

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PACO 108

HOWARD HANSON

Merry Mount

Pristine
XR

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PACO 108
STEREO

Hanson

Merry Mount

An opera in Three Acts

Bernardt Tiede - Wrestling Bradford
Beverly Sparks - Lady Marigold Sandys
Patricia Berlin - Plentiful Tewke
Richard Gilley - Sir Gower Lackland
Craig Hankenson - Myles Brodrib
Wayne Leazer - Jonathan Banks
Donald Woods - Faint-Not Tinker
James Reichert - Samoset
Carolyn Sixbey - Desire Annable
Rolland Hurst - Praise-God Tewke
Jacqueline Mailloux - Peregrin Brodrib
Mary Barbara Williamson - Love Brewster
William Duvall - Thomas Morton
Charlene Chadwick - Bridget Crackston
Roy Hines - Jack Prence
Jacob Hamm - Jewel Scooby
John Burr - first Puritan
William Boland - second Puritan

This recording has a somewhat convoluted history. The existence of this in-performance taping in the Eastman Theatre was re-discovered by me in Fall, 1985, while researching the old index-card catalogue of the Sibley Music Library, where a single card had the information "Merry Mount, May 1955, binaural." When a librarian finally located the tapes in a school annex, I learned that they were experimental binaural stereo captured on a staggered-head Magnecorder tape recorder. (This was a full year before the first commercial stereo sessions engineered by Mercury Records). When that single machine "died" at some subsequent point, no transfer to standard in-line stereo had ever been made to the best of our knowledge...and we looked! Eastman Recording Services and their engineer, Ross Ritchie, rented a then-very-expensive full-frequency digital delay box to slow down the advance channel to match the follow channel. When I heard the synchronized output, I was overjoyed at the quality of the early "experimental" stereo and, most of all, of the magnificent interpretation of this wonderful opera by its composer.

At that time I was the Radio Manager for the NPR radio station in Rochester, WXXI-FM. We were quite collaborative with the network producers in Washington, DC, so it was very natural for me to approach Andy Trudeau of NPR to co-produce with WXXI-FM the first-ever network-radio broadcast of this historic performance.

Damage to some portions of the original tape - especially the overture and first minutes of the recording - led us to the decision to edit in "repair" sections of Merry Mount from the 1957 commercial recording for Mercury of selections from the Opera, once again with Dr Hanson conducting. These patches were derived from an ERA LP disc.

John Proffitt, letter to the producer, 2014 (*excerpt*)

Producer's Note

This remarkable recording of Howard Hanson's only opera is a wonderful find, and I'm deeply indebted to John Proffitt for offering to me to remaster for Pristine. Recordings of the opera are thin on the ground - the world stage première in 1934, conducted by Serafin (sadly incomplete) has been joined by a more recent digital recording on the Naxos label; beyond that we have a suite and excerpts. This is the first time a full recording, conducted by the composer, has been made available. Even more remarkably it's in stereo, of a kind! The majority of the recording comes from the 1955 tapes, which vary in quality from somewhat dim and hissy to quite clear and bright. I've attempted to even out these differences and enhance the sound as much as I can to give the best possible outing for this truly historic recording. **Andrew Rose**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
SARL Pristine Audio, 144 Rue de l'Eglise, 24610 St. Méard de Gurçon, France



Soloists, Chorus & Orchestra of the Eastman School of Music
conductor: Howard Hanson

Live concert recordings, 1955, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester

Hanson - Merry Mount

- CD 1
- 1 **Act I - Prelude** (2:35)
 - 2 Be as a lion, dread Jehovah - From plots of Hell and witcheries (7:06)
 - 3 Ah - I deny thy Christ (4:17)
 - 4 A savoury discourse, good Master Bradford (2:44)
 - 5 Last night came One that paced a-down the stairway of the sky (2:54)
 - 6 My son, Thou'rt over-ripe for marriage! (1:37)
 - 7 The willow keep to thatch our sleep (3:55)
 - 8 Plentiful Tewke hath caught the preacher! (5:01)
 - 9 Gi' you good night, sir (5:00)
 - 10 Marigold! Lady! - Let us be lions of Jehovah (4:26)

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Howard Hanson

Live recording at the Eastman Theater, 16-17 May 1955. Additional material from Mercury LP SR-90524, also conducted by Howard Hanson

Many thanks to John Proffitt for his help and assistance in realising this project

- CD 2
- 1 **Act II, Scene 1 - Prelude - I wind and I wind, My true love to find** (3:36)
 - 2 From forth the hill - I christen 'Merry Mount' - Maypole Dance (3:22)
 - 3 Long Live the Lady (0:57)
 - 4 Marigold! When the morning stars together sang (4:29)
 - 5 Methinks I see th_infernal rendezvous of Satan and his bond-slaves (7:14)
 - 6 Scene 2 - O pity me! Thou alone of women Canst heal this tortured heart (2:46)
 - 7 Let them strike twice, And I will come to thee! (2:37)
 - 8 Hale her to the village, A prisoner (0:51)
 - 9 Almighty Father, My King and my God (2:55)
 - 10 Chorus of Mystic Voices (3:20)
 - 11 Scene 3 - Alleluia! Alleluia! (9:40)
 - 12 Now thou art mine (1:48)
 - 13 Rise up, my love my fair one (4:24)
 - 14 **Act III, Scene 1 - Prelude** (4:11)
 - 15 Scene 2 - Gird you with Sackcloth (6:38)
 - 16 Never more shall prayer ravish these lips! (3:49)
 - 17 Woe, woe! Lost sheep are we (0:55)
 - 18 No witch am I; But one that long ago was happy (4:23)
 - 19 Ay, even now thy lover frets at Hellgate - Death to the Witch (4:07)

Total duration: 1hr 51:38

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Eastman School Symphony Orchestra *Howard Hanson*