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PASC219

PIERRE MONTEUX

PRISTINE
AUDIO

EARLY RECORDINGS

STRAVINSKY: Le sacre du printemps

Première Partie: *L'adoration de la terre*

- 1 Introduction (3:08)
- 2 Les Augures printaniers – Danses des adolescentes (3:11)
- 3 Jeu du rapt (1:22)
- 4 Rondes printanières (3:09)
- 5 Jeux des cités rivales (1:56)
- 6 Cortège du sage – Le sage (1:09)
- 7 Danse de la terre (1:13)

Seconde Partie: *Le sacrifice*

- 8 Introduction (4:16)
- 9 Cercles mystérieux des adolescentes (2:57)
- 10 Glorification de l'Élué (1:33)
- 11 Évocation des ancêtres (0:41)
- 12 Action rituelle des ancêtres (3:14)
- 13 Danse sacrée: l'Élué (4:33)

Recorded 23rd – 25th January, 1929 in the Salle Pleyel, Paris
Matrix nos: CS 3172-1T1, 3175-1, 3176-1T1, 3177-2, 3178-2,
3186-1T1, 3173-2T1, and 3174-3
First issued on Disque Gramophone W-1008 through 1011

14 RAVEL: Le petit poucet (*Ma mère l'oye*) (3:46)

Recorded 3rd February, 1930 in the Salle Pleyel, Paris
Matrix no.: CF 2842-2
First issued on Disque Gramophone W-1108

15 COPPOLA: Interlude dramatique (8:30)

Recorded 3rd February, 1930 in the Salle Pleyel, Paris
Matrix nos.: CF 2849-2 and 2850-1
First issued on Disque Gramophone W-1108

16 CHABRIER: Fête Polonaise (*Le Roi malgré lui*) (7:08)

Recorded 29th January, 1930 in the Salle Pleyel, Paris
Matrix nos.: CF 2818-2 and 2819-1
First issued on Disque Gramophone L-796

17 RAVEL: La valse (10:41)

Recorded 31st January, 1930 in the Salle Pleyel, Paris
Matrix nos.: CF 2839-3, 2840-1 and 2841-2
First issued on Disque Gramophone W-1107 and 1108

Pierre Monteux
Orchestre Symphonique de Paris

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Pierre Monteux

Total duration: 62:27 ©2010 Pristine Audio.

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PIERRE MONTEUX

ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE PARIS



EARLY RECORDINGS

STRAVINSKY: LE SACRE DE PRINTEMPS

RAVEL: LE PETIT POUCKET

COPPOLA: INTERLUDE DRAMATIQUE

CHABRIER: FÊTE POLONAISE

RAVEL: LA VALSE

Obert-Thorn

RECORDED 1929-1930

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AUDIO

PIERRE MONTEUX

EARLY RECORDINGS

Producer's Note

Pierre Monteux' early recordings fall into three general categories: the Berlioz discs, including a complete *Symphonie Fantastique*; the three concerto recordings with Menuhin; and the rest, which are presented here. While the Menuhin recordings have rarely been out of print in one form or another since they first appeared and the Berlioz records have seen at least two CD reissues during the 1990s, the remainder have proven rather hard to come by. I am aware of only one previous CD reissue of the Stravinsky, Coppola and Chabrier items, and none at all of the two Ravel works.

Part of the reason for this may have been due to the rarity of the original discs. Unlike the Menuhin recordings, which saw release throughout the world, or the Berlioz records which came out in America, the other recordings were only issued in France. Adding to their rarity are the difficulties involved in their transfer. None of them were released on particularly quiet shellac, and much of the original engineering was not state-of-the-art for the time. The volume levels of several of the recordings were adjusted downward as the recordings went along, requiring compensating increases on the part of the restoration engineer; and the recorded sound is sometimes rather raw and harsh.

Most problematic of all is Monteux' first recording, the Stravinsky. Four of the eight sides were only issued as sonically-compromised "dubbings". These were re-recordings made from the original metal discs or shellac pressings in order to decrease volume levels so that the discs would pass the "wear test", particularly needed for the many loud passages in this work. Being copies of copies, dubbings had inherently inferior sound. They also had similar volume decrease problems, which I have attempted to mitigate by matching the dynamic extremes against Monteux' 1956 Decca recording with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra.

Notwithstanding their many faults, these are bracing performances. It is a particular shame that *La Valse* and *Sacre* did not see the international release that the contemporaneous recordings by Koussevitzky and Stokowski had in the Victor/HMV family of labels, because in both scores Monteux proves more vital than the other conductors' comparatively restrained accounts. *La Valse* in particular has a wealth of characterful detail in the wind playing, coupled with an inexorable momentum that carries through to a shattering conclusion.

Mark Obert-Thorn

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