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CANTELLI: PHILHARMONIA '52

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By the time that Guido Cantelli appeared with the Philharmonia Orchestra for the first time in the autumn of 1951 he had already made five complete commercial recordings with three orchestras. In 1949 these were: the Haydn Symphony No.93 with the NBC Symphony Orchestra (2 March) followed by Rossini's overture *Le siège de Corinthe* (9 May) and Casella's *Paganiniana* (13 and 14 May) with the Orchestra Stabile dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. The following year he made his second recording with the NBC Symphony Orchestra, this time it was Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* (13 January), thus completing both the works which he had conducted for his debut in the States the previous year. Then followed the Tchaikovsky Symphony No.5 with the Orchestra della Scala after the orchestra's visit to the Edinburgh Festival and this was recorded at the Abbey Road Studio in London (23 and 26 September). But it was 1951 that heralded the beginning of his relationship with what was considered by many to be Britain's premier orchestra - the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Cantelli returned to London in October 1952 for six concerts with the Philharmonia Orchestra and plans were in place by the previous August for recording sessions which were also to be held in the Royal Festival Hall. This was possibly an experiment to establish whether the hall would be a suitable venue for recordings but it was never used again for Cantelli and possibly did not find favour with Douglas Larter, the engineer for the majority of Cantelli recordings on the HMV label. The works recorded and which appear on this CD were *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (Ravel) *La gazza ladra* (Rossini), and Symphony No.6 (Tchaikovsky) and as usual all had been played at the concerts - the Ravel on 5 and 8 October, the Tchaikovsky on 14 October and the Rossini on 17 October.

Tchaikovsky: Symphony in B minor, No.6, Op.74, Pathétique

There are instances when the tragedy of Cantelli's brief career registers with overwhelming force and this is one of them. Cantelli performed this symphony on just six occasions and it is worth a moment's thought that Karajan made more commercial recordings of this symphony (seven) than Cantelli gave actual performances. Cantelli first conducted the symphony on 27 July 1945 at an open air concert during his first appearance with the Orchestra della Scala and his last was the performance with the NBC Symphony Orchestra on 21 February 1953 which has already been released on this label (PASC 166). His previous concert performance was with the Philharmonia Orchestra on 14 October 1952 and was followed by four three-hour sessions on 24, 28 and 30 October for the commercial recording. As might be expected, with so short an interval between the commercial recording in London and the concert performance in New York, there is little to choose between them: perhaps the commercial recording has a slightly more burnished sound, but it's marginal. Cantelli fully understands the emotional implications of the score which he conveys without resorting to exaggerations: the demands of expressiveness are met without hysteria, tempi are well-judged in all four movements, and the harrowing despair of the final movement is admirably portrayed. All this is also true of the live performance with the NBC Symphony Orchestra.

Notes by Keith Bennett - further notes available online. © 2011 Keith Bennett

Restoration notes

The recordings here, all of which were generously lent by Keith Bennett for the purposes of this release, were drawn largely from a rare and unusually high quality source. During the 1950s, His Master's Voice recordings could be purchased on disc, normally both 78rpm shellac and, from 1952 onwards, on the quickly popular 33rpm vinyl format. However, they also ran a short series of "High Fidelity Tape Recording" issues, the "HTA" series, and at the time the highest-priced issue format the company offered. Each tape consisted of a 7-inch spool of 1/4 inch EMITAPE with two mono tracks, one on each side, running at 7.5 inches per second. A printed paper inlay contained the sleeve notes, and a small slip which referenced the Batch Number was hand-initialled by the tape operator, an inspector and a packer. Despite their undoubted high fidelity, especially when played as here on a modern, broadcast-standard Studer tape recorder, these tapes failed to attract much public attention at the time, quite possibly as a result of their exorbitant cost. It has to be said that they have been a pleasure to work from - offering the highest quality of any domestic medium I've encountered from the era. **AR**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM

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CANTELLI

CONDUCTS THE
PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

THE STUDIO RECORDINGS OF 1952

TCHAIKOVSKY

SYMPHONY NO. 6
'PATHÉTIQUE' IN B MINOR

RAVEL

PAVANE POUR UNE INFANTE
DÉFUNTE

ROSSINI

LA GAZZA LADRA OVERTURE

Cantelli: 1952 Philharmonia Recordings

TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 6 in B minor, "PATHÉTIQUE", OP. 74

1 1st mvt. - Adagio - Allegro non troppo (16:14)

2 2nd mvt. - Allegro con grazia (8:04)

3 3rd mvt. - Allegro molto vivace (9:16)

4 4th mvt. - Adagio lamentoso - Andante (9:28)

Recorded 24, 28 & 30 October, 1952, Royal Festival Hall, London

5 RAVEL Pavane Pour Une Infante Défunte (6:21)

Recorded 24 & 25 October, 1952, Royal Festival Hall, London

6 ROSSINI La Gazza Ladra - Overture (8:50)

Recorded 22 October, 1952, Royal Festival Hall, London

Philharmonia Orchestra
conducted by **Guido Cantelli**

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Transfers from HMV tapes HTA3,
HTA23, and from the private
collection of Keith Bennett

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Guido Cantelli**

Total duration: **58:13**

Keith Bennett is the author of **Guido
Cantelli – Just Eight Years of Fame**

(published 2009) which is only
available from GC Publishers.

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