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Toscanini conducts Sibelius

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Sibelius

Symphony No. 2

Pohjola's Daughter
The Swan of Tuonela
Finlandia

"This exceptional concert, taken from a broadcast on December 7, 1940, offers uniformly excellent performances of a wide range of Sibelius' finest works... [Toscanini's] Sibelius is lean, taught, classically sculpted, and played to a fare-thee-well in this extraordinary recital. The *Second Symphony* has grandeur without pomposity, and the finale never outstays its welcome. *Pohjola's Daughter* offers both humor and Romantic warmth of expression... The best thing that can be said about the recording is that you can hear just how good the performances are. It won't win any awards for sound, but fans of Sibelius or Toscanini will be thrilled. I was."

David Hurwitz, *Classics Today*, 2006 - review of *Naxos CD reissue, excerpts*

Transfer notes

Here we bring together broadcast recordings from two all-Sibelius concerts that Toscanini conducted with the NBC Symphony Orchestra in February 1939 and December 1940. The concerts were similar in content - the only difference in programming being the replacement in 1940 of *En Saga* by *Pohjola's Daughter*, cutting the overall duration of the later broadcasts's musical content by approximately 7 minutes. Alas, the time constraints of CDs do not allow us to include representations of all the works here - *Pohjola's Daughter* won out on grounds of rarity (Toscanini's only US performance, it appears) and sound quality (our copy of the 1939 *En Saga* suffered some radio cross-talk, an issue also for our 1939 *Symphony No. 2*).

My aim with these reissues was to bring the full battery of XR-remastering technology to bear on these recordings. Many listeners will be familiar with at least half of the recordings here - the *Symphony* and *Pohjola's Daughter* were both issued by RCA with Toscanini's approval - but they will not be familiar with the astonishing sound quality it has been possible to achieve with the raw material at hand.

Gone is the scratchy, hissy and crackly sound of the RCA transfers, as well as the boxiness of the acoustic and a lack of real depth, to be replaced by a broader, more open sense of the space and musical vision Sibelius's music implies. Meanwhile, the 1939 recordings, whilst lacking the very high end treble of the later broadcast, still retain much of the same captivating sound quality and sense of atmosphere, the latter being particularly spellbinding and enthralling in *The Swan of Tuonela*. AR

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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NBC Symphony Orchestra - Toscanini
Broadcast recordings, 1939/1940

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SYMPHONY NO. 2, THREE TONE POEMS
TOSCANINI, NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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XR remastering by
Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a 1939
photograph of **Jean Sibelius**

Symphony 2 & Pohjola's Daughter
Broadcast 7 December 1940
NBC Studio 8H, New York City

Swan of Tuonoela & Finlandia
Broadcast 18 February 1939
NBC Studio 8H, New York City

Total duration: **70:43**

Toscanini Sibelius

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegretto (8:40)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Andante ma rubato (12:07)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Vivacissimo (6:42)
- 4 4th mvt. - Allegro moderato (12:27)

- 5 Pohjola's Daughter, Op. 49 (12:47)
- 6 The Swan of Tuonela, Op. 22 No. 2 (9:52)
- 7 Finlandia, Op. 26 (9:08)

NBC Symphony Orchestra Arturo Toscanini

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