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PASC 438

FRITZ REINER
Rarities, Volume Three

Pristine
XR

Producer's Note

Like the two earlier releases in this series (PASC 235 and 294), this volume of Reiner Rarities features works which are rare in more than one sense. First, these are Fritz Reiner's only commercial recordings of the works presented. In addition, none of them have ever received an "official" CD reissue from their originating labels. The current release features all of Reiner's French repertoire recordings which fall under these criteria.

The Debussy *Faune* and *Nocturnes* come from Reiner's earliest issued recording session, although they were originally published without crediting the conductor or the orchestra. They were part of the "World's Greatest Music" series recorded by RCA Victor for the *New York Post*, which featured similarly anonymous recordings by Ormandy and the Philadelphia and Rodzinski and the NBC Symphony.

This session featured 78 players from Barbirolli's New York Philharmonic, and also included works by Wagner. What is particularly striking here, as in many of the recordings featured in this program, is Reiner's pacing, allowing the music to unfold with seeming inevitability even as he moves it along, choosing tempi that seem ideal. (The uncredited flute soloist in *Faune* is most likely John Amans, the Philharmonic's principal at the time.)

The broadcast of the *Daphnis* Suite, although not a commercial recording, was part of the series of V-Discs released by the U.S. government for the entertainment of servicemen during World War II, and falls under Reiner's issued discography. Again, one is struck by the pacing, the judgment in the length of pauses, and the choices for when (and how much) to use string portamenti to underline emotional points.

The Pittsburgh recordings document Reiner's decade as music director of that city's orchestra. In *La Valse*, Reiner does not play his hand too early, letting loose only in the final pages (in contrast to Munch, who, for all his admitted excitement, plays it at fever pitch from the start). The Ravel orchestration of Debussy's *Danse* gets an appropriately energetic performance, while the rousing Berlioz march ends with an unusual, rarely-heard diminuendo.

In 1927, Reiner conducted the U.S. premiere of Honegger's 1924 single-movement *Concertino*, a work which seems to have been somewhat influenced by Prokofiev's Third Concerto. The soloist, Oscar Levant, is perhaps best known today for his acting work in such films as *An American in Paris*, *The Band Wagon* and *Humoresque*; but in his time, he was a highly popular piano soloist specializing in twentieth century repertoire (particularly the works of his friend, George Gershwin), as well as an author, composer and raconteur.

The sources for the recordings were American Columbia LPs for *La Valse* and the Honegger, and shellac 78 rpm discs for the remaining items, except for the *Daphnis* Suite, which was taken from a tape of original off-the-air acetates, which sounded better than the V-Disc dubbings.

Mark Obert-Thorn

Reiner Rarities

Volume Three

DEBUSSY

Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

Two Nocturnes

Danse

RAVEL

Daphnis and Chloe — Suite No. 2

La Valse

HONEGGER

Concertino for Piano and Orchestra

with Oscar Levant

BERLIOZ

Damnation of Faust — Hungarian March

Studio and live recordings, 1938-1949

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REINER RARITIES, VOLUME THREE
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- 1 DEBUSSY Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune (9:31)
Recorded 22 November 1938 in Carnegie Hall, New York
Matrix nos.: CS-028849-1/028850-1 - First issued on World's Greatest Music SR-17

DEBUSSY Nocturnes

- 2 Nuages (8:41)
3 Fêtes (5:47)

Recorded 22 November 1938 in Carnegie Hall, New York
Matrix nos.: CS-028851-1/028852-1A/028853-1A/028854-1A - First issued on World's Greatest Music SR-18/19

- 4 DEBUSSY Danse (Tarantelle styrienne) (orch. Ravel) (4:41)

Recorded 1 April 1947 in the Syria Mosque, Pittsburgh
Matrix nos.: XCO-37578 - First issued as Columbia 12785-D in album X-296

RAVEL Daphnis et Chloé - Suite No. 2

- 5 Lever du jour (5:01)
6 Pantomime (7:44)
7 Danse générale (4:35)

Live broadcast 2 September 1945 from the CBS Studios, New York
Matrix nos.: VP-1543-D5-TC-1340-1H/VP-1544-D5-TC-1341-1M/VP-1545-D5-TC-1342-1D
First issued as V-Disc 546/7

- 8 RAVEL La Valse (11:40)

Recorded 1 April 1947 in the Syria Mosque, Pittsburgh
Matrix nos.: XCO-37575/7 - First issued as Columbia 12784-D/12785-D in album X-296

HONEGGER Concertino for Piano and Orchestra

- 9 1st mvt - Allegro molto moderato — (3:40)
10 2nd mvt - Larghetto sostenuto — (2:04)
11 3rd mvt - Allegro (4:43)

Oscar Levant (piano)

Recorded 6 July 1949 in the Columbia 30th Street Studios, New York
Matrix nos.: XCO-41374/6 - First issued as Columbia ML 2156

- 12 BERLIOZ Hungarian March (from La damnation de Faust, Op. 24) (4:13)

Recorded 15 November 1941 in the Syria Mosque, Pittsburgh
Matrix nos.: XCO-31902 - First issued as Columbia 11709-D in album M-491

Fritz Reiner, conductor

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REINER RARITIES, VOLUME THREE
FRITZ REINER

Producer and Audio Restoration
Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Additional restoration and pitch
stabilisation by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Fritz Reiner

Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York
(Tracks 1 – 3)

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
(Track 4, 8 & 12)

CBS Symphony Orchestra
(Tracks 5 – 7)

Columbia Symphony Orchestra
(Tracks 9 – 11)

Total duration: 72:20

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