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LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI

Acoustic, Volume 3

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Review of Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No. 2

These historic records, issued in June, 1924, are equal from every point of view to any pianoforte concertos yet issued. The lyric beauty of the second movement and the surge and sweep of the third are most stirringly rendered by the fine orchestra, while Rachmaninoff's playing comes through with all that power and poetry that we associate with it at his recitals. The balance is excellent and I could find hardly any faulty parts in the recording. The English H.M.V. have the materials for pressing copies, but hesitate to include them in their catalogue because the first movement is not available. Perhaps if sufficient people write asking for these records to be made the company will comply with the demand ; otherwise they must be ordered through any H.M.V. dealer and cost, like the other Victor Red Seal records mentioned in this article, 9s. 6d. each. They are worth it.

John F. Porte The Gramophone - April 1925

Producer's Note

This is the third of four volumes which aims to present all of the surviving acoustic recordings made by Leopold Stokowski with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the studios of the Victor recording company between 1917 and 1924. The somewhat drawn-out nature of this project has allowed us to track down a number of rare and unreleased sides, several of which appear for the first time on this release.

Since beginning the series, a number of technological advances in the field of sound restoration have appeared, allowing each time for greater fidelity to be extracted from the limited opportunities found in the grooves of acoustically-recorded discs, with their highly limited frequency and dynamic range.

One such advance is in the control of pitch instability - the "wow and flutter" inherent to one degree or another in all analogue recordings, and generally found to greater degrees as recordings get older. To be able to restore solidity of pitch to Rachmaninov's piano is to give it a degree of realism never heard before. Despite the aforementioned technical limitations, a few moments listening to the solo piano in the opening bars of the Piano Concerto No. 2, not originally issued, may have you pinching yourself - surely this is not the sound of a piano captured through a horn, cut into a disc being driven by weights, just months before the introduction of microphones? The delicacy of touch, the immediacy of the sound, the solidity and (relative!) realism of the piano's tone is quite remarkable to hear.

For many, the performance given by Rachmaninov and Stokowski here was preferable to their 1929 electrical remake. Here we take a step closer to that performance, alongside a panoply of single sides and previously unissued Wagner, Tchaikovsky and one Edgar Stillman Kelley, a composer who was new to me. My sincere thanks to all who make this release possible. A fourth and final volume in the series will follow within a month.

Andrew Rose



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stokowski

acoustic volume 3

rachmaninov

piano concerto no. 2
sergei rachmaninov, piano

music by
bizez
liszt
boccherini
ippolitov-ivanov
chopin
mendelssohn
chabrier
kelley
wagner
tchaikovsky

Rare and unreleased acoustic recordings, 1917-1924
The Philadelphia Orchestra • Leopold Stokowski
Victor Studio Recordings

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stokowski

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XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Leopold Stokowski

Special thanks to Edward Johnson, Mark Obert-Thorn and Ward Marston for help and providing source material

Full discographic information can be found on our website

Recorded at Camden Church Studio (Victor Building no 22) Camden NJ, USA except tracks 12, 13, 17: Victor Office Building no 2, Eighteenth Floor Auditorium, Camden, NJ, USA

*Previously unissued

Total duration: 79:41

For a full catalogue visit www.pristineclassical.com or call : (00) 33 979 622713

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RACHMANINOV Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18 (r. 1924)

- 1 1st mvt. - Moderato (9:41)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio sostenuto (10:15)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegro scherzando (10:43)

SERGEI RACHMANINOV - piano

- 4 BIZET Carmen - Prelude (2:13) (r. 1919)
- 5 BIZET Carmen - Changing of the Guard (3:35) (r. 1923)
- 6 BIZET Carmen - March of the Smugglers (3:32) (r. 1923)
- 7 BIZET L'Arlésienne - Spanish Dance (1:40) (r. 1922)
- 8 LISZT Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 (3:59) (r. 1920)
- 9 BOCCHERINI Quintet in E - Minuet (2:36) (r. 1922)
- 10 IPPOLITOV-IVANOV Caucasian Sketches Suite No. 1 - Procession of the Sardar (3:20) (r. 1922)
- 11 CHOPIN Prelude in E minor (2:15) (r. 1922)
- 12 MENDELSSOHN A Midsummer Night's Dream - Scherzo (4:30) (r. 1917)
- 13 GLUCK Orfeo ed Euridice - Dance of the Blessed Spirits (4:43) (r. 1917)
- 14 CHABRIER España Rhapsody (4:28) (r. 1919)
- 15 KELLEY Alice in Wonderland Suite - The Red Queen's Banquet (4:36) (r. 1924)*
- 16 WAGNER Tannhäuser - Festmarsch (Part 1) (3:08) (r. 1924)*
- 17 TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 6 - 3rd mvt. - Scherzo (Part 2) (4:27) (r. 1917)*

The Philadelphia Orchestra *Leopold Stokowski*

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