



Toscanini

conducts American Music, Volume 1



Loeffler's tone poem is peasant dark with an admixture of Russian threnody to which we can add Mussourgskian surge and a sense of evocative romanticism; maybe also a sly reference to Volga Boatmen. Its last movement, commemorating a death, is eerie in the extreme and beautifully extrapolated by Toscanini. Paul Creston's *Choric Dance No. 2* opens quite melodramatically and soon explores rhythmic implications with concentration and vivacity; more an exercise than a totally convincing piece but certainly bracing. This was the première of Morton Gould's *A Lincoln Legend*, a piece that opens with contemplative string writing but soon introduces a raft of quotations (*John Brown's Body* among a number) in a determinedly vulgar melange – at least I think it's determinedly vulgar. After the tumultuous Americana we return to the more reflective intimacies that had ushered us in.

The 1942 concert and the first disc conclude here with *Rhapsody in Blue* in a performance given by Earl Wild. He was the youngest soloist to have played with the orchestra and always wondered why he and not a raft of others had been selected. Wild reminisced elsewhere that he later found out that Toscanini used to listen in to NBC's chamber concerts on Sunday mornings and had heard Wild there – a more or less humble NBC staffer catapulted to fame. The *Rhapsody* comes complete with a celebrity clarinetist in the shape of Benny Goodman, soon to test classical waters with the Budapest Quartet but not yet a student of the legendary English player Reginald Kell. His nervousness shows with a fluffed note at a registral change but it's salutary to hear Goodman's wailing opening bars. Toscanini unfolds during the performance and Wild is fine though not as idiomatic as he was later to become (especially with Fiedler); the ending is magnificent though and properly conclusive.

Jonathan Woolf MusicWeb International, 2004

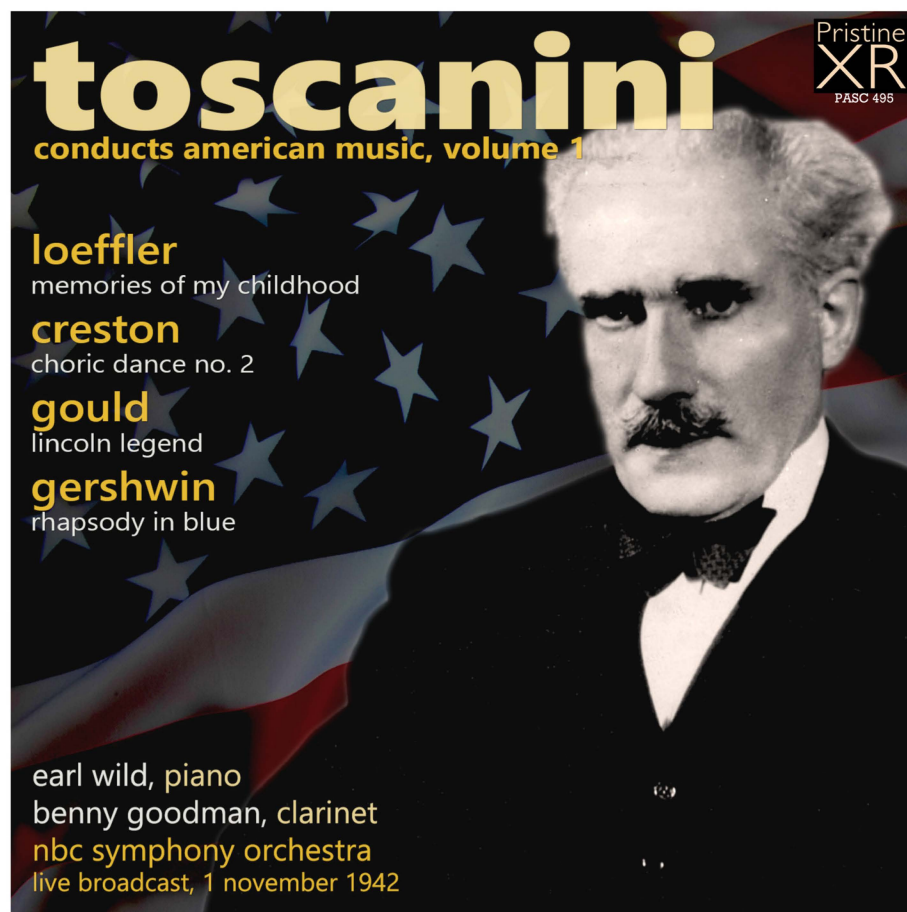
Producer's Note

Toscanini conducted two concerts in the 1942-43 season with NBC of American Music, a subject he rarely covered in his regular programming. Of the programme of November 1st, 1942, only the Loeffler had previously been played with the NBC orchestra, and none of the other pieces would receive a second outing under Toscanini's baton. This was American music for a country at war.

I was lucky to receive what I believe may be a previously unused source for the present transfer. Certainly the sound quality is significantly better than that heard in previous transfers of this concert. Indeed, after XR remastering and considerable work on surface swish and other minor irritants associated with even rarely-played acetates of this vintage, the sound quality is more reminiscent of a studio recording of the 1950s than a radio broadcast from the early 1940s.

The frequency range of the present recording is pleasantly wide, extending to more than double that of contemporary commercial discs. Backgrounds are quiet. XR remastering has added depth and detail, whilst subtle use of convolution reverberation has greatly improved the notoriously unaccommodating acoustic properties of NBC's Studio 8H. Announcements have been included where available, in some cases patched in from inferior sources. The music is all of the highest audio quality.

Andrew Rose



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TOSCANINI, WILD, GOODMAN, NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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conducts american music, volume 1

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disc
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XR remastering by
Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Arturo Toscanini

Broadcast of 1 November 1942
Studio 8H, NBC Radio City
New York City

Total duration: 54:03

1 NBC Radio Introduction (0:30)

2 LOEFFLER Memories of My Childhood (Life in a Russian Village) (13:47)

3 CRESTON Choric Dance No. 2 (5:50)

4 GOULD Lincoln Legend (17:29)

5 GERSHWIN Rhapsody In Blue (16:27)

Earl Wild *piano*

Benny Goodman *clarinet*

NBC Symphony Orchestra

Arturo Toscanini, *conductor*

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