

"It is amazing to think that the ballet première of Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloé" in 1912 was led by a 37-year-old conductor, Pierre Monteux, the same gentleman who directed the music at yesterday's New York Philharmonic concert at Carnegie Hall.

There aren't many people around today who heard that performance, but it is not likely that the music sounded fresher or more vigorous than it did yesterday, even coming after a long program that included two other works of Ravel. And, thanks to an intermission plea by David M. Keiser, president of the Philharmonic Society, there was no disturbing parade of early departures during the performance, a feature of previous Friday afternoon concerts.

Mr. Monteux became more animated as the concert progressed. "Le Tombeau de Couperin" was transparent and dry, the "Rhapsodie Espagnole" elegant but restrained until the last section. All this was not out of keeping with the character of each work. It served to differentiate one from the other—not an unimportant consideration in a lopsided program like this one.

But it was the two suites from "Daphnis et Chloé" that provided the conductor's real triumph. The many strands of Ravel's orchestral writing were somehow audible without losing the shimmering textures of the instrumental sound. Mr. Monteux achieved elasticity and excitement within his steady, knowing beat and the orchestra members played their hearts out for him." — Eric Salzman, *The New York Times*, 7 March, 1959

One imagines that, had Pierre Monteux picked up a copy of the New York Times on Saturday 7 March, he might have felt his day was getting off to a good start. After all, he would be conducting the same repertoire that evening, not only to a packed Carnegie Hall, but also to a live radio audience across the nation's airwaves, and then again the following afternoon, to the local audience alone.

Alas the 66-year-old Joseph Szigeti might not have been quite so pleased with his notice — he played both the Berlioz *Reverie et caprice* ("neglected, not without reason"), which was receiving its first performances by the New York Philharmonic that week and J. S. Bach's D minor Violin Concerto (which has survived in less than optimal sound quality and proved too long to preserve for this release) — and was less well received by the newspaper's reviewer: "Unfortunately, the years have taken their toll on Mr. Szigeti's technical control and he was not able to project either work very convincingly". A little harsh, perhaps, but as by a good number of years this counts as our most "recent" Szigeti recording, it's interesting to hear he could still pull out some, if not all, of the stops, despite less than thrilling material.

But of course it's the Ravel that we're really interested in here. He and Monteux were born a month apart in 1875 in opposite ends of France, and we bring them together here to celebrate both 150th anniversaries in this superb performance from 1959, well-captured by the CBS engineers and sounding truly effervescent in this Ambient Stereo XR remaster, now devoid of many thousands of coughs from the New York audience. A truly special night that can now be enjoyed all over again!

Andrew Rose



monteux

conducts ravel

PRISTINE
AUDIO

PASC 738

RAVEL LE TOMBEAU DE COUPERIN - RAPSODIE ESPAGNOLE -- DAPHNIS ET CHLOÉ SUITES
MONTEUX, SZIGETI, NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

PASC 738

PRISTINE
AUDIO

1. RADIO Introduction (0:20)

RAVEL Le tombeau de Couperin

2. 1. Prélude. *Vif* (3:15)
3. 2. Forlane. *Allegretto* (4:52)
4. 3. Menuet. *Allegro moderato* (4:44)
5. 4. Rigaudon. *Assez vif* (4:02)

RAVEL Rapsodie espagnole

6. 1. Prélude à la nuit. *Très modéré* (3:58)
7. 2. Malagueña. *Assez vif* (2:17)
8. 3. Habanera. *Assez lent et d'un rythme las* (2:34)
9. 4. Feria. *Assez animé* (7:18)

10. BERLIOZ Réverie et caprice (10:40)

Joseph Szigeti, violin

RAVEL Daphnis et Chloé Suite No. 1

11. 1. Nocturne (5:30)
12. 2. Interlude (2:40)
13. 3. Danse guerrière (4:15)

RAVEL Daphnis et Chloé Suite No. 2

14. 1. Lever du jour. *Lent* (4:58)
15. 2. Pantomime (6:37)
16. 3. Danse générale (5:02)

New York Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by Pierre Monteux

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on
photographs of Pierre Monteux
and Maurice Ravel

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