

CRQ Editions: Summer 2018

CRQ Editions' Summer release schedule headlines with a towering performance from the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, presented in the spring of 1963, of Puccini's final opera *Turandot*. The title role is taken by the legendary British soprano Amy Shuard. So successful were this new production and her performance in it that Shuard's international career was effectively launched as a result. The supporting cast is equally fine: the young Bruno Prevedi as a virile Calaf, soprano Raina Kabaivanska as Liù, and Joseph Rouleau as a sonorous Timur. Edward Downes conducts with a full understanding of Puccini's barbaric score, and the recorded sound, taken from a BBC direct relay, is very good indeed.

In complete contrast and reflecting his tremendous popularity, we have secured through the co-operation of collectors Richard Gate and Edward Johnson, tapes of Leopold Stokowski conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra in an attractive programme of Austro-German classics, by Schubert, Mozart and Richard Strauss. The excellent sound from radio broadcasts allows a full appreciation of the Boston Orchestra's virtuosity and Stokowski's powerful musical vision. Another towering conductor from past is Sir Adrian Boult. His account of Elgar's oratorio *The Kingdom* was given to mark the centenary of Elgar's birth in London in 1957. This was clearly an occasion of great significance and Boult's Elgar here is superb. Completing this 2-CD set is a recording of the first performance of Havergal Brian's *Cello Concerto*, given in 1971 with the much missed Thomas Igloi as soloist.

The recordings of the Austrian conductor Clemens Krauss are spread over an enormously wide area. We have managed to collect together three of the rarest of these. They include an ultra-rare account of *Vltava* from Smetana's *Ma Vlast*, recorded with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in late 1944 (never previously published under its correct attribution to Krauss and the BPO), a complete performance of Respighi's *The Fountain of Rome*, and an excerpt from Mancinelli's *Venetian Scenes*, both with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and recorded in 1945. In addition this disc includes two extensive extracts from Krauss's legendary performances of *Tristan und Isolde*, given at the Royal Opera House, London, in 1951 with Kirsten Flagstad as *Isolde*.

The Concert Hall Record Club was major influence during the 1950s and 1960s in spreading an awareness of classical music throughout Europe. Using an extraordinarily interesting and varied selection of pianists and conductors it recorded all the five piano concertos of Beethoven during the 1950s. These have now been brought together as a single set, we believe for the first time. Together with a scintillating account of Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 25 'Coronation'*, these recordings present a fascinating oversight of the musical attributes of the post-war era, as well as much purely musical pleasure.

Towards the end of his conducting career, Jascha Horenstein forged close links with the North of England, where he could be frequently heard conducting two of the region's major orchestras, the Halle Orchestra and the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra (now known as the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra). We have brought together recordings by both these distinguished groups with Horenstein in unusual repertoire for him: two works by Benjamin Britten – the *Four Sea Interludes* from the opera *Peter Grimes* and the song-cycle from the late 1930s, *Les Illuminations* (featuring the Britten specialist soprano Jennifer Vyvyan as soloist) – together with Dvořák's *Symphony No 8*, which gets a very special reading in Horenstein's hands.

'Perhaps her greatest single success as a song recitalist' – the verdict of critic Alan Blyth on Dame Janet Baker's famous song recital of 2 December 1966, given in New York's Town Hall. In this (we believe) first publication on CD of the informal recording of this event and originally released on LP in the USA Dame Janet's artistry shines out powerfully. The programme is divided equally between German and French songs, for all of which she gives readings of tremendous understanding and

musicality. The pianist Martin Isepp provides superlative accompaniments. Composer recordings are a key element of the CRQ Editions catalogue, providing an unique insight into how composers regard the performance of their music. The great Polish composer Karol Szymanowski who died in 1937 just managed to make several recordings and these are all included on our new CD devoted to his music. This also includes performances of his two violin concertos by two musicians who were very close to him: violinist Eugenia Urmińska and conductor Grzegorz Fitelberg. Another great musician of the past with close links to an outstanding composer was the English pianist Adelina de Lara, who studied extensively with Robert Schumann's wife, Clara. De Lara's post-war set of 78rpm recordings have not appeared previously on CD – recorded in 1949 they present an essential alternative to her later recordings of Schumann's piano music, issued on LP during the 1950s. On 78rpm her playing has a freshness and authenticity that is extremely beguiling. This CD is completed by further private recordings made by this fascinating pianist and musician.

The recordings of conductor Albert Coates are consistently popular, and in response to several requests from customers, transfer specialist Damian Rogan has constructed a significant programme of Coates's later electrical recordings made with the London Symphony Orchestra, with which Coates worked extensively during the 1920s. This features music by Wagner, Richard Strauss, Liszt, Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky and Prokofiev, in all of which Coates was an experienced and highly effective interpreter. A collector's 'must'! Another major conductor whose recordings are consistently popular is William Steinberg. Volume 3 of our series devoted to his recordings for the Command Classics label, which were engineered by Robert Fine using the Everest 35mm film recording set-up, features a highly attractive programme of music by Beethoven, Schubert and Wagner, in all of which Steinberg and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, of which he was chief conductor for many years, deliver performances of outstanding quality.