

CRQ Editions: Winter 2018-2019

2018 saw the passing of one of the great conductors of the Soviet and post-Soviet eras, Gennady Rozhdestvensky. We mark his death with an 'in memoriam' CD containing powerful performances of two works from the Second Viennese School: Schoenberg's symphonic poem *Pelleas and Melisande*, and Berg's Violin Concerto, 'In memory of an angel'. These recordings well illustrate Rozhdestvensky's extraordinary command of large forces as a conductor, and his masterly shaping of complex scores. The virtuoso soloist in the Berg Concerto is Leonid Kogan, another musical giant of the Soviet era. The orchestra in both instances is the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, of which Rozhdestvensky was chief conductor from 1961 to 1974. The stereo engineering of the original Melodiya LPs is first rate, with excellent presence and atmosphere.

During 1951 Italian Radio (RAI) marked the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Giuseppe Verdi with a series of broadcasts of the majority of his operas. Many of these performances later found their way onto commercial LPs and CDs via the Cetra label. One that did not, and which has enjoyed a legendary reputation ever since, was the broadcast of *La Traviata* featuring the extremely popular Italian-American soprano Lina Pagliughi in the title role of Violetta, ably supported by tenor Giacinto Prandelli and baritone Paolo Silveri, with the legendary Mari Rossi conducting. We have now been able to locate a good 'off-air' recording of this performance. The wait has been worth it: Pagliughi is one of the very few sopranos able to embrace all aspects of Violetta, from Verdi's demanding coloratura to the almost 'verismo' writing of the last act. Prandelli, Silveri and Rossi are all excellent.

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf is one of CRQ Editions' best-selling artists, and this quarter we add to our catalogue of her recordings with the complete recital which she gave in honour of Ernest Newman with on 2 December 1968 at the Royal Festival Hall, London. On this occasion Schwarzkopf's programme consisted of songs by Schubert, Wolf and Richard Strauss. The occasion was obviously important to her, and throughout her singing and involvement are notable for their rapt concentration. Geoffrey Parsons is the admirable accompanist.

Peter Katin was one of the best-loved of British pianists whose career spanned the whole of the last half of the twentieth century. We have been fortunate to secure recordings from Peter Katin's personal record collection of accounts of two major works which are otherwise not represented in his commercial discography. These are Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 2, from 1966 with Sir Malcolm Sargent conducting and Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 3 from 1970 with Sir John Pritchard conducting. In addition this set includes the Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 1 from 1958, also with Sargent, and Tchaikovsky's Concert Fantasia from Munich in 1971, with Rudolf Albert at the helm. Throughout Katin's playing is exemplary, full of excitement as well as delicacy whenever and wherever required.

The late recordings made by the British composer Sir Granville Bantock for the music publisher Paxton in November 1945 have been intermittently available across various CDs. We have now brought these all of together for the first time to present the complete series of recordings in the same order in which they were originally published. These recordings present a fascinating insight into Bantock's rich and elusive style of composition. In addition this new programme contains several recordings of other Bantock orchestral works conducted by Walter Collins and Dolf van der Linden, also recorded originally for Paxton. This set of Bantock rarities is completed by two choral extracts from Bantock's setting of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, recorded by Columbia during the inter-war period with Stanford Robinson conducting

Sir Reginald Goodall was one of the most extraordinary of English conductors. His recorded legacy is surprisingly thin in the one area of repertoire in which he excelled: Wagner, sung in the original

German. We are able to go some way towards rectifying this situation through the release of the recording of a 1969 concert which he gave with the London Symphony Orchestra for the BBC and which was broadcast in stereo. This featured a complete account of the first act of *Die Walküre*, as well as the Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde* and the Siegfried Idyll. This new set includes in addition a riveting reading of Siegfried's Death and Funeral March from *Götterdämmerung* with the Orchestra of the English National Opera and tenor Alberto Remedios from the Snape Maltings in 1974 (Goodall had been a close associate of Benjamin Britten earlier in his career); Beethoven's powerful concert aria, *Ah, perfido!* sung by Heather Harper from 1970 with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and a short extract from *Das Rheingold* sung by bass-baritone David Ward with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

During the late 1960s Sir Charles Mackerras served as first conductor of the Hamburg State Opera, an appointment that thrust him into the midst of international music making. While at Hamburg he was contracted by the American Elektra-Nonesuch organisation to record several LPs for a new label it was launching, called Checkmate. This featured state of the art stereo recording by New York based Elite Recordings Inc. The orchestra employed for Mackerras was that of the Hamburg State Opera under its concert-giving name, the Hamburg Philharmonic, and the repertoire selected was mainstream symphonic. These excellent recordings had a limited commercial life and we are now reissuing two of them on a single CD. The chosen repertoire, Dvořák's *Symphony No. 8* and Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4*, gives both both Mackerras and the Orchestra plenty of opportunities to play to their strengths. The results are very good indeed, both sonically and musically.

Another great conductor from the past recorded by numerous smaller American labels was Hans Swarowsky. The specialist audiophile label Audio Fidelity leased five LPs worth of finely engineered stereo recordings of Swarowsky conducting the Vienna State Opera Orchestra in mainstream nineteenth century repertoire, by Beethoven Schumann, Brahms Suppé and Johann Strauss II, and released these in the USA during the 1960s. We have now brought all of these recordings together in a single three CD set. Apart from the very good sound, these recordings, which have none of the doubts about Swarowsky's participation as has been the case with many of the recordings attributed to him, reveal his strengths as an interpreter and especially his strong sense of symphonic architecture. They are presented as three separate mini-concerts, one on each CD.

An outstanding musician also based in Vienna for much of his career was the pianist Friedrich Wührer, whose reissued recordings on CRQ Editions have proved to be extremely popular. Our latest Wührer release is a two CD set which brings together his Vox recordings of the last three Beethoven piano sonatas, Schumann's mighty third sonata, 'Concerto without Orchestra', and three large scale works for solo piano inspired by Paganini: Schumann's *Six Studies, Op. 3*, Brahms's wonderful *Paganini Variations* and Liszt's extraordinary *Sixth Paganini Study*. Throughout this challenging repertoire Wührer proves to be a master of his art.

Another great musician from the past who needs no introduction is the conductor Leopold Stokowski, whose recordings remain extraordinarily popular. Our continuing series of CDs devoted to the recordings of this extraordinary musician continue with live recordings from concerts given with the Cleveland Orchestra and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The centrepiece is a riveting performance of Glière's massive *Symphony No. 3. 'Ilya Murometz'* with the Cleveland Orchestra in a vivid stereo broadcast from 1971. In addition this disc features shorter works by J. S. Bach, Sibelius, and Vivaldi, all benefiting from the unique Stokowski touch.