

Subject: [NEWS] PRISTINE NEWS 1st October 2010: Prokofiev's Love for Three Oranges, Steinberg in Pittsburgh

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Pristine News: Friday 1st October, 2010



PROKOFIEV The Love for Three Oranges

Pictured: 2010 Estonian National Opera production

(details [here](#))

In this week's newsletter:

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Casadesus & Mitropoulos play de Falla - Audiophile Audition

'The pungency and feverish articulation of the parts (of Nights) swells into a passionate evocation of the three sections, making the concerted piece a distant cousin of Debussy's La Mer.'

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Editorial - Hard Disk Drive RIP

This past week has been one of those you think you'd rather forget - and as a result of which this is not going to be much of an editorial, I'm afraid! Suffice to say that, to crown various computer hardware problems revolving around my main audio workstation which have had me taking it apart, removing and replacing bits, and ultimately reinstalling everything from scratch, just as I got the thing running again my main work hard drive started to slowly die.

Right now, as I type, I'm gingerly extracting, at a snail-like pace, as much work-in-progress as I can recover from said drive, and transferring it to a brand new shiny replacement. I've written here before of the distinct advantages of having a dual-drive mirrored RAID system to protect your data, and right now I'm up against

the consequences of already having a drive in place which didn't meet this criteria.

The new drive is ultra-fast - a test on it this morning indicated an average data read speed of over 200 MB per second - I say this to put it into context. The old drive is now in a kind of self-preservation mode, gradually spinning more and more slowly to protect itself from further damage, and is offering data at less than 1.5MB per second. At this mind-numbingly slow pace things take a long time to transfer - I asked my PC to copy off my Toscanini working folder; it told me it would take 220 minutes to do so...

Remember, this is something which could happen at any time, to anyone. It doesn't matter whether you're running Mac, PC, or a standalone audio player with a hard drive inside, at the heart of the data storage you're likely to have a box with 3 or 4 platters spinning at very high speed, being read and written to at extraordinarily densities and speeds and at microscopically fine precision. It's a wonder they work at all!

What I have taken the opportunity to do in all of this is replace my boot drive - the C drive which gets everything started - with a solid state drive (SSD), full of Flash memory chips and with no moving parts. This has two distinct advantages: 1 - it's as quick as or quicker than the very fastest regular disk drives in operation; 2 - with no moving parts it doesn't wear out, and typically is expected to last in excess of a century (by which time, frankly, I won't give a damn).

Right now though, unless you possess far deeper pockets than I, it's perhaps unlikely that you'll replace large disk drives with these SSD alternatives. They may be silent, cool-running, small and long-lived, but they ain't cheap, and the maximum capacity currently available is a quarter of what I'm looking for at about six times the price. I can foresee this changing in the next 2-4 years, and I sincerely hope that my next drive purchases are big SSDs (if they're not then something else mechanical has started to fail!), but for now we're stuck with a technology which dates back ultimately to IBM's first 'Winchester' drives of 1973.

So if you're putting all your CDs onto hard drives right now, make sure either you've got RAID drives or you've got good back ups - and if you have the space then put the originals in the attic, if only for the next five years - just in case!

PADA Subscribers will notice a new layout to the player this week will hopefully make it simpler and easier to navigate, as well as better accommodating it to the smaller screen size of notepad computers, with a typical screen resolution of 1024x600. I think we've now spotted and ironed out one or two link anomalies in the system and it should all be working fine, but drop me a line if you spot any problems. A useful tip if you need to reload the player at any point is to press the F5 key on your keyboard - this refreshes the browser page for you.

If you're not a subscriber you can get a taste of it by starting up Pristine Radio - it uses the same interface and playback system but plays movements and excerpts from our catalogue rather than the full releases. Click on "PADA and Pristine Radio" from the top menu to launch the system and either start Pristine Radio or log into PADA itself.

Andrew Rose

International Record Review - special mini-subscription offer

[International Record Review](#) has again included a number of our recent releases in one of its features in the October 2010 issue. I understand that these are as follows:

Ives, Robert Russell Bennett and Herrmann
PASC232

Henk Badings Symphony No. 3 and Concerto for
Two Violins No. 1 **PASC230**

Stravinsky Rite of Spring and works by Ravel, Piero
Coppola and Chabrier **PASC219**

Virgil Thomson, Brahms and Chabrier **PASC215**

Ives, Mozart, Wagner and Strauss **PASC227**

Mozart - Die Zauberflöte **PACO045**

By way of a special arrangement for devotees of the Pristine label IRR has produced a mini-subscription package of three issues of the magazine October, November and December 2010 at the post inclusive cost of: in the **UK £9, Europe £17, USA \$24 and the rest of the world £20.**

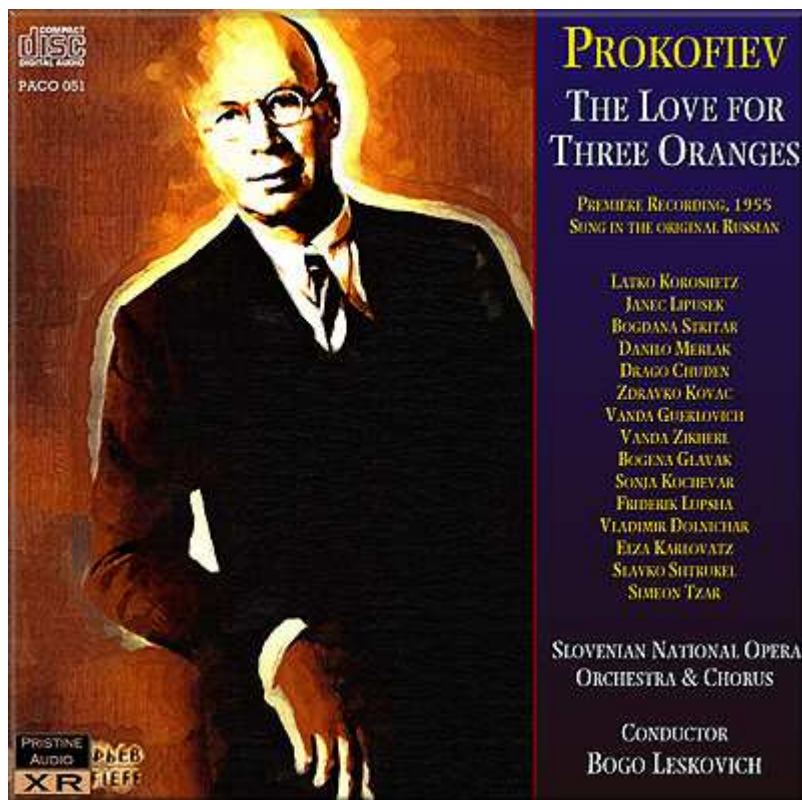
Contact barry.iring@recordreview.co.uk and he will set up the subscription for you.



New release today:

[PROKOFIEV The Love for Three Oranges](#)

Pristine Audio PACO 051



Slovenian National Opera, Ljubljana
conductor Bogo Leskovich

Full list of soloists below
Studio recording from 1955

Transfer from Philips ABL.3150/51
XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, September
2010
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Prokofiev

Total duration: 1hr 48:41
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The FLAC downloads:



The première recording of Prokofiev's best-loved opera

One of only four Russian-language recordings - new XR-remastered transfer

- **PROKOFIEV** - The Love for Three Oranges. Op. 33 [[notes/score](#)]

Cast

le Roi de Trèfle - **Latko Koroshetz**
le Prince - **Janec Lipusek**
la Princesse Clarice - **Bogdana Stritar**
Léandre - **Danilo Merlak**
Truffaldino - **Drago Chuden**
Tchélio - **Zdravko Kovac**
Fata Morgana - **Vanda Guerlovich**
Linette - **Vanda Zikherl**
Nicolette - **Bogena Glavak**
Ninette - **Sonja Kochevar**
la Cusinière - **Friderik Lupsha**
Farfarello - **Vladimir Dolnichar**
Sméradine - **Elza Karlovatz**
le Maître de Cérémonies - **Slavko Shtrukel**
le Hérault - **Simeon Tzar**

Slovenian National Opera Orchestra & Chorus
conducted by **Bogo Leskovich**

PROKOFIEV The Love for Three Oranges

In the mid-fifties the Slovenian National Opera toured western Europe and elicited rave reviews for their performance of Prokofiev's opera The Love for Three Oranges - and this superbly recorded document of that cast shows exactly why.

As a Gramophone reviewer at the time stated:
"There is a galaxy of excellent voices in the large cast— some young, some mature—and they deliver the music, which is not at all easy to sing, with assurance, accuracy and, where it is appropriate, expression..."

This rare issue is one of only four Russian-language recordings of this opera - it's the première, and it sounds absolutely marvellous!



Act 3, Scene Two:

"Da, ya Printsessa Ninetta!"

(Ambient Stereo version)

Notes on the transfers:

This is one of two rare Russian opera recordings by the Slovenian National Opera which came my way from the collection of the former art director of Philips UK. It was sold as a boxed set of two LPs, and given the slightly alternative title of *The Love OF Three Oranges* (as opposed to the now more common "...FOR Three Oranges").

The discs were in immaculate condition, suggesting little or no play, and transfer was straightforward. Despite being very well recorded for their day and origin, I noticed a lightness in the bass and some roll-off at the top end, both of which contrived to make the sound rather thin. This is a reasonably straightforward task to fix using XR remastering, and the finished result is clean, clear, bright and with at times quite exceptional depth.

As the notes below explain, *The Love for Three Oranges* received a poor reception in the USA when first premièred in 1921. A revival there in the late 1940s however was wildly successful and the opera has entered the standard repertoire of many opera companies since. However this world première recording is particularly fascinating both for being given in the composers native language, and for being for many a particularly unfamiliar work at the time. Whilst the performers may today be unfamiliar to many, it stands as an excellent example of performance practice at the time, as well as being a superb recording in its own right, and was duly very well received upon its release, as this excerpt from [a review](#) in the January 1957 issue of *The Gramophone* indicates:

This is the performance by the Ljubljana Opera which was such a success at the Holland Festival last year, and later in Paris. No wonder it was ! There is a galaxy of excellent voices in the large cast— some young, some mature—and they deliver the music, which is not at all easy to sing, with assurance, accuracy and, where it is appropriate, expression. The conducting and the playing of the orchestra are excellent. In every way this vivid performance represents a higher level of achievement than the flawed, though often very enjoyable, recordings of Russian operas which Decca have made in Belgrade. It should have a great success now among record buyers.

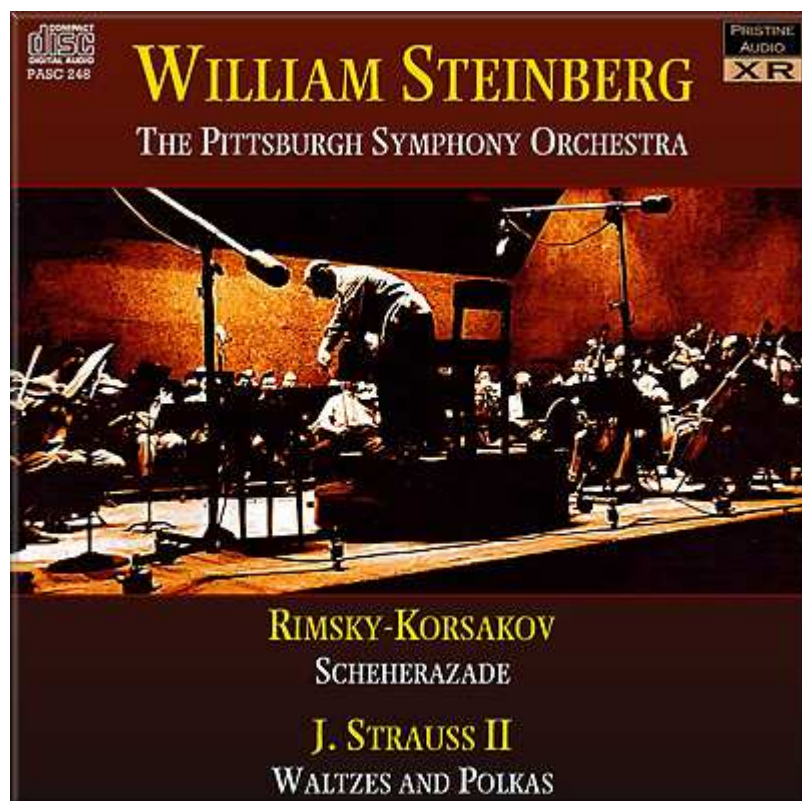
Technical notes by Andrew Rose

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New release today:

[STEINBERG conducts Rimsky-Korsakov & Strauss](#)

Pristine Audio PASC 248



The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conductor William Steinberg

Recorded 1953 and 1955

Transfers by Edward Johnson from his private collection
XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, September
2010

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Steinberg with the
Pittsburgh Symphony, c.1955

Total duration: 75:44
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The FLAC downloads:



Wonderful, vibrant, electric - Steinberg in Pittsburgh

Classic 1950s Capitol recordings in new XR-remastered transfers

- **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV** Scheherazade [[notes](#) / [score](#)]

Recorded 11th January 1955
First issued as Capitol LP P-8305

- **J. STRAUSS II** Waltzes and Polkas [[notes](#) / [scores](#)]

Recorded 11th February 1953
First issued as Capitol LP P-8222

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
conductor William Steinberg

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV · STRAUSS

William Steinberg's career was already progressing very well indeed when he took charge of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in 1952. Quickly he shaped it into a world-class ensemble, as these two recordings from early in his tenure amply demonstrate.

Scheherazade, recorded in 1955, is beguiling and entrancing, whilst a collection of waltzes and polkas from the pen of Johann Strauss Jr., made two years earlier, is as exuberant and vibrant as you could wish for.

Both were very well recorded by Capitol for LP issue, and both have been excellently restored and XR-remastered from this new issue.



Johann Strauss II

Pizzicato Polka

(Ambient Stereo version)

Notes on the transfers:

Delightful recordings, both well-made and transferred from excellent sources, comprise this first release by Pristine of recordings by the eminent and highly talented William Steinberg, best known for his long tenure with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, which he transformed into one of the finest in the world at the time.

There is very little to comment with regard to the restoration and remastering process - everything went exceptionally smoothly, and aside from an occasional suggestion of end-of-side peak distortion in some of Strauss's cymbal-crashing moments, both halves of this somewhat diverse release have come up a treat!

Andrew Rose

Available as **320kbps mono MP3, 16-bit mono & Ambient Stereo FLAC, 24-bit mono FLAC, Mono & Ambient Stereo CD**
or listen on demand with [Pristine Audio Direct Access](#) (PADA)

New MP3 transfers only at PADA Exclusives

by **Dr. John Duffy**
in Ambient Stereo

Schuricht conducts Beethoven



Carl Schuricht

Beethoven

Symphony No. 1 in C

**Vienna Philharmonic
Conductor Carl Schuricht**

Recorded at Grosser Saal, Musikverein, Vienna
27-30 May 1952

Producer: Victor Olof
Eng: Cyril Windebank

First issued as Decca LX3084, 10/52

Schuricht: [biography](#)

This transfer is presented with Ambient Stereo remastering by Dr. John Duffy.

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[Audiophile Audition](#)

'The pungency and feverish articulation of the parts (of Nights) swells into a passionate evocation of the three sections, making the concerted piece a distant cousin of Debussy's *La Mer*.'



FALLA

**Nights in the Gardens of Spain
3 Dances from The 3-Cornered Hat
Interlude and Dance from La Vida Breve**

**Robert Casadesus, piano
New York Philharmonic/Dimitri Mitropoulos**

PRISTINE AUDIO [PASC 244](#) Time: 42:23

French piano virtuoso Robert Casadesus (1899-1972), despite having become the scion of an originally Catalan family, played little Spanish music in his long and distinguished career, recording (2 November 1956) only Manuel de Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* with the volatile Greek conductor Dimitri Mitropoulos (1896-1960). While live concert recordings exist with Casadesus and Ansermet (from Geneva) and George Szell (from Cleveland), CBS (on ML 5172) offered the only commercial inscription, and this had its own problems, with a harp part that had to be added separately.

Typical of these two fine collaborators, the pungency and feverish articulation of the parts--the keyboard's often imitating guitar effects--swells into a passionate evocation of the three sections, making the concerted piece a distant cousin of Debussy's *La Mer*. The shimmering *En el Generalife* segues into the erotically swaying *Distant Dance*, Mitropoulos' plastic delineation of the string, woodwind, and double-tongued brass parts ever scintillating. Casadesus approaches the broken chord sequences with the same *detache* he brings to Ravel

and Scarlatti, a crisp series of rapid staccati and ostinati that never lose their sense of interior color. The Mitropoulos string line from the New York Philharmonic exploits its capacity for the tragic muse, an agonized pedal point that we know from the conductor's forays into Mahler and Richard Strauss. The final movement, an evocation of the *Gardens of the Sierra de Cordoba*, pairs Casadesus against the symphony tympani and battery in splendid runs and explosive slides, a kaleidoscope of Spanish dramatic heat in a sizzling gypsy style. The latter pages often hint at the influence of Debussy and Ravel on Falla's passionate style, made even more emotionally flexible by the selective rubato applied by these two artists who collaborated elsewhere in Mozart, Ravel, and Beethoven concertos.

The few solely orchestral pieces (3 June 1957) under Mitropoulos again combine his sweeping, even tragic humanity with his innate sensitivity for national colors. The Neighbors dance that opens *The 3-Cornered Hat* enjoys those florid roulades in the strings, winds, and horns and the rhythmic stops-and-starts that light up the score with heat lightning. *The Miller's Dance* pulsates with cante-jondo expressivity, the Andalusian rhythm heavy with potent jealousies. When Falla likes, he can parody the skewed metric thrusts from Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*. *The Final Dance* explodes with the panoply of a feria in exotic flight, a flamenco dance in apotheosis. The brief concert concludes with that warmly splendid and ingratiating *Interlude and Dance from Life is Short*, that latter half of which every gifted violinist knows from the Kreisler arrangement.

In his producer's note, Andrew Rose mentions his search for more Falla by Mitropoulos: and there is a performance of Falla's Homenajes from a live New York Philharmonic broadcast, if ever he and Mitropoulos devotees were interested.

-- Gary Lemco

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Andrew Rose
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