

IMMORTAL PERFORMANCES

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TANNHÄUSER

Met 1936

REMASTERED CDs 1, 2 and 3

April 2018

We have recently obtained the commentary and curtain calls of this performance as heard after the close of each act – an important aspect which adds, for us, to the recreation of the historical occasion of this broadcast. When adding these we also went over the levels which we thought could stand some refinement and correction as a further improvement of the musical and dramatic dynamics.

In consequence of the addition of the commentary each act will have an extra access point noted in our booklet. Also, the re-make of CD 3 required the omission of the final (and to us, least important) of the bonus items, the concluding choral finale as derived from the newspaper syndicate recordings from 1940 (Track 18) lasting 2 minutes, in order to accommodate the commentary. The disc now runs 79:03 minutes.

For those who find such small changes as important as we do, you can acquire these remastered discs at the cost of \$2.50 per disc if requested with an order for any one of our other releases. If you'd like to acquire the discs without an order, the postage cost would need to be added.

EARLIER RESTORATION WORK

January 22, 2017

Restoration of CD-1 – TANNHAUSER Met 1936

The re-master begins with no change in the sound for the first minute or until the strings enter. Thereafter you may hear far more natural tone in the orchestra, overtones in the strings, a more dimensional sound overall and also increased, though sporadic, instances of light grit. To my hearing the recording no longer sounds like Met 1936 in that the compression of tone and somewhat tinny middle register has vanished. The least difference between our former and present release is in the flutes. Try an A/B comparison of the first act (when the levels exactly match) and you will hear, I believe, all the differences I cite.

As a relevant aside, I am increasingly convinced that even my minimal intervention to suppress some of the surface grit and ticks may lead to compression and alteration of tonal values, though if I'm sometimes bad

in this direction, other releases are worse. The question that propounds itself is to what audience are these often privately recorded historical broadcasts meant? It is largely numerous older opera lovers who do not require noiseless recordings; they have long learned how to listen *through* surface noise such as sustained grit, learned, very likely, from years of listening to shellac 78 rpm records. Recognizing this, I have been reducing my intervention as to surface grit and ticks, choosing not to use noise-suppression equipment because it brings the consequence of compressing the sonics and filtering away the overtones resulting in a lifeless sound that has had its vividity lost. Instead, I'm removing loud ticks by hand.

This re-master of the 1936 Met *Tannhäuser* CD-1 follows a similar re-master of the 1939 *Simon Boccanegra*. These two performances received substantial praise from music critics when first released but which thereafter registered on me as not what they could be. Further experimentation, in the period following their availability, led me to finally draw from these important recordings more natural and dimensional sound though they still have many sonic faults. Interestingly, I compared the re-mastered 1939 *Boccanegra* Council chamber scene "Plebe, patrizi" from the Met broadcast to the 78 rpm commercial disc RCA Victor recorded shortly after the broadcast and our re-master offers better, fuller sound than the Victor record.

One last comment as to this re-master: you may notice that the voices have regained a previously missing upper register and clarity. It is much like as if they vocally stepped out of a half shadow into full light. At this point, it was determined that CD-2 and -3 could not be sufficiently improved over our previous release, thus they remain as issued.

Restoration of CD-3 – TANNHAUSER Met 1936

Another Production Error
(Vot else is new?)

23 July 2015

Before an actual master is made, the sound engineer makes numerous passes at the whole of each CD, correcting or improving differing strata of problems or deficiencies (particularly compressed dynamics). This usually involves dozens of sub-final versions. Sometimes it means re-dubbing whole sections as he becomes dissatisfied with the layering of work that has been done. Somehow in this complex process, an important addition Mr. Caniell wanted included on CD 3 was omitted in what was published. It did not have the missing verse of *Tannhäuser's* Rome Narration inserted as promised in the Recording Notes (stanza two, cut by Bodanzky); neither did it have Thorborg in Act III. We belatedly offer the correct master to our patrons, *gratis* if requested with any one of your orders, or for the price of postage if sought by itself.