

IMMORTAL PERFORMANCES



WAGNER SOUND SAMPLES

PREFACE

A number of our patrons have written to us asking about forthcoming releases. When they learned that we were going to re-release the 1936 *Meistersinger* and the Dream *Ring* in improved sound, they wanted to know in what ways these were better. Overall, the sound of the Dream *Ring* is significantly improved, its dynamic range enlarged, and tone improved. However, after considering what language we might use that would be sufficiently descriptive, we decided that the best reply would be to provide a sample of the sound from these pending releases. To these we added selections from other forthcoming productions.

In the instances where we previously released the broadcast on Guild, we provide, on a few occasions, the track number (G-4 for instance), so you can compare, especially A/B if you have a second CD player. We also included some samples from past releases for those who have not acquired these albums.

Please understand a considerable vividness of sound and lifefulness in the voices are lost when disc surfaces are strongly filtered to remove the stream of grit and ticks (which some refer incorrectly as acetate hiss). The overtones of the voice and instruments (such as violins) occur in the very strata wherein occur some of this grit and I have not filtered much of it away as the air, the atmosphere and subtle color would be lost.

There are more Wagner albums in the works that we omitted for reasons of space but I could not resist including the finale to *Parsifal*, which, in its seraphic beauty, is how I felt it best to end a sampling of Wagner's music dramas.

Richard Caniell

WAGNER SOUND SAMPLES

DREAM RHEINGOLD (2012 restoration)

- Tr. 1 & 2 Opening (Guild Tr. 1)
- Tr. 3 Journey to Nibelheim , part orchestral & Laufkoetter / Habich
- Tr. 4 Erda's appearance - Thorborg, Schorr (G. CD-2, Tr. 16)

DREAM WALKÜRE (2012 restoration)

- Tr. 5 Prelude Act I (G. Tr. 1)
- Tr. 6 *Du bist der Lenz* – Lehmann, Melchior
- Tr. 7 Prelude to Act II (G. Tr. 14) – Schorr, Flagstad
- Tr. 8 Act III music before Wotan's Farewell

DREAM SIEGFRIED (2012 restoration)

- Tr. 9 Act I - *Du hast du die Stücken* (G. Tr.5) Melchior, Laufkötter
- Tr. 10 Act I - *Heil dir* (Schorr)
- Tr. 11 Act I - *Nothing!*
- Tr. 12 Act III Prelude (CD-3, Tr. 1)
- Tr. 13 Act III Magic Fire music
- Tr. 14 Act III Duet part - Melchior, Flagstad
- Tr. 15 Act III Finale - Melchior, Flagstad

DREAM GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (2012 restoration)

- Tr. 16 Dawn Duet excerpt - Flagstad and Melchior (G. Tr. 11)
- Tr. 17 Act I Siegfried's arrival - Melchior, Janssen
- Tr. 18 Act II Siegfried's Narration part - Melchior

MEISTERSINGER (1936) (2012 restoration)

- Tr. 19 Prelude excerpt
- Tr. 20/21 Act I chorale part & beginning scene - Maison, Branzell, Rethberg
- Tr. 22 Act II Sachs and Eva (part) - Rethberg and Schorr
- Tr. 23 Act III Final chorus

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE 1937 (2012 restoration)

Tr. 24/25 Part of commentary and beginning of Prelude

Tr. 26 Act II excerpt - Flagstad, Thorborg

Tr. 27 **LOHENGRIN, MET 1938 - ACT I EXCERPT** - Melchior/Flagstad
(2012 restoration)

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG, COVENT GARDEN 1938

Act II Complete, Melchior, Leider, Janssen, Weber / Furtwängler

Tr. 28 Hagen's Call

Tr. 29 Frida Leider

Tr. 30 Melchior

Tr. 31 **TANNHÄUSER, BAYREUTH 1930 RE-CREATION – ACT III COMPLETE**
Melchior, Janssen, Jost-Arden (excerpt)

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE ACT III COMPLETE – Melchior, Ljungberg,
Andresen, Guszalewicz - re-creation of 1932-33 performances

Tr. 32 Tristan's death - Melchior, Ljungberg

Tr. 33 Isolde alone - Ljungberg

Tr. 34 King Marke's arrival - Janssen, Andresen, Guszalewicz

Tr. 35 **LOHENGRIN, MET 1935, Complete** - Melchior, Lehmann, Lawrence,
Schorr; Part of commentary and Act I excerpt - Lehmann (2012 restoration)

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG, MET 1948 Complete (re-creation)

Melchior, Traubel, Janssen

Tr. 36 Act II excerpt - Melchior, Traubel

Tr. 37 Act III Siegfried's Death – and part of Funeral Music - Melchior

Tr. 38 Immolation, part - Traubel

DIE MEISTERSINGER, MET 1939 (2009 restoration)

Tr. 39 Act I Prelude (part)

- Tr. 40 Act I *Am stillen Herd* - Kullman
 Tr. 41 Act II excerpt - Schorr
 Tr. 42 Act III Eva - Jessner
 Tr. 43 Act III Finale

PARSIFAL ACT I, Teatro Colón 1946 & ACT I / III Covent Garden 1937

- Tr. 44 Act I Teatro Colón - Janssen
 Tr. 45 Act III Good Friday – Weber (Covent Garden, 1937)
 Tr. 46 Act III finale, from the bonus recordings – portion of
Nur eine Waffe taugt - Melchior

NOTES

- Tr. 1-4 **DREAM RHEINGOLD** - has broadcast commentary, Milton Cross
 In this re-mastering, there are some orchestral portions that are more full, enlarged, a tinny compressed tonality in the Guild disc CD is increasingly overcome, but apart from the beginning of the Prelude and the Erda - Wotan scene, together with certain other scenes and the addition of the opening and closing commentary, *Rheingold* is not as substantially improved as are all the remaining music dramas.

- DREAM SIEGFRIED** - has broadcast commentary, Milton Cross
 Tr. 9 Example of enlarged dynamic range.
 Tr. 10 This passage (corresponds to CD-1 Tr. 11 on Guild, the first words of the Wanderer) was, in the Guild edition, derived from a damaged disc (afflicted with a burring sound). That defect is remedied in this excerpt.
 Tr. 11 This excerpt reveals increased clarity and sonic dimension.
 Tr. 14 In this passage Flagstad's *forte* note was very distorted in the Guild CD; this has been cleared up.

- DREAM GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG** - broadcast commentary, Milton Cross
 Tr. 16 In the Guild edition, I used the Dawn Duet from the 1939 Met performance. However the duet for the Furtwängler 1937 Covent Garden performance is much superior as to voices & conductor so it has been substituted.

- Tr. 17 Siegfried arrival: this difficult re-creation had much surface noise in our Guild edition. Here it is, completely restudied, quieter, its transitions done anew and its tone more natural.
- Tr. 20-23 **MEISTERSINGER, MET 1936** – Schorr, Rethberg, Kullman
w/ broadcast commentary
With new restoration techniques we were able to substantially improve the sound so as to justify this re-issue. Note: the Finale to Act III was off-pitch (sharp) in the Guild album. In order to properly compare the sound, your player must have a variable pitch. Correcting this problem is one of the driving factors in seeking to sonically upgrade this important performance. The other was to give the voices more prominence and clarity and dissolve the sense of aural compression.
- Tr. 24-25 **TRISTAN, MET 1937** – Melchior, Flagstad with broadcast commentary
This was released in a substantially noisy and considerably off-pitch CD album by Archipel. Here is the original, greatly restored.
- Tr. 26 Act II offers the most beautiful singing ever heard from Flagstad in this role.
- Tr. 27 **LOHENGRIN, MET 1938** – Melchior, Flagstad, Branzell, Huehn/
De Abravanel, with broadcast commentary
This cast sang in the 1937 broadcast with Maison as Lohengrin. In 1938 the same cast sang, except Melchior appeared as Lohengrin. Most of the transcriptions were destroyed; this is our re-creation of the broadcast, same cast, conductor, chorus.
- Tr. 31 **TANNHÄUSER, BAYREUTH 1930, ACT III COMPLETE**
Melchior, Müller, Janssen, Ruth Jost-Arden
This performance released on Columbia had Pilinsky instead of Melchior as Tannhäuser and Elmendorff instead of Toscanini (who appeared in the 1930 Bayreuth performance) because Melchior and Toscanini were under contract to the Victor Company. Columbia omitted the Prelude, cut a few concluding choral phrases in the music leading to Elisabeth's prayer, then

omitted all the music after the Prayer up to Wolfram's first line leading to his Ode. Then the music was omitted from the Ode postlude to the Rome Narrative. This deplorable aspect of the "complete" *Tannhäuser* released by Columbia on 36-78 rpm sides devoted only 4 discs to Act III, essentially providing 36 minutes of music in the act which normally runs to 52 minutes (all that was needed to complete the act would have been 2 - 78 rpm discs, approximately 4 sides, at a 50 cent manufacturing cost per disc). This painfully truncated recording is what music lovers had to endure for over 20 more years. All of what was missing has been brought back in our restoration and Pilinsky's wobbly, inexpressive, often sour *Tannhäuser* is replaced by Melchior, who, at Toscanini's insistence, sang the balance of the 1930 performances at Bayreuth. Apart from the interpolations, all of the Bayreuth recording is included.

- Tr. 35 **LOHENGRIN, MET 1935** – Melchior, Lehmann, Lawrence, Schorr
This has been repeatedly released by various pirates including Archipel.
Here is the original recording with better, clearer, finer sound.
Has broadcast commentary. Bonus excerpts with Melchior and Lehmann.
- Tr. 39-42 **MEISTERSINGER, MET 1939** - Schorr, Kullman, Jessner / Leinsdorf
Includes all broadcast commentary and curtain calls.
- Tr. 44-46 **PARSIFAL**
This album offers a complete Act I with Ralf, Janssen, List, Bampton / Kleiber (Teatro Colón 1946) and 1937 Covent Garden: Prelude; Transformation Scene to the end of the Act (Weber, Ralf, Janssen / Reiner) and Act III Good Friday Scene to the end of the Act (Weber, Ralf, Janssen / Reiner) missing portions seamlessly interpolated with Ralf/Weber/Moralt plus a bonus of many important excerpts from *Parsifal* sung by Andresen, Leider, Kipnis and Melchior.

DREAM GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

This music drama has had the most extensive changes in the entire Dream Ring Cycle. These include the fact that Furtwängler now conducts nearly all of CD 1 except for approximately 8 minutes; and CD 2 except for 17 minutes. Furtwängler conducts all of CD 3 (Act II) except for 5 minutes, 13 seconds of interpolations. This great conductor also is heard in more of CD 4 (Act III) than before though this Act has numerous transitions and interpolations in the first 20 minutes; good sound continues from that point to the end. Dezsó Ernster's Hagen has been replaced throughout by Ludwig Weber. Also, Konetzni is now heard throughout. The Norn and Rhinemaiden scenes are also conducted by Furtwängler. Most of Furtwängler's performance derives from 6 and 11 June 1937 (Covent Garden) and La Scala 1950. Cast is Melchior, Flagstad, Janssen, Weber, Thorborg, Konetzni, and Habich.

◆ Further notice: Track 17, Siegfried's arrival. Our booklet indicates Melchior and Janssen but fails to state that the excerpt begins with Weber as Hagen, sighting Siegfried in his skiff. Track 18, Weber as Hagen is also heard with Melchior and Janssen.

Immortal Performances is a federally chartered, educational, non-profit music society established in 1980. Its restorations of operatic and symphonic broadcasts are in university music libraries and have also been acquired for public audition by the National Library of Canada. The Society's work has been published by Naxos (48 albums) and Guild (53 albums), and has been publishing CD albums on their own label since 2009. A number of its restorations have won International awards: the Platinum Disc Award from Opera International, 1998 (France) for the 1943 *Tristan und Isolde*; Best Historical *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Gramophone Magazine; Best Vocal Album: 2004 *Vinogradov*, Classical Record Collector (a jury of 11 music critics). Extensive critical acclaim for its productions can be found on our website

www.immortalperformances.org

The Directors