



**REISSUE OF THE MONTH**



**Arturo Toscanini**  
NBC 507

Toscanini's recording of the last act of *Rigoletto* remains a model of Verdian style. More than that, it is some of the most thrilling conducting and singing to be heard on disc. This is Verdi as film noir, taut, claustrophobic, shadowy. The conductor keeps the drama on the tightest of leashes, only to let go at key points for surges of excitement or passion – for the most part, though, it's all bottled up, as explosive as a Molotov cocktail. This reissue is in warm, alive sound.

**REVIEWED ON PAGE 132**

Toscanini transfers on the ever-enterprising Japanese Opus Kura label have been lovingly prepared from HMV "ALP" vinyl pressings. The best of the bunch is the 1951 NBC Verdi Requiem with Nelli, Barbieri, di Stefano and Siepi, the "Dies irae" even now delivering more explosive bass-drum wallops than any before or since, even though a 1940 Toscanini/NBC Requiem with Björling et al (M&A) is in general rather better sung. Another Verdi programme on Opus Kura includes *Rigoletto* Act 3 (Peerce, Warren, Milanov, Merriman) and various operatic extracts, notably a dazzlingly dramatic wartime *Luisa Miller* overture. This is Toscanini functioning at white heat, and the sound quality has a warmth and presence that if memory serves exactly mirrors the virtues of those much-loved old LPs.

**REPLAY**  
Rob Cowan's monthly survey of new issues and archive recordings

**Mostly from America**

**A major Debussy find for the Toscanini catalogue and Fritz Busch's prized Danish recordings**

Historic Audio's exploitation into the Arturo Toscanini catalogue archive continues to yield extraordinary results, the most being an all-Debussy concert with the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra from April 16, 1946. The major "find" for all but fully re-up Toscanini collections will be the "Prelude" and "Danse macabre de Schéhérazade" from *Le mortier de St Sulpice*, which is otherwise unavailable in the Maestro's discography and which Toscanini conducts with the kind of essential direction that nowadays rights expect from, say, Claudio Abbado. Repertoire-wise, the most progressive repackages we've already had from Toscanini, either on disc or on commercial CDs, "Nones", "Fines", "Ballets", "La Wally" and *Le danzonné* (the latter with Bala Szepe and Rose Bampton). All tend to be Toscanini "reissues" of the music rather more freely than he has with the NBC Symphony, though there too he achieved laudable levels of drama and musical transparency. The New York La near model of the finest we have from Toscanini, a palpable music-scapes in CD, and infinitely flexible in its phrasing. I can't imagine anyone playing more "warm" from these imperfect and somewhat old-age recordings than Andrew Rose does for Pristine.

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Fritz Busch was an impressive conductor in the Toscanini mould whose post-war recordings with the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra are still prized. Could he couple Haydn's Symphony No 88 and Sibelius overtures with Mozart's *Ein Horn*, *Sinfonia* and *Lea Synphony*, the masterly piece well OK. During the odd low-blue periods (78, 1946), the performances straight but never rigid, in a word, satisfying. I was very glad to see Gail's release, *Phantasma* (the 1947 recording) always the one where alternate dates are given), although Gail's *Rite* is transferred sharp, at least in part, and has a well recorded. Performances wise, both are gripping and significantly more exciting than Mozart's *Dance Party* (sung from the same year, better balanced too for least the M&A version is, even though recorded in mono. Gail's coupling is Kinoshita-Kinoshita and

Bonolis orchestral works with the San Francisco Symphony previously released by M&A as part of a 12-CD set, "Sunday Evenings with Pierre Monteux" (CD192), Bonolis's "Polishian Dances" and Rimsky's *Sheherazade* are on, on the way.

Boston's most prestigious maestro was **Serge Koussevitzky**, in the Sibelius whose spectrum second (1950) recording of Symphony No 2 has appeared on Nones coupled with a first CD release of *Peter and the Wolf* (Dance Record) rather badly recorded. The Sibelius has already appeared in a marginally superior United Archives transfer (the first volume of a somewhat extensive set) and although interest is generally low concerning this his pre-war recording (now on Pearl).

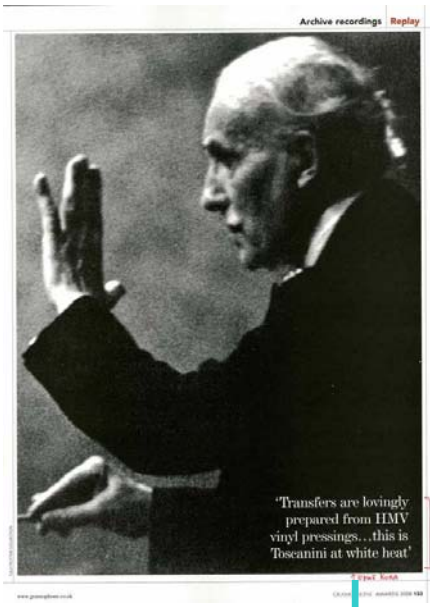
**Jascha Hoffer** features on two occasions, both containing Lali's *Rhapsodie espagnole* (Rigoletto's *Finale* is from a clean vinyl original, James Ostrander's Italian's from (in press) a tape-derived CD edition. Both are good, in Rigoletto's case coupled with the *King of the Kings* and shorter (mostly) American works with piano, whereas EDI adds *concerto* pieces with orchestra (Saint-Saëns, Sarasate, Chausson, Ravel). Both discs offer primo-circa 1940s vintage Hoffer, elegant, intense, soulful, and moving.

**Alfredo Campoli** operated at a lower voltage, and his London Decca recording of violin concertos by Beethoven (D.S.O. Kops, 1952) and Tchaikovsky (L.S.O. Argente, 1956, in "Toscanini" used) are less forcefully dispatched than Hoffer's, and yet their moody, affable character, nearly always relaxed but never lacking in spirit, guarantees enjoyment on its own terms. Bonolis's transfers are generally excellent.

**Zino Francescatti** overlaid Hoffer's fireworks with Campolani at his best, though an electrifying 1947 account of Ravel's *Tzigane* seems more towards Hoffer. It turns up on a new Balhigh CD coupled with various shorter pieces, including Verdi's *Chaconne*, Paganini's *Capriccio* of 1799 and Saint-Saëns's *Introduction et Rondo capriccioso*, as well as Kreisler, Massenet, Chabrier etc; sweet, nuanced playing, always stylish and never vulgar.

**The Recordings**

- Debussy Oct-Vin. Toscanini Pristine Audio # 20 (PAC217)
- Verdi Requiem Toscanini Pristine Audio # 20 (PAC217)
- Wally Oct-Vin. Toscanini Pristine Audio # 20 (PAC217)
- Haydn Mozart Oct-Vin. Busch Gail's # 20 (G210)
- Strawinsky Five of Spring Munich Gail's # 20 (G210)
- Sibelius Oct-Vin. Koussevitzky Nones # 20 (N210)
- Lali Kargell Oct-Vin. Hoffer Pristine Audio # 20 (PAC217)
- Lali Chausson Oct-Vin. Hoffer Pristine Audio # 20 (PAC217)
- Beethoven Tchaikovsky Oct-Vin. Campoli Pristine Audio # 20 (PAC217)
- Verdi Opera Oct-Vin. Francescatti Pristine Audio # 20 (PAC217)



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**Opus Kura, Toscanini Review**  
OPK7038 Verdi Live *Rigoletto* etc  
OPK7040 Verdi Requiem (1951)