

MASTERING EQUIPMENT

Merging Technologies
Hapi Digital Converter

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with
Custom by JRF Magnetics & Siltech wiring
Nagra 4S custom by JRF Magnetics

Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services
Retro Instruments 2A3 Dual-channel tube program equalizer
Sontec MEP-250EX Parametric EQs

VPI Classic Turntable w/ Benz Wood Cartridge
Rogue Audio Phone Pre-amp

Power Sources: PS Audio P10 Power Plant
and Power Plant 300

Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products,
Speltz Anti-Cables

Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks,
Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves

Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner
using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's

Facts about this Recording

Transferred from a London 4-track tape recorded 1961

Engineer Gordon Parry & James Brown • Producer - John Culshaw

September 1961 Sofiensaal, Vienna



Herbert von Karajan

Adam Giselle

Romantic Ballet in Two Acts

Vienna

Philharmonic

Orchestra



Herbert von Karajan (1908-1989) contracted with RCA Victor to produce a series of recordings for their so-called "Soria Series," instituted by Dario Soria, who was Angel Records' first president. He instituted the old UK-made Angel Deluxe packages. When he became an RCA Records executive, he founded the Soria Series as a luxury line of records in 1959. Soria Series records had top line artists, thicker, quieter pressings, and deluxe art booklet presentations. These were beautiful to own and scarce, and in nice condition. The Soria line was short lived due to the expense of making them. Most of these titles were later reissued as standard line LSC/LM series records, and those are still excellent. Certainly, while Karajan enjoyed a good relationship with ballet, having recorded excerpts from Tchaikovsky ballets with the Philharmonia of London for EMI, his choice of Adolphe Adam's *Giselle* seems an anomaly. Karajan ignores the music as "dance music," as he prefers to link each of the episodes as a pearl in an ongoing symphonic poem. Karajan applies an edited version of the score, perhaps for some rendering the score more dramatic, less rhetorical, and generally leaner in texture. We admit the music, while consistently tuneful, lacks the dramatic and sheer melodic intensity of a Tchaikovsky ballet score. The lush, seamless sound that later became the Karajan hallmark already permeates this reading, so the "symphonic" aspect of the score dominates our attention. Admirers of the music found Karajan more than sympathetic: "I would have never guessed that the great Herbert Von Karajan, who was the most brilliant conductor of symphonic works would conduct Adolphe Adam's ballet *Giselle*. But then again he did conduct Tchaikovsky ballet suites so it's not that much of a surprise. *Giselle* is more dramatic here, with less emphasis on the gentility and sickeningly sweet mood it can acquire. Somehow Karajan blends femininity and melody with intensity and Gothic melodrama. *Giselle* is the first Romantic ballet, and the first to introduce the white tutu.

It tells the story of a peasant girl fond of dancing and naive. She falls for Albrecht, a prince disguised as a hunter. Albrecht is engaged to be married. He has his fling with Giselle, who takes it more seriously and is heart broken when she discovers the truth and dies. In Act 2, she reappears as a ghost or Willi, and Albrecht is in danger of being lured to his death by the other Willi girls, but Giselle intervenes and saves him. Karajan is a fine conductor and everything he works with is a glorious and beautiful endeavor. He is a young conductor here and the music has never sounded better. Fans of Karajan and the ballet *Giselle* will want to own this performance."

Perhaps the most pleasant surprise comes from the overall sound picture which is markedly different from what we would later (in the more numerous and prominent Deutsche Grammophon and EMI discs with the Berliner Philharmoniker) come to recognize, like it or not, as the typical "Karajan sound." Helped by a truly inspired Decca engineering team, these recordings not only amply stand the test of time in presence and dynamics, but more importantly the characteristic color, refinement, and transparency of the Wiener Philharmoniker is miraculously rendered. The silken sound of the strings, the individual color of the woodwinds and the brass are a constant pleasure. It seems Karajan at this stage of his career and with this particular orchestra was still suggesting rather than "dictating," and the result is by any standard outstanding. The *Giselle* - beautiful and elegant here under Karajan and the VPO - is also the subject of a famous story. It appears that the decision to record it was a spur-of-the-moment inspiration, and the orchestral parts had to be shipped in. For some reason, they could not be sent as a unit and so appeared movement (or section) by movement with conductor and orchestra having the time of their lives essentially sight-reading the music with the mikes on. The joy and freshness of that experience lives on in the recording here.

Herbert von Karajan
Adam Giselle
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

1. Act I**Introduction****No. 1 Les Vendangeurs****No. 2 Entrée du Prince****No. 3 Loys seul - Entrée de Giselle****No. 4 Retour des Vendangeurs - No. 4(bis) Valse****No. 5 Pas de Deux****No.5b La Chasse****No.7 Marche des vigneronns****No.7a Variation de Giselle****No. 8 Galop****No. 8(bis) Final****1. Act II****No.10 Apparition et scène de Myrtha****No.11 Apparition de Giselle****No.13 Entrée de Loys****No. 14 Scène des Willis (Entrée d'Hilarion)****No. 15 Grand pas de deux: a) Andante****No. 15 Grand pas de deux: b) Variation de Loys****No. 15 Grand pas de deux: c) Variation de Giselle****No. 16 Final**

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks. Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HD TT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.



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