

The Swiss conductor, Ernest Ansermet, came from a musical family; he successively studied the clarinet, violin and brass instruments, which he used in fanfares; later he wrote military marches for the Swiss army which he did not consider important. Besides Music, he studied Mathematics in Lausanne and graduated with a Diploma in 1903; until 1906 he taught at the Lausanne Grammar School, then he decided to continue his studies at the Sorbonne and, at the same time, to attend courses at the Paris Conservatory. After his return to Lausanne, he taught Mathematics for one more year before devoting himself entirely to music.



Ansermet was a particular advocate of the Swiss composers Arthur Honegger and Frank Martin. He conducted the first performances of the following works of A. Honegger: *Horace victorieux* (1921), *Chant de joie* (1923), *Rugby* (1928) and *Pacific 231* (1923), which was dedicated to him, and of the following works of Frank Martin: *Symphonie* (1938), *In terra pax* (1945), *Der Sturm* (1956), *Le mystère de la Nativité* (1959), *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* (1963) and *Les Quatre Éléments*, which were dedicated to him. Also important were the first performances of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946) and *Cantata misericordium* (1963).

Facts about this Recording

Transferred from a Dolby Encoded London 4 Track Tape

Producer: Michael Bremner / Engineer: James Lock

Date of Recording: (July-Aug) 1964

Venue: Grand Théâtre, Geneva



DEBUSSY
PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE

HIGHLIGHTS

ERNA SPOORENBERG

CAMILLE MAURANE

GEORGE LONDON

GUUS HOEKMAN

ANSERMET

L'ORCHESTRE DE LA
SUISSE ROMANDE



From the outset of this 1964 recording, the beginning of the first scene this remarkable performance of the first scene is a model of musical pacing and dramatic subtlety, laying down the seeds of miscommunication, evasion, fear, and longing that drive the opera to its tragic ending, and Ansermet and the singers maintain the same high standard throughout.

There is something to be said for crisply delineated performances of Pelléas, which can reveal beautiful details of gesture and orchestration, but Ansermet's soft-edged and unemphatic reading with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande is ideal for expressing the drama's ambiguity and the characters' inchoate and unexpressed yearnings. The singers are ideally suited to their roles, both musically and dramatically; they have the security to project the deceptively simple vocal lines, but each expresses a vulnerability that gives the opera the melancholy that it requires to be fully effective. Golaud will be ultimately undone by his fears. The young lovers must be entirely convincing as hormone-driven young people who can barely recognize what is happening to their emotions, much less find a way to express them. The urgency and electricity of their exchanges drive the drama more realistically than the passivity that singers frequently bring to these roles. The youthfulness and naturalness of

their voices should make them believable as confused adolescents, and their innocence gives their fate a special poignancy. The singers' idiomatic French contributes to the realism and momentum of the drama. This is easily one of the most emotionally satisfying and vocally and orchestrally beautiful recordings of Pelléas, and would be of interest to anyone who loves the opera or who wants to become familiar with it.

Much of Ansermet's performance relies, as one might expect, on his ability to blend an exact judgment of sonority with a scrupulous sense of dramatic pace. We're reminded throughout that the filigree flute and oboe writing that tracks Pelléas, Mélisande and Yniold, designates vulnerability, while the strings that surround Golaud, Arkel and Geneviève indicate some form of entrapment, whether emotional or physical. Sound, throughout, is mirrored perfectly with sense. When Pelléas states, during the love scene, that "the ice has been broken with hot irons," the vast yet quiet underlying string chord indicates not only the liquefying of emotion in the verbal image, but also the inherent danger in which the lovers find themselves, as Golaud's low, rasping cellos and basses soon begin to hem them in.

Debussy

Pelléas et Mélisande (Highlights)

Ernest Ansermet / Suisse Romande Orchestra

Camille Maurane (Baritone), Erna Spooenberg (Soprano),

George London (Bass Baritone), Guus Hoekman (Bass)

1-Act III Scene 1

2-Act III Scene 4

3-Act VI Scene 1

4-Act IV Scene 2

5-Act V

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 HDTT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.



For more info e-mail us:
admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
www.highdeftapetransfers.com