

Richard Strauss

Salome

Dance of the Seven Veils Final Scene Inge Borkh

Manuel de Falla

El Amor Brujo

Leontyne Price

Fritz Reiner Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Fritz Reiner was one of the most acclaimed conductors of the 20th century -- noted for the vast range of his repertoire, which included both symphonic and operatic pieces spanning from the traditional canon to contemporary material, he was also an influential educator who counted among his pupils Leonard Bernstein. Reiner was born in Budapest, Hungary, on December 19, 1888; despite earning a law degree from the University of Bucharest, he pursued a career in music, and at age 21 was named chorusmaster of the Budapest Opera. A stint as conductor with the Budapest Volksoper followed before Reiner was chosen in 1914 to serve as principal conductor of the Royal Opera in Dresden, where he collaborated with Richard Strauss on productions of several of the composer's early operas.



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In 1922 Reiner left Europe to relocate to America, settling in Cincinnati, OH, and signing on as conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra; a decade later he was tapped to head the orchestral and opera departments at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music, where his students included Bernstein. After next serving as the music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony between 1938 and 1948, he served five years with the Metropolitan Opera. While Reiner's frequent migration might have been attributed largely to a restless creativity, he was also a notoriously difficult personality who frequently alienated those around him -- many of the musicians under his command openly loathed him, although he inevitably inspired the best work of their careers.

Reiner's own best work was undoubtedly his tenure with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which he elevated into one of the most celebrated ensembles in the world. Moving over to the CSO in 1953, he not only established the orchestra as a top-flight live attraction but also as a popular recording entity -- the countless albums they made for RCA's Living Stereo series during Reiner's decade-long tenure were much acclaimed by collectors for both the power of the performances and the unusually high fidelity of the recordings themselves. Releases like Fritz Reiner Conducts Richard Strauss and Fritz Reiner Conducts Bartók in particular remain definitive interpretations of the composers in question. Health problems forced Reiner to resign his position in 1962, and he died in New York City on November 15 of the following year.

Facts about this Recording

Salome Recorded by RCA 1957 Falla recorded 1963

Producer: Richard Mohr Engineer: Lewis Layton

Transferred from a RCA 2-track tape and 4-track tape

Inge Borkh has enjoyed major success in the world's leading opera houses not only because of her bright and attractive soprano voice, but owing to her deft dramatic skills. Indeed, she was trained as an actress and managed to convert her superior sense for drama seamlessly to the operatic stage, taking on a variety of standard roles, but with many memorable successes in early-twentieth century opera. She has sung Verdi -- Aida, Macbeth (Lady Macbeth), Cherubini -- Medea, Wagner -- The Flying Dutchman (Senta), Die Walkure (Sieglinde, Freia), and many other staples. But in the twentieth century, beside singing Richard Strauss (Salome and Elektra) and Puccini (Tosca and Turandot), she has taken on somewhat riskier fare, including Magda in Menotti's The Consul and Cathleen in Egk's Irische Legende. Because Borkh also had training as a dancer, she often moved about on-stage with a keen balletic sense and gracefulness. Though she retired from singing in 1973, many of her recordings are still available from a variety of major labels, including DG, Decca, RCA, Opera D'oro, Orfeo D'or, Melodram, Ponto Recordings, and Myto Records. Inge Borkh (Ingeborg Simon) was born in Mannheim, Germany, on May 26, 1917. She studied music in Milan, and during the war years resided in Switzerland, which she would eventually make her home. Borkh made her debut at the Lucerne Opera in 1940, singing Czipra in Johann Strauss, Jr.'s Der Zigeunerbaron. In the postwar era she gained international notice when she sang Magda in The Consul at the Basle Opera in 1951. This was a major production at the time, not least because it was the German-language premiere of the Menotti masterwork. Other important debuts followed: Bayreuth (1952), singing Sieglinde and Freia; San Francisco (1953), as Elektra; and Florence (1954) as Eglantine in von Weber's Euryanthe. Her debut at the Met came in 1958, singing Salome, and at Covent Garden the following year in the same role. Borkh was appearing in major recordings, as well, including the 1957 Dimitri Mitropoulos-led Elektra (now available on Orfeo D'or) and the acclaimed 1960 version of the same opera with Karl Böhm on DG. Borkh remained a major operatic star throughout the 1960s, even though she did not amass a large number of recordings. In 1973 she retired from serious singing, but returned to the stage four years later as an actress. Following retirement, Borkh also briefly appeared in a cabaret-style act.

Leontyne Price was born on February 10, 1927, in Laurel, Mississippi, to James Anthony Price, a carpenter, and Kate Baker Price, a midwife with a beautiful singing voice. Price showed an interest in music from a young age and was encouraged by her parents. After beginning formal music training at age 5, she spent much of her time singing in the choir at St. Paul Methodist Church in her hometown. Following her time at Oak Park Vocational High School, where she was a standout pianist and member of the glee club, Price enrolled at the College of Education and Industrial Arts in Wilberforce, Ohio. She began her studies focusing on music education, but was later encouraged by faculty to switch her concentration to voice. After graduation, Price headed to New York City to attend The Juilliard School on a full scholarship. At Juilliard, Price studied under the tutelage of her beloved vocal instructor, Florence Page Kimball. Price's beautiful lyric soprano voice landed her feature roles in many of the school's operas. After witnessing Price perform the role of Alice Ford in a student production of Giuseppe Verdi's Falstaff, composer Virgil Thomson leapt at the chance to bring her into one of his productions. In April 1952, Leontyne Price made her Broadway debut as St. Cecilia in the revival of Thompson's Four Saints in Three Acts. Immediately following the show's three-week engagement, she was cast in a touring production of George Gershwin's Porgy and Bess. For the next two years, Price dazzled audiences with her stunning portrayal of Bess, gaining acclaim with her flawless vocal interpretations. During her tour with the show, she married co-star William Warfield, who portrayed Porgy. In 1955, Price starred in the NBC Opera Theatre's television production of Giacomo Puccini's Tosca. This performance led to a string of TV operas featuring the budding starlet. In her opera stage debut at the San Francisco Opera House in 1957, Price took on the role of Madame Lidoine in Francis Poulenc's Dialogues des carmélites. The moving performance marked the commencement of her rise to fame in the serious opera community. By 1958, Price was wowing European audiences at such famous venues as the Covent Garden in England and La Scala in Milan. She had reached stardom at home as well as on an international level. Price's debut at the New York City's Metropolitan Opera House in 1961 as Leonora in Il Trovatore was such a success, it marked the beginning of her residency as one of the opera's principal sopranos. She flourished as a prima donna at the Met, starring in such roles such as Cio-Cio-San in Madama Butterfly, Minnie in La Fanciulla del West and, perhaps most notably, as Cleopatra in Antony and Cleopatra. Price's fame led her to be widely regarded as the first African-American singer to gain international reputation in opera, and allowed her to be selective with her roles throughout the 1970s. She chose to perform in opera productions less frequently, focusing mainly on recitals. Price delivered her farewell performance in the titular role of Aida at the Met in 1985, which was telecast and hailed as one of the most successful operatic performances in the Met's history. Throughout her career, Price's recordings have earned her numerous honors, including more than a dozen Grammy Awards. She rose to stardom as a woman of color in a time and profession where the odds were not in her favor.

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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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