

Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 3 in C, Op. 26^a; Visions fugitives, Op. 22 – Nos. 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18; Contes de la vieille grand-mère, Op.

31 – Nos. 2 and 3; Etude, Op. 52 No. 3; Gavotte, Op. 32 No. 3; Gavotte from the Classical Symphony, Op. 25 No. 2; Paysage, Op. 59 No. 2; Sonata No. 4, Op. 29 – Andante; Sonatine pastorale, Op. 59 No. 3; Suggestion diabolique, Op. 4 No. 4.

Sergey Prokofiev (pf); ^a**London Symphony Orchestra / Piero Coppola.**

St Laurent Studio mono (M) (D) YSL78-040 (56mins; ADD); rec. ^aAbbey Road Studio No. 1, London, 27–28/6/32; Paris, 12, 25–26/2, 4/3/35. www.78experience.com.

Prokofiev Romeo and Juliet – Suite No. 2, Op. 64ter^a; Visions fugitives, Op. 22 – Nos. 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 18; Children's Music, Op. 65 – Nos. 10, 11 and 12 (introduced by the composer); Etude, Op. 52 No. 3; Sonata No. 4, Op. 29 – Andante. Suggestion diabolique, Op. 4 No. 4.

^a**Moscow State Philharmonic Orchestra / Sergey Prokofiev** (^acond/pf).

St Laurent Studio mono (M) (D) YSL78-145 (57mins; ADD); rec. ^aMoscow, 1938; Columbia Concert Hall, WABC radio station, New York, 16/1/37. Item marked ^a from USSR 7754/65. www.78experience.com.

The first of these discs reproduces all of Prokofiev's HMV recordings. The collection has been reissued several times, first on a Great Recordings of the Century LP, then on a Pearl CD (D GEMMCD9470) and more recently on Naxos (D 8.110670). All these transfers are satisfactory, as is the new St Laurent issue, though listeners sensitive to surface noise may prefer the older issues, where the sound is not quite so immediate as in St Laurent's rather more basic transfers. Not even the most sophisticated engineer, however, can do much about the rather canned sound of the 1935 solo recordings, or the balance in the concerto, where for once it would have been good to have a more forward piano sound. No more need to be said of these recordings than that Prokofiev was a virtuoso pianist, and that his obviously authoritative performances have an arresting bluff ebullience, but with a wistful gentleness in the quieter solo items.

Of greater importance, however, is the second disc, which contains the contents of a 1937 broadcast by Prokofiev that has never appeared before in any form. Only the three *Children's Music* pieces and the seventh *Vision fugitive* are not duplicated on the commercial recordings, but we do hear the composer introduce the former in clear, accented English (and there is also a strangely English-sounding announcer). Prokofiev seemingly favoured the same pieces (even the Fourth Sonata Andante by itself) in recital at this time. The broadcast is in decent sound for the period and the performances are similar to those on the HMV records. The second disc is made up with Prokofiev's rhythmically vigorous, straightforward account of his Second *Romeo and Juliet* Suite, accurately but roughly played in a raucous recording by the Moscow State Philharmonic Orchestra of 1938. The St Laurent transfer is, however, the best I have heard of this important document.

Alan Sanders