

Desire-Emile Inghelbrecht, Vol. 1 = RAVEL: Ma Mere l'Oye; DUKAS: L'Apprenti sorcier; RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Flight of the Bumblebee; BORODIN: In the Steppes of Central Asia; Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances and Chorus of the Peasants – Orch. des Concerts Padeloup/ Desire-Emile Inghelbrecht – Yves St.-Laurent

The acknowledged master of the Debussy idiom finds equal sympathy for Ravel, Dukas, and some basic Russian repertory, here in potent restorations.



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Desire-Emile Inghelbrecht (1880-1965), a member of the original *Les Apaches* with Maurice Ravel, became associated almost exclusively with the music of Claude Debussy, despite his work in Mussorgsky and Florent Schmitt. St-Laurent Studio resurrects Inghelbrecht's 1929 electric recordings with the Padeloup Concerts Orchestra in the delicate color-work required by Borodin, Dukas, and Ravel. The Ravel *Mother Goose Suite* (1911) based on the children's tales of Charles Perrault has a sensitive interpreter in Inghelbrecht, who paces the music in plastic and transparent colors. The sense of urgency, of the tragic inexorability of time, present in the Koussevitzky performance from the same period, likewise makes itself manifest in this reading. The oriental harmonies of the *Laideronnette* section ring with pagodas and gamelan pageantry. The solo clarinet in waltz time portrays Beauty as the contrabassoon embodies Beast's pleas for affection. The waltz tempo underpins the eventual transformation, via a harp glissando, of Beast into the solo violin's Prince Charming. The entire last section, *The Fairy Garden*, embodies an awakening, but it, too, shimmers in a tragic awareness of youth's frailty and terrible evanescence, what we must construe as "Paradise Lost." Inghelbrecht's studied peroration reaches a lovely flowering, as splendid as it is aristocratic.

The Dukas *C Minor Scherzo* after the Goethe ballad has never lacked good interpreters, and Inghelbrecht captures its airs of mystery and foolhardy bravado. The playing from the woodwinds enjoys that particularly nasal resonance of Gallic realization, and the attacks remain curt, with brief decay at the cadences. The carefree whimsy of the initial theme places the symphonic poem in a league with the Strauss *Till Eulenspiegel*, which Inghelbrecht also recorded. The well-restored 78rpm sound reminds us of how brilliantly scored are the interior brass and wind lines. The suave momentum of the music ascends to feverish heights, certainly as our hapless apprentice overestimates his power over the broom and its eldritch progeny. The apprentice's lament and culminating swat from the Master well mark a sense of poetic justice.

The Russian entries combine deft playing and spirited affection for the repertory, and we must recall that Inghelbrecht brought *Boris Gudonov* to Paris. Of the three Borodin entries, the tone-poem *In the Steppes of Central Asia* enjoys a leisurely evolution of orchestral colors, opening with the inverted pedal in the strings and proceeding through the winds over pizzicato strings. The nasal muezzin chant invokes a world of throbbing string resonance as fine response in the horns. The blending of the two main themes, always a high moment, possesses a romantic character in this reading. The *Polovtsian Dances* (with female chorus) from *Prince Igor* proceed rather beyond the routine and dependable, comparing favorably with performances by Coates and Stokowski, and the *Chorus of the Peasants* beguiles in its rare vintage of oriental harmony. Once more, the unfiltered restorations prove virile and commanding rather than distracting in their ability to project a musical experience that vibrates with authenticity.