



“... fantastic transfers... a wonderful sort of insight in a kind of authentic sound... I think Yves St-Laurent is a jeweler: the craftsmanship is so high here, it's just lovely!”

Mark Swartzentruber, Producer — Sunday Morning with Suzy Klein, BBC Radio 3

Soon to celebrate its 10th Anniversary, the intrepid historical label St-Laurent Studio continues to expand its tantalizing offerings, now boasting a catalog of over one thousand titles. Its original line of expert transfers from shellac originals has been supplemented by several series, among the most notable being the most extensive and diverse catalog of Sviatoslav Richter concert recordings ever released, an invaluable Artur Rodzinski collection, drawing upon never before issued archival material, and “live” broadcasts featuring many of the world’s great orchestras, including those of Cleveland and Boston.

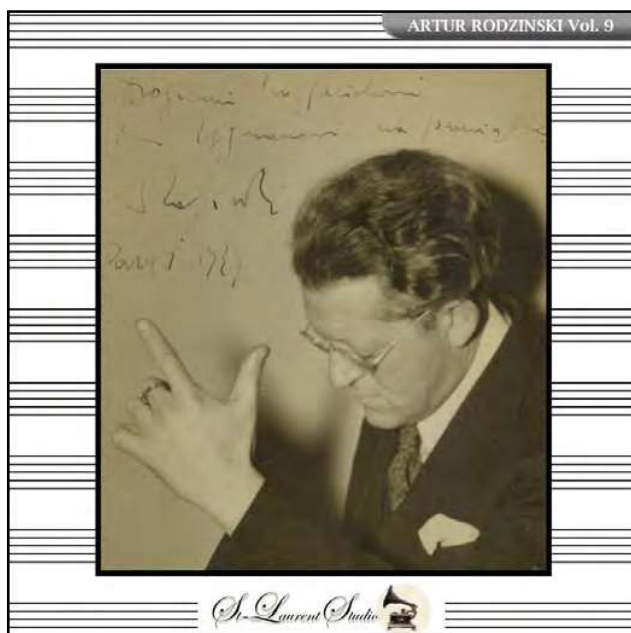
What follows here is an interview with its busy founder, **Yves St-Laurent**, and then his own hand-picked selection of recommended issues, all embedded with hyperlinks back to his shop, ready to order.

Q: When did you launch your label and what were your first issues? How large is your current catalog? Are all titles available as downloads?

YSL: I started my St-Laurent Studio label in 2010. I am an elementary school teacher and father of 6 marvelous children and all this adventure was kind of by accident. As a big classical music collector, I did some 78 rpm transfers to add recordings to my collection. After listening and comparing with official issues, two of my friends convinced me to make them available worldwide by creating my label and website. All began with my transfer of Rimsky-Korsakov Scheherazade conducted by Artur Rodzinski (© YSL 78-001). Ten years later, my catalogue contains now more than 1200 titles, including 357 volumes in the Sviatoslav Richter private collection. All volumes are available as downloads, but customers have to contact me for that. I plan to make my website completely download friendly in a couple of years. I am very surprised at the speed at which my label took off, especially given the fact that St-Laurent Studio is only one guy ... me.

Q: You have a partnership with Norbeck, Peters & Ford. Could you tell us more about that?

YSL: I was a customer of Norbeck, Peters & Ford. They were always a reference and a source of great discovery. One day, I went to Vermont to take some 78 RPM records I bought from them and met those three passionate guys. After listening to one of my transfers, with tears in his eyes, Jim Peters declared that from now on, all of his collection was mine and that I will never need to buy 78s anymore. They decided to distribute my label on their website and then began a very close and solid friendship between us. They are part of my family now.



Above Left: © YSL 131 78: Vol. 9 in the label's Artur Rodzinski series, featuring a never before released "live" 1938 account of Bruckner's Symphony No. 7 with the Cleveland Orchestra. **Above Right:** © YSL SR 1948 05 19: A young Sviatoslav Richter in a "live" 1948 concert performance of Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 2 with conductor Nicolai Anosov. The "Richter Private" series now numbers an astonishing 357 volumes.

Q: Originally you specialized in transfers of 78rpm recordings, but you now offer a wealth of broadcast material as well, with series devoted to the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra and others. Could you speak a bit more about this?

YSL: My first passion and expertise is to transfer 78 rpm records. My main goal is to make available great recordings of the past in the sound quality they deserve, no matter the number of sales. People around the world contact me with that in mind to share with me treasures they collected over the years, and are pleased to give access to unpublished material through my label to music lovers. Those live recordings may come from radio or private collections in different formats (tapes, acetates ...). Despite the fact that I did not do the transfer myself, I put my touch to enhance them (pitch corrections, sound restoration ...).

Q: Have you been disappointed with the re-issue efforts undertaken by the major labels (e.g., DG, Decca, Sony/BMG, EMI, etc.)?

YSL: The reason my label came to exist is absolutely because I was so disappointed with the product those big labels offer to musical customers. When we do a 78rpm transfer, we have to respect the characteristics of those recordings. Noise is part of them. Instead of putting so much energy in getting rid of it and destroying the music and interpretation, I put my time in more important things:

- Finding the correct speed
- Choosing the correct needle
- Selecting the appropriate parameters that may put the music in front
- Re-centering each side for a better sound presence and pitch stability

In other words, to do everything I can to get out of those grooves the majesty of that fantastic era ... to reveal the music! Now, I understand why I was not interested in old recordings: everything was filtered, dry ... simply dead!



Above: © YSL 145 78: Currently, the only extant recording of Prokofiev “live” at the piano - a 16 January 1937 broadcast over WABC of a concert given by the composer at Columbia Concert Hall, New York City.

Q: Who are among your favorite artists personally?

YSL: I am a big piano fan. In that way, I cannot imagine my life without Rachmaninov, Friedman, Meyer, Fischer, Schnabel, Perlemuter to name only a few. So many great musicians were lost in the history of the 78s that every day is a discovery. So many treasures just waiting to be revealed!

Q: Which issues are you most proud of?

YSL: I think of some recordings that were supposed to be dead. For example, I put so much time in transferring the Bruckner Symphony no. 7 conducted by Rodzinski (© YSL 131 78). The acetates were so damaged that I never thought that this would be in the end one of the best 7th ever. Yes, there are still sound problems, but the music finds its way to our soul. I also think of the unique existing copy of a Prokofiev talking and presenting works he will play for us at an American radio before going back to Russia (© YSL 145 78), or the first appearance of William Kapell in Boston to perform the Khachaturian Piano Concerto with Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, acetates found in the Rodzinski archives (© YSL 139 78).

Q: It seems to me among your most interesting contributions are the series dedicated to conductors Nikolai Malko and Artur Rodzinski, both of which entail the release of numerous previously unissued (or even unknown) broadcast material, most of it new to their discographies. Could you speak about that?

YSL: In both cases, their respective sons (Richard Rodzinski and George Malko), after listening to some of my transfers, asked me to go to their homes to bring back with me all their family archives (Tapes, 78 rpms records, LPs and acetates). Among these were a lot of unissued material. They also asked me to retransfer everything already available on the market. They were so pleased to discover that those old grooves can contain so much information. They gave me access to everything for free and I did my work for the same price... so lucky to be part of that trip!

Q: Your “live” Sviatoslav Richter series is among the most comprehensive of any label. Could you tell us more about that?

YSL: I discovered most of the piano repertoire with Sviatoslav Richter. He played and recorded so many works and composers in his career. Before touching the 78 rpm era myself, I did not know the great pianists of the past all that well. Richter was for me a refer-



Above: Yves St-Laurent at his home in St-Basile-Le-Grand near Montréal, Québec, Canada

Right: A pre-amp used by St-Laurent Studio. “My preamplifier and amplifier are custom made for my work by Denis Pelletier, from Saint-Marcel-sur-Richelieu, Québec.

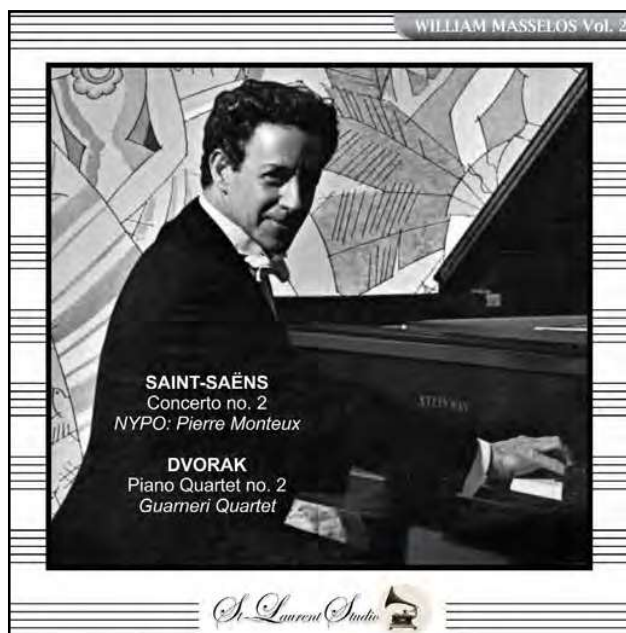
“Single ended triode amplifier, and 100% tube pre-amplification. Totally transparent and musical, entirely natural sounding, they are the best I ever heard from any time period, or at any price.

“He is an artist of the sound. All my closest friends, passionate music lovers, own a system made by Denis Pelletier.”



ence. In that time of my life, I was collecting everything I could find on him. I made a lot of trades with other Richter Friends and decided some years ago to construct a series devoted to him by regrouping all of his interpretations by date. In each volume, I try to put a photo of the hall or the city where he played. I have many more recordings of him, but only select those who have enough of a good sound to be enjoyed.

Q: Are there any “lost” commercial recordings that you hope to find? [For example, Frederic Lamond recorded Beethoven’s “Hammerklavier”, but it has never been found. Marston Records has long been in search of a recital given by Josef Hofmann in South America, circa 1935, that was rumored to survive on acetates, but thus far has similarly not been located.]



Above Left: © YSL 286 33 - A truly amazing document - A complete Nicolai Malko “live” concert, from Montevideo, Uruguay (28 May 1955 - first ever publication). **Above Right:** © YSL 294 T - The remarkable William Masselos in a captivating performance of Saint-Saens’ Piano Concerto No. 2, with Pierre Monteux, no less (“live” - 8 March 1959).

YSL: Yes of course. I dream of a day when someone will bring me a non-filtered copy of:

- Rachmaninov and Horowitz playing together
- Rodzinski with Bartok playing his own Piano Concerto no. 2 (1939-40)
- Rodzinski with Horowitz in Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto no. 3
- Klemperer with Annie Fisher in Brahms's Piano Concerto no. 2 (Budapest ca.1946)
- Klemperer with Annie Fisher in Beethoven's Concertos (Concertgebouw 1950's)
- Other unpublished Perlemuter recitals

I also hope that someday, I will have the privilege to work myself on the original sources of Rachmaninov playing his Symphonic Dances, or on Sapellnikoff playing the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto no. 1. In a more realistic point of view, I am still searching for a good 78 rpm copy of Busch – Serkin playing Schubert's Fantasy D. 934

Q: What projects are planned for the future?

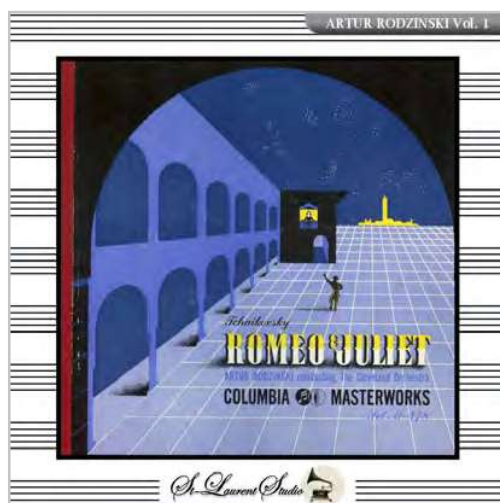
YSL: I will continue to add to collections like Schnabel or Backhaus for example. I also plan new vocal collections devoted to Caruso, Chaliapin and Elizabeth Schumann. Depending on the treasures I receive or find in my collection, or in the Norbeck, Peter and Ford's treasure trove, the St-Laurent Studio label will continue to grow.

My customers will also decide where I go depending on their demands.

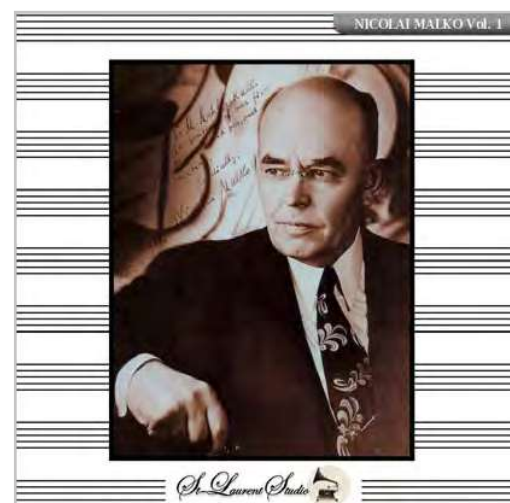


Above: Yves checking the results of a recent transfer.

Below: Selections from the catalog, hand-selected by Yves St-Laurent; “hover” each image and the reverse side, with track information, will appear. One can also click on the image and be taken to the label's website to order a copy.



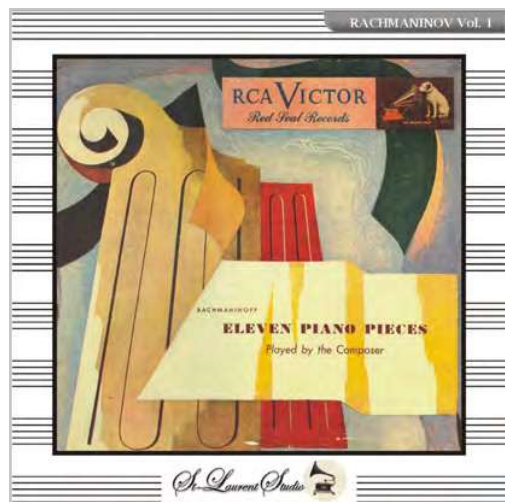
Artur Rodzinski Vol. 1: Scheherazade, etc.



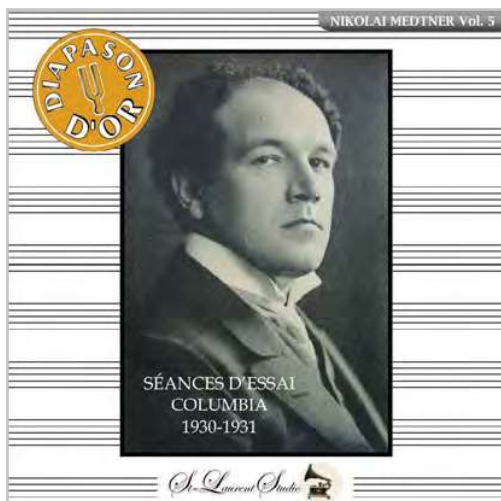
Nicolai Malko Vol. 1: Stravinsky, etc.



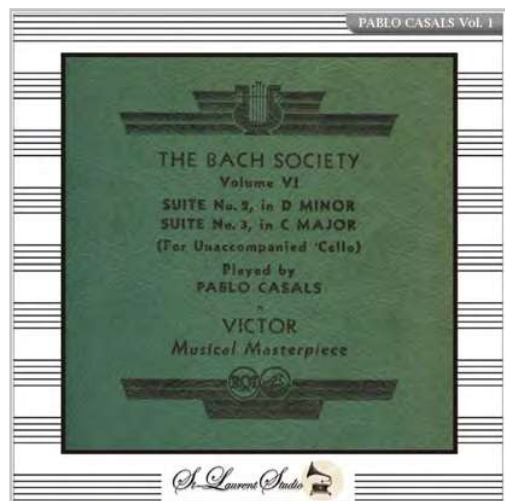
Edwin Fischer Vol. 3: Bach, Mozart, etc.



Serge Rachmaninov Vol. 1: Schumann, etc.



Nikolai Medtner plays Medtner Vol. 5



Pablo Casals Vol. 1: Bach

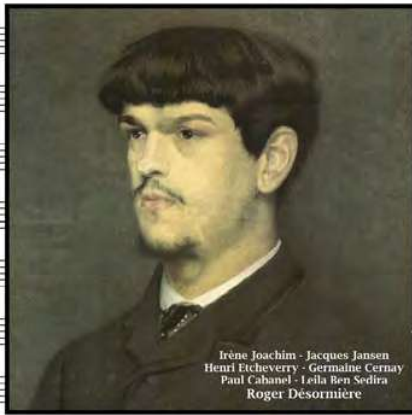


Ignaz Friedman Vol. 1: Mendelssohn



Alfred Cortot Vol. 2: Chopin Preludes, etc.

PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE



Irène Joschim - Jacques Jansen
Henri Flicheverry - Germaine Cernay
Paul Cahanel - Leïla Ben Sedira
Roger Désormière

A. Laurent Audio

Roger Désormière: Pélleas et Mélisande

MARCELLE MEYER Vol. 3



A. Laurent Audio

Marcelle Meyer Vol. 3: Bach, etc.

RICHARD STRAUSS Vol. 1



A. Laurent Audio

Richard Strauss Vol. 1: Don Quixote, etc.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV Vol. 2



A. Laurent Audio

Sergei Prokofiev Vol. 2: Live in Recital

NINON VALLIN Vol. 1



A. Laurent Audio

Ninon Vallin Vol. 1: French Songs

DINU LIPATTI Vol. 3



A. Laurent Audio

Dinu Lipatti Vol. 3: Bach, Mozart, etc.



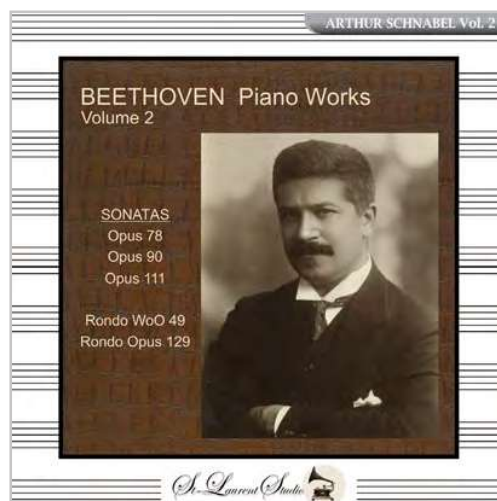
Adolf Busch Vol. 1: Schubert Trio D. 929



Ignace Jan Paderewski Vol. I: Haydn, etc.



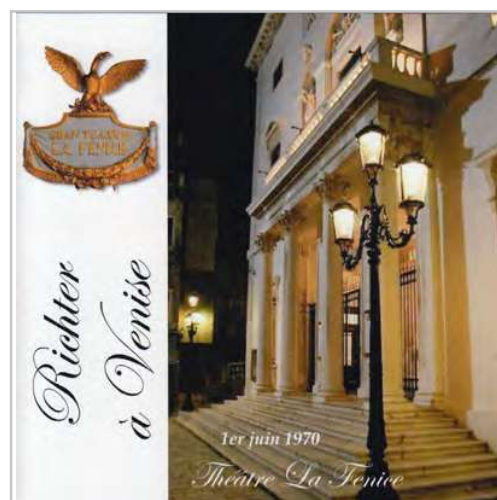
Blanche Selva Vol. 2: Franck



Arthur Schnabel Vol. 2: Beethoven



Gabriel Pierné Vol. 4: Bizet, etc.



Sviatoslav Richter in Venice: 1 June 1970

St-Laurent Studio - www.78experience.com - Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to: Yves, St-Laurent, Founder of St-Laurent Studio / The 78rpm Experience
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<http://www.78experience.com>



COUPON ALERT: St.-Laurent Studio has graciously agreed to provide subscribers to Liner Notes Magazine with an exclusive one-time 20% off coupon, valid throughout the year 2022. Purchasers need only reference the discount code **YSL20** and will receive 20% off on their order. Should you have any questions, please write to 78experience@gmail.com. Thank you!