

**Copland: Music for the Theatre / Appalachian Spring Suite / El Salón México, etc.
Walsh / Drucker / Dutton / Harmonie Ensemble /
New York, Steven Richman , cond. BRIDGE 9145
Reviewed by Simon Groome**



Bridge is a label that constantly releases superb sounding recordings of bold and innovative repertoire: usually performed to the highest artistic standards. Even with the more standard repertoire, they can generally be relied upon to find some novel and attractive viewpoint to tempt the public. A wonderful example is Arturo Toscanini's solo piano arrangement of Aaron Copland's El Salón México, or the American's Two Ballads for Violin and Piano: both of which see their premiere recordings on this disc. Neither are major compositions, but along with the Elegies for Violin and Viola, they certainly make this more than just another issue of Copland's music. Pianist Diane Walsh and the two members of the Emerson String Quartet, along with the Harmonie Ensemble, conducted by Steven Richman; play with undoubted assurance and exhibit a certain élan. There are also marvelous performances of the more significant works, which include a reference version of the Appalachian Spring Suite in its original chamber version, which flows impeccably with the aid of some brisk with lively tempos in the speedier sections. No matter how well you know it, here the piece sounds original and fresh, helping to make this a most enjoyable and inspirational release.

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