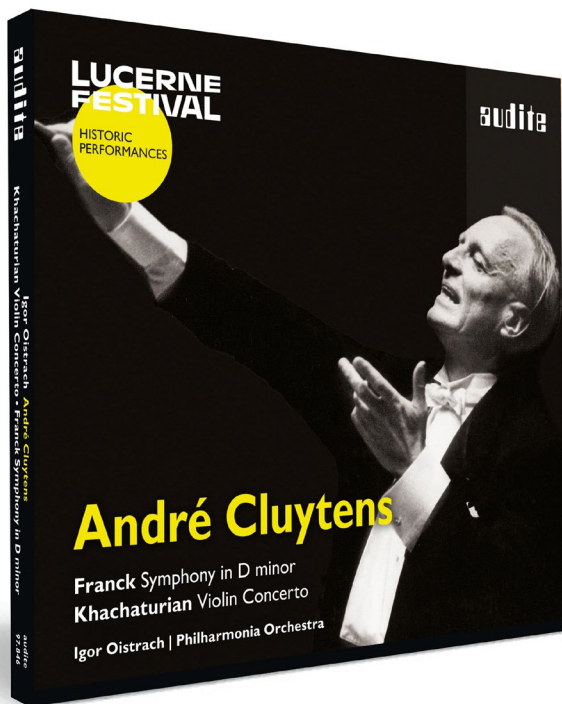


Elegance and Drama without Showiness

Lucerne Festival • Vol. XXII



César Franck: Symphony in D Minor
 Aram Khachaturian: Violin Concerto in D Minor

Igor Oistrach violin
Philharmonia Orchestra
André Cluytens

Live recordings: Kunsthau Lucerne, 28. August 1954

previously unreleased

André Cluytens (1905–1967) was known for flowing elegance, fidelity to the score, and temperament without any trace of showmanship. He was the first Frenchman to conduct at Bayreuth, made the first complete recording of Beethoven’s symphonies with the Berlin Philharmonic, and was also a frequent and welcome guest in Lucerne. In 1954, he met the young Igor Oistrakh and earned standing ovations with Khachaturian’s brilliant Violin Concerto and Franck’s Symphony in D minor.

He has fallen somewhat into obscurity. Yet in the 1950s and 1960s, André Cluytens was regarded, alongside his older colleagues Charles Münch and Ernest Ansermet and the slightly younger Jean Martinon, as the foremost interpreter of the French repertoire. Even so, he was by no means a “specialist”. On the contrary, the breadth of his repertoire and his curiosity for unfamiliar works were hallmarks of Cluytens’s artistry. In 1955, he became the first French conductor to appear at Bayreuth (long before Pierre Boulez). Between 1957 and 1960, he even pre-empted Herbert von Karajan by making the Berlin Philharmonic’s first complete recording of the Beethoven symphonies.

Two live recordings from the Internationale Musikfestwochen Luzern (today’s Lucerne Festival), released here for the first time, pay tribute to the Belgian-born conductor who made France his adopted home. In the summer of 1954, Cluytens drew a remarkable range of colours and moods from César Franck’s Symphony in D minor at the helm of the Philharmonia Orchestra, shaping its unsentimental tempos into a compelling symphonic drama. He was also joined by the then 23-year-old violinist Igor Oistrakh, who performed Aram Khachaturian’s Violin Concerto, one of the signature works of his father and teacher David Oistrakh. His interpretation combines breathtaking precision with an idiomatic shaping of the lyrical themes and features a substantial solo cadenza of his own, surpassing not only Khachaturian’s original but also the cadenza customarily performed by his father in terms of technical demands.

The 32-page booklet in three languages provides a portrait of the conductor written by Michael Struck-Schloen and also features photos from the festival archive, published here for the first time.

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release dates

- 🎵 26.06.26: Franck - Symphony D Minor, II. Allegretto [🔗](#)
- 🎵 10.07.26: Mussorgsky - Pictures at an Exhibition, Promenade I [🔗](#)
- 🎵 24.07.26: Mussorgsky - Pictures at an Exhibition, Bydło [🔗](#)
- 🎵 07.08.26: Khachaturian - Violin Concerto, III. Allegro vivace [🔗](#)
- 🎵 21.08.26: Mussorgsky - Pictures at an Exhibition, The Great Gate of Kiev [🔗](#)
- 🕒 04.09.26: album release [🔗](#)

