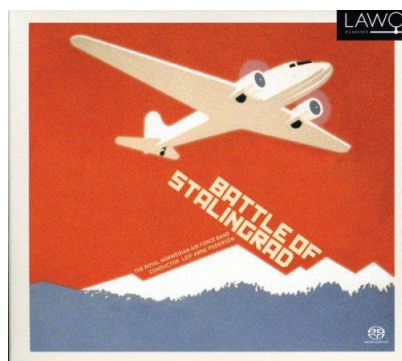


a **BATTLE OF STALINGRAD** • Leif Arne Pedersen, cond; Royal Norwegian Air Force Band • LAWO 1045 (54:54)

GLIÈRE *Solemn Overture*. **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV** *The Flight of the Bumblebee*. **KABALEVSKY** *Comedians'*

Galop. **KHACHATURIAN** *Armenian Folk Song and Dance*.

Gayanne:Lezginka. *Soviet Police March*. *Uzbek March and Dancing Song*. *Battle of Stalingrad*: Suite



Battle of Stalingrad
AUDIO CD; HYBRID SACD - DSD
LAWO Classics

By the time this review appears in print, there's no telling what the situation will hold, but as I write this Russia has recently “reclaimed” Crimea from Ukraine, the U.S. and Europe are putting together sanctions against Russia, and a new Cold War, or something significantly hotter, may be looming. And so a collection like this—through no fault of its own—takes on an unwanted but perhaps inevitable subtext. Current events can cast a chilling shadow on our aesthetic experiences.

Titles like *Solemn Overture for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution* and *Soviet Police March* are bound to affect the way Western audiences hear this music, often tuneful but with a militaristic undercurrent, no matter how nimble and jolly Khachaturian makes the latter sound. The stirring and harmonically exotic Armenian and Uzbek songs and dances suggest geographical distances and cultural differences that support the idea of self-determination and political independence. And the reorchestrated suite of music from the 1949 film *The Battle of Stalingrad*, alternately swaggering, bombastic, and brooding, attempts to use nationalistic pride to rouse the listener's emotions. In this context, popular items like *Flight of the Bumblebee* and the *Comedians' Galop* are momentary divertissements.

The Royal Norwegian Air Force Band is a fine ensemble. I'm sure there is an audience for music like this among band fanciers, and as far as that goes I assume there are equivalents in the American band repertory. As an old homespun country philosopher once said, “There's a lid for every jar.” **Art Lange**

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