

COMPACT
disc
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PASC 484

Koussevitzky

Harris • Hill • Diamond

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Since the meaning of any music depends on the experience of the person who hears it, I hesitate to specify what I hope to express in this symphony. Yet people are often guided to a better understanding of music if they have word ideas to help them in the appreciation of musical ideas. And so I shall attempt to say in words what I have put into the music of this Symphony.

I hoped to express qualities of our people which our popular dance music, because of its very nature, cannot reveal. Our people are more than pleasure-loving. We also have qualities of heroic strength — determination — will to struggle — faith in our destiny. We are possessed of a fierce driving power — optimistic, young, rough and ready — and I am convinced that our mechanistic age has not destroyed an appreciation of more tender moods. And it is right that these gentler moods should live in us. Otherwise our strength and vitality might degenerate into a ruthless brutality.

These were the feelings which aroused me to write the Symphony. But as the work unfolded it seemed to assume the character of our times. It became more martial — more savage — more ominously brooding and intense than I had imagined it in the beginning. The Symphony seemed to possess an independent life of its own which I had to accept and translate.

I had planned to write this Symphony during the late summer and fall of 1940. I had promised Dr. Koussevitzky that it would be ready for the spring of 1941. But after working on it during the month of September, I found I was not ready to write it.

And so it was not until the summer of 1942 while I was in Colorado Springs at the great mountains near by that I knew that I could write the work. We came home to Cornell University and began the Symphony in early October. It was completed on Christmas morning, followed by great rejoicing and festivities in our home, where students and friends and fellow teachers came to drink a toast to the new Symphony and wish each other a merry Christmas — knowing full well that “Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men” was only something to hope and, ironically enough, to fight for.

Roy Harris Programme notes for the world première of his 5th Symphony (*excerpt*), 1943

Producer's Note

All three recordings on this release are truly historic documents, not only of the works and performances concerned, but of Serge Koussevitzky and the BSO's tremendous work in promoting and commissioning new works. Edward Burlingame Hill's Symphony No. 1 was premièred by Koussevitzky in 1928 (to be followed by two more symphonies) - this was its final BSO performance of nine. The Harris and Diamond symphonies here are both premières (to be technically correct they had received their first performances the previous day in Friday matinee concerts, duplicated the evening after from which these recordings derived). Resurrecting these previously unheard acetate off-air recordings has been a monumental task, with numerous significant technical hurdles to be overcome, including massive pitch issues particularly with the Harris and Hill. Surface noise was a constant and at times chronic problem, and unfortunately some peak distortion remains, particularly in the finale of the Diamond. The latter also required two minor patches to cover side changes, which I hope I have rendered undetectable. Cross-talk and other radio interference have been removed, though the frequency and dynamic limitations of AM radio remain. That said, the finished result of my efforts will prove, I hope, entirely enjoyable. The Harris and Diamond symphonies may be familiar to some; however this appears to be the only known recording of Hill's Symphony No.1.

Andrew Rose

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koussevitzky

rare american symphony performances

harris
symphony no. 5
world première

hill
symphony no. 1
only known recording

diamond
symphony no. 2
world première

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boston symphony orchestra
previously unreleased live recordings · 1943/44

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HARRIS SYMPHONY No. 5 HILL SYMPHONY No. 1 DIAMOND SYMPHONY No. 2
KOUSSEVITZKY, BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

koussevitzky

rare american symphony performances

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ROY HARRIS Symphony No. 5 (1942)

- 1 1st mvt. - Prelude (5:07)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Chorale (10:47)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Fugue (10:37)

Performance of 27 February, 1943

XR remastering by
Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based
on a photograph of
Serge Koussevitzky

Total duration: 77:49

EDWARD BURLINGAME HILL Symphony No. 1 in B flat, Op. 34 (1927)

- 4 1st mvt. - Allegro moderato, ma risoluto (5:46)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Moderato maestoso (6:55)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Allegro brioso (4:49)

Performance of 27 February, 1943

Broadcast performances from
Symphony Hall, Boston

DAVID DIAMOND Symphony No. 2 (1943)

- 7 1st mvt. - Adagio funebre (10:59)
- 8 2nd mvt. - Allegro vivo (6:06)
- 9 3rd mvt. - Andante espressivo, quasi adagio (9:05)
- 10 4th mvt. - Allegro vigoroso (7:38)

Performance of 14 October, 1944

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Boston Symphony Orchestra

Serge Koussevitzky, conductor

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KOUSSEVITZKY, BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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