



Harty & Monteux

conduct Berlioz



This release commemorates the 150th anniversary of the death of Hector Berlioz (1803 – 1869) by presenting recordings by two of his greatest conductorial advocates: Sir Hamilton Harty and Pierre Monteux. Harty's complete commercially-recorded Berlioz repertoire is collected here in its entirety for the first time (a 1991 Pearl CD featured all but the *King Lear* Overture), coupled with Monteux's complete pre-war recordings of the composer's works.

Irish composer/conductor Sir Hamilton Harty (1879 – 1941) considered Berlioz and Mozart as his two musical deities, due to what he perceived as their shared intuitive approach toward composition. His longest conductorial post was with the Hallé Orchestra of Manchester (1920 – 1933), whose founder, Charles Hallé, had been a friend of Berlioz. Hallé had begun a tradition of Berlioz performance with his ensemble which Harty continued and expanded into the then-new realm of recordings.

Beginning with acoustic versions of the Hungarian March from *The Damnation of Faust* (1920) and the *Roman Carnival Overture* (1924) for English Columbia, Harty presided over a string of nearly annual electrical sessions featuring Berlioz works. After leaving the Hallé, Harty made several recordings as a guest conductor of Beecham's newly-formed LPO before making a final series for Decca in his last post as music director of the LSO, although the latter were hampered by the use of a small hall, inferior engineering and noisier pressings. Throughout, Harty's immense vitality and disciplined ensemble playing have rightly made his Berlioz discs legendary.

For Pierre Monteux (1875 – 1964), an association with an orchestra steeped in the Berlioz tradition was also instrumental in developing his approach toward the composer. While still in his teens, Monteux became principal violist of the Colonne Orchestra, whose founder, Édouard Colonne, had known Berlioz and championed his works by presenting annual cycles. As Monteux's former pupil and biographer, John Canarina, notes, "Monteux felt he gained great insight into Berlioz's music through Colonne's understanding of the composer's scores."

Although he conducted a wider array of Berlioz's music, Monteux's recorded repertoire of the composer was small, comprising besides the three works presented here only *Romeo and Juliet* and the *Faust* Hungarian March. While he went on to record the *Symphonie Fantastique* four more times after the 1930 Paris version, Canarina relates that Monteux considered this early effort his favorite, adding that "to this day, it is considered one of the greatest recorded performances of the work."

The Harty transfers were made from the best portions of pre-war American Columbia and early laminated English Columbia pressings, while the Monteux recordings came entirely from US Victor "Z" pressings. Multiple copies of each record were located in order to ensure the best sources were used.

Mark Obert-Thorn



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disc
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disc one

- 1 Beatrice and Benedict - *Overture* (7:45)
- 2 Romeo's Reverie and Fête of the Capulets (*from Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 17) (11:29)
- 3 Queen Mab Scherzo (*from Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 17) (7:26)
- 4 Dance of the Sylphs (*from The Damnation of Faust*, Op. 24) (2:52)
- 5 Hungarian March (*from The Damnation of Faust*, Op. 24) (3:51)
- 6 Royal Hunt and Storm (*from Les Troyens*) (9:45)
- 7 The Corsair - *Overture*, Op. 21 (8:43)
- 8 Funeral March for the Last Scene of Hamlet (No. 3 *from Tristia*, Op. 18) (8:02)
- 9 Roman Carnival Overture, Op. 9 (8:58)

London Philharmonic Orchestra (Tracks 1, 2, 7 & 8)

Hallé Orchestra (Tracks 3 - 6 & 9)

conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Special thanks to Nathan Brown, Michael Gartz and Charles Niss for providing source material

Full discographic information available online

Total duration: 2hr 28:25

disc two

- 1 King Lear - *Overture*, Op. 4 (11:43)
- 2 Marche Troyenne (*from Les Troyens*) (4:00)

London Symphony Orchestra

conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty

- 3 Les Troyens - Prelude to Act 3 (4:09)

- 4 Benvenuto Cellini - *Overture*, Op. 23 (10:44)

Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14

- 5 1st Mvt. - Rêveries - Passions (13:04)
- 6 2nd Mvt. - Un bal (5:56)
- 7 3rd Mvt. - Scène aux champs (16:10)
- 8 4th Mvt. - Marche au supplice (4:41)
- 9 5th Mvt. - Songe d'une nuit de sabbat (9:07)

Orchestre Symphonique de Paris

conducted by Pierre Monteux

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