



Harty

conducts Music of the British Isles



In addition to his acknowledged expertise in the works of Berlioz and Schubert (as documented on Pristine PASC 551 and PASC 282 respectively), Hamilton Harty was also an enthusiastic proponent of contemporary British composers. He commissioned Moeran's First Symphony, premièred and recorded Walton's First, and played the solo piano part in the première and first recording of Constant Lambert's *The Rio Grande* with the composer conducting (PACO 028). The spirited Bax overture which opens our program comes from Harty's final recording session for Columbia, in which he conducts Beecham's London Philharmonic.

The remaining items feature the Hallé Orchestra of Manchester, of which Harty was the principal conductor from 1920 through 1933. Harty had begun his career in his native Northern Ireland as an organist and later piano accompanist before turning to composition. It was his own orchestral poem *With the Wild Geese* that served as his London conductorial debut when he led the LSO in the work in 1911. Harty explained the title in the preface to his score:

The "Wild Geese" was the name given by the Irish to the exiles who gave their swords to France before and after the Battle of Aughrim and the surrender of Limerick in 1691. At the Battle of Fontenoy, in 1745, the Irish regiments distinguished themselves greatly, though a third of their number perished. After the battle, the Irish say that the dead arose from the field and sailed home all through the night to their beloved country.

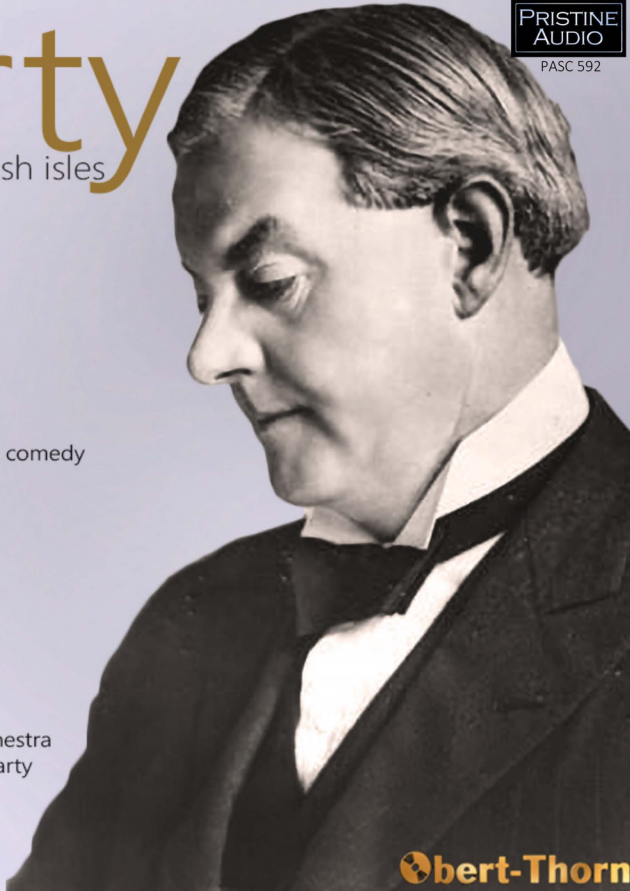
The recording presented here, from one of the Hallé's earliest electrical sessions in 1926, was plagued by extensive pitch fluctuation problems that modern restoration technology has only recently been able to solve.

Three years later, Harty recorded his arrangement for solo violin, harp and string orchestra of the *Londonderry Air* as well as the Scherzo movement from his *Irish Symphony*. These were the only recordings he would make of his own compositions, save for an earlier acoustic set of his *Fantasy Scenes from an Eastern Romance*, which will be featured on a future volume. The short work by British composer Sir Henry Walford Davies must have had particular appeal to the ex-organist in Harty.

Harty's recording of Elgar's Cello Concerto with W. H. Squire has previously been reissued on PASC 393. Three other works by the composer conclude our program. The first, an excerpt from his oratorio *The Apostles*, is a setting of the Beatitudes, with running commentary drawn from various Old Testament sources. The brief *Dream Children*, featured as the "filler" side to Harty's set of Elgar's *Engima Variations*, was a work the composer himself never got round to recording.

Harty's recording of the *Engima Variations* has received strangely little attention over the years. *The Gramophone* did not review the original release, and EMI never brought out an "official" LP or CD reissue. It is, however, a performance that should be more well-known, marked as it is by Harty's typical tremendous energy and filled with characterful detail. If, as some modern reviewers have cited, there are some inaccuracies of ensemble in the faster sections, it is a small price to pay for so exhilarating a reading.

Mark Obert-Thorn



harty
music of the british isles

elgar
enigma variations

harty
with the wild geese

bax
overture to a picaresque comedy

davies
solemn melody

hallé orchestra
london philharmonic orchestra
conducted by sir hamilton harty

studio recordings · 1926 - 1935

bert-Thorn



PASC 592

harty

conducts music of the british isles



1. BAX Overture to a Picaresque Comedy * (9:02)
2. HARTY With the Wild Geese (Poem for Orchestra) (15:43)
3. TRADITIONAL (arr. Harty) Londonderry Air (4:21)
4. HARTY Scherzo from An Irish Symphony (3:00)
5. DAVIES Solemn Melody for Organ and Orchestra (3:39)
Harold Dawber (organ); Clyde Twelvetees (cello)
6. ELGAR The Apostles, Op. 49 – By the Wayside (7:02)
Dora Labbette (soprano); Hubert Eisdell (tenor); Dennis Noble (baritone)
Robert Easton (bass); Harold Williams (bass); Hallé Chorus

ELGAR Dream Children, Op. 43

7. I. Andante (2:13)
8. II. Allegretto piacevole (2:40)

ELGAR Variations on an Original Theme ("Enigma"), Op. 36

9. Theme (1:21)
10. I. C.A.E. (the composer's wife) (1:48)
11. II. H.D.S.-P. (Hew David Steuart-Powell) (0:38)
12. III. R.B.T. (Richard Baxter Townshend) (1:23)
13. IV. W.M.B. (William Meath Baker) (0:26)
14. V. R.P.A. (Richard Penrose Arnold) (2:07)
15. VI. Ysobel (Isabel Fitton) (1:24)
16. VII. Troyte (Troyte Griffith) (0:49)
17. VIII. W.N. (Winifred Norbury) (1:30)
18. IX. Nimrod (A.J. Jaeger) (3:01)
19. X. Intermezzo: Dorabella (Dora Penny) (2:15)
20. XI. G.R.S. (George Robertson Sinclair) (0:46)
21. XII. B.G.N. (Basil G. Nevinston) (2:10)
22. XIII. Romanza: *** (Lady Mary Lygon) (2:37)
23. XIV. Finale: E.D.U. (the composer) (4:57)

Hallé Orchestra

*London Philharmonic Orchestra

conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty

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Mark Obert-Thorn

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on a photograph of
Hamilton Harty

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information can be
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