



Joseph Szigeti



The European Columbia Recordings, Volume 1

Joseph Szigeti was born in Budapest in 1892. After showing promise on the violin at a very young age, he was accepted as a student by Jenő Hubay and made his Berlin debut at thirteen. Shortly thereafter, he settled in England for several years. It was during this period that he met Ferruccio Busoni, who was to become a major influence in moving the young prodigy from being merely a talented virtuoso toward becoming a more intellectual and analytical musician.

A stay in a Swiss sanatorium in 1913 to treat his tuberculosis introduced Szigeti to a fellow Hungarian who was to become another major influence on him as a musician and a lifelong friend, Béla Bartók. Szigeti remained in Switzerland for several years, teaching and expanding his facility in playing chamber works. In 1925, he played for a visiting Leopold Stokowski, and was quickly invited to make his American debut. He shortly became established internationally as a concert artist. He settled in the USA in 1940, and continued his concert career for another twenty years before retiring to write and teach. He died in 1973.

Szigeti's earliest recordings were made in England for the Gramophone and Typewriter Company between 1908 and 1913. He made no further discs during the acoustic era, save for a handful recorded in Russia in either 1924 or 1926. In the latter year, he began an association with English Columbia that lasted for eleven years, with one session for their Japanese affiliate in 1931 that produced four sides. In 1938, he began recording for American Columbia, where he remained until 1956, with one set (the Bloch Concerto) done for French Columbia in 1939, a single disc made for the American New Music Quarterly label in 1941, and a return to English Columbia for four sides in 1946-47. His final recordings were made for Mercury in 1959-61.

This series will present all of the Columbia recordings he made in Britain, France and Japan, as well as the one New Music Quarterly disc, as a complement to Sony's upcoming set comprising his American Columbia recordings. From the 1940s onward, Szigeti began to experience increasing technical problems. American Columbia passed on releasing his 1955-56 recordings of Bach Sonatas and Partitas as well as several contemporaneous LPs' worth of Mozart Sonatas, which were only issued later by Vanguard. Szigeti himself ruefully referred to his final Mercury LPs as his "posthumous recordings". The performances featured here and in the coming volumes are generally judged to be his finest on disc.

Our first volume focuses on Baroque and Classical repertoire. Among the works he recorded at his very first session in 1908 had been the Preludio from Bach's Partita No 3; and Szigeti continued to champion the composer and contemporaries like Handel and Tartini throughout his career. After the two Bach Sonatas presented here, he recorded the Third Sonata for American Columbia in 1949; but only excerpts from the Partitas appeared on disc before his late LP set of the complete Sonatas and Partitas. Szigeti recorded remakes of the Handel Sonata as well as the Tartini Sonata and Concerto in 1954, and re-recorded the Mozart Sonata with Horszowski the following year. The LP remakes feature broader tempos, a wider vibrato and more problematic intonation than the earlier 78s.

The Bach Double Concerto was recorded with Szigeti's elder Hungarian compatriot, Carl Flesch (1873-1944), who was esteemed as both a violinist and pedagogue. The Mozart Concerto was the first of three classic disc collaborations with Sir Thomas Beecham. Szigeti would return to neither of these works later in his recording career, so their presence here is doubly valuable.

Mark Obert-Thorn

joseph szigeti

the european columbia recordings, volume 1



bach
handel
veracini
tartini
exaudet
mozart



studio recordings · 1927 - 1937

Obert-Thorn

joseph szigeti

European Columbia recordings, vol. 1

disc one

J. S. BACH Violin Sonata No. 1 in G minor, BWV1001

1. 1st mvt. - Adagio (4:37)
2. 2nd mvt. - Fuga: Allegro (5:17)
3. 3rd mvt. - Siciliana (4:24)
4. 4th mvt. - Presto (2:26)

J. S. BACH Violin Sonata No. 2 in A minor, BWV1003

5. 1st mvt. - Grave (4:58)
6. 2nd mvt. - Fuga (7:17)
7. 3rd mvt. - Andante (3:19)
8. 4th mvt. - Allegro (2:29)

9. J. S. BACH *Bourée* from Violin Partita No. 1 in B minor, BWV1002 (2:40)

10. J. S. BACH *Gavotte* from Violin Partita No. 3 in B minor, BWV1006 (3:09)

11. J. S. BACH (arr. Szigeti) *Arioso* from Cantata No. 156, BWV156 (*Sinfonia*) (3:45)

J. S. BACH Concerto in D minor for Two Violins, BWV1043

12. 1st mvt. - Vivace (3:59)
13. 2nd mvt. - Largo ma non tanto (6:58)
14. 3rd mvt. - Allegro (4:48)

with Carl Flesch, violin

HANDEL Violin Sonata No. 4 in D major, Op. 1 No. 13, HWV371

15. 1st mvt. - Adagio (4:07)
16. 2nd mvt. - Allegro (2:35)
17. 3rd mvt. - Larghetto (3:24)
18. 4th mvt. - Allegro (3:02)

Walter Goehr · Orchestra (Tracks 11 – 14)

Nikita Magaloff, piano (Tracks 15 – 18)

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn
Full discographic information can be found online
Special thanks to Nathan Brown and Charles Niss for providing source material
Cover Artwork based on a photograph of Joseph Szigeti

Total duration: 2hr 19:10 CD1: 73:13 CD2: 65:57

disc two

1. VERACINI (arr. Corti) *Largo* from Violin Sonata Op. 2, No. 6 in A major (3:47)

TARTINI Violin Sonata in G major, Op. 2, No. 12, 8.619

2. 1st mvt. - Andante (2:34)
3. 2nd mvt. - Allegro (2:05)
4. 3rd mvt. - Presto assai (1:52)

5. TARTINI (arr. Ondříček) *Adagio* (3:47)

TARTINI (ed. Pente; arr. Szigeti) Violin Concerto in D minor, D.45

6. 1st mvt. - Allegro (5:14)
7. 2nd mvt. - Grave (3:43)
8. 3rd mvt. - Presto (4:08)

9. EXAUDET (arr. Nachèz) Minuet and Dance of the Auvergne (3:46)

MOZART Violin Sonata No. 21 in E minor, KV304

10. 1st mvt. - Allegro (4:26)
11. 2nd mvt. - Tempo di Menuetto (4:57)

MOZART Violin Concerto No. 4 in D major, KV218

(Cadenzas: Joachim)

12. 1st mvt. - Allegro moderato (9:26)
13. 2nd mvt. - Andante (8:30)
14. 3rd mvt. - Rondo: Allegro (7:41)

Kurt Ruhseitz, piano (Tracks 1 – 4 and 9)

Nikita Magaloff, piano (Tracks 5, 10 and 11)

Walter Goehr · Orchestra (Tracks 6 – 8)

Sir Thomas Beecham · London Philharmonic Orchestra (Tracks 12 – 14)

Joseph Szigeti, violin