



Hamilton Harty

Acoustic Concerto Recordings



This release brings together all of Hamilton Harty's recordings of concertos and concerted works with soloists made during the acoustic era. Included are the first-ever complete recordings of the Mozart, both Beethoven compositions and the Lalo. None of the works were ever re-recorded by Harty or the soloists in the electrical era, and previous reissues of them have been scarce.

In 1924, the Columbia Graphophone Company of London, spurred on by *The Gramophone's* editor, Compton Mackenzie and public demand, embarked on an ambitious program of complete recordings of symphonies, concertos and chamber music, little suspecting that within a year, electrical recording would render them all technologically obsolete. Most had a short catalog life; the Beethoven concerto presented here was issued in January, 1926 and deleted by February, 1928. Some suffered from limited distribution: the same Beethoven set was only issued in the UK, while the Lalo only came out in America. As a result, original editions are rare today.

For the bulk of their concerto recordings, English Columbia turned to Hamilton Harty (1879-1941, not yet "Sir" – he was not to be knighted until 1925), the composer/conductor who had earned acclaim early in his career as a piano accompanist. (Indeed, *The Musical Times* had dubbed him "the prince of accompanists".) While the 1919 recordings, made prior to Harty's appointment as principal conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, probably used a London pickup ensemble, the later ones were most likely done with his Manchester band. Lacking for the most part the deep roster of international stars that the HMV/Victor labels could boast, Columbia turned primarily to British and Australian artists for their soloists.

Arthur Catterall (1883-1943), the Hallé's leader, performed with the London Chamber Music Players and founded the Catterall Quartet. John S. Bridge, the quartet's second violin and Catterall's successor at the Hallé, is his partner in the Bach. While the slow tempi and string portamenti are at odds with today's HIP standards, they reflect the Victorian Age sensibilities in which the players were trained. Harty was more in his element in the Mozart, whom he counted as one of his two favorite composers (the other being Berlioz). Catterall here turns in a stylish performance that deserves to be better known.

The Beethoven with Australian-born William Murdoch (1888-1942) stands out as Harty's sole acoustic piano concerto release. (In fact, two weeks after that session, Harty recorded the Grieg concerto with Ignaz Friedman; but that was never issued and is presumed lost.) Murdoch was particularly noted for his performances of Beethoven. Here, he plays Ignaz Moscheles' infrequently heard cadenza.

Daisy Kennedy (1893-1981), another native Australian, studied under Ševčík in Vienna. Harty partnered her on the piano in several recordings of abridged sonata movements, but these are their only orchestral discs. She lived long enough to celebrate the success of her third cousin, violinist Nigel Kennedy.

Leo Strockoff (1888-1957) was born to a family of Russian musicians and studied under Ysaÿe. Although he made a number of discs for English Columbia from 1911 through 1925, this is his only major recording. He plays the then-standard four movement version of the Lalo, which continued to be favored by Auer pupils like Heifetz and Milstein even into the LP era. Strockoff's tendency to rush ahead of the beat lead to some ensemble problems, which may have been one reason Columbia passed on releasing this in the UK.

Albert Sammons (1886-1957) is probably the best-known today of all of the soloists here, in no small part due to his pioneering electrical recording of the Elgar concerto under Henry Wood, which brought renewed critical praise when it was reissued on LP. The Bruch Concerto's fiery closing bars signal the end of not only a marvelous performance, but of an entire recording era as well.

Mark Obert-Thorn



harty

acoustic concerto recordings

disc one

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

1. 1st Mvt. - Vivace (4:13)
2. 2nd Mvt. - Largo ma non tanto (7:04)
3. 3rd Mvt. - Allegro (5:41)

Arthur Catterall & John S. Bridge, violins

Recorded 10 April 1924

MOZART Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, KV219, 'Turkish'

(Cadenzas: Joachim)

4. 1st Mvt. - Allegro aperto (10:16)
5. 2nd Mvt. - Adagio (7:59)
6. 3rd Mvt. - Rondeau. Tempo di Menuetto (9:01)

Arthur Catterall, violin

Recorded 10 April 1924

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37

7. 1st Mvt. - Allegro con brio (Cadenza: Moscheles) (16:01)
8. 2nd Mvt. - Largo (7:50)
9. 3rd Mvt. - Rondo: Allegro (8:23)

William Murdoch, piano

Recorded 6 April 1925

disc two

1. **BEETHOVEN** Romance No. 1 in G major, Op. 40 (7:13)

2. **SAINT-SAËNS** Introduction & Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 28 (6:36)

Daisy Kennedy, violin

Recorded in 1919

LALO Symphonie espagnole, Op. 21

3. 1st Mvt. - Allegro non troppo (6:51)

4. 2nd Mvt. - Scherzando (3:52)

5. 4th Mvt. - Andante (4:29)

6. 5th Mvt. - Rondo (6:43)

Leo Strockoff, violin

Recorded 14 July 1924

BRUCH Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26

7. 1st Mvt. - Prelude: Allegro moderato (8:04)

8. 2nd Mvt. - Adagio (7:36)

9. 3rd Mvt. - Finale: Allegro energico (6:53)

Albert Sammons, violin

Recorded 9 April 1925

Orchestra conducted by Hamilton Harty

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: **Mark Obert-Thorn**

Special thanks to Nathan Brown, Raymond Glaspole, Donald Manildi, Charles Niss and David Schmutz

All recordings made at the Clerkenwell Road Studios, 102-108, Clerkenwell Road, London EC1

Full discographic information available online

Total duration: 2hr 14:43

CD1: 76:26 CD2: 58:17

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