



Joseph Szigeti



The European Columbia Recordings, Volume 2

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. 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 recent 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 second volume focuses on Classical and early Romantic repertoire. Szigeti recorded the Beethoven concerto three times, twice with Bruno Walter conducting. Their New York remake of fifteen years later is quite similar in concept to the 1932 London version presented here, even down to the timings (the last two movements are each within a second of each other, while the first differs by a few more seconds due to a variant at the end of the cadenza). Szigeti's earlier performance has a headlong forward momentum which was somewhat lacking in the later, somewhat more cautious version.

The Paganini Caprices come from a transitional period when violinists were beginning to leave behind the Ferdinand David-composed piano accompaniments and to play them as the composer originally intended. Both versions of Caprice No. 24 used the piano arrangement. The first from 1926 was shorn of repeats in order to fit it on two ten-inch sides. Two years later, Szigeti would remake it complete on a twelve-inch disc. The other two Caprices made a few years later were played without accompaniment. Szigeti would not return to this repertoire subsequently in his recording career, so their presence here is doubly valuable.

Mark Obert-Thorn

joseph szigeti

the european columbia recordings, volume 2



beethoven
schubert
weber
paganini



studio recordings · 1926 - 1936

Obert-Thorn

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AUDIO

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JOSEPH SZIGETI
THE EUROPEAN COLUMBIA RECORDINGS, VOLUME 2: BEETHOVEN SCHUBERT, WEBER, PAGANINI

joseph szigeti

european columbia recordings, vol. 2

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
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JOSEPH SZIGETI
THE EUROPEAN COLUMBIA RECORDINGS, VOLUME 2: BEETHOVEN SCHUBERT, WEBER, PAGANINI

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BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61 (Cadenzas: Joachim)

1. 1st Mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo (22:19)
2. 2nd Mvt. - Larghetto (9:48)
3. 3rd Mvt. - Rondo. Allegro (9:37)

Recorded 14 April 1932 in Central Hall, Westminster

4. BEETHOVEN (arr. Burmeister) Minuet in G G167, No. 2 (2:28)

Recorded July 1926 in the Columbia Petty France Studio, London

5. BEETHOVEN Allegro vivace from Violin Sonata No. 8 in G major, Op. 30, No. 3 (3:13)

Recorded 30 June 1927 in the Columbia Petty France Studio, London

6. SCHUBERT (arr. Friedberg) Rondo from Piano Sonata No. 17 in D major, Op. 53 (D850) (4:54)

Recorded 31 May 1933 in Abbey Road Studio No. 3, London

WEBER (arr. Szigeti) Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 10

7. 1st Mvt. - Air Russe: Allegretto moderato (1:43)

8. 2nd Mvt. - Rondo: Presto (2:12)

Recorded 6 March 1936 in Abbey Road Studio No. 3, London

9. PAGANINI Caprice in B minor, Op. 1, No. 2 (2:41)

Recorded 24 August 1935 in Abbey Road Studio No. 3, London

10. PAGANINI Caprice in E major, Op. 1, No. 9 'La chasse' (3:07)

Recorded 29 September 1933 in Abbey Road Studio No. 3, London

11. PAGANINI Caprice in A minor, Op. 1, No. 24 - first recording (5:16)

Recorded 20 September 1926 in the Columbia Petty France Studio, London

12. PAGANINI Caprice in A minor, Op. 1, No. 24 - second recording (7:05)

Recorded 7 June 1928 in the Columbia Petty France Studio, London

Bruno Walter · British Symphony Orchestra (Tracks 1 – 3)

Kurt Ruhrseitz, piano (Tracks 4, 5, 11 and 12)

Nikita Magaloff, piano (Tracks 6 – 8)

Joseph Szigeti, violin

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Mark Obert-Thorn

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Full discographic information for
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