

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 1942, and a return to English Columbia for four sides in 1946. His final recordings were made for Mercury in 1959-61.

This is the final volume in a series presenting 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 prior volumes are generally judged to be his finest on disc.

Szigeti championed contemporary works throughout his career, and so it is appropriate that the present program focuses mainly on Twentieth Century music. Some words are in order about a few of the works. Peter Warlock's "Capriol" Suite was composed only ten years before Szigeti recorded his transcription of three of its movements; yet it almost seems to come from the time of the Renaissance dances which were its inspiration, save for its dissonant conclusion.

Bartók's Portrait No. 1 had originally been written as the first movement of his first Violin Concerto; but the composer left it unpublished and repurposed this movement as the first of his two Portraits. The concerto in its original form was only first performed in 1958.

Szigeti gave the world premiere of the Bloch concerto in 1938 with Mitropoulos conducting the Cleveland Orchestra. Broadcast performances have been released of his performances the following year under Mengelberg and Beecham (the latter on Pristine PASC 410), the same year he made the first recording with Munch presented here.

Mark Obert-Thorn

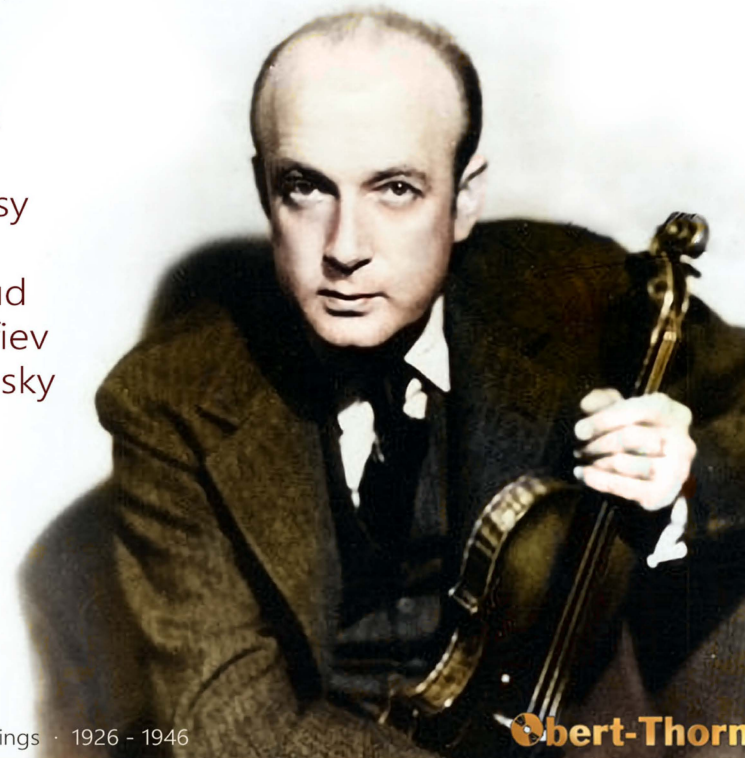
joseph szigeti

the european columbia recordings, volume 4

PRISTINE
AUDIO

PASC 695

bartók
bloch
debussy
ives
milhaud
prokofiev
stravinsky



studio recordings · 1926 - 1946

Obert-Thorn

disc one
(53:48) **WARLOCK** (arr. Szigeti) "Capriol" Suite
1. 1. Basse-Danse: Allegro moderato (1:32)
2. 2. Pavane: Allegretto, ma un poco lento (2:48)
3. 6. Mattachins: Allegro con brio (1:04)

4. **DEBUSSY** (arr. Dushkin) Menuet (No. 3 from Petite suite, L 65) (3:05)
5. **RAVEL** (arr. Leduc) Pièce en forme de habanera (2:34)
6. **MILHAUD** Le printemps, Op. 18 (2:53)
7. **MILHAUD** (arr. Lévy) Corcavado (No. 7 from Suadades do Brasil, Op. 67) (2:14)
8. **MILHAUD** (arr. Lévy) Tijuca (No. 8 from Suadades do Brasil, Op. 67) (2:21)
9. **LIE** (arr. Szigeti) Sne (Snow) (1:45)
10. **SZYMANOWSKI** Le fontaine d'Arthéuse (No. 1 from Mythes, Op. 30) (5:38)
11. **SCRIABIN** (arr. Szigeti) Etude in D flat major, Op. 8, No. 10 ('Etude in Thirds') (1:49)
12. **STRAVINSKY** (arr. Stravinsky/Dushkin) Pastorale (1:15)
13. **STRAVINSKY** (arr. Dushkin) Danse Russe from Petrushka (2:44)
14. **PROKOFIEV** (arr. Grunes) Gavotte from the 'Classical' Symphony, Op. 25 (1:34)

PROKOFIEV Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major, Op. 19
15. 1st mvt. - Andantino - Andante assai (9:13)
16. 2nd mvt. - Vivacissimo (3:58)
17. 3rd mvt. - Andante - Allegro moderato (7:21)

disc two
(71:10) **BARTÓK** (arr. Szigeti) Hungarian Folk Tunes (after For Children)

1. 1st mvt. - Parlando (1:02)
2. 2nd mvt. - Andante non molto (1:10)
3. 3rd mvt. - Allegro vivace (1:36)
4. 4th mvt. - Andante sostenuto (1:31)
5. 5th mvt. - Allegro (0:38)
6. 6th mvt. - Andante (0:46)
7. 7th mvt. - Poco vivace (0:53)

BARTÓK (arr. Székely) Romanian Folk Dances, Sz.56 (BB 68)

8. 1st mvt. - Jocul cu băță (Stick Dance) (1:09)
9. 2nd mvt. - Brăul (Sash Dance) (0:25)
10. 3rd mvt. - Pe loc (In One Spot) (0:52)
11. 4th mvt. - Buciumeana (Song of Buchumi) (1:29)
12. 5th mvt. - Poarga Românească (Romanian Dance) (0:32)
13. 6th mvt. - Măruntel (Fast Dance) (1:00)
14. **BARTÓK** Portrait No. 1 - Egy idealis (One Ideal), Op. 5, Sz.37 (9:05)

IVES Violin Sonata No. 4, "Children's Day at the Camp Meeting"

15. 1st mvt - Allegro (1:55)
16. 2nd mvt - Largo - Allegro (5:13)
17. 3rd mvt - Allegro (1:38)
18. **BLOCH** Nigun (Improvisation) (No. 2 from Baal Shem, B.47) (5:23)

BLOCH Violin Concerto in A minor

19. 1st mvt. - Allegro deciso (18:15)
20. 2nd mvt. - Andante (6:15)
21. 3rd mvt. - Deciso (10:23)

disc one
Nikita Magaloff, piano
(Tracks 1 – 3, 5, 9 – 14)

Kurt Ruhrseitz, piano
(Tracks 4, 6 – 8)

Sir Thomas Beecham (cond.)
London Philharmonic Orchestra
(Tracks 15 – 17)

disc two
Béla Bartók, piano
(Tracks 1 – 13)

Constant Lambert (cond.)
Philharmonia Orchestra
(Track 14)

Andor Foldes, piano
(Tracks 15 – 17)

Kurt Ruhrseitz, piano
(Track 18)

Charles Munch (cond.)
**Orchestre de la Société des
Concerts du Conservatoire**
(Tracks 19 – 21)

Joseph Szigeti, violin