

Myra Hess

Schubert • Brahms

Dame Myra Hess (25 February 1890 – 25 November 1965) was born in London as Julia Myra Hess, but was best known by her middle name. At the age of five she began to study the piano and two years later entered the Guildhall School of Music, where she graduated as winner of the Gold Medal. She studied at the Royal Academy of Music under Tobias Matthay. Her debut came in 1907 when she played Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 with Sir Thomas Beecham conducting. She went on to tour through Britain, the Netherlands and France. Upon her American debut in 1922, she became a prime favourite in the United States, not only as a soloist, but also as a fine ensemble player.

Hess garnered greater fame during World War II when, with all concert halls blacked out at night to avoid being targets of German bombers, she organized what would turn out to be some 1700 lunchtime concerts spanning a period of six years, starting during the London Blitz. The concerts were held at the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, Hess herself played in 150 of them. For this contribution to maintaining the morale of the populace of London, King George VI awarded her with the Dame Commander of the British Empire (DBE) in 1941, having previously been created a CBE in 1936.

Hess was most renowned for her interpretations of the works of Mozart, Beethoven and Schumann, but had a wide repertoire ranging from Domenico Scarlatti to contemporary works. She also played a good amount of chamber music. Her protégés included Clive Lythgoe and Richard and John Contaguglia. She was a teacher of Steven Kovacevich. In September 1961, Hess played her final public concert at London's Royal Festival Hall. She was forced to retire after suffering a stroke earlier that year while in New York on her annual concert tour in America. On November 25, 1965, Hess died at age 75 of a heart attack in her London home.

Jelly d'Arányi (30 May 1893 – 30 March 1966) was born in Budapest, the grand-niece of Joseph Joachim and sister of the violinist Adila Fachin. She began her studies as a pianist, but switched to violin at the Music Academy in Budapest when Jenő Hubay accepted her as a student. After concert tours of Europe and America as a soloist and chamber musician, she settled in London. On memorable occasions, she and Béla Bartók gave sonata recitals together in London and Paris.

She was an excellent interpreter of Classical, Romantic and modern music. Maurice Ravel dedicated his popular violin-and-piano composition Tristane to her. Ralph Vaughan Williams dedicated his Concerto Academic to her. Gustav Holst's Double Concerto for 2 Violins was written for Jelly and Adila. She died in Florence in 1966, aged 72.

Excerpts from Wikipedia - further biographies can be found on our website

Producer's Note

The source for the transfer of the Schubert trio (Hess's recording debut) was a mid-1930s "large label" American Columbia set, while the Brahms came from later pre-war US "microphone label" pressings.

Mark Obert-Thorn

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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Myra Hess

The Pre-War Trio Recordings

Schubert

Piano Trio No. 1

Brahms

Piano Trio No. 2



Jelly d'Arányi violin

Felix Salmond cello

Gaspar Cassadó cello

Studio recordings, 1927 & 1935

Obert-Thorn

Producer & Audio Restoration Engineer
Mark Obert-Thorn

Cover artwork based on photographs
of Myra Hess and Jelly d'Arányi

Schubert Piano Trio No. 1

Recorded 28 - 30 December 1927
in New York City
Matrix nos. W 98414-5, 98415-2,
98416-2, 98417-3, 98418-3,
98419-2, 98420-1 and 98421-2
First issued on American Columbia
67436-D through 67439-D in Album 91

Brahms Piano Trio No. 2

Recorded 25 October 1935 in EMI
Abbey Road Studio No. 3, London
Matrix nos.: CAX 7646-2, 7647-1, 7648-1,
7649-1, 7650-2, 7651-2, 7652-2 and 7653-2
First issued on English Columbia LX 8246
through 8249

Total duration: **61:26**

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AUDIO

Myra Hess Pre-War Trios

SCHUBERT Piano Trio No. 1 in B flat major, D.898

- 1 1st Mvt. - Allegro moderato (11:02)
- 2 2nd Mvt. - Andante un poco mosso (8:41)
- 3 3rd Mvt. - Allegro (4:03)
- 4 4th Mvt. - Allegro vivace (8:22)

BRAHMS Piano Trio No. 2 in C major, Op. 87

- 1 1st Mvt. - Allegro (9:55)
- 2 2nd Mvt. - Andante con moto (8:49)
- 3 3rd Mvt. - Presto (4:18)
- 4 4th Mvt. - Allegro giocoso (6:16)

Myra Hess piano
Jelly d'Arányi violin

Felix Salmond cello (Schubert)
Gaspar Cassadó cello (Brahms)