

Nathan Milstein (1904 -1992) was a Ukranian-born American virtuoso violinist. Widely considered one of the finest violinists of the 20th century, Milstein was known for his interpretations of Bach's solo violin works and for works from the Romantic period. He was also known for his long career: he performed at a high level into his mid-80s, retiring only after suffering a broken hand.

Milstein was born in Odessa, then part of the Russian Empire, the fourth child of seven, to a middle-class Jewish family with virtually no musical background. It was a concert by the 11-year-old Jascha Heifetz that inspired his parents to make a violinist out of Milstein. He started violin studies with the eminent pedagogue Pyotr Stolyarsky, also the teacher of David Oistrakh. When Milstein was 11, Leopold Auer invited him to become one of his students at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Milstein may in fact have been the last of the great Russian violinists to have had personal contact with Auer. He also studied with Eugène Ysaÿe in Belgium.

Milstein met Vladimir Horowitz in 1921 when he played a recital in Kiev. Milstein and Horowitz performed together throughout the Soviet Union and struck up a lifelong friendship. In 1925, they went on a concert tour of Western Europe together. Milstein made his American debut in 1929 with Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. He eventually settled in New York and became an American citizen. He toured repeatedly throughout Europe, maintaining residences in London and Paris.

A transcriber and composer, Milstein arranged many works for violin and wrote his own cadenzas for many concertos. He was obsessed with articulating each note perfectly and would often spend long periods of time working out fingerings which would make passages sound more articulated.

A recital he gave in Stockholm in July 1986 proved to be his final performance. It was recorded in its entirety, and shows the remarkable condition of his technique at age 82. A fall shortly afterwards in which he severely broke his left hand ended his career. He died of a heart attack in London on December 21, 1992, 23 days before his 89th birthday.

*(Notes adapted from Wikipedia)*

#### Producer's Note

This volume is the second of three which will reissue all of Nathan Milstein's published 78 rpm solo recordings for American Columbia. Although his concerto recordings from this period have appeared often on LP and CD, none of these solo discs, made between 1935 and 1945, have ever seen an "official" re-release by Columbia or its successor, Sony, and neither have they been presented before in their entirety elsewhere.

Milstein had made a few test recordings for HMV in 1932, which remained unissued on 78s when he was not signed to the label. Three years later, he began an association with American Columbia which lasted until 1947, although his last sides remained unissued when he began recording for RCA Victor in 1949. He would later record for Capitol, Angel/EMI and Deutsche Grammophon, with his final sessions being held in 1975.

This release presents all of Milstein's recordings of works from the Classical period issued during his Columbia years, as well as the first tranche of selections by Romantic era composers. It features his only commercial recordings of the Stamitz and Paganini works made during his long career, as well as the first CD/digital releases of the Gluck, Stamitz, Schumann and Brahms items. Pianist Artur Balsam became Milstein's accompanist in 1938, and is featured in most of his recordings between 1939 and 1955, while also pursuing a busy career as what Wikipedia described as "the accompanist of choice of international artists".

Mark Obert-Thorn



# milstein

## the american columbia solo recordings - volume 2



1. **GLUCK** (*arr. Kreisler*) *Mélodie from 'Orfeo ed Euridice'* (3:07)  
Recorded 21 May 1942 · Matrix: CO 32875-1 · First issued on Columbia 17408-D

### STAMITZ Violin Concerto in B-flat

2. 2nd Mvt. - *Adagio* (3:57)  
3. 3rd Mvt. - *Rondo* (2:35)  
Recorded 14 October 1940 · Matrices: XCO 28938-1 & 28939-2  
First issued on Columbia 70747-D

### MOZART Violin Sonata No. 17 in C, K.296

4. 1st Mvt. - *Allegro vivace* (4:03)  
5. 2nd Mvt. - *Andante sostenuto* (6:14)  
6. 3rd Mvt. - *Allegro* (3:30)  
Recorded 3 May 1939 · Matrices: WXCO 24462-A, 24463-C, 24464-C & 24465-C  
First issued on Columbia 69683-D & 69684-D in album X-143

### BEETHOVEN Violin Sonata No. 8 in G, Op. 30, No. 3

7. 1st Mvt. - *Allegro assai* (3:53)  
8. 2nd Mvt. - *Tempo di minuetto*,  
ma molto moderato e grazioso (8:27)  
9. 3rd Mvt. - *Allegro vivace* (3:02)  
Recorded 4 May 1939 · Matrices: WXCO 24471-A, 24472-A, 24473-A & 24474-A  
First issued on Columbia 69623-D & 69624-D in album X-137

### Nathan Milstein, violin

Artur Balsam, piano (Tracks 1, 4 - 9, 11 & 15)  
Leopold Mittmann, piano (Tracks 2, 3, 10 & 12 - 14)

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn  
Special thanks to Nathan Brown, Jim Cartwright of Immortal Performances, Inc., Charles Niss and the Yale Collection of Historical Sound Recordings  
(Mark Bailey, director) for providing source material  
Recording venues: Columbia Studios, New York (1935 – 1940) and Liederkanz Hall, New York (1942)

Total Timing: 62:04

10. **PAGANINI** (*arr. Kreisler*) *La campanella*  
(from Violin Concerto No. 2) (4:02)  
Recorded 4 January 1936 · Matrix: XCO 18477-1 · First issued on Columbia 68479-D

11. **SCHUMANN** (*arr. Hüllweck*) *Träumerei*  
(from *Kinderszenen*) (2:58)  
Recorded 27 April 1942 · Matrix: CO 32754-2 · First issued on Columbia 17337-D

12. **CHOPIN** (*arr. Milstein*) *Nocturne No. 20*  
in C-sharp minor, Op. Posth (4:15)  
Recorded 31 December 1935 · Matrix: XCO 18463-2 · First issued on Columbia 68480-D

13. **LISZT** (*arr. Milstein*) *Consolation No. 3* (3:46)  
Recorded 20 February 1936 · Matrix: XCO 18476-5 · First issued on Columbia 68479-D

14. **SMETANA** *Aus der Heimat - No. 2, Andantino* (4:53)  
Recorded 4 January 1936 · Matrix: XCO 18478-1 · First issued on Columbia 68480-D

15. **BRAHMS** (*arr. Joachim*) *Hungarian Dance No. 2 in D minor* (3:21)  
Recorded 30 April 1942 · Matrix: CO 32781-1 · First issued on Columbia 17352-D