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HAMILTON HARTY

CONDUCTS SCHUBERT

Sir (Herbert) Hamilton Harty (4 December 1879 – 19 February 1941) was born in Hillsborough, County Down, Ireland, the fourth of ten children of church organist William Michael Harty and his wife, Annie Elizabeth. Raised an Anglican, Harty played viola, piano, and organ as a child. Initially following in his father's footsteps, he held positions as a church organist from age twelve. He moved to London in 1901 to pursue a musical career as accompanist, and accompanied an impressive list of soloists, among them John McCormack, W.H. Squire, Joseph Szegedi, Fritz Kreisler, and soprano Agnes Nicholls, whom he married on 15 July 1904.

Nicholls' professional relationship with the Hungarian conductor Hans Richter was of great importance to Harty. After performing in Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* under Richter in 1908, she approached him on her husband's behalf. It was through this connection that Harty secured his first important conducting engagement: a performance of his tone poem *With the Wild Geese* with the London Symphony Orchestra in March 1911. The performance was a success, and he was engaged to conduct the orchestra again during its 1912–13 season. Hoping to reinforce his status as a composer-conductor, Harty gave the first performance of his *Variations on a Dublin Air* with the same orchestra in February 1913. Unfortunately, neither the critics nor the public shared his enthusiasm for his music: his concerts made a loss and he was not invited back for the following season. Nevertheless, his reputation as a conductor continued to grow, and he was invited to perform Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* and Bizet's *Carmen* at Covent Garden in 1913. But he had little sympathy with opera, preferring symphonic music instead. In January 1914 he conducted the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and in April he made his debut with the Hallé Orchestra of Manchester. His career was interrupted briefly by the First World War: in June 1916 he joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and was posted for duties in the North Sea, and he rose to the rank of lieutenant in 1917 before leaving in June 1918. In December he substituted for an indisposed Sir Thomas Beecham at a performance of Handel's *Messiah* with the Hallé Orchestra, and on 27 March 1919 he again replaced Beecham at a performance of J. S. Bach's *Mass in B Minor*.

Harty did most of his composing between 1901 and 1920, including his *Irish Symphony*, his tone poem *With the Wild Geese*, his *Violin Concerto*, and his setting of *Ode to a Nightingale* for soprano and orchestra, premiered by Nicholls. After short stints with the London Symphony Orchestra and elsewhere in England, Harty became permanent conductor of The Hallé in 1920, a position that he held until 1933. Under his baton, the Hallé became one of the premier orchestras in England. He was knighted in 1925. From 1931 to 1936, Harty toured in America and elsewhere, conducting in Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Rochester, as well as in Sydney, Australia.

Harty's health began to deteriorate sharply in 1936: a malignant brain tumour was discovered and surgery was required. After both the growth and his right eye were removed, Harty convalesced in Ireland and Jamaica during 1937 and 1938. Unable to conduct, he returned to composing: he set five Irish songs and wrote his last original composition, the tone poem *The Children of Lir*, during his convalescence. Following two studio concerts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra in December 1938 and February 1939, Harty returned to the Queen's Hall on 1 March 1939, directing the premiere of *The Children of Lir* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. After another period of convalescence in the summer of 1939 he undertook a full programme of concerts during the 1939–40 season. But his illness continued to trouble him, and he conducted for the last time on 1 December 1940. Because of Harty's estrangement from his wife, the conductor was nursed through his final illness by his secretary and intimate friend, Olive Elfreda Baguley. Harty died in Hove; after cremation his ashes were placed in Hillsborough parish church.

Producer's Note

The sources for the transfer of the concerto were primarily American Columbia "Full-Range" label pressings, with a patch from an earlier "Royal Blue" shellac copy to overcome the swish that most copies exhibit at the start of the first side. I have tried to correct the pitch fluctuations which plague the original recording. The ensemble is unknown, but may be the LSO, RPO, British SO, or a pickup combination thereof.

For the transfer of the symphony, I had the luxury of working from four American Columbia "Viva-Tonal" pressings, the most quiet form of issue for this set. An anomaly among other English Columbia recordings of the period, this one has hardly any pitch problems and plays at just about 78 rpm. The main problem here was overcoming blasting during loud passages caused by the original owners' use of fiber needles, for which the multiple copies came in handy. The original recording venue is unknown, but is definitely not the expansive acoustic of Free Trade Hall in Manchester, the Hallé's usual locale. Discographic expert Michael Gray believes it was likely done in Fyvie Hall, London, where Beecham had made recordings for Columbia the previous month.

Mark Obert-Thorn, reissue producer

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HAMILTON HARTY

CONDUCTS

SCHUBERT

CELLO CONCERTO SYMPHONY No. 9

WITH

GASPAR CASSADÓ, CELLO
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
HALLÉ ORCHESTRA

STUDIO RECORDINGS, 1928 AND 1929

 **Obert-Thorn**

Harty conducts Schubert

SCHUBERT (arr. Cassadó) Cello Concerto in A Minor

(adapted from the "Arpeggione" Sonata, D.821)

- 1 1st mvt. - *Allegro moderato* (11:44)
- 2 2nd mvt. - *Adagio* (3:33)
- 3 1st mvt. - *Allegretto* (8:28)

Gaspar Cassadó cello

Symphony Orchestra

SCHUBERT Symphony No. 9 in C Major ("The Great") D.944

- 4 1st mvt. - *Andante; Allegro ma non troppo* (13:40)
- 5 2nd mvt. - *Andante con moto* (14:51)
- 6 3rd mvt. - *Scherzo: Allegro vivace* (7:32)
- 7 4th mvt. - *Allegro vivace* (11:59)

Hallé Orchestra

Conductor Sir Hamilton Harty

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn



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Cover artwork based on a photograph of Sir Hamilton Harty

Cello Concerto

Recorded 5th March, 1929
in Central Hall, Westminster
Matrix nos. WAX 4739-4744 (all Take 3)
First issued on Columbia LEX 1-3

Symphony No. 9

Recorded 14th January, 1928
in Fyvie Hall, London
Matrix nos.: WAX 3184-1, 3185-3,
3186-3, 3187-3, 3188-1, 3189-3, 3190-3,
3191-3, 3192-3, 3193-3, 3194-1, 3195-3,
3196-3 and 3197-1
First issued on Columbia L 2079-2085

Total duration: 71:47

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