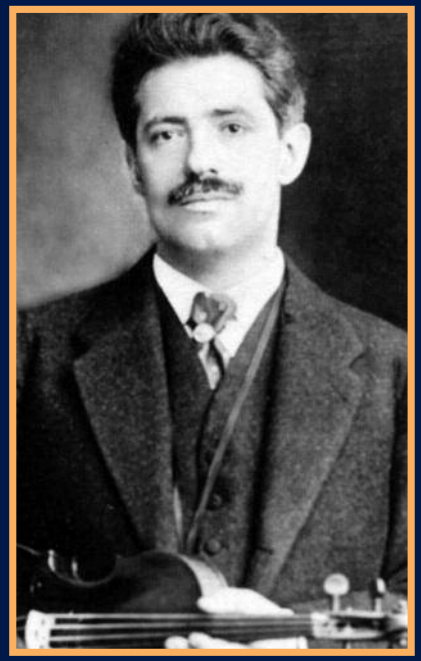

Great Violinists • Kreisler

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THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS • 4

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Fritz Kreisler

Recorded 1916-1919

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962)
The Complete Recordings • 4

Victor Talking Machine Co.

Johann Brandl (1835-1913):
Der liebe Augustin
1 The Old Refrain (arr. Kreisler) **2:53**
rec. 14th January 1916
mat. B-14343-5; cat. 64529

Enrique Granados (1867-1916):
12 Danzas españolas, Op. 37
2 No. 5: Andaluza (Playera) (arr. Kreisler) **3:39**
rec. 14th January 1916;
mat. B-16986-2; cat. 64556

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962):
3 **Berceuse romantique, Op. 9** **3:34**
rec. 14th January 1916;
mat. B-16989-3; cat. 64565

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904):
7 Gypsy Melodies 'Zigeunerlieder', B. 104 (Op. 55)
4 No. 4: Songs My Mother taught me **3:07**
rec. 14th January 1916;
mat. B-17013-2; cat. 64563

Jules Massenet (1842-1912): Thaïs
5 Méditation (arr. Marsick) **4:22**
rec. 14th January 1916;
mat. C-8944-5; cat. 74182

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962):
6 **Liebesfreud** **3:14**
rec. 14th January 1916;
mat. C-8951-4; cat. 74196

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962):
7 **Aubade provençale** (in the style of Couperin) **2:24**
rec. 7th February 1916;
mat. B-17119-1; cat. 64202

Stephen Foster (1826-1864):
8 **Old Folks at Home** (arr. Kreisler) **3:24**
rec. 7th February 1916;
mat. B-8939-4; cat. 64130

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897):
9 **Hungarian Dance No. 5** **2:08**
(arr. Joachim in G minor)
rec. 7th February 1916;
mat. B-8969-2; cat. 64131

Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884):
Aus der Heimat, T 128 (From the Homeland)
10 No. 2: Andantino 'Bohemian Fantasie' **3:51**
rec. 7th February 1916;
mat. C-8942-4; cat. 74172

Pyotr Il'ych Tchaikovsky (1840-1893):
String Quartet No. 1 in D major, Op. 11
11 II. Andante cantabile (arr. Kreisler) **4:35**
rec. 11th May 1916;
mat. C-17671-1; cat. 74487

Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805):
String Quintet in E, Op. 11, No. 5 (G 275)
12 III. Minuet (arr. Kreisler) **3:01**
rec. 29th May 1916;
mat. B-17753-2; cat. 64614

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962):
13 **Rondino on a Theme by Beethoven** **2:15**
rec. 29th May 1916;
mat. B-17754-2; cat. 64600

Georges Bizet (1838-1875):
L'Arlésienne
14 Adagietto (arr. Godard) **2:24**
rec. 29th May 1916;
mat. B-17755-1; cat. 64601

Herbert Spencer (1878-1944):
15 **Underneath the Stars** (arr. Pasternack) **3:11**
rec. 1st March 1917;
mat. B-19321-2; cat. 64660

Raymond Hubbell (1879-1954): The Big Show
16 **Poor Butterfly** **3:14**
rec. 1st March 1917;
mat. B-19322-3; cat. 64655

Franz Schubert (1797-1828):
Rosamunde, D 797
17 Ballet Music No. 2 (arr. Kreisler) **3:03**
rec. 1st March 1917;
mat. B-19323-1; cat. 64670

Felix Winternitz (1872-1948):
18 **Dream of Youth** (arr. Pasternack) **2:39**
rec. 16th July 1917;
mat. B-19324-3; cat. 64730

Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941):
19 **Minuet in G, Op. 14, No. 1** (arr. Kreisler) **3:08**
rec. 16th July 1917;
mat. B-20333-3; cat. 64709

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962):
20 **Polichinelle** (arr. Pasternack) **1:31**
rec. 16th July 1917;
mat. B-20339-1; cat. 64731

Franz Schubert (1797-1828), arr. Kreisler:
Moments musicaux Op. 94, D 780
21 No. 3 in F minor **1:51**
rec. 25th February 1919;
mat. C-8943-4; cat. 74202

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764):
Les fêtes d'Hébé
22 Tambourin (arr. Kreisler) **1:49**
rec. 25th February 1919;
mat. C-8943-4; cat. 74202

Mary Earl (1862-1932):
23 **Beautiful Ohio** **3:19**
rec. 23rd May 1919;
mat. B-22863-10; cat. 64817

Alexander Krakauer (1866-1894):
24 **Paradise** (arr. Kreisler) **3:26**
rec. 23rd May 1919;
mat. B-22865-9; cat. 66023

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962):
25 **La Gitana** (arr. Lapitino) **2:49**
rec. 23rd May 1919;
mat. B-22866-4; cat. 64842

Charles Robert Valdez (?-?):
26 **Sérénade du Tzigane** (arr. Kreisler) **3:41**
rec. 23rd May 1919;
mat. B-22868-3; cat. 64857

1-10 with piano accompaniment by **Carl Lamson**

11 with string quartet: **Howard Rattay**, violin **T. Levy**, violin • **J. Fruncillo**, viola • **Rosario Bourdon**, cello • **Walter B. Rogers**, conductor

12-13 with string quartet: **Howard Rattay**, violin • **T. Levy**, violin • **J. Fruncillo**, viola • **Alfred Lennartz**, cello • **Rosario Bourdon**, conductor

14 with string trio: **Howard Rattay**, violin **J. Fruncillo**, viola • **Alfred Lennartz**, cello • **Rosario Bourdon**, conductor

15-20, 23-26 with **Orchestra • Josef Pasternack**

21-22 with piano accompaniment by **Maurice Eisner**

1-10, 21, 22: recorded in New York City
11-20, 23-26: recorded in Camden, New Jersey

Thanks to John Bolig and Lawrence Holdridge

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962)

The Complete Recordings • 4

The years 1916–19 found Fritz Kreisler at his peak as an artist but also brought one of the lowest points of his career. Based in New York, he had become accustomed to giving many concerts in the city and touring all over America. In the first half of 1916 New Yorkers heard him play his *C major Concerto* (still attributed to Vivaldi), Tchaikovsky's *Concerto* and two performances of Brahms's *Double Concerto* with Pablo Casals. 'The two artists were animated by the same spirit and kindled by the same enthusiasm,' reported *The New York Times*. Kreisler set two sacred Latin Texts for his friend John McCormack to sing in recital, and gave fund-raising concerts for a free children's hospital, destitute musicians, music teachers and music students stranded in Vienna, and the six orphaned children of Enrique Granados (who was lost with his wife Amparo when the Germans torpedoed the Sussex in the English Channel). Having summered with his wife Harriet at Seal Harbor, in the 1916-17 season Kreisler treated New York to four Carnegie Hall recitals, partnered not just by Carl Lamson but by German pianist Carl Friedberg, who played sonatas with him. Kreisler gave the première of the concerto by Ernest Schelling with Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra and played such standard concertos as the Bruch *G minor*, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky, also twice performing Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* with Harold Bauer and Casals. On 6th April 1917, however, America entered the European war; and by 27th June the first GIs were landing in France. Up to now Kreisler had been considered a war hero and his account of life in the trenches had been selling well. On 18th August he and McCormack were cheered by 10,000 people at their first American joint concert, in Ocean Grove, New Jersey. Kreisler's initial Carnegie Hall recital of the new season, on 28th October, also went well, but on 7th November it was reported that 'patriotic societies' in Pittsburgh objected to forthcoming appearances by him and Karl Muck. In vain Kreisler pointed out that he had been supporting some sixty British, French, Russian and Italian children stranded in Vienna, and that the only other money he had sent to Austria had been a monthly remittance for his 74-year-old father. On 26th November he cancelled the rest of his tour, asking to be released from contracts worth $85,000. He still appeared in the major centres, where audiences were more sophisticated, played in aid of victims of the Halifax disaster in Nova Scotia and fulfilled four of five planned quartet concerts with members of the disbanded Kneisel Quartet (his fees went to charity). But on 8th March 1918 he called off all concerts and devoted himself to composing his operetta *Apple Blossoms* and a *String Quartet* which the Letz Quartet premièred at Aeolian Hall on 15th April 1919.

The man who was to become the epitome of Viennese style was born Friedrich Kreisler in Vienna on 2nd February 1875, the son of a Polish physician. He could read music at three. His first violin lessons came from his father Salomon, a keen amateur, and he went on to Jacques Auber, leader of the Ringtheater orchestra. In 1882 he became the youngest student admitted to the Vienna Conservatory, where among his tutors were Josef Hellmesberger Jnr (violin) and Anton Bruckner (composition), and made his début at Carlsbad (Karlovy Vary) with the singer Carlotta Patti, sister of Adelina. 'Some very great men played at the Conservatory when I was a pupil,' he recalled. 'There were Joachim, Sarasate in his prime, Hellmesberger [Snr], and [Anton] Rubinstein, whom I heard play the first time he came to Vienna. I really believe that hearing Joachim and Rubinstein play was a great event in my life and did more for me than five years of study!' At ten he won the Conservatory gold medal, was given a three-quarter-size Amati by friends and transferred to the Paris Conservatoire (studying violin with Joseph Massart, composition with Leo Delibes). He met César Franck, played in the Pasdeloup Orchestra and in 1887 took a first prize in violin. In 1888–89 he toured America with the Polish pianist Moriz Rosenthal, making his début in Boston on 9th November 1888 with the Mendelssohn *Concerto* conducted by Walter Damrosch. He spent two years back in Vienna, broadening his education, considered following his father's profession and did two years' medical training, then his military service. In 1896 he opted for music and, turned down for the Court Opera Orchestra by the concertmaster Arnold Rosé, began his career as a virtuoso. He toured Russia, met Glazunov, found a wealthy sponsor and gradually advanced himself, getting to know Joachim, Wolf and Schoenberg as well as Brahms. In January 1898 he made his concerto début in Vienna with Bruch's *G minor*, conducted by Hans Richter, and in March 1899 had an even greater triumph when he played Bruch's *D minor*, Vieuxtemps's *F sharp minor* and Paganini's *'Non più mesta' Variations* for his Berlin Philharmonic début under Josef Rebicek. In November 1899 he was back in Berlin for the Mendelssohn *E minor Concerto* under Arthur Nikisch. In 1900 he toured America and in 1902 appeared in London, playing the Beethoven *Concerto* at the first of Richter's concerts, on 12th May, and the Bruch *G minor* at the third. That year he married Harriet Lies. In 1904 he received the Philharmonic Society gold medal, in 1910 he toured Russia again and by the outbreak of World War I, he was known worldwide. After brief war service during which he was wounded, he was domiciled in the United States. From 1924 Kreisler made his home in Berlin but spent much time in America and recorded with Sergey Rachmaninov. In 1932 his second operetta, *Sissy*, had its successful première in Vienna. With the rise of Hitler in 1933, he boycotted Germany because of the treatment of his fellow Jews. When he admitted in 1935 that many 'Baroque' and 'Classical' pieces in his repertoire were his own compositions, he caused an international scandal – the English critic Ernest Newman was particularly miffed. After the Anschluss of Austria by Hitler in 1938, Kreisler became a French citizen, then emigrated permanently to the United States, taking citizenship in 1943. His career was more or less ended in 1941, when he was hit by a van while absent-mindedly crossing a New York street. He was in a coma for four weeks; and although he recovered and did not stop playing in public until 1950, he was never the same again. He died in New York on 29th January 1962.

By 1916, the Victor engineers were capturing Kreisler's tone with astonishing fidelity and he himself was playing better than ever. A fair amount of studio time was therefore given to making substitutes for some of his earliest American recordings, as the master discs were getting a little tired. Kreisler and Carl Lamson began their 14th January session with something new, the violinist's lovely transcription of Dvořák's most famous song, using the old trick of putting the second verse up an octave. The rest of the day was devoted to tidying up unfinished business from earlier sessions: Kreisler's own *Liebesfreud* (an insouciant replacement for the 1910 version) and *Berceuse romantique* (the sole version of this piece in his discography); *The Old Refrain*, based on '*Du alter Stefansturm*' from Brandl's operetta *Der liebe Augustin* and featuring beautiful double-stops for the final verse; the *Méditation* from Massenet's *Thaïs* (another remake of a 1910 disc), with sensitive variations in bow pressure; and a single successful 10-inch take of Granados's compelling *Spanish Dance*, demonstrating Kreisler's wonderful *parlando* bowing. A redundant take of Godowsky's *Wienerisch* (see Volume 3) was also made, as a safety measure. On 7th February three more 1910 sides, Foster's *Old Folks at Home*, Smetana's *From the Homeland No. 2* and Brahms's *Hungarian Dance No. 5*, were remade; but two other attempts at replacements, Kreisler's *Caprice viennois* and his 'Tartini' *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*, were failures. The *Caprice* would reach Take 12 in 1924 before everyone was satisfied; and he would never return to the 'Tartini'. Another of his mock Baroque items, the charming 'Couperin' *Aubade provençale*, was achieved in one take; but his 'Dittersdorf' *Scherzo* was aborted after experiments with 12-inch and 10-inch takes. On 10th May Kreisler had a cordial session with McCormack; and the following day he made just two takes with string quartet (Howard Rattay, T. Levy, J. Fruncillo, Rosario Bourdon) of Tchaikovsky's *Andante cantabile*, conducted by Walter Rogers. Bourdon took over the baton on 29th May and was replaced in the quartet by Alfred Lennartz, for rather fast and heartless renditions of Boccherini's *Minuet* and Kreisler's *Rondino*. The latter, a virtuoso elaboration of the opening theme of Beethoven's *G major Rondo for violin and piano, WoO 41* – dedicated to the young Mischa Elman to 'punish' him for clowning around with it, not long after its

composition – really needed a 12-inch side, as did the Boccherini. Godard's arrangement of Bizet's *Adagietto*, with just a string trio, fared better. Kreisler's three 1917 sessions, with Josef Pasternack directing a small orchestra, worked out well, although two numbers had to be redone, Winternitz's *Dream of Youth* being demoted from 12-inch to 10-inch. All were persuasively played, especially the violinist's own *Polichinelle Serenade*, rhythmically delightful, *Poor Butterfly*, with lovely rubato, Paderewski's *Minuet*, a nice Kreisler scoring done with delicate rhythm, and Schubert's *Ballet Music*, secured in one mellifluous take.

Understandably, no Kreisler sessions took place in 1918; but the signing of the Armistice on 11th November that year brought an end to the violinist's 'enemy alien' status; and even though he did not judge it politic to appear in concert for almost a further year, records could be made without fuss or fanfare. When he was finally able to return to the studios, on 25th February 1919 with Maurice Eisner at the piano, he achieved a neat replacement for a 1910 tour de force, fitting Schubert and Rameau morsels on to one 12-inch side; but two attempts to effect a similar remake of Dvořák's *Humoresque* were not liked – it was eventually done with orchestra. Sessions with orchestra on 21st and 22nd May produced 26 unused takes; but among the 21 further takes inscribed on the 23rd were publishable versions of the waltz *Beautiful Ohio* – composed by Robert A. 'Bobo' King under the name 'Mary Earl' and later adopted as the state's official song – Rimsky-Korsakov's *Song of India* (to come in Volume 5), Alexander Krakauer's *Paradise*, Kreisler's own *La Gitana* and Charles Robert Valdez's *Sérénade du Tzigane*, another showcase for the great violinist's inimitable vocal style.

Tully Potter

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FRITZ KREISLER (1875-1962)
THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS • 4

Playing Time 78:32

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1	**Brandl: Der liebe Augustin:** The Old Refrain	2:53
2	**Granados: 12 Danzas españolas, Op. 37:** No. 5: Andaluza	3:39
3	**Kreisler: Berceuse romantique, Op. 9**	3:34
4	**Dvořák: 7 Gypsy Melodies 'Zigeunerlieder', Op. 55:** Songs My Mother taught me	3:07
5	**Massenet: Thaïs:** Méditation	4:22
6	**Kreisler: Liebesfreud**	3:14
7	**Kreisler: Aubade provençale (in the style of Couperin)**	2:24
8	**Foster: Old Folks at Home**	3:24
9	**Brahms: Hungarian Dance No. 5**	2:08
10	**Smetana: Aus der Heimat:** No. 2: Andantino 'Bohemian Fantasie'	3:51
11	**Tchaikovsky: String Quartet No. 1, Op. 11:** II. Andante cantabile	4:35
12	**Boccherini: String Quintet Op. 11, No. 5:** III. Minuet	3:01
13	**Kreisler: Rondino on a Theme by Beethoven**	2:15
14	**Bizet: L'Arlésienne:** Adagietto	2:24
15	**Spencer: Underneath the Stars**	3:11
16	**Hubbell: Poor Butterfly**	3:14
17	**Schubert: Rosamunde, D 797:** Ballet Music No. 2	3:03
18	**Winternitz: Dream of Youth**	2:39
19	**Paderewski: Minuet, Op. 14, No. 1**	3:08
20	**Kreisler: Polichinelle**	1:31
21	**Schubert: Moments musicaux, D 780:** No. 3 in F minor	1:51
22	**Rameau: Les fêtes d'Hébé:** Tambourin	1:49
23	**Earl: Beautiful Ohio**	3:19
24	**Krakauerr: Paradise**	3:26
25	**Kreisler: La Gitana**	2:49
26	**Valdez: Sérénade du Tzigane**	3:41

Tracks 1-10, 21, 22: recorded in New York City
Tracks 11-20, 23-26: recorded in Camden, New Jersey
Recordings made in 1916, 1917 and 1919
A complete track list can be found in the booklet

The 1916-19 period saw Fritz Kreisler at his peak as an artist, although the shadow cast by America's entrance to World War One in 1917 forced him to cancel numerous concerts. The improved fidelity possible by 1916 saw Kreisler making substitutes of his earlier American recordings, including his own *Liebesfreud*. Amongst an abundance of technical marvels, Kreisler's superb 'parlando' bowing is demonstrated in Granados's *Spanish Dance*. The string quartet recordings include a fine *Andante cantabile* by Tchaikovsky, and persuasive performances with small orchestra in 1917 include *Beautiful Ohio* which would later be adopted as the state's official song. After the Armistice, Kreisler was able to return to the studio in 1919 for showcase works such as Valdez's *Sérénade du Tzigane*.

Producer and Audio Restoration Producer: Ward Marston
Thanks to John Bolig and Lawrence Holdridge
Cover Image: Fritz Kreisler, circa 1915 [Private Collection]

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