

The Great Violinists - Volume XXVIII

This album in the Symposium Records series *The Great Violinists* is remarkable on several grounds. It comprises of three very fine sonatas, each is played by world-class violinist and each is accompanied by a world-class pianist. In addition, of the first two violinists these are the only significant recordings whilst records of the first pianist are of great rarity.



ANDRÉ PASCAL (Paris 1894- 1976) studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Guillaume Rémy, Lucien Chevalier and Charles-Marie Widor, taking a first prize in 1911 and then studying with Jean Huré at the Ecole Normale. His début in Paris in 1911 was followed by solo appearances at Troyes in 1912 and in Dieppe in 1913. He toured Europe and North America in 1918 and 1919. In 1919 he founded the Quatuor Pascal. He played in the Paris Opéra Orchestra and he was a soloist with the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, the Colonne and Lamoureux Orchestras and on French Radio. Pascal taught at the American Conservatory, Fontainebleau. He retired in 1951. He was also a composer, writing mainly for his own instrument. Of his pitifully few recordings, the Saint-Saëns Sonata is the most significant.



ISIDORE PHILIPP (Budapest 1863-Paris 1958) entered the Paris Conservatoire at the age of 16 to study with Georges Mathias, a pupil of Chopin and of Kalkbrenner, and he left in 1883 with the first prize for piano. He received advice from Stephan Heller (a pupil of Czerny who had studied with Beethoven), Theodore Ritter (a pupil of Liszt) and Saint-Saëns.

He appeared frequently at the Colonne, Conservatoire and Lamoureux Concerts, and he toured Europe, making his first appearance in London at a Philharmonic Society concert in 1890. In that year, also, he, Berthelier and Loeb started a chamber music group with which he toured for about 10 years. In 1896 he took over the Société des Instruments à Vent and for some years he toured with this also.

From 1893 until 1934 he was one of the most significant piano professors at the Conservatoire and from 1921 to 1933 he also taught at the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau. He left France for America in 1940 where he taught in New York and at the Conservatoire de Musique du Québec in Montréal. After the war he taught in New York and in Paris. He gave his farewell recital in Paris at the age of ninety-two.

A contemporary at the Conservatoire was Claude Debussy. They became lifelong friends and after Debussy's death Philipp came to be regarded as the leading expert on his music.

Phillip died after falling on the Metro. He is buried in the Père Lachaise Cemetery. He was a member of the Légion d'Honneur and he wrote various piano pieces.

PAWEL KOCHANSKI (Odessa 1887-New York 1934) was of Polish parentage and was already being taught at the Warsaw Conservatory by Emil Mlynarski at the age of seven. In 1901 he was leader of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra. Two years later he moved to the Brussels Conservatoire to join César Thomson's class. Such was his ability and progress that but four months later he was awarded a Premier Prix avec la plus grande distinction. He was immediately on the world

circuit as a soloist and he promoted the works of his friend Szymanowski. He returned to Warsaw in 1907 to teach the virtuoso violin class at the Conservatoire and in 1913 he followed Leopold Auer as violin professor at the Imperial Conservatoire of St. Petersburg. In addition, at this time he was regularly touring Europe.

In 1917 he tried to leave Russia, but was compelled to teach in Kiev, however, after two years he was able to return to Poland. He soon took up concerts again and in 1921 made his American *début* with the New York Symphony Orchestra. Then, in 1924 he began to teach at the Juilliard School.

He was decorated with the order of Chevalier de Légion d'Honneur.

For an artist of his calibre his recorded repertoire is but slight, consisting of a number of encore and salon pieces made around 1920 for the Vocalion company and just this one major work for the Victor company in 1932.

ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN (Łódź 1887-Geneva 1982) was the son of a successful manufacturer and the youngest of eight children. At the age of two he was discovered to have perfect pitch and at the age of four he was a child prodigy. With such aptitude he studied piano in Warsaw until he was 10 and was then sent to Berlin to study piano with Karl Heinrich Barth and composition with Max Bruch, and he had some advice from Paderewski.

After astonishing success in an orchestral concert in Berlin in 1900, he soon appeared in Dresden, Hamburg and Warsaw. After six solo recitals in Paris and a concert with the Lamoureux Orchestra, he achieved further success in London. His first American tour, in 1906, comprised of 40 concerts, but was not particularly successful.

In 1912 Rubinstein made his home in London and as the First World War ended he began again to play all over the world. During the Second World War he lived in the United States, and after that war once more resumed his world tours.

Early in his life Rubinstein was reluctant to take pupils, for example, turning down Wilhelm Kempff's request for lessons, but later on he did agree to teach, even to giving masterclasses. He asserted that too much practice led to lack of inspiration in live performance. He claimed that only after his marriage (at the age of 45) did he really start to work; he wanted his children to remember him as someone who was a great pianist rather than as someone who might have been a great pianist.

Although Rubinstein was best known as a soloist, he was also very highly regarded as a partner in chamber music. He and Pawel Kochanski, with whom he plays in this album, were very close and he was deeply saddened by his friend's early death.

Rubinstein's stamina was apparently unlimited. As late as 1973 he played the "Emperor" Concerto in the Royal Festival Hall, an occasion on which he and Edward Heath received the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society. However, retirement was finally forced upon him in 1976 by failing eyesight.

Throughout his life he was deeply attached both to Poland and to his Jewish origins. After the Second World War he refused ever to visit Germany again on account of the many members of his family who had perished in German-held territories.

He wrote two volumes of autobiography, *My Young Years* (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.) and *My Many Years* (Jonathan Cape Ltd.). They are amusing, informative and detailed, indeed astonishingly detailed in view of his claim never to have kept a diary. They include, for example, menus of particular meals eaten seventy and more years before. He recounts that only in retirement could he sit and listen to music, complete operas for example, which he had never had time to hear before.

TOSCHA SEIDEL (1899-1962) travelled to America with Leopold Auer, his teacher and made his *début* just half a year after Heifetz. Seidel was certainly not inferior to Heifetz or Elman; for many he combined in good measure the technique of one and the fire of the other; and his sound was somewhere between the two. But those six months made him just too late; a country cannot be ruled by two emperors. Less melodramatically; there may have been other reasons; perhaps his personality was not able to cope with the strains of a big career or perhaps he was less fortunate in promotion. Carl Flesch, one of the most acute judges and no bestower of unearned praise, wrote "that the quality of his tone is one of the most beautiful that I have heard... Technically, too, he is excellently equipped... an injustice that he is not considered the third in the triumvirate with Heifetz and Elman." In London, his Brahms concerto was likened to Kreisler's. Whatever the reasons, he eventually settled in Hollywood, earning his bread in the film studios. Even now his name can sometimes be spotted fleetingly on the silver screen when a movie hero is required to perform on the violin.

ARTHUR LOESSER (New York City 1894-Cleveland 1969) came of a musical family and was taught by his father until he was ready for lessons with Stojowski, a pupil of Paderewski, at the Institute of Musical Art (now the Juilliard School). He also studied zoology at Columbia University. He made a successful *début* in Berlin in 1913. He made his New York *début* in 1916. A tour of Australia in 1920 included accompanying the violinist Mischa Elman. During the '20s and '30s he appeared frequently with the conductor Wilfrid Pelletier in a piano duo. In 1926 he joined the Cleveland Institute of Music, an association which lasted for forty-three years. From 1953 he was head of the piano department. During the Second World War he was with the United States Army Intelligence Department. His work required him to study Japanese in which he became sufficiently proficient to lecture in that language in Japan after the war. During the 1960s he played in a series of television engagements. Loesser was as much renowned for his qualities as an accompanist as he was as a soloist. He was the author of several books including *Men, Women, and Pianos*. He also wrote notes for LPs and many programme notes for the Cleveland Orchestra. His half brother Frank Loesser, sixteen years his junior, was very successful as a composer and librettist on Broadway.

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