

Albert Hirsh

P i a n i s t



A P a s s a g e i n T i m e

Contents

A Musical Legacy	1
Notes to the Recordings.....	18
Concert Artists	40
Discography	41
Works By Composer	42
Other Notes	44

Cover Photo: *Albert Hirsh played a major role in Houston's music scene for nearly 40 years. This 1950s photo appeared on the cover of KRBE-FM's program guide in March 1962.*

A Musical Legacy

Albert Hirsh was a great musician. His career as a concert pianist spanned more than six-and-a-half decades; as a teacher, about the same. His musical legacy lives on in the memories of concertgoers, in the hearts of fellow musicians with whom he shared the stage, and in the ongoing performing and teaching careers of many of his students.

His artistry, of course, can't be captured in statistics. It can be described, to be sure, but far better, it can still be listened to.

He made very few commercial recordings (see Discography on page 41), but over the years I managed to collect a good number of tapes, cassettes and compact discs of live performances. After his passing in December 2003, a few more of these came to light.

Preserving them in a form that could be played not only by myself but by others who were close to him became a compelling project, the end result of which is now in your hands.

Along with the Albert Hirsh Scholarship Fund administered by the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston, this booklet and accompanying CD collection constitute a fitting memorial to my father, who devoted most of his 88 years to making music. (He lived one year for each note on the standard piano keyboard.)

Editing and producing 36 CDs (a total of more than 27 hours of music!) was no small project. This collection comes to you as a gift from the Hirsh family in the hopes that the musical legacy of Albert Hirsh will remain available in audible form and continue to be enjoyed by at least a few of those who knew him.

Amazing Gifts

Think about the "gift of music" for a minute. It has many meanings. There's the gift of the performing artist who momentarily brings a work to life. There's the unfathomable gift of the composers who permanently shared their inspiration via ink and paper. And taken for granted today, the gift of technology that preserves the fleeting performances of those inspired compositions and interpretations for any number of future listeners.

But then imagine the days of Bach or Beethoven, when the only listening was to live performances. Imagine how seldom in an entire lifetime one could hear a favorite sonata

or symphony repeated. For much of the population outside the great cultural centers of Europe, hearing a touring pianist like Franz Liszt play a transcription might be the one and only opportunity to hear a complete Beethoven symphony.

What a gift that listeners today can become so intimately familiar with hundreds, even thousands of great works, and replay them at the flick of a remote control!

Both Depth and Breadth

Billed as an interpreter of great sensitivity, praised as a dazzling performer of modern chamber works, Albert Hirsh was also amazing in the range of his musicianship. He covered an immense repertoire of chamber music, from Baroque to contemporary and everything in between. He played works from each era with equal mastery.

He stayed faithful to the composer's intention, while bringing out all the delicacy or the power and passion of a passage. He could bring out the humor of a piece. And he could leave audiences breathless.

I can never forget the time he performed the fifth Brandenburg Concerto at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, and his cadenza toward the end of the first movement was so electrifying the normally proper crowd of very experienced concertgoers burst into applause at the movement's close. It was one of those inspired occasions when the performance simply exceeded all expectations.

There are many other unrecorded performances and interpretations I remember vividly, spanning the full range of his repertoire. I can still see them and hear them, but of course can't share them. Just the titles start them replaying in my head. The Brahms *F Minor Piano Quintet*. The Beethoven *Triple Concerto*. The Chausson *Concert for Violin, Piano and String Quartet*. The Mendelssohn *Double Concerto for Violin and Piano*. The Brahms *Horn Trio*. Schubert's trios and "*Trout*" *Quintet*. Ravel's dazzling *Tzigane*. All of the cello sonatas of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. The list goes on and on. There were also bravura works in his early concert repertoire that I never got to hear him perform, such as Tchaikovsky's first piano concerto and Liszt's *Paganini Variations*.

Fortunately, this collection of performances now preserved on compact disc is fairly extensive and represents the breadth of his repertoire as well as his artistic development over the passage of six full decades—from 1939 to 1999.

A Musical Legacy

Getting Started

Albert Hirsh was born in Chicago on July 1, 1915. His Russian-born parents, Louis and Sonia Hirsh, had permanently emigrated to the United States in 1909 and 1906, respectively, from Ismail, a city in the region known as Bessarabia. Today, Ismail is in southernmost Ukraine, but during the past century-and-a-half Bessarabia changed hands several times, alternating between Turkish, Russian, Rumanian and Soviet control.

The family name of Hershkovitch was shortened to Hirsh in a classic case of immigration via Ellis Island. Louis, an amateur violinist, was a trained chemical engineer and later worked as an insurance actuary.

When Louis and Sonia discovered that Albert had perfect pitch, they bought him a Victrola and a piano. Soon he was playing on the piano everything he heard on the phonograph. He began piano lessons when he was seven years old. His brother Berny, one year older, studied violin. As a duo, they gave many a recital at their mother's social gatherings while growing up. Berny went on to become a certified professional accountant, but his brother "Obby" stuck with the keyboard. The Chicago Musical College granted him one free lesson weekly and a partial scholarship for the second weekly lesson.

When Albert was 11, he became a pupil of Djane Lavoie-Herz, a French-Canadian who had moved to Chicago from Toronto seven years earlier. Her tutelage would take him far (in spite of the dire warnings voiced in a letter from the disappointed manager of the Chicago Musical College).

A Distinguished Pedigree

In the 1980 film *The Competition*, starring Richard Dreyfuss and Amy Irving, the piano teacher played by Lee Remick tells her pupil about the importance of musical lineage—how authoritative knowledge and stylistic tradition are passed along from one master to the next, from the great composers and performers on down to today's aspiring musicians. I was startled when she then quickly ticked off her own lineage, from Beethoven, to Carl Czerny, and eventually to Artur Schnabel and then to her own teacher.

The Artur Schnabel part is what got my attention, because Schnabel taught Djane Lavoie-Herz, who taught Albert Hirsh. Here was something worth looking into!

Sure enough, Schnabel studied with Theodor Leschetizky, a Polish-born pianist, composer and teacher who studied with Czerny, a prolific student of Beethoven's. Czerny today

is best known as the writer of about 1,000 etudes and other compositions, many of which were designed to build keyboard technique and finger dexterity in young pianists. He also wrote books on the art of playing the piano and interpreting various composers.

Czerny began his studies with Beethoven at a young age in Vienna, and later gave many concerts of Beethoven's works—with the master himself in attendance. (Talk about *pressure*!) He also premiered some of Beethoven's concerti and other works. He promoted the legato style that was both appropriate for Beethoven's compositions and demanded by the technical evolution of the keyboard instrument.

Students of Czerny included Franz Liszt and Leschitzky. They both studied with Czerny at a young age, and Leschitzky began teaching in his own right at about 14, eventually shaping a whole new generation of musicians. Besides Artur Schnabel, his pupils included Ignace Paderewski and many other highly acclaimed pianists. His teaching emphasized proper sitting position and demeanor at the keyboard, the production of pure and beautiful sound, and paying attention to the inner singing of a phrase and—the space between all the notes.

Leschetizky is said to have combined the classical training of Czerny and the cantabile style of Chopin with the brilliance of Liszt. He died in 1915, the year that Albert Hirsh was born.

Just as Czerny and Leschitzky had done in prior generations, Austrian-born Schnabel went to Vienna to study piano at a very early age (by which I mean between 7 and 11 years old) and immersed himself in music there. He met Brahms and other famous musicians, and in 1890 made his concert debut. As his career developed, he became famous for championing the works of Beethoven, performing them often, including all 32 piano sonatas and the five piano concerti, which he also recorded. At the time, performing a complete sonata cycle as Schnabel did was a new concept.

Schnabel was considered one of the world's leading pianists in the 1920s and 1930s and was known for his distinctive interpretations. Djane Lavoie-Herz studied with him for several years, spending winters in Berlin and summers in the Austrian Tyrol. Prior to that she studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, which she attended at the age of 16, and then with a teacher in Paris.

While studying with Schnabel in Berlin, she also met Russian pianist and composer Alexander Scriabin, who had taught her prior teacher, Canadian Alfred La Liberté. She became a disciple of Scriabin's mystical theosophy for



Albert's teacher, Mme. Djane Lavoie-Herz (the first name is pronounced d'yonn) inscribed this photo for her "very dear friend and pupil" on December 18, 1936.

a number of years and urged her piano students to read a book on the subject.

She began a successful concert career in Canada in 1908. Her performances over the next six years typically included works of Liszt, Scriabin and Brahms, among others. She gave two well-received recitals in New York in 1915. However, around 1918 a hand injury forced her to give up public performance and devote more of her time to teaching. The following year, she moved to Chicago and soon was well established there as a teacher.

At her studio she hosted a salon—an active meeting place not only for her own students but also for young composers and musicians passing through Chicago. Her studio was an open venue. Students were allowed to listen to all the lessons and ask questions or join in discussions of music and countless other topics. It was the scene of many performances of avant-garde music, allowing composers to try out their new works.

When Mme. Lavoie-Herz moved to New York in 1932, the studio/salon became an even more active magnet for musicians. Artists who dropped in to play with their peers included Jascha Heifetz, Isaac Stern and Artur Rubinstein.

Mme. Lavoie-Herz was described as animated, charismatic, and striking (even exotic) in appearance. She sported a large turquoise ring on her middle finger, and when hosting her salon wore long velvet robes and dresses with trains. Her home and studio were filled with medieval, Oriental and contemporary art, including large mystical works she painted herself. She provided a very stimulating environment for her students, and also demanded a great deal of them.

In Albert Hirsh's case, even though he was already playing concerti and major solo works, for an entire year she had him play only exercises to build technique. After that, he could work on performance pieces again. In a 1933 interview with the *Ottawa Citizen*, he lamented that too many music teachers were ignoring the basics and just having their pupils play compositions. "From my own experience I realize what folly and extravagance it is to have inadequate teaching for beginners." He added that you can't overestimate the importance of "the best teaching from the very beginning." In other words, his first four years of instruction were sadly lacking in the essentials of technique.

After his year of technical exercises under Mme. Lavoie-Herz, he began to relearn compositions by Bach that he had previously played only as exercises, and for the first time started to learn their deeper meaning. We shall let his first teacher, a famous member of the staff of the Chicago Musical College, remain nameless.

Of course, Albert later gained a tremendous amount of additional insight and experience from performing with so many of the world's best musicians while in his 20s and 30s. He was part of a concert trio with Emanuel Feuermann and violinist Erica Morini, with whom he also toured. She was one of the very first female violinists to hold her own in the male-dominated world of concert artists. Over time, the list of artists Albert appeared with was like a *Who's Who* of the leading violinists, cellists and vocalists of the time. (See "Concert Artists" on page 40.) This ongoing enrichment of his musical experience continued for many more decades.

Making Moves

Albert's first professional recital occurred unexpectedly in December 1931, when he was 16. Another pianist, Shura Cherkassky, had to cancel an engagement at the Decatur, Illinois, Music Club, and Albert Hirsh was quickly lined up to fill in. The day after the concert, the newspaper declared in the review's headline, "Piano Recital By Unknown Chicago Youth Delights Decatur Audience." The program consisted of two Bach preludes, sonatas by Mozart and Beethoven, two works by Debussy, and two pieces of Chopin as encores. The reviewer wrote that additional study would make this talented youth "an outstanding artist," and also noted that "he was gracious and entirely self possessed."

That same year, Mme. Lavoie-Herz (her husband later anglicized his part of the name to Hearst) wanted to move to New York where there was more opportunity for interchange with up-and-coming musicians and composers. While visiting the city, she accepted an invitation to have lunch at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Ira S. Wile. Mrs. Wile had

A Musical Legacy

heard of Madame's active salon and was greatly interested in how she might somehow get involved. Over wine, Mme. Lavoie-Herz expressed her desire to move to New York but said she couldn't do so yet—she had a very promising student she couldn't leave behind in Chicago. His name was Albert Hirsh.

Mrs. Wile said she could easily solve that problem by having Madame's student stay at the Wile residence, a five-story brownstone at 264 West 73rd Street, one block from Riverside Drive. Mme. Lavoie-Herz was so taken aback, she leaped out of her chair and rushed over to her hostess.



ALBERT HIRSH, 15 young pianist of Chicago, will play Monday night for Decatur Music club. Described by great masters of the piano "as good as he is handsome," the boy's program, published last Sunday, shows him able to undertake a thoroughly difficult concert. Decatur will hear him before he has made his debut in the music world, which is scheduled for 1933 in New York.

This caption from the Decatur Herald in December 1931 understated his age by one year. He was actually 16.

After determining the offer was for real, she excitedly accepted on Albert's behalf. Planning the details of their eastward migration began immediately.

Thus it was that in early 1932, at the age of 16, Albert arrived in New York to continue his studies with the teacher who had already taken him so far. Of course, his black Steinway came with him—once Siegfried Hearst convinced Sonia Hirsh that it was worth the \$20(!) trucking fee to avoid having to buy a new instrument in New York.

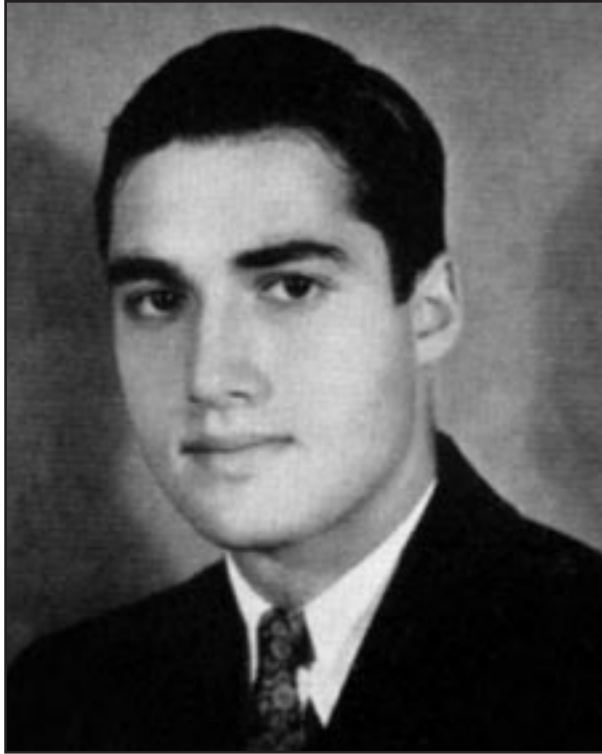
Albert stayed in what had been one of the maids' rooms, but there were a few details that Mrs. Wile failed to anticipate. The grand piano ate up half the space in the Wiles' living room, which couldn't very well be used by anyone else while he practiced all morning. At the time, he was working on Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto, the romantic nature of which was not lost on one member of the household—Mildred, a high school senior who was one year older than the new boarder. Albert had already graduated from Lakeview High School in Chicago six months earlier, at 16.

By the time Mildred left home to study modern dance at Bennington College its very first year of operation, she and Albert had frequently been going out to concerts at Town Hall and Carnegie Hall, taking advantage of free passes he got from a contact at Juilliard.

At that point Albert was renting a large room in someone's apartment at 67 Riverside Drive, only about six blocks from the Wiles. It had a view of the Hudson and cost seven dollars a week. On weekends he took the train to Vermont to see Mildred, arriving there at 2 a.m. He rented another room in North Bennington, adjacent to the college. The joke around campus was that Bennington wasn't coed, except for Albert. And of course, he gave a piano recital there.

His own college experience consisted of a single semester at Columbia University, where he took one course in French and another in philosophy. After that, his entire focus was on establishing his career as a pianist. He told the *Sioux City Journal* that "one can not do two things well when music is one of the studies." He also said his "daily practice quota" was five hours, "that much being essential and more, futile." The interviewer also noted that Albert loved to play baseball and tennis.

At some point, he took a summer class in conducting at Tanglewood, led by none other than Leonard Bernstein. Many years later, he occasionally conducted a chamber orchestra from the keyboard while performing a Baroque concerto or playing continuo. He would remind me he had



Albert was 19 when NBC Artists Service released a promotional flyer with this photo.

been trained by Bernstein, but always with tongue in cheek. He knew he was not much of a conductor.

The Concert Life Begins

In December 1933, with His Excellency the Governor General in the audience, Albert appeared with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra doing the Rachmaninoff, which had been composed only 15 years earlier. The review reported that “Hirsh played with fire and verve and very musical tone.” It also said “it was not surprising that he received recalls which made encores imperative.” He played three Chopin etudes.

Albert was 19 when he appeared in his New York Town Hall debut on January 30, 1935. *The New York Times* picked up on the publicity materials pointing out that his training was wholly in America. Apparently, it was generally accepted at that time that a musician normally had to have studied in Europe to be any good. Suddenly, it was noticed that now the New World could turn out accomplished artists on its own! (In reviewing an earlier concert of Albert’s, another newspaper had stated, “He is fast disproving the accepted doctrine that only foreigners can win acclaim on American shores...”)

The *Times* went on to describe the Town Hall recital’s opening: “Dark and boyish, with the close-knit physique

of a college athlete, he sped to the piano and plunged into the Bach-Liszt . . . at a pace possible to ardent youth.” The reviewer also commented that he “made the music talk.” The program included works by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and Chopin.

About a year-and-a-half later, in 1936, Mildred graduated from Bennington. Almost exactly a year after that, she and Albert were married. Dr. Wile called the couple “Milbert,” and for a while the nickname stuck. They lived in New York about another six years, during which Albert continued to pursue his concert career.

He performed in Town Hall on several more occasions, both solo and with others. His solo recital in February 1939 was captured on a set of privately made 78-rpm records, which we’ve transcribed onto the first two compact discs in this collection.

Learning a Very Special Art

Albert Hirsh began his professional career as a pianist giving solo recitals, appearing on some of the same concert series as artists like Artur Schnabel and Sergei Rachmaninoff. He started out being represented by the husband of Mme. Lavoie-Herz, Siegfried Hearst, whose career was in concert management. At some point, for reasons that have not been documented, Hearst dropped Albert from his roster of artists to promote. Whether due to a spat between Hearst and Madame, management concerns about a conflict of interest, or some other issue, the recital bookings stopped.



Made in New York by Bruno of Hollywood, this image is sort of a cross between Marlon Brando and Liberace.

A Musical Legacy

This led to a new direction for Albert when Mme. Lavoie-Herz introduced him to the legendary cellist Emanuel Feuermann, whom Hearst was representing at NBC Artists Service (later NBC Concerts). Feuermann was looking for a new pianist because in 1940 his former accompanist, Franz Rupp, had accepted a large contract from impresario Sol Hurok to accompany the great contralto Marian Anderson. So he began teaching Albert the discipline of ensemble playing. It was performing with Feuermann that led to Albert's finding his true calling as an accompanist and chamber musician.

Feuermann is still revered today as one of the greatest cellists of all time. He recorded piano trios on RCA Victor with Heifetz and Rubinstein and tossed off virtuoso showpieces with ease. He had a distinctive style and technique, practiced very little, and could pull off stunts—seemingly effortlessly—that left listeners incredulous. One of these was to play the last movement of Mendelssohn's violin concerto on the cello, exactly as written for violin, and make it sound better than most violinists could. He had a command of the cello's upper register that no one else could touch, perhaps related to his earliest start on the instrument. His father tried to teach him the violin as a

very young child, but the boy insisted on playing it vertically. Rather than fight his son, he attached a long pin to the end of the violin and gave him cello lessons instead.

A child prodigy intensely inspired by hearing Pablo Casals perform, Feuermann made his debut at the age of 11 as soloist with the Vienna Philharmonic. By the time he was 16, he auditioned successfully for a teaching post at the Cologne Conservatory. Throughout his career, he felt strongly that great musicians are obligated to pass on their knowledge to the next generation.

After his American concert debut in 1935, the cellist known as Munio to his friends rapidly became world-famous, giving 150 concerts on five continents in a year-and-a-half. In 1938, he had to leave Germany and emigrated to the United States. Siegfried Hearst had prodded him to do so to further his concert opportunities, as well.

During that same year, Feuermann performed an unheard-of feat—playing 13 works for solo cello and orchestra in a four-concert marathon at Carnegie Hall with the National Orchestral Association. Both the stamina and the virtuosity created a sensation in New York.

As a teacher, Feuermann was known to be very hard on his students. He rarely gave compliments, and on occasion would bop pupils on the head with his bow. As Albert's coach, he was what today would be called a screamer, yelling verbal abuse until he got just the desired effect from the piano. Albert never complained; he just grew as a musician. And he certainly never adopted Feuermann's teaching style.

In the biography *Emanuel Feuermann, Virtuoso*, Seymour Itzkoff writes: "Albert Hirsch (*sic*), also a fine pianist, was Feuermann's last accompanist. Feuermann always took a certain amount of fatherly pride in giving his accompanists—they made pitifully little—an opportunity to get the requisite experience to further their careers."

Perhaps that partly explains an incident that occurred early in their relationship. After their first appearance in concert, Mme. Lavoie-Herz came backstage and gushed, "Didn't he play wonderfully?" Feuermann retorted, "He never played *before*." The sound of her hand slapping the cellist's face could be heard by anyone standing within 20 paces. Such was the degree to which each felt personally invested in ensuring Albert's success—and that apparently included bragging rights.

Albert appeared several times with his mentor at Town Hall, sometimes doing three Beethoven cello sonatas in a program. It was normal in those days for the violinist or

Albert Hirsch

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Some early publicity portraits, such as the one in this Chicago flyer, went for the moody look.

cellist to play without music, but Albert did the same on several of these sonata recitals, which was highly unusual. He wasn't trying to show off—he just knew the works so well, there was no point in taking the music onstage.

His pay in those days—the going rate—was only \$25.00 per concert. Feuermann sometimes offered more, depending on the fee he received himself.

Death of a Legend

Unfortunately, this collaboration with Emanuel Feuermann was cut short by the cellist's untimely death in May 1942. Preparing for a "routine medical procedure" (*hint*: cellists sit a lot) Feuermann sent his cello home with Albert for safekeeping while he was in the hospital. Dad rode the subway lugging the 1730 instrument, probably one of the last six made by Stradivarius. When he got back to his apartment he stored the cello underneath the piano, where it had often rested when Feuermann took his unusually long vacations from practicing.

For some reason, the operation was performed by Mrs. Feuermann's gynecologist at a small private hospital that catered to refugees. An infection set in and without the benefit of today's routine antibiotics, the results were soon fatal. Feuermann was six months shy of his 40th birthday and had just received his full American citizenship two weeks before he died.

The music world mourned. More than 300 musicians attended the funeral in New York. Artur Schnabel performed the funeral march from Beethoven's Opus 26 piano sonata, a string quartet led by Erica Morini played Beethoven's Opus 74 ("*Harp*"), then Morini and Albert Hirsh performed the Arioso from Bach's *Cantata No. 156*. Honorary pallbearers included conductors Arturo Toscanini, Eugene Ormandy and George Szell, pianists Rudolf Serkin and Artur Schnabel, and Siegfried Hearst. Toscanini broke down crying, then shouted, "This is murder!"

Dad returned the cello, known today as the "Feuermann" Stradivarius, when he called on Eva Feuermann sometime after the funeral. The instrument was later sold to a friend who was a collector, then passed to cellist Aldo Parisot at the Yale School of Music. Eventually it was purchased by the Nippon Music Foundation of Japan for more than \$1 million. The Feuermann Strad is heard regularly today in concerts by cellist Steven Isserlis, to whom it is on loan from the foundation.

When he died, Feuermann's unfinished work included a planned series of RCA Victor recordings of the major trio



This publicity shot of Emanuel Feuermann was disseminated by NBC Concerts in 1938.

literature with Jascha Heifetz and Artur Rubinstein. He was scheduled to have a session with them shortly after his hospital stay. Only a few weeks earlier, RCA had done a test pressing of Feuermann playing the slow movement of Victor Herbert's second cello concerto, with Albert Hirsh at the piano. It was Feuermann's last recording session. That one movement was finally released on a Cello Classics compact disc in 2001 as part of a collection of rare Feuermann recordings.

Helping the War Effort

Albert and Mildred had their first child, Oliver, in 1940, followed by Conrad in late 1941. Albert's performing and teaching career, as well as family life, was interrupted when he was drafted into the Army. His draft notice came the day before the services stopped drafting men with children who were born before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Mildred and the young boys moved to Vermont and on April 7, 1944, Albert reported for duty at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. After infantry basic training, he drove trucks and to become a radio operator learned Morse code. Then for about a year, he served as an administrative clerk, interviewing and testing enlisted men prior to their receiving specialized assignments. From time to time, PFC Hirsh (later, Corporal Hirsh) also gave piano recitals to entertain his fellow soldiers.

A Musical Legacy



This portrait was taken at home in the early 1950s, not long after Albert and the family moved to Houston.

His regular concert career resumed after his year and nine months in the Army. He traveled extensively to perform with many prominent artists while using Vermont as home base. A third son, Ethan (yours truly), was born there in 1947.

Albert would catch the Montreal-to-New York train in Albany at 3:00 a.m. and be in New York at a decent hour in the morning to make whatever other connections were next. (This lifestyle “worked up to a point,” he told an interviewer many years later.) He spent most of the 1948 concert season touring Europe with French violin virtuoso Zino Francescatti.

Going Texan

According to a brief career history printed in a 1951 Houston Symphony program, it was while touring the U.S. with Francescatti that “he began to look about for a city with a musical community of promise and progress in which he might establish himself.”

That city turned out to be Houston. At the urging of an Army buddy, Albert stopped off there on his way home from a concert with Nathan Milstein in Mexico City. Convinced that Houston indeed looked promising, he decided to make the big move. He picked up a new Ford sedan from the factory in Detroit, sold the house on Main Street in North Bennington, Vermont, packed up the family and headed for Texas.

Coming from the Green Mountain State, the summer heat was a shock, as was the sight of brown lawns baked by Houston’s worst drought in many years. But in addition to neighborly hospitality, the newcomer found a city well supplied with patrons of the arts and audiences hungry for classical music. He performed the Rachmaninoff with the Houston Symphony in the summer of 1950. (He also started practicing in his underwear, keeping a towel handy. Until the house was air conditioned, Houston’s heat and humidity made routine activities pretty miserable.)

Before long, Albert was performing for virtually every existing concert series in town, and quickly helping to found new ones. He was a master at creating performance opportunities for himself and his fellow chamber musicians.

He was a founder or charter member of The Music Guild; the Jewish Community Center Recital Series; the Chamber Music Society of Houston sponsored by the Houston Museum of Fine Arts; the J. S. Bach Society (of which he was musical director); and the Coastal Concert Society in outlying League City, Texas. At the University of Houston, he was instrumental in starting the Virtuoso Quartet, a faculty quartet-in-residence which was under professional management for engagements beyond the U of H campus. Later he was a member of the Lyric Art Quintet. He performed on virtually all other major music series in the city, including Houston Friends of Music, Society for the Performing Arts and the Houston Chamber Orchestra. He also helped start a concert series at the University of Houston’s Clear Lake City campus, as well as a series at Texas A&M University in College Station.

After moving to Houston, he was especially in demand when a touring soloist required a pianist west of the Mississippi. He played in big cities and small towns; at colleges and universities all over the country; and in Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico. For a few summers in the early 1950s, he was also part of the Dartmouth Trio, putting on six weekly concerts in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Performing between 50 and 60 concerts per year—an average of about one per week—he was considered the most active pianist residing in the Southwest. He was versatile enough that even when the sonata recital business dried up after a while, due to presenters’ changing tastes, he stayed busy. By the time his career was complete, he estimated he had appeared onstage about 2,000 times.

The “A” Word

Through his work with Feuermann early in his career, Dad had quickly mastered the art of accompaniment, and as his career developed he collaborated with a large number of the most widely known violinists, cellists and singers of the century. Yehudi Menuhin, Nathan Milstein and Itzhak Perlman, to name a few.

To anyone familiar with most of the repertoire, “accompanist” is somewhat a dirty word. It belittles the technique and artistry involved in being a collaborative musician.

It’s true that some programs do feature an instrumentalist or singer who is more or less “accompanied by so-and-so at the keyboard.” Indeed, the featured soloist (or the presenter) is paying for the pianist’s services at a lower rate than the one with the star billing receives. Still, the pianist has to have a special knack for blending perfectly with the accompany-ee, not drowning out the soloist, and staying in step with perfect precision. Even if the piano part *sounds* simple, it’s not an easy job.

As Dad sometimes pointed out in interviews, it was a total misconception that an inferior pianist could make it as an accompanist. The technical demands alone, presented by so many works of Beethoven, Schubert and plenty of other composers, require first-rank musicianship.

Nonetheless, many newspaper critics—even at the esteemed *New York Times*—showed their lack of understanding of the equal roles of the two parts in major sonatas by mentioning the pianist in a single sentence at the end of a lengthy review.

That’s not the only reason being a professional accompanist means setting one’s ego aside. It often involves discussing the composer’s intentions in a particular piece of music, but ultimately supporting the other performer’s interpretation. In one busy week or so of concerts in the late 1950s, Dad played the Franck sonata with three different violinists, playing it differently each time to suit the preferences of each artist.

His goal was always to provide such a solid base of support that the other musician could concentrate fully on communicating through the music. Violist Gaetano Molieri recalled recently, “I always felt a freedom in performing with Albert to take advantage of the inspiration of the moment, yet keeping the structure of the music intact.” Dad put his concept of good support this way: “They feel at ease and they let loose.”

Clarinetist Jeffrey Lerner recalls that Albert was a consummate collaborator. “He used to say during rehearsals, ‘What do you think about this? How do *you* feel?’ He was always listening and willing to hear other points of view.”

Having performed extensively with some of the leading singers of his day, he also knew how critical it is for the pianist to know a great deal about vocal pieces to be presented. He wanted to know the words, regardless of which language they were in, not only to gauge the singer’s phrasing but also to know the mood and emotion to communicate to the audience.

Having a rehearsal with the singer did not always answer all his questions, though, as the following story demonstrates. It’s from an article entitled “The Art of the Accompanist” in the November 1979 issue of Houston’s *Performing Arts* magazine.

“When the Spanish soprano Montserrat Caballé concertized here a decade ago, her accompanist was Albert Hirsh. She brought with her some manuscripts of Spanish songs that were otherwise unavailable. Hirsh found himself rehearsing [at a downtown hotel] the night before the concert, sitting on a high stool (there was no bench) while the soprano whispered her way through the songs to conserve her voice.

“ ‘I had no idea how much she was going to open up in performance, loud or soft. I very quickly got an idea of what the tempi were, and I had to gauge the rest or just trust to instinct and my own musical judgement. Turned out to be a wonderful concert,’ Hirsh recalls.”

Caballé was certainly pleased. She insisted he join her for all the curtain calls.

In addition to sonatas and other works for two instruments, or for piano and voice, Dad also performed most of the piano trio, quartet and quintet repertoire, all part of what’s collectively known as chamber music. Again, public misconception is rampant.

Contrary to the image presented by Hollywood (where typically a plodding string quartet playing a Haydn adagio puts listeners to sleep quicker than Sominex®), chamber music includes some of the most dynamic and passionate classical music there is. Many of the piano parts require every bit as much virtuosity and stamina as a concerto, as you’ll hear on many of the recordings in this collection.

A Musical Legacy



The Dartmouth Trio performed for several summers in the early 1950s in both Woodstock, Vermont and Hanover, New Hampshire. Joining Albert Hirsh were Edwin Sherrard, violin and Arnold Kvam, cello.

Why Brahms?

During one of Dad's newspaper interviews in the early years in Houston, the reporter asked him to name his favorite composer. He responded without hesitation: "Brahms." I don't recall that the reporter pursued *why*. More than 50 years later, I found myself wondering what was behind Dad's choice.

After listening to these recordings, and doing a little analysis, I think I can answer the question with reasonable certainty. Brahms' music not only embodies deep feelings and power; it also makes use of the deep lower register of the keyboard and the sustain pedal in a way unequalled before, and probably since.

There is something weighty yet not overstated about a big, bold and deep Brahms chord that holds your attention. It has a rich presence and is impossible to ignore. It is also sublimely beautiful. It doesn't need to beg for attention—it stands on its own.

But part of what would make Brahms especially appealing to a pianist like my father is due to the keyboard technology that had become available to the composer. Brahms was one of the first great masters who got to write for the full capability of the modern piano, which evolved essentially to its current form during his lifetime.

Brahms grew up with the piano as part of his life. His father was a street musician and gave him lessons at an early age.

Johannes moved on to a professional instructor when he was seven, and advanced quickly. His recital as a 10-year-old was so impressive that a promoter in the audience wanted to rush him off on a tour of America. Fortunately, the advice of others prevailed and steered Brahms to more concentrated musical studies so he could improve his composing, which was already under way.

At 16, he performed some of his own works along with a sonata of Beethoven. His abilities as a keyboard virtuoso earned him recognition as well as opportunities to play his own works for the public.

Beethoven's achievements in composing for piano were monumental, and Brahms had a marble bust of the master staring down at him as he composed his own works. But compare even the grandest chords of Beethoven with those of Brahms and you'll usually hear a difference. The keyboard Brahms was using had more notes at both ends, and he made grand use of the added range. The change in pianos was one of the factors in this evolution of music.

Brahms favored Austrian pianos for their rich, mellow tone. That helped his chords, many of which combine the lower and upper registers, to come across. He also liked very large instruments, no doubt to convey all the power he was writing into his works. (Robert Schumann said of Brahms shortly after their first meeting, he "transformed the piano into an orchestra of lamenting and jubilant voices.")

Whether with orchestra, a chamber ensemble or a sonata partner, Brahms' piano always holds its own, no matter how much else is going on.

I think Dad liked all of the above.

The Academic Albert

While all his concertizing was going on, Dad also maintained a four-decade career at the University of Houston. He would sometimes fly as much as 3,600 miles in 48 hours to play a program in a distant city and then get home in time to teach his normally scheduled students.

He joined the university's faculty as a part-time music instructor in 1950 and three years later became a full-time associate professor of music, Artist-in-Residence and head of the piano department.

Dad helped launch the nation's first weekly live classical program on educational television in the 1950s, carried on the University of Houston's KUHT-TV. Videotape had not yet come into use, so each Wednesday evening the half-hour program would open with a close-up of Dad's hands as he actually played the opening bars of a Chopin nocturne. The performances included solos and chamber music for a variety of instruments. I loved getting to sit in the control booth and watch the producer call the shots as students with earphones wheeled their huge television cameras around the studio.

Promotion to full professor of music came in 1957. Dad got a kick out of the fact that when he marched in the university's commencement processions each year, he was always the only member of the entire faculty without any academic colors on his robe to represent degrees earned.

He served from time to time as acting chairman of the School of Music, and for many years was director of applied music programs. At the university he also taught advanced repertory coaching for students of any instrument, something he first began doing in the 1930s. For this type of instruction, he was extremely well equipped. An issue of the program guide for KRBE-FM put it this way: "...his extraordinarily comprehensive repertoire includes virtually the entire string, vocal and chamber music literature as well as that of his own instrument."

Another important contribution Albert Hirsh made to the university was recruiting many of the long-term members of the music faculty, quite a few of whom he performed with frequently.

Finally, towards the end of his university career, he was named Professor Emeritus.

For seven summers, from 1974 to 1980, Dad taught in a very different setting at the American Institute for Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria. He gave classes in accompaniment and related topics that fit in with AIMS' intensive six-week program in the study of vocal music as it relates to the singer, the pianist and the instrumentalist. For many students, AIMS training led immediately to contracts with European opera companies.

Having become very familiar with the 850-year-old city of Graz, surrounded by mountains and a stimulating musical environment, Dad enjoyed his Austrian summers immensely.

Love of Teaching

The music-teaching career of Albert Hirsh began in about 1933, when he started living on his own and needed the income. A friend set him up with about ten students in New Jersey. For the next 65 years, he would only rarely be without private pupils. Teaching, whether at home or at a university, was a major part of his personal commitment to music.

It was another mark of his professionalism that just as he gave the same dedication to every single work he performed, he treated all his students with equal respect and planning, whether a child or an advanced graduate student.

His thoughtful approach is well illustrated by the story Timothy Hester tells about his second private lesson with Professor Hirsh, as a 12-year-old private pupil who had previously studied for five years with another piano teacher.

"Needless to say, I was a little nervous going to play for him—a figure about whom I had known since I was little. He assigned a piece by Handel which I practiced and practiced all week, eager to please him. Unfortunately, I didn't learn the correct key signature in this piece (it had an F-sharp).

"I went to my next lesson and Mr. Hirsh let me play the piece all the way through without stopping. Then, after much praise for my obvious effort, he simply said, in passing, as if it were no big deal at all, that the key signature had an F-sharp in it. He made it seem as if we were discovering this fact together, and I felt absolutely no humiliation at all. This sensitivity showed great wisdom on his part, something that I was very lucky to experience."

Today, Timothy Hester is not only an accomplished pianist. He fills many of the roles that Professor Hirsh carried out

A Musical Legacy

at the University of Houston several decades ago. The torch was thoroughly passed.

Some might think he was old-fashioned, but Dad would not permit his students to wear jeans to their lessons. I think it had little to do with sartorial style. He simply felt that dress should reflect one's respect for the music, the composer and the instrument. And yes, for the process by which musical knowledge gets handed down from generation to generation.

He also filled a broader role as teacher that went beyond music per se. He was often mentor and counselor to students in need of guidance. I know, because I used to hear the conversation during many of the lessons he gave at home. He knew that his student would have to be fully functional as a person to be fully functional as a musician or as a music teacher, so counseling was sometimes worked into the lessons as needed.

For one extremely talented young man, this extra service frequently included a wake-up call from Albert Hirsh when the student overslept on the morning of his scheduled piano lesson. Dad's persistence paid off. The young man pulled his life together and went on to a brilliant career.

Over the years, Dad's students became classical performers, professors of music, private and secondary school music teachers, church musicians, advanced amateurs, and very capable parents of another generation of music students. Some employed their classical training and technique to become highly successful jazz and entertainment artists.

Occasionally, Dad gave piano pedagogy workshops for the benefit of other music teachers. One of these, offered as Music Ed. 412 at the University of Houston in 1963, gave one hour's college credit and had the following course description: "Elements of piano technique. Aspects of style and interpretation. Effective piano study and practice. Open discussion of teaching problems common to the field of piano pedagogy. Evaluation of current teaching methods and collections." All that for just \$20.00!

The Best Seat in the House

Even though I grew up living with two piano teachers, my own childhood piano lessons didn't go very far. I did master the recorder, though, well enough to play Baroque works with Albert Hirsh as my—well—accompanist. We would often perform after-dinner music for guests, such as sonatas by Bach, Handel, Marcello, Telemann and Vivaldi. That was fun, but not as memorable as my other musical calling.

For quite a few years, beginning when I was perhaps 11, I accompanied Dad onstage as his "factory-trained" page-

turner. I may have had some piano and recorder lessons, but I was not what you'd call a trained musician. I knew how to read music and follow orchestral scores, but I relied a lot on the visual cues found on the printed music. That worked great when there were clear melodic lines that went up and down, or a steady rhythm in the left hand, but often I had to come up with other techniques. And if all else failed, I could count on Dad's head to bob my direction at the appropriate time.

It was of course an advantage that I'd heard his practicing for weeks before the concert, and could even turn pages sometimes while he practiced to enable me to get really familiar with a piece. By the time I was a teenager, I had developed plenty of methods to keep my place on the page. I also had an excellent feel for how far ahead Dad was reading the music so I could turn based on his eyes, not his fingers.

By the time I was in my 20s, I was making notes for a manual (yet unwritten) on the methods and perils of pageturning. To my knowledge, none exists. (I'm referring to manuals, of course—the perils are plenty!) If I got really off in a fast movement, Dad would bark "Turn!!" If I started to turn too early, whichever hand he could spare would bat the page back like lightning without missing a beat. But most of the time, I was quite proficient.

I decided later that since it took lots of concentration and nerves of steel, pageturning was great preparation for my four years in military air traffic control. As I look back on it now, I also see it as a rare form of father-son bonding. I helped arrange the chairs and music stands, carried the music, shared those tense moments before walking out from behind the curtain, and there in the glare of stage lights was privileged to sit at his left elbow during dozens of performances.

It was definitely the best seat in the house.

From Father to Son

My brother Oliver before me had had a tour of duty as homegrown pageturner. (Actually, we were a second-generation act. Dad turned pages at recitals in Town Hall and elsewhere in New York while a student.) Compared to me, Oliver had the advantage of being a serious student of music. He also had received a lot of very early exposure to music—sometimes at quite close range.

Feuermann had told Dad he couldn't practice at his own home while his baby girl was sleeping. To make a point, one day Oliver's bassinet was put in the same room as Dad's piano, positioned so that the cellist would not notice it when

he arrived to rehearse. When the rehearsal was over, and before Feuermann had left, Oliver was wakened and lifted from the bassinet. Sleeping through music? No problem!

Oliver took violin lessons when he was about four, took up cello at the University of Houston when he was 14, and also studied piano with Dad. At 16, he went to Paris to study harmony and conducting with Nadia Boulanger while continuing his work on the cello. A year later he settled (permanently, it turned out) in Denmark, where his interest turned almost wholly to Baroque and particularly Renaissance music. He studied for a time at the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen.

For the past four decades Oliver has been active as a performer, teacher and editor of early music. Instruments on which he has performed include viola da gamba, chamber organ and clavichord. His concerts, courses and ensemble workshops have taken him to England, Germany and Italy as well as many parts of Denmark. Oliver has recorded on various labels, including Nonesuch and L'Oiseau Lyre. His most recent release is a 2004 Helikon compact disc featuring music of Elizabethan composer William Byrd.

Growing up in a musical household definitely shaped Oliver's choice of career. He recalls from his youth that experiencing chamber music up close as a pageturner, along with listening intently to countless hours of Dad's practice and rehearsals, exposed him to "the intimate flexibility of chamber musicianship with its subtle phrasing and exchanges, varied uses of rubato (hesitation before a climax or articulation of an upbeat), and diversity of tone color." He was thoroughly initiated.

Striving for Perfection

I knew from hearing him practice in the evenings that Dad was a perfectionist's perfectionist. Notes, tempo, phrasing—it all had to be perfect in order to be ready to present to an audience. For years, I held my breath during his performances hoping that no imperfections would occur.

Of course, wrong notes *do* happen in live performance. He sometimes complained that both audiences and critics had been spoiled by constantly hearing recordings that had been fixed in the studio, where wrong notes could be replaced by correct ones, or whole sections could be combined from different takes to create a seemingly flawless recording. (And that was decades before the wizardry of digital was available.) "It's all hokum," he told an interviewer from the *Houston Chronicle*.

Some of the recordings in this CD collection have their share of wrong notes. If Dad heard some of these bobbles, he'd probably scrunch up his face in one of those Albert Hirsh grimaces and say "Ouch!" But I think he'd forgive me for including the unedited tapes in this archive. The musicality is all there, and we don't have him around to do another take. (There were several tapes that didn't make the cut because of their poor sound quality, however.)

One of the things that amazes me about his concert activity is that after the weeks of preparation, he performed the vast majority of programs only one time before moving on to the next assignment. By contrast, many concert artists who go on tour are able to achieve absolute mastery of a few works by presenting them dozens of times over the course of several months.

And speaking of perfection, Dad had that extra sense called perfect pitch. He could hear the notes on a printed page exactly as they would sound in performance. He could also tell if an A was really 440 cycles per second. Of course, there's a flip side to everything. Perfect pitch could be painful while listening to anything that was out of tune, such as the phonograph I had as a kid that rotated too fast, making every composition a half step too high.

Amazing Feats

Much like Feuermann, Albert Hirsh had unflagging stamina and relished using it. He would fly to some other city, rent a car and drive to the town where a concert was to be held, rehearse, play the evening concert, attend the reception afterwards, then go to the airport and catch a red-eye back to Houston, changing out of his tails in the air. The plane would get in at 6 a.m., he'd come home and shave, shower and dress, have breakfast, then head to the university for a normal day's teaching. At 3 o'clock, he'd come home to private pupils and teach straight through til dinner.

Summer vacations in the 1950s, starting when I was about four years old, provided a different version of the same drill. Right after Memorial Day, we'd leave Houston in an unairconditioned car in late afternoon, drive through East Texas as the day cooled, cross the swamps of Louisiana in the evening and push across the rest of the South in the wee hours. When I'd wake up from my bed on the floor behind the front seat, the sun would just be coming up over rolling tobacco fields in the Carolinas. Dad would do more than 90 percent of the driving, stopping only for gas and meals, and we wouldn't look for a motel until well into Virginia—more than 24 hours from Houston. He always got us where we were going safely, and he did a thorough job of relaxing (for three whole months!) once we got to our destination in New

A Musical Legacy

England. But using his huge reserves of energy and attention was like a game for him. With his great sense of timing, he could also predict almost to the minute when we'd arrive at a given point on the map—a few hours before we'd get there.

He did little things to stay in shape while maintaining his rigorous schedule. One of them was to more or less run up the stairs whenever he went to his studio on the third floor of the Ezekiel W. Cullen Building. He enjoyed telling me the story of the time he was on his way up and overheard one student say to another, "Get out of the way—here comes Mr. Hirsh."

His legendary stamina amazed the judges and staff at the G. B. Dealey Awards competition in Dallas year after year, even though they'd seen him demonstrate it before. He'd play the transcribed orchestra part of one concerto after another, for three full eight-hour days. Not only that, he'd make each transcription sound as close to the original score as was humanly possible on a piano, and his solid support and musicianship almost always inspired the competitors to reach new levels in their playing.

(A few decades earlier, it was common practice to include concerti in recital programming, so Dad used to play some of those transcriptions on the concert stage. Today's audiences expect to hear the soloist with a real orchestra if a concerto is involved, so pianists now mostly pretend to be orchestras only for students' recitals, auditions and contests.)

At one competition, a contestant's pianist did not show up. Dad saved the day by playing the orchestra part of the Saint-Saëns cello concerto—from memory.

There were plenty of other musical feats. He could learn a new piece of music by reading it on an airplane, then perform it later the same day.

Then there's the time in New York during World War II that he was playing the Franck sonata with Josef Gingold, a neighbor who was then a violinist in the NBC Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. The air raid sirens blared, the lights went out for a blackout, and the two continued in the dark, playing the final two movements of the sonata by memory.

Another time, a violinist arrived at the university to audition for an opening on the faculty, only to discover he'd failed to bring the music for the piano part. Dad said that was okay—he knew it. He didn't mention that he hadn't played the piece in many years. The audition went on as planned.

And certainly another great feat was continuing to play superbly into his 80s. Just listen to Disc 29 with the Richard Strauss violin sonata, recorded in 1991 when Albert was 75 years old. Truly, he never sounded better.

Occupational Hazard

How would violinists like it if everywhere they went, they had to adjust to a different instrument? ("The Strad's being worked on this week, so we rented this great fiddle for you at Montgomery Ward.") Unfortunately, for pianists, that's a fact of life.

For a long time, Vladimir Horowitz was the only pianist who traveled with his own concert grand, and his own personal tuner-technician as well. Not only could he afford it; his unique brand of pianism included a distinctive voicing of the instrument that was part of the recognizable Horowitz sound. No other piano would do.

For most other pianists, checking out the instrument that awaits in the concert auditorium always provides an element of potluck suspense before a performance away from home base.

Dad often played at colleges and universities, many of them in small towns. He'd play on instruments that had been mistreated or needed tuning; he'd make do with a baby grand, or sometimes even an upright—whatever fate thrust under his fingers—and still find a way to make it sound musical.

It wasn't a challenge he enjoyed, though, especially if the instrument had sticking keys or an overly stiff action. On one occasion in Mexico, one of the pedals was completely missing. He had a special gift that enabled him to rise above the limitations of lousy instruments—even those that were missing parts.

Having Fun, Wish You Could Hear

Dad liked to play—the piano, and with words. The worse the pun, the better he liked it. Groaning on cue was de rigeur for his fellow musicians when they came to the house to rehearse.

Once a program of the Houston Symphony consisted of three works that all happened to be in the key of D major. *The Houston Post* reported that when someone pointed out this oddity, Albert chortled, "Well after all, this is D major concert of the year."

He also had his favorite names for things... like the Franck Sonata. And in December, you could expect to hear at least one "Bach, Humbug!"

He never pretended to be Victor Borge, but he had a few humorous pieces in his concert repertoire. These included Debussy's *Gollywog's Cakewalk*, the Shostakovich *Polka* from his ballet suite *The Golden Age*, and Dohnányi's *Variations on a Nursery Air*. Many composers—Mozart,

Beethoven and Ravel, to name a few—had humorous touches in their chamber works. Just as he did with Romantic works, Albert played them all without exaggeration, letting the humor come through on its own. Several of these pieces are included in this collection of recordings.

For a few months in 1951, our family took care of Dandy, the white standard French poodle of Houston Symphony conductor Efrem Kurtz. Part way into his assignment in another city, the maestro sent Dandy a post card complaining that he was having to work too hard—living a dog's life, in fact. Dad helped Dandy send a fitting response, also by post card: "Dear Master, sorry to hear you're working so hard. Here they're treating me like a symphony conductor."

Very occasionally, his students would have their own version of fun. One day during semester finals and juried performances, he found a Latin inscription above the door to his studio. He learned later that it was a quote from Dante, translated as "Abandon hope, all ye who enter." It may have been in jest, but it was also an acknowledgement of his very high standards.

Name-Dropping

Growing up, I met many of the famous artists with whom he performed, often because we served them dinner while they were at our house to rehearse. Pierre Fournier playfully poked me in the belly with his bow. Berl Senofsky, professional football-player-turned-concert-violinist, arm wrestled my grandmother (well, sort of). Salvatore Accardo, accompanied by his father, an Italian cameo carver, was 21 years old and making his first U.S. tour.

Dad and I visited with Nathan Milstein while he ate a late-evening dinner at Houston's Rice Hotel. And while on vacation in Massachusetts, we spent an afternoon with Zino Francescatti and his wife at Fiddlehead, their hilltop estate in the Berkshires. The Columbia album of Francescatti doing the Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky concerti with the New York Philharmonic was one of the first three LPs I owned as a kid. The album cover featured a photo of him playing the violin by a scenic window at the very house where I was having afternoon tea and cookies.

History Lost, and Found

As I grew up, I watched Dad stand beside the piano during breaks in his practicing and sort stamps for his albums. Over time, his collection grew to about 100,000 specimens. It was his way to relax. He would also add to his scrapbooks periodically. In chronological order, volume after volume

chronicled his career. He meticulously saved the printed program from each concert and every newspaper review that came into his hands. There were also those odd bits of publicity like mentions in George Fuerman's "Post Card" column in *The Houston Post*.

I leafed through those scrapbooks every so often and became familiar with the territory he'd covered, both geographically and musically, and the scores of famous artists he performed with. I silently dreamed of one day going through those dozens of volumes and picking out the most significant items for posterity, perhaps compiling quotes by music critics from all over, condensing it down to a readable size, and photocopying it for my descendants.

In the large cabinet that once housed medical records in my grandfather's office in New York City, the scrapbooks and the stamp albums were neck and neck competing for space. Unfortunately, for reasons I have never fully understood, at some point in the mid-1990s the stamp collection won by default. Without thinking to consult me, Dad hauled all the scrapbooks to a dumpster.

Nearly 60 years of musical history—indeed, most of the written documentation of his artistic career—was out the window. Suddenly, I was faced with being able to describe my father's achievement without being able to prove it! It was many years before I could even verbalize my sense of loss. I never mentioned it to him because there was no point in having two of us feel bad instead of just one.

After his passing in December 2003, I discovered a few programs and reviews his brother had sent from very early in Dad's career, and a few duplicates from later years that eluded the dumpster. But my attention turned mostly to preserving my collection of Albert Hirsh recordings. Combining some cassettes and CDs he had with my own reel-to-reel tapes and cassettes, I discovered the collection was bigger than I remembered. Then I rounded up some additional cassettes from Fredell Lack, with some exciting material.

The happy ending is that given a forced choice between scrapbooks or recordings, I would much rather have the recordings! Through sound, they express far more of the real musical legacy than the printed word possibly could. I screened all the tapes for quality, then arranged to have them transcribed and edited to produce the collection that accompanies this booklet.

If asked about my musical father, I can now say "Don't listen to me—listen to *him*."

A Musical Legacy

Last Concert, Last Recording

Dad's last concert came up rather unexpectedly in the summer of 1999 while he was vacationing in Denmark, staying at the family summer cottage adjacent to Oliver's home near the town of Klippinge. When Oliver had asked some local music-lovers if there would be any interest in sponsoring a solo piano recital, the response was quite enthusiastic. An arts society and an academy in the nearby town of Rødvig agreed to co-sponsor the concert as the lead-off event for their season. Dad enjoyed rising to the challenge of putting together a complete program. With intermissions to pick raspberries, trim roses and bask in the sunshine, he did most of his practicing on the small upright that sits beneath a tiny guest sleeping loft. Sometimes he was also able to work on grands at the homes of two friends in the area.

Dad gave a preview of part of the well-publicized program at Gjorslev, a 700-year-old castle owned by a neighbor of Oliver's. Then, on the evening of August 17, 1999, he played to a standing room-only audience of several hundred in Rødvig. The program consisted of three Bach preludes and fugues, most of Beethoven's "*Tempest*" Sonata, two works of Brahms, three short pieces of Debussy, and the Chopin waltz that he performed in Texas earlier that year. Not bad for an 84-year-old!

When it was all over, the enthralled listeners kept up their standing ovation and insistent, rhythmic clapping, eager for more. After taking another bow onstage, Albert Hirsh turned and symbolically closed the lid of the Steinway grand, marking the end of his last public performance.

There's more to the story, however. A short time before the concert, using the upright in the thatched-roof cottage, he produced the entire recital before a tiny cassette recorder. The tape he produced was for his second son, Conrad, who was then in London getting treatment for a brain tumor. In his own notes about the taping session, Dad had this to say: "While this recording sounded fairly respectable, the old upright piano had a limited and troublesome action, and tonal limitations that were frustrating." (We can only imagine!)

For Conrad, 57, who had lived most of his adult life in Africa, the cassette provided a precious family connection. He played the cassette daily for himself and for visitors while in London, and took it with him when he returned to Kenya. He died just two months after the tape was made.



In the summer of 1999, Albert prepared for his last concert appearance using the upright piano in the family's summer cottage in Denmark.

Postscript 1

Perhaps reflecting the strain of dealing with Con's illness, Dad had a heart attack in 1999 shortly after returning from Denmark. He survived his bypass operation well, but rarely touched the keyboard afterwards.

Pianist Albert Hirsh passed away peacefully four years later, on December 27, 2003. He was one of the last master performers of a generation that through concertizing and teaching carried forward the classical tradition of artistry and musical lineage from one century to the next. In this collection of recordings, you get a thorough sampling of his versatile achievements as an interpreter and collaborator over the passage of six decades.

Bravissimo!!

Postscript 2

One of the recurring themes of this story is how interconnected our musical heritage is—how musical talent and knowledge are passed from generation to generation, parent to offspring, teacher to pupil, through centuries of development. As I neared completion of this project, I had to ask myself what had prepared me for such an undertaking. I guess a lot was handed down to me, too.

I was an amateur musician of sorts, but I certainly didn't inherit the talent, the ear or the discipline to be a professional musician. However, my upbringing was steeped in music. I heard pianos almost daily. (There were three grands in the house—two downstairs, and one upstairs where my mother taught beginners.) I attended countless rehearsals and concerts from an early age, and for half a century soaked up the program notes printed on concert

programs and record jackets. I also became intimately familiar with works through listening to recordings, including some of those presented in this collection which I acquired on tape as a teenager.

When I began this commemorative project, I thought I had very little source material to work with, since the dozens of large scrapbooks detailing my father's career were gone. But I found enough leftovers tucked away in a few boxes and folders that with a lot of detective work I could track down some of the missing links. While cataloging the recordings, to identify unlabeled compositions I sifted through old programs and newspaper clippings, searched my own record and tape library, and downloaded dozens of digital music files from Internet sites set up for that purpose.

What ultimately got restored was not just the recordings, but the story. I now know a tremendous amount more about Dad's early years than I ever did when he was with us. Perhaps he knew what he was doing when he tucked away those odds and ends of selected programs and clippings. But best of all, we can now listen to him make music for many years to come.

Enjoy!

Notes to the Recordings

Some of these notes include anecdotes about the performances, so they're worth a look even if you're not planning to listen to a particular disc. A cross-reference listing of all 101 compositions in this collection, sorted by composer, is provided at the back of this booklet on page 42.

Disc 1

Bach-Busoni: Chorale-Prelude

- 1 "Ich ruf zu Dir, Herr" (4:32)

Vivaldi-W.F. Bach: Concerto in D Minor

- 2 Maestoso e pesante (4:08)
- 3 Fuga (3:10)
- 4 Largo (6:22)
- 5 Finale (3:37)

Chopin: Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58

- 6 Allegro maestoso (11:58)
- 7 Scherzo: molto vivace (2:34)
- 8 Largo (8:23)
- 9 Presto, ma non tanto (4:32)

Bartók:

- 10 Allegro barbaro, Sz. 49 (2:39)

Granados:

- 11 Unidentified work (6:07)

(Total Time: 58:26)

Disc 2

Albéniz:

- 1 Unidentified work (5:10)

Liszt:

- 2 St. Francis Walking on the Waves (7:17)

Bach-Hess: Chorale-Prelude

- 3 "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" (7:17)

Scriabin:

- 4 Etude in D Sharp Minor, Op. 8, No. 12 (3:50)

Gluck:

- 5 Unidentified work (2:04)

Shostakovich:

- 6 Polka from *The Golden Age* ballet (2:06)

(Total Time: 26:15)

New York Town Hall Recital – February 4, 1939

Albert Hirsh made his New York debut in Town Hall at age 19, in 1935. This recording was made about four years later, when he was 23. It was preserved for posterity on 78-rpm records that were transferred to reel-to-reel tape roughly 40 years later. Some (but not all) of the scratchiness has been filtered out by computer while making the CD. The 78-rpm format allows only about three minutes per side, so for any composition or movement of greater length, there was always that good old noisy pause while the needle ran to the center and the changer dropped the next record into place on the turntable. To help the continuity of the music, we've edited out those interruptions, but the scratchiness and occasional needle skips may remind you what listening to the old Victrola used to be like. Although the sound quality is mediocre, this recording is of great historical value to Albertophiles. His sensitivity and dynamic range are in full evidence, and his polished virtuosity in the Chopin and Liszt is astonishing.

Taken as a whole, the contents of this concert show how programming has changed over the past 65 years. Solo recitals in the first part of the last century typically contained a lot of variety, numerous shorter pieces mixed with a few bigger ones. And unlike today's more purist approach, works from the Baroque era were frequently presented as arranged by later, more heavy-handed composers (although some of Dad's early programs did include a full, unadulterated Bach French suite).

Unfortunately, no printed programs for this concert have survived and I've been unable to identify three of the works. If you never got to win Name That Tune, here's your big chance!

Bach-Busoni Chorale-Prelude. The son of two musicians, Ferruccio Busoni (1866 – 1924) became a virtuoso pianist and composer. In addition to creating operas, orchestral music and chamber works, he transcribed many works composed by others, including more than a dozen by Bach.

The original function of the chorale-prelude was to introduce hymns in church. Most often it would be improvised, but if particularly successful the music would be saved in written form. On a larger organ, the hymn tune would have its own tone color, and could also be decorated with elaborate embellishments.

Vivaldi-W. F. Bach. Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710 – 1784) was the oldest son of Johann Sebastian, and one of three sons who became successful composers. (Imagine being taught at home by J.S. Bach himself!) The musical



Following his debut there in 1935, Albert appeared on the stage of New York's Town Hall many times, both as soloist and accompanist.

output of J.S. Bach's offspring helped create a bridge from the Baroque to the early Classical period, paving the way for Haydn and Mozart. For a time, this new generation was considered to be the with-it Bachs, while their father was looked on as old-fashioned. However, their own reputations quickly faded.

I'm sorry to report that Wilhelm Friedemann sold off many of his father's manuscripts to pay for his booze and gambling habits. Fortunately, his brothers were more responsible with their shares of the family legacy and most of their father's output survives.

Like many other composers over the past few centuries, W.F. Bach enjoyed arranging works of earlier masters, giving them an updated (but not necessarily improved) style.

Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3. This was not the first time that Chopin (1810 – 1849) chose not to adhere to the usual sonata form. He wrote the third piano sonata in 1844. (The following notes are from an undated printed program for a

later Albert Hirsh solo recital presented by the Civic Music Association, perhaps in more than one city.)

“In the Allegro maestoso the first theme has symphonic qualities and the development is highly ornamented with a profusion of themes and a wealth of detail. The second theme in D major is a beautiful, tender and dreamy cantilena. The Scherzo has restrained perfection. The Largo in B major is a lied in the usual form with its opening theme possessing a decided Italian character. The Finale, in rondo form, is one of the touchstones of piano virtuosity; from beginning to end it is one mad whirl of sound. It is considered to be the most difficult technically of all of Chopin's compositions.”

Bartok Allegro barbaro. Composed in 1911, this work by Hungarian Béla Bartók (1881 – 1945) lives up to its name. The composer was striving to produce a piece that abandoned all the accepted rules of music and captured the most primitive kind of energy. He succeeded!

Bartók first learned piano from his mother, and made his first public performance when he was ten years old. He became an avid collector of folk music and used many peasant tunes in his compositions. He had a successful career as a pianist, but his composing was at first less well received. He emigrated to the United States in 1940. Although his health and finances were declining, he produced several of his best-known works in his final years, commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation and by artists such as Yehudi Menuhin.

Granados. Spanish pianist and composer Enrique Granados (1867 – 1916) performed many of his own compositions in concert. He made his recital debut in 1890 in Barcelona, where ten years later he founded the Society of Classical Concerts. Shortly thereafter, he launched Academia Granados, his own school for piano studies. Granados and his wife died when the ocean liner Sussex was torpedoed in the English Channel by a German U-boat.

Albéniz. Another Spanish pianist and composer, Isaac Albéniz (1860 – 1909) wrote about 250 works for piano between 1880 and 1892. Most of his compositions featured melodies and rhythms with a strong Spanish flavor. In 1893 he moved to Paris, where he was influenced by Fauré and Dukas. One of his best-known works is *Iberia*, a set of 12 pieces for piano that was later orchestrated.

Liszt St. Francis Walking on the Waves. (Again, the following notes are from the Civic Music Association program.) “Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886) was not only the greatest of bravura pianists during his lifetime, but he also

Notes to the Recordings

composed some of the most technically difficult works that have ever been written for piano. He was a lover of the magnificent, the splendid, and the fancifully decorative, and these qualities characterize his compositions for the piano. He delighted to write compositions involving technical demands which were the consternation of his confreres. He seemed to revel in breathlessly swift cadenzas, dynamic rushing chords, and intricately formed arabesques.

“In 1863 Liszt wrote *St. Francis Walking on the Waves* which some musical authorities believe might have been inspired by a Dürer engraving. It is a remarkable example of tone painting and there is nothing any more original in the entire repertoire for piano. The legend of St. Francis tells that he was refused passage by the boatman because he had no money to pay for it, thereupon the Saint threw his cloak upon the waters and was borne on it safely and triumphantly across the waters.”

Bach-Hess Chorale-Prelude. The chorale-prelude “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” is from *Cantata No. 147* for voice with organ or orchestra, which J.S. Bach wrote for the Sunday of Visitation. This piano version was arranged by Dame Myra Hess (1890 – 1965). The familiar melody in the right hand is the original organ part, while the contrasting melody of the stately chorale comes from the vocal part.

A Londoner, Myra Hess received many honors during her career, including the Order of the British Empire (the equivalent of knighthood). Among other things, she directed a six-year program of 1,700 public concerts during World War II, performing in 150 of them. Her legacy includes recordings of chamber music with Emanuel Feuermann.

Scriabin Etude. The early works of Russian pianist and composer Alexander Nikolayevitch Scriabin (1872 – 1915) reflect the strong influence of Chopin and Liszt. That definitely applies to the 12 etudes, or studies, written in about 1893 and published as Opus 8. However, the etudes also have some of the dark and mysterious elements that figured significantly in Scriabin’s later style, which was increasingly influenced by his mystical belief in theosophy.

The paths of Scriabin and Rachmaninoff often crossed, as they studied piano and composition with some of the same teachers. Rachmaninoff devoted many solo recitals to his friend’s music after Scriabin died unexpectedly at 43.

Gluck. Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714 – 1787) studied music in Prague but later traveled to many countries of Europe, settling eventually in Vienna. He is best known for his contribution to the development of opera, as he

made a concerted effort to change composers’ approach to use of recitative. His goal was greater integration of the music and the drama, paving the way for opera in its more modern form.

Gluck wrote nearly two dozen operas and comic operas, and many of his arias are known to audiences today as instrumental arrangements. This unidentified piece for piano is perhaps one of those.

Shostakovich Polka. The last two works in this program were probably encores. The delightful Shostakovich Polka is a favorite of mine that I became familiar with when Dad performed it once or twice in the late 1950s. It’s from the 1930 ballet *The Golden Age* (so it had been written less than 10 years before this recital took place). Shostakovich arranged his ballet suite for piano in 1935. This performance is all the more amusing since you get to hear a sophisticated New York audience being fooled about where the piece really ends.

Disc 3

Bach-Hess: Chorale-Prelude

- 1 “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” (3:20)

Frank:

- 2 Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, M. 21 (16:57)

Beethoven: Sonata No. 17 in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2 (“Tempest”)

- 3 Largo—Allegro (7:53)
- 4 Adagio (6:13)
- 5 Allegretto (5:47)

Chopin:

- 6 Berceuse in D Flat Major, Op. 57 (4:31)

(Total Time: 45:01)

Disc 4

Chopin: Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58

- 1 Allegro maestoso (11:39)
- 2 Scherzo: Molto vivace (2:39)
- 3 Largo (8:20)
- 4 Finale: Presto, ma non tanto (4:50)

Debussy:

- 5 Gollywog’s Cakewalk (3:02)
- 6 Claire de Lune (3:54)

7 La Cathédrale Engloutie (The Sunken Cathedral)
(5:30)

(Total Time: 40:24)

Inaugural Concert, Clear Creek High School Auditorium, League City, Texas – March 30, 1957

League City, Texas lies almost exactly halfway between downtown Houston and the strand at Galveston. In the 1950s it was still a very small, very quiet town a mile or so east of the Gulf Freeway (now Interstate 45). The town was quite proud when it managed to build the very modern Clear Creek High School. It was well into the school year when the school's large auditorium was completed, and a proper kick-off event was needed to show it off.

Edna Kilgore, a private pupil of Albert Hirsh, played an important role in development of the auditorium and invited him to perform the inaugural concert. She had the foresight to provide a professional tape recorder (the first I had ever seen) backstage, wired to a mike near the piano. She gave Dad the tapes, and after I got a tape recorder of my own in 1962, I replayed the entire concert countless times over the years.

It was a demanding program. It also was not his most bobble-free performance, due to more than just the pressure of giving a solo recital (his first in more than 10 years) in a large hall. By intermission, he was venting his frustrations with the Baldwin piano. As if not being a Steinway weren't bad enough, a couple of keys were sticking due to the high humidity. As you know, the Gulf Coast has a stick-key climate. (Sorry—I had to work in at least one Albert-type pun somewhere...)

Nonetheless, the audience was very appreciative. One woman who went backstage told him she would have traveled any distance just to hear his rendition of Claire de Lune. Listen to this jewel for yourself, and you'll see why.

As a footnote, many years later Dad performed several times at the new University of Houston Clear Lake City Campus, not far from the high school auditorium that opened in 1957. With construction of NASA's Lyndon B. Johnson Manned Spacecraft Center nearby, the entire area was totally transformed into a master-planned community, and culture and higher education came to stay. But the area's first classical concert was the solo recital by Albert Hirsh, playing to a packed house in a sleepy little town hungering for good music.

Bach-Hess Chorale-Prelude. (See the notes for Disc 2.)

Franck Prelude, Chorale and Fugue. Although he began his career as a pianist, César Franck (1822 – 1890) later concentrated on the organ, eventually being considered the greatest improviser on the instrument since Bach. His Prelude, Chorale and Fugue embodies two hallmarks of Franck's composition—frequent, sometimes radical key changes, and a cyclical form that allows themes to recur many times in the current and succeeding movements. He also felt a closeness to the classical forms used by Bach and other of his predecessors, such as preludes, chorales and fugues, all three of which he combined in this work for piano written in 1884.

Beethoven Sonata No. 17. The concert's program notes by Dr. Alfred R. Neumann had this to say: "Beethoven's compositions mark the turning away from music as aristocratic entertainment and the inception of music as a personal expression of the composer, and indirectly, the performer. The Sonata Opus 31, No. 2, can therefore be understood better if we remember that it was written in 1802, in the same year in which Beethoven prepared a will . . . in which he decried his growing deafness and the problems he faced because of this infirmity in society and profession. It appeals as a mature work of relative simplicity, without the experimentation found in Beethoven's later works."

Chopin Berceuse. Opus 57 of Frédéric Chopin is often cited as a perfect example of a berceuse, which in French means lullaby or cradle song. Written in 1843, this tender piece features a gentle, rocking 6/8 rhythm introduced in the left hand, but also many ornamentations and other devices to keep it interesting from start to finish.

Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3. Chopin's third piano sonata was written in 1844, immediately after the Berceuse. (See the notes to Disc 1.)

I knew Dad was unhappy with this performance, but I never appreciated what he was comparing it to until 47 years later when I reviewed his 1939 version, which is dazzling in its greater speed and precision.

Debussy. These three pieces by Claude-Achille Debussy (1862 – 1918) were all encores. The Children's Corner suite is a group of six small pieces Debussy wrote for his young daughter, Chou-Chou. Gollywog's Cake-Walk is the last of those pieces. Using syncopation, it's a humorous imitation of a form of Negro music that was popular in France in the 1890s. (An Impressionist version of Scott Joplin?) The word "gollywog" has numerous spellings, and refers to a kind of well-dressed black doll popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Notes to the Recordings

Part of the Bergamasque Suite written between 1890 and 1905, Debussy's *Claire de Lune* is unquestionably one of the greatest musical paintings of all time. Its inspiration was a poem of Paul Verlaine which describes "the calm moonlight, sad and lovely, which moves birds in the trees to dream and makes fountains sob with ecstasy." To this day, Debussy's musical miniature seems to have the same effect on concert audiences.

La Cathédrale Engloutie is the tenth piece in Book I of Debussy's *Préludes*, written in 1909 and 1910. He had spent most of that decade writing short pieces for piano. After being diagnosed with cancer in 1909, he turned to composing various chamber works.

Like many of his works, *La Cathédrale Engloutie* creates mysterious visual images in the imagination. Here, chords ascend and descend to depict a cathedral, long engulfed by the sea, reemerging as the tides recede and the fog briefly clears, then sinking beneath the swirling sea as the waves once again crash around the ghostly structure.

Disc 5

- 1 **Bartók-Szekely:** Six Rumanian Folk Dances, Sz. 56 (5:25)

Stravinsky-Dushkin:

- 2 *Chanson Russe* (Russian Maiden's Song) from the opera *Mavra* (3:40)
- 3 *Danse Russe* (Russian Dance) from *Petrouchka* (2:55)

Mussorgsky-Hartmann:

- 4 *Russian Dance* from *Sorochintsy Fair* (1:36)
- 5 *Hebrew Song* (2:35)
- 6 **De Falla-Kreisler:** *Danse Espagnole* from *La Vida Breve* (3:13)
- 7 **Chopin-Sarasate:** *Nocturne*, Op. 9 (5:16)
- 8 **Martini-Hartmann:** *Arabesque No. 4* (*Etudes Rhythmiques*) (1:50)
- 9 **Reger:** *Wiegenlied* in G Major from *Pieces*, Op. 79d (1:45)
- 10 **F. Schubert-Dresden:** *L'abeille* No. 9 from *Bagatelles*, Op. 13 (0:58)
- 11 **Brahms-Joachim:** *Hungarian Dance No. 5* (2:01)
- 12 **Elgar:** *La Capricieuse*, Op. 17 (3:55)
- 13 **Ries:** *Perpetuum Mobile* from *Suite No. 3* in G Major, Op. 34, No. 5 (2:46)
- 14 **Saint-Saëns:** *The Swan* from *Carnival of the Animals* (2:18)

Kreisler:

- 15 *Caprice Viennois*, Op. 2 (4:08)
- 16 *Liebesleid* (3:28)
- 17 *Liebesfreud* (3:24)

(Total Time: 52:05)

Deutsche Grammophon Recording – July 1957

When the preeminent Austrian violinist Wolfgang Schneiderhan prepared to make his first U.S. tour in 1956, his friend Yehudi Menuhin recommended he contact a fine American pianist by the name of Albert Hirsh. He did so, and their success together led to a request for Albert to fly to Salzburg, Austria in July 1957 to record a collection of 17 short pieces on the Deutsche Grammophon label. The collection was released in 1958 as a boxed set of four 45-rpm records, titled "*Wolfgang Schneiderhan spielt für Sie...*" ("*... plays for you...*")

The set may have been available in the U.S. for a time, but it was never released in LP format and went out of print. A few decades later, it was released in Japan on compact disc. Deutsche Grammophon has graciously given permission to reproduce the CD for this private-use-only album.

The Scheiderhan-Hirsh-DG collaboration was a good fit, as everyone on the team was equally dedicated to finding perfection. They worked more than 21 hours during their two days in the studio at Schloss Klessheim, doing as many as 15 takes of a single piece. When the sound engineer detected a squeaking sound while reviewing one tape, the solution was quickly found. Dad took off his shoes and played the rest of the session in his stocking feet.

Many of the pieces in this collection are arrangements of works for orchestra or piano. Some of them may sound familiar. For example, Stravinsky's *Danse Russe* (Russian Dance) is adapted from his ballet *Petrouchka*, which has a similar piano part embedded in the orchestra. Saint-Saëns' *The Swan*, one of his most famous pieces, is a movement from *Carnival of the Animals* that was originally a cello solo. The Chopin nocturne was of course originally for solo piano.

Disc 6

Fauré: *Violin Sonata No. 1* in A Major, Op. 13

- 1 *Allegro molto* (9:10)
- 2 *Andante* (7:10)
- 3 *Allegro vivo* (3:59)
- 4 *Allegro quasi presto* (5:12)

Brahms: Violin Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 100

- 5 Allegro amabile (8:05)
- 6 Andante tranquillo – Vivace (6:37)
- 7 Allegretto grazioso (5:05)

(Total Time: 45:27)

Disc 7

Bartók: Violin Sonata No. 1 (1921)

- 1 Allegro appassionato (12:42)
- 2 Adagio (11:06)
- 3 Allegro (3:35)

Bartók: Violin Sonata No. 2 (1922)

- 4 Molto moderato (8:36)
- 5 Allegretto—Più vivo (11:32)

(Total Time: 47:54)

Hirsh-Lack Recitals, University of Houston – October 4 and 9, 1962

In October 1962, Fredell Lack and Albert Hirsh gave two recitals within a week's time, previewing for Houston audiences programs they were about to play in New York's Carnegie Recital Hall later in the month. In addition to the works listed above, each of the concerts included a Beethoven violin sonata and a Bach sonata or partita for violin alone.

The Hirsh-Lack collaboration spanned more than four decades and reached the highest levels of ensemble playing. The notes on one of their recordings state that they “performed virtually the entire repertoire for violin and piano.” This included a large number of works composed in the 20th century. As members of the Virtuoso Quartet and the Lyric Art Quintet, the two also performed much of the chamber music literature. Their first performance together for which I have documentation was a Town Hall recital in New York in early 1955. Miss Lack joined the music faculty at the University of Houston in 1959 and, like Albert, became an Artist-in-Residence. She made many well-received tours of Western and Eastern Europe, performing as soloist with major orchestras in concert and in radio broadcasts.

Fauré Violin Sonata No. 1. This sonata by Gabriel Fauré (1845 – 1924) is one of my all-time favorites. Described by one commentator as having “abundant originality, clarity and elegance,” this 1876 work has less intensity than the sonata produced by César Franck ten years later, but it wears

extremely well. I know—I've played this recording so many times I'm surprised there's any oxide at all still left on the tape.

Camille Saint-Saëns was a teacher and mentor of Fauré and gave this first violin sonata a very favorable review after its premiere. The concert at which this recording was made is a perfect example of the ability of the Hirsh-Lack duo to capture the wide range of feeling embodied in the repertoire of the Franckists as well as in the profound works of Brahms.

Brahms Violin Sonata No. 2. Brahms wrote all three of his surviving violin sonatas during a mature and sunny period of his career. He is thought to have lost or destroyed earlier ones. The second sonata, the shortest of the three, was written during an August holiday at Thun in 1886, when Brahms was 53. As he often did, he consulted violinist Joseph Joachim for technical advice while working on the piece. The tempi of this lyrical work are distinctive. The “amabile” marking of the first movement means charming, gracious, amiable. The second movement combines slow sections with faster scherzo sections, and the finale proceeds at less than a full allegro. Listening, one senses self-assurance and reflection.

Bartók Violin Sonatas. When these concerts took place, only 40 years had passed since Hungarian-born Béla Bartók completed his two violin sonatas. The works are demanding and exciting, and today they still sound, well—very Bartók. The two violin sonatas are considered to be some of Bartók's most complex works in terms of harmony and structure. Both instruments present very complex rhythms, often working against each other.

Unfortunately, this tape of his first sonata cuts off a little before the actual ending of the final movement. The second sonata is a serious work from the composer's mature period. It begins with a long, slow introduction followed by several fast dance sections that reviewer Carl Cunningham described as “full of dry, sardonic Bartókian wit and those ghostly, bizarre tone colors that Bartók could at times conjure up from the strings of the violin.”

Disc 8

- 1 **J. S. Bach:** Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 903 (11:52)
- 2 **Dohnányi:** Variations on a Nursery Air for Orchestra and Piano Obligato, Op. 25 (27:20)

(Total Time: 39:16)

Notes to the Recordings

Home Recording – October 13, 1963

Bach Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue. I had never heard this thrilling piece by Bach until Dad began practicing it for a concert of Houston's J. S. Bach Society. He was one of the founders and driving forces of the Society, and its principal keyboard artist. What a blessing for our family—we were guaranteed he'd be playing Bach at least three times a year, and most of the rehearsals were in our living room (even if a chamber orchestra was called for).

Sixteen at the time, I was so taken by the *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* I asked Dad to play it non-stop while I had the tape recorder running. When he felt ready, I set up a mike next to the piano and this recording is the result. The tape's sound quality is amateur, but now that he's gone I'm especially glad I have it. To my knowledge, he never performed this piece before or after that one Bach Society concert in 1963.

Houston Symphony Broadcast – February 7, 1967

Dohnányi Variations on a Nursery Air. Quite a few years elapsed between Dad's previous appearance as soloist with the Houston Symphony in the 1950s and this performance with Sir John Barbirolli on the podium. Much earlier in his career, Sir John had succeeded Toscanini as conductor of the New York Philharmonic. In the 1960s, he led the Houston Symphony for several years. The maestro extended to Dad an invitation to do a pair of subscription concerts, then worked on figuring out what work to put on the program—something not performed as often as the best-known concerti. It came down to a choice between Manuel De Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* and Ernst von Dohnányi's *Variations on a Nursery Air*: Twinkle-twinkle won.

Written in 1913, the Dohnányi is a demanding work the composer often used to showcase his own virtuosity. Born in 1877, he was considered the greatest Hungarian pianist since Franz Liszt. He also became widely known as a conductor and late Romantic composer, strongly influenced by Brahms. Along with his countrymen Bartók and Kodály, Dohnányi gathered Hungarian folk tunes and gave them new life within his compositions. Dohnányi died in 1960, only seven years before this Houston performance took place.

The *Variations* contain humor, to be sure, but the piece also has its more serious-sounding moments. The composer said this work was a joke written "for the enjoyment of fun-lovers and the annoyance of others." Many parts of the piece were well suited to Sir John's sweeping and elegant interpretations (with gestures and footwork to

match). If you listen closely, you can hear him singing here and there, too.

The nursery tune is the same one Mozart used for his set of 12 variations for piano in C major, K. 265. This newer, more satirical version, also in C major, includes 11 variations and a concluding fugato.

For Dad, this was an entirely new work to be learned from scratch, then memorized. He was paid a few hundred dollars for the pair of concerts, so on a total hourly basis he made less from playing as soloist with the Houston Symphony than he did teaching private lessons.

The rehearsals and two evening performances in Houston's Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts went off with few problems, although in one performance the horns jumped an entrance and Dad had to catch up. Besides technical proficiency, what shines is how in the piano's opening statement he captured the childish phrasing that makes audiences laugh. Dohnányi gets the audience ready with the dramatic build-up of a four-minute orchestral introduction.

I made this recording from a Houston Symphony broadcast on KTRH-AM/FM a few weeks after the concerts, using a transistor radio wired to an amateur tape recorder. To make it even more challenging, I was 35 miles from the city at the time. I'm glad I made the effort. The Houston Symphony's tape archives were destroyed in 2001 when massive rains flooded downtown Houston, including the basement of Jones Hall. Mine is presumably the only recording that remains of this 1967 performance.

Six years later, Dad performed the work again with the Houston Symphony, but under the baton of Pops legend Arthur Fiedler. That time, it was without Sir John's sweep and elegance. In their pre-rehearsal conference, Fiedler told Dad, "Just play it straight." End of discussion. He beat time and everyone played. Fiedler's comment after their first performance: "It's a very difficult piece."

Disc 9

Beethoven: Violin Sonata No. 5 in F Major, Op. 24 ("Spring")

- 1 Allegro (9:30)
- 2 Adagio molto espressivo (5:06)
- 3 Scherzo (Allegro molto) (1:06)
- 4 Rondo (Allegro ma non troppo) (6:10)

Schoenberg:

- 5 Phantasy for Violin With Piano Accompaniment, Op. 47 (8:24)

Sarasate:

- 6 Malagueña, Op. 21, #1 (4:01)
- 7 Introduction and Tarantella, Op. 43 (5:05)

Hambro:

- 8 Happy Birthday Ludwig! (5:45)

(Total Time: 45:31)

Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston – October 18, 1970

Parts of this tape had terrible flutter that could not be corrected, but the performance and the program rise above the variable sound quality.

Beethoven “Spring” Sonata. One of the most popular of Beethoven’s ten violin sonatas, this work was written in 1801 toward the end of the composer’s early period, and shortly before he produced the “Eroica” Symphony. The “Spring” Sonata continues the late Classical style, but bears signs of new things to come, such as having a scherzo inserted as the third movement. Other indications of Beethoven’s evolving style, according to program notes by Michael D. Williams for a 1985 concert: Compared to his earlier violin sonatas, “the outer movements tend to be more lyric, the expressive range of the writing for both instruments is increased, there are digressions into distant tonalities, and thematic material is developed more extensively.”

Schoenberg Phantasy. In the early 1900s, Arnold Schoenberg (1874 – 1951) worked on inventing a new language for composition that abandoned existing concepts of tonality. In his system, the composer would arrange all 12 notes of the chromatic scale in a series, in any order, and then vary the way the series was presented (such as reversed, inverted or transposed). Rather than melody in the traditional sense, a listener hearing a 12-tone composition must focus on such things as driving rhythms, wild tone intervals, dissonance, and contrasting volumes and tonal colors. Schoenberg was born in Vienna but spent much of his career in Berlin, moving to Los Angeles when Hitler came to power. His complex atonal approach, around which the Second Viennese School of composers was formed, had a significant effect on 20th century music. His pupils included Anton Webern and Alban Berg.

Completed in 1949, the *Phantasy* was Schoenberg’s last instrumental work. As the title implies, it was written as a

work for violin, and the piano part is secondary. In fact, he wrote the entire violin part first before adding the piano’s role. The work is in four sections and has many of the characteristics typically associated with a musical fantasy—virtuosity, runaway emotion and at times an improvisational feel. The piano interjects comments of its own. Sometimes there is conversation, at other times, debate.

Sarasate Malagueña and Introduction and Tarantella.

Basque composer Pablo de Sarasate (1844 – 1908) was a Spanish-born violin prodigy. He received his first music lessons from his father at age 5 and gave his first public performance three years later. In addition to having an acclaimed concert career, he wrote numerous compositions for violin that are known for their great speed, Spanish folk themes, and demand for complete virtuosity. Many famous pieces of music, such as Lalo’s *Symphonie Espagnole*, were written for Sarasate to perform.

Birthday Present – January 1971

Pianist Leonid Hambro composed this work to celebrate the 1970 bicentennial of Beethoven’s birth. When I heard it played on the radio on Beethoven’s birthday, I was tickled by the genius of it—variations on *Happy Birthday to You* incorporating witty musical parodies of familiar Beethoven works. See how many you can identify!

With a little research, I figured out how to order a copy of the music to give Dad for his birthday. The following January 11, I received a cassette for my birthday. It was my favorite pianist playing Hambro’s gem for me! In spite of the dreadful technical details (it was recorded on one of those late 1960s-era portable cassette recorders designed for dictation, not music), I felt this light-hearted piece was worth including here. I played the original tape every January 11 for years.

Okay, give up? Here’s a cheat sheet with the key to the six variations: *Bagatelle No. 1*; *Für Elise*; *Minuet in G*; “*Pathétique*” *Sonata*; “*Moonlight*” *Sonata*; and *Symphony No. 5*.

Disc 10

Franck: Piano Quintet in F Minor

- 1 Molto moderato quasi lento – Allegro (17:14)
- 2 Lento con molto sentimento (11:08)
- 3 Allegro non troppo ma con fuoco (10:45)

(Total Time: 39:08)

Notes to the Recordings

Virtuoso Quartet – September 22, 1974

This work by César Franck, written in 1878, has many of the elements that are typical of his music, and are also found in the compositions of his disciples, known as the Franckists. This group included Ernest Chausson, Gabriel Fauré and Vincent d'Indy. Franck and his students knew how to produce chromatic music with lush, sensuous sound and intense energy.

The quintet is dark, brooding and extremely powerful—so much so that although I love it a great deal, I'm cautious about how often I play it.

Franck departed from many of the musical conventions of his day, which may explain why his wife abhorred the piece, as she did his *Symphony in D Minor*. Or, her disgust might have been because she sensed a connection between the work's passion and the composer's feelings for his favorite female student, with whom he and countless other composers and musicians thought themselves in love. Mrs. Franck (herself once a favorite pupil of his) even scolded his students for allowing him to write such outlandish music. I'm grateful he did not always listen to her.

Camille Saint-Saëns, to whom the quintet was dedicated, was the pianist for the work's premiere. Even he had little respect for the piece, leaving the music on the piano as he stalked offstage before the audience had time to applaud. Among other things, he disliked how many key changes there were. Today, the quintet remains disquieting on its own, but it's considered one of Franck's greatest works.

Regrettably, I don't know for sure who all the string players are on this recording. Also, the source tape for this CD was at least second generation and had less than optimum sound quality.

Disc 11

Enesco: Sonata No. 2 for Piano and Violin, Op. 6

- 1 Assez mouvementé (6:43)
- 2 Tranquille (6:58)
- 3 Vif (7:07)

(Total Time: 20:58)

Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston – February 9, 1975

Rumanian composer Georges Enesco (1881 – 1955) began music lessons at age four with a gypsy violinist and

began composing the following year. He made his concert debut two weeks before his eighth birthday, later becoming a violin virtuoso as well as a pianist, organist, cellist and conductor. No wonder Pablo Casals called him “the greatest musical phenomenon since Mozart.” In some of his concert appearances with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, he played violin and piano and conducted his own works.

Two of Enesco's most famous pupils were Yehudi Menuhin and Arthur Grumiaux. Fredell Lack also studied for a time with Enesco and says there were two sides to his musical approach. On the one hand, he was an absolute stickler for strict interpretation of the classical masters like Bach and Mozart. His other side was deeply into Rumanian folk music, which he adapted to his own compositions, sometimes including the improvisational style of fiddling with its complex and varied rhythms.

Enesco studied composition under Fauré and Massenet. Although the public knows him primarily for his two Rumanian rhapsodies for orchestra, he wrote a wide variety of other compositions, including three sonatas for violin and piano. (*Sonata No. 3* is on Disc 34.)

Disc 12

Beethoven:

- 1 Piano Trio No. 9 in G Major (“Kakadu”), Op. 121a (16:52)

Chausson: Piano Quartet in C Minor, Op. 35

- 2 Animé (12:34)
- 3 Très calme (9:08)
- 4 Simple et sans hâte (3:53)
- 5 Animé (10:35)

(Total Time: 53:08)

Lyric Art Ensemble, University of Houston – April 17, 1977

Beethoven Piano Trio No. 9. The name of this work for piano trio comes from the theme on which Beethoven created a set of variations, originally in a simpler version for piano. A 1794 comic opera by Wenzel Müller contained the aria, “Ich bin der Schneider Kakadu” (I am the tailor, Kakadu). Beethoven sent his expanded work to a publisher in 1816, shortly after a revival of the opera, calling it “variations with an introduction and supplement, for piano,

violin and cello, on a well-known theme by Müller, one of my earlier compositions, though it is not among the reprehensible ones.”

After a solemn introduction, the theme is introduced as a comic letdown—as one observer points out, not unlike the same point in Dohnányi’s *Variations on a Nursery Air*. Then, Beethoven launches into ten variations, and still having fun, tacks on a coda for the finale. [*Truth in advertising*: You may not notice, but several measures of the trio’s opening section are missing from this recording. Sorry!]

Chausson Piano Quartet. A student of Franck, Ernest Chausson (1855 – 1899) did not begin composing until he was in his late twenties. He had trained to be a lawyer but never launched his legal practice. Since he did not have to work for a living, he could compose at his own pace, often laboring for days over a single measure of music. Chausson was influential because besides composing, he hosted an active salon in Paris that became one of the city’s thriving centers for artists, musicians, writers and intellectuals. He also was a close friend and mentor of Claude Debussy. His music is considered a bridge between the contemporaries of Franck and the new wave led by Debussy and Ravel. His best known work is his Opus 25 *Poème* for violin and orchestra.

Chausson’s music is similar in many ways to Franck’s. It is lush, sensuous and chromatic, and very demanding technically. The composer employed what critic and author Harold Schonberg called “the physiological action of pure sound.” Yes, it’s sound you can happily wallow in.

At times rambling and mysterious, the piano quartet embodies all of these described traits. It was unfinished when Chausson, only 44, died after losing control of his bicycle and crashing into a wall. Fellow Franckist Vincent d’Indy completed the work.

Disc 13

Mozart: Piano Quartet No. 2 in E-flat Major, K. 493

- 1 Allegro (7:09)
- 2 Larghetto (6:53)
- 3 Allegretto (8:37)

Martinu: Piano Quartet No. 1

- 4 Poco allegro (6:34)
- 5 Adagio (8:40)
- 6 Allegretto poco moderato (8:16)

(Total Time: 46:17)

Lyric Art Piano Quartet, University of Houston – October 2, 1977

Mozart Piano Quartet No. 2. When he wrote his two piano quartets in 1785 and 1786, Mozart (1756 – 1791) recast the way such works were conceived. Previously, it was typical for the piano to be the featured instrument while the three strings were along for the ride. That notion catered to amateur players making music at home. Mozart decided to give the strings an equal, more demanding role while still giving the piano plenty of room to shine. Beethoven’s only piano quartet, written in about the same year (when he was only 15 years old), took the same tack, and the foundation was set for future generations of composers to build on.

The Mozart E-flat quartet is a bright piece of music, with a cheerful first movement, gentle second movement, and a final rondo that resumes the brightness of the first movement.

Martinu Piano Quartet No. 1. The works of Bohuslav Martinu (1890 – 1959) are not widely known, although he was the leading Czech composer after Leos Janáček. Martinu was a violinist in the Czech Philharmonic before concentrating on composition. He was influenced by Stravinsky and also American jazz, but his music maintains a Czech flavor. He wrote a great deal of chamber music, some of it for unusual combinations of instruments, and liked experimenting with unconventional rhythms.

From the first few notes of the quartet’s fast-paced first movement, I was hooked. It’s an exciting piece!

Disc 14

Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-Flat Major, K. 595

- 1 Allegro (13:21)
- 2 Larghetto (6:27)
- 3 Rondo: Allegro (9:24)

(Total Time: 29:15)

University of Houston Symphony Orchestra, Igor Buketoff conducting – October 7, 1977

Mozart wrote his first piano concerto when he was 11 years old, in 1767. In the next two dozen years, his growth as a composer refined this musical form and set the stage for his successors. He completed the 27th—his last—in 1791, 11 months before his death at age 35. Just seven years later,

Notes to the Recordings

Beethoven had already published his first and second and was well on his way to taking the art of the piano concerto to its next level.

I often wondered why this final piano concerto of Mozart seems rather quiet and subdued compared to most of the ten more brilliant ones that preceded it (17 through 26). It was his life reflected in his music. During his last two years, he had been shut out of the concert scene in Vienna. As a performer and composer, he was unbooked and broke. The perfect beauty of this concerto is sadly full of melancholy and mourning. Under those circumstances, brilliant expression of unbridled joy would be asking too much. I now hear this piece in a whole new light.

This recording was taped off the air from an FM broadcast in January 1978. Internationally known conductor Igor Buketoff appeared with many of the best-known symphony orchestras in the U.S. and Europe and made numerous recordings with RCA and others. During his tenure with the University of Houston Symphony Orchestra he commuted to Houston from New York City.

Disc 15

Rachmaninoff: Cello Sonata in G Minor, Op. 19

- 1 Lento – Allegro moderato (15:25)
- 2 Allegro scherzando (7:16)
- 3 Andante (6:57)
- 4 Allegro mosso (12:30)

(Total Time: 42:09)

**Hirsh-Trepel Recital, Rice University –
March 15, 1978**

Sergei Vasilyevich Rachmaninoff (1873 – 1943) composed his cello sonata in 1901, immediately after the immensely popular second piano concerto (Opus 18). He had just recovered from a period of depression during which he took an intermission from composing.

The composer stated that the cello sonata was written for “two instruments in equal balance.” As the Rice University program notes by Alice Hanson put it, “The virtuosity of the piano provides a turbulent background against which the cello bares its soul.” This sweeping work contains many of the elements typical of Rachmaninoff’s romanticism—the melancholy, the sinister, the introspective, the elegiac and the rhapsodic. It is both dreamy and dramatic.

Shirley Trepel, the cellist in this performance, studied with Emanuel Feuermann at Curtis Institute, and later with Gregor Piatagorsky. She was principal cellist of the Houston Symphony for many years. She also taught cello, first at the University of Houston and then at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music.

Disc 16

Leclair: Violin Sonata in D Major

- 1 Un poco andante (3:12)
- 2 Allegro (2:30)
- 3 Sarabande (2:24)
- 4 Tambourin (2:54)

Beethoven: Violin Sonata No. 10 in G Major, Op. 96

- 5 Allegro moderato (7:54)
- 6 Adagio espressivo (6:10)
- 7 Scherzo (Allegro) (1:57)
- 8 Poco allegretto – Adagio espressivo – Allegro (8:47)

Tchaikovsky:

- 9 Valse-Scherzo in C Major, Op. 34 (5:48)

(Total Time: 41:53)

Disc 17

Strauss: Violin Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 18

- 1 Allegro ma non troppo (11:26)
- 2 Improvisation: Andante cantabile (8:04)
- 3 Andante – Allegro (7:59)

Mennin: Sonata Concertante

- 4 Sostenuto – Allegro con brio (6:28)
- 5 Adagio semplice (4:50)
- 6 Allegro con fuoco (4:56)

(Total Time: 43:51)

**Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston –
September 24, 1978**

Leclair Violin Sonata in D Major. Born 12 years after Bach and Handel, French composer Jean-Marie Leclair (1697 – 1764) held musical positions in various courts and toured as a concert violinist. He was best known for his works for violin. These included 12 concerti and well over 100 sonatas for violin with accompaniment, violin solo

and two violins unaccompanied. His output is credited with elevating the status of both the instrument and the sonata form, and thus he influenced the output of many subsequent eighteenth-century composers.

This sonata's third movement is a sarabande, a dance form in slow 3/2 time that entered Europe from Spain in about the 16th century. The final movement is a fast-paced tambourin, a Provençal dance based on a steady drumbeat.

Beethoven Violin Sonata No. 10. Beethoven's early sonatas for violin and piano were written for patrons who were taking piano lessons from him. As time went on, he cared more about his own inventiveness than the limitations of his students, and the piano parts became more demanding technically. This final violin sonata was written in 1812, the year Beethoven produced his seventh and eighth symphonies.

As Dad pointed out in a *Houston Chronicle* interview in 1984, the sonatas include lots of relatively simple scales and broken figures, "but they have to be played with rhythmic precision, clarity and style. They've got to be clean but beautiful at the same time." He added that "everything Beethoven has written is difficult because of the speed."

In the program notes to a 1985 Hirsh-Lack concert, Michael D. Williams described this last Beethoven sonata as "the most introspective of the ten... Lyricism abounds in all four movements, even in the scherzo, where the playful opening is followed by a tuneful trio. The momentum of the final movement is interrupted by a slow, rhapsodic cadenza passage."

Tchaikovsky Valse-Scherzo. This showpiece by Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky (1844 – 1893) was written in 1877 for violin and orchestra, then transcribed by the composer for violin and piano later the same year. It premiered in Paris in 1878. Tchaikovsky studied law and worked as a civil servant before becoming a composer, but he made up for his late start by packing this short piece with enough fiddle acrobatics to fill a normal concerto.

Strauss Violin Sonata. Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949) is best known for his operas, such as *Salome*, and his tone poems such as *Death and Transfiguration*. The beginning two minutes of Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* provided the very arresting soundtrack for the opening sequence of Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey* and from that became a musical icon known to the masses. In case you wondered, this Strauss was not related to the Viennese waltz-meisters Johann and his son Josef. The father of Richard

Strauss played first chair French horn with an opera orchestra in Munich and gave his son a solid musical education.

The violin sonata was written in 1887 when Strauss was in his early 20s and still working to find his true voice. This robust Hirsh-Lack performance, like the 1991 rendition on Disc 29, delivers the concerto-like work's full potential. Soon after Strauss wrote this chamber work, he was drawn to the music of Richard Wagner and began to make his own mark with his series of tone poems, the style of which was at first fairly controversial.

Mennin Sonata Concertante. Peter Mennin, born in 1923, completed his first symphony as a teenager and went on to have a very successful career in music. He composed many works on commission and taught composition at Juilliard, where he eventually served as president for 21 years up until his death in 1983. His output included eight symphonies. Written in 1956, the Sonata Concertante is meant to have some of the characteristics of a concerto, hence the name.

Disc 18

Brahms: Piano Quartet No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25

- 1 Allegro (12:32)
- 2 Intermezzo: Allegro (ma non troppo) (7:55)
- 3 Andante con moto (9:46)
- 4 Rondo alla Zingarese: Presto (8:27)

(Total Time: 38:42)

Lyric Art Quintet, University of Houston – February 10, 1980

The name of violinist Joseph Joachim pops up frequently in writings about Brahms. But before he met Joachim, who advised the composer on many of his works and performed them frequently, Brahms had a good friendship with another violinist, Eduard Reményi. A political refugee from Hungary, Reményi impressed Brahms greatly with his fiery Hungarian approach to music. It was a style Brahms loved hearing sometimes on his walks in the countryside. Later he often emulated Hungarian folk music in his own compositions, including this first piano quartet.

Shortly before Brahms turned 20, he and Reményi set out by foot on a concert tour. It was at one of their concerts that Brahms met Reményi's friend Joachim, who in turn introduced the composer to Liszt and then Schumann. In

Notes to the Recordings

a published article, the latter publicly crowned him “one of the elect.” The G minor quartet premiered in 1861 with Schumann’s wife, Clara, at the keyboard.

The strings in this performance were members of the Lyric Art Quintet: Albert Muenzer, violin; Lawrence Wheeler, viola; and Hans Jørgen Jensen, cello. Music critic Carl Cunningham wrote in the next morning’s *Houston Post*: “...the best part of the concert came last, when pianist Albert Hirsh joined the ensemble and led the string players in an absolutely dazzling performance of the Brahms G-minor Piano Quartet. Clean, perfectly coordinated ensemble playing is a standard expectation at Hirsh’s performances; Sunday evening, his playing was all that and much more.

“The G-minor Quartet is virtually a concerto for piano and string trio and Hirsh took full advantage of its soloistic opportunities with a tonally full-blooded performance that was full of youthful Brahmsian bravura. The chain of Hungarian dances that makes up its finale became a particularly rousing display piece that won Hirsh and the string players quite an ovation.”

By the end of this CD, you too will want to stand and cheer.

Disc 19

Beethoven: Clarinet Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 11

- 1 Allegro con brio (9:52)
- 2 Adagio (4:58)
- 3 Allegretto (7:16)

Brahms: Clarinet Trio in A Minor, Op. 114

- 4 Allegro (7:32)
- 5 Adagio (7:43)
- 6 Andante grazioso (4:39)
- 7 Allegro (4:59)

(Total Time: 47:14)

Faculty Recital, University of Houston – August 15, 1981

Albert Hirsh, piano; Jeffrey Lerner, clarinet; Hans Jørgen Jensen, cello.

Beethoven Clarinet Trio. Beethoven wrote his Opus 11 trio in 1798. The piece was one of several he composed in his mid-thirties to showcase his own keyboard prowess for audiences in Vienna, where he was still working to make a name for himself six years after moving there. Chamber music that included a clarinet was still fairly exotic in those

days. Beethoven even noted on the score that the clarinet part could optionally be performed on violin.

The trio’s third movement is a set of variations on the theme of an aria from an opera by Beethoven contemporary Joseph Weigl. For what it’s worth, the song opens with words we can all relate to: “Before I begin important work, I want something to eat!”

Brahms Clarinet Trio. Feeling frustrated and drained of creative ideas, Brahms had decided to retire from writing music in about 1890. But then he was introduced to Richard Mülfeld, an extraordinary clarinetist with the Meiningen Orchestra, which often performed Brahms’ works, including while the composer was still developing his scores. The results of their friendship were the postponement of retirement, and creation of four works for clarinet—the trio (Opus 114), the quintet (Opus 115), and the two sonatas (Opus 120).

The trio was written in 1891. Like some of the other very late Brahms works, it has the marks of a composer who no longer has anything to prove to the world, rather is writing strictly for the love of music. The mood is often somber, there’s a mix of major and minor keys, but beautiful intertwining melodies among the three instruments.

The first three movements have a certain serenity. The long second movement has a lazy theme and variations. The fourth movement is the shortest but builds in energy. It is full of arpeggios and opposing rhythms. Five variations follow the theme that is presented, each progressively more demanding, until a more relaxed coda leads to the trio’s calm finish.

Disc 20

Schubert: Fantasy in C Major, D. 934

- 1 Andante molto – (3:26)
- 2 Allegretto – (5:19)
- 3 Andantino – (8:34)
- 4 Allegro vivace – Allegretto – Presto (6:01)

Fuchs:

- 5 Fantasy (5:29)

Szymanowski: Violin Sonata in D Minor, Op. 9

- 6 Moderato (8:48)
- 7 Andantino tranquillo e dolce (6:23)
- 8 Finale: Allegro molto, quasi presto (5:24)

(Total Time: 49:38)

**Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston –
September 1982**

Technical note: Due to problems with the channels of the original recording, this disc is presented in monaural rather than stereo.

Schubert Fantasy. The first performance of this work by Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828) was early in the year of his death. The initial reception was lukewarm, perhaps because its form and length were unusual at the time. However, once it was published in 1850, it became a popular virtuoso showpiece.

The sections of the work interlock, rotating among keys that are thirds apart—C, A, E-flat, A-flat. The third movement introduces a theme (from his song *Sei mir gegrüsst*) and four variations, from which it jumps without pause into the final movement.

Fuchs Fantasy. To my knowledge, there are no commercial recordings available of this work by Peter Paul Fuchs, an American music educator, conductor and opera producer about whom I could find very little information.

Szymanowski Violin Sonata in D Minor. Polish composer Karol Szymanowski (1882 – 1937) was born to a musical family in the Ukraine. He studied first with his father, then had schooling in Warsaw, where he eventually settled. In the late 1920s he devoted himself to directing a conservatory in Warsaw to help establish a new generation of Polish composers. His contributions to the nation's music therefore reached well beyond his own considerable output as a composer.

Szymanowski was eclectic in style. His rather introspective violin sonata, written in 1904, reminds some of the A Major sonata by Brahms (included on Disc 6). It has an intermezzo section featuring pizzicato, and the final movement combines characteristics of a tarantella and a Brahms Hungarian dance.

Fredell Lack and Albert Hirsh recorded the Szymanowski Sonata on the Vox label in 1984 and a digitally remastered version was issued in 1994 as part of a two-disc Vox Box. Both the original album and the boxed reissue include Miss Lack's performance of Szymanowski's second violin concerto with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra.

Disc 21

Fauré: Piano Quartet No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 15

- 1 Allegro molto moderato (9:28)
- 2 Scherzo (Allegro vivo) (6:12)
- 3 Adagio (6:41)
- 4 Allegro molto (8:55)

Bartók: Violin Sonata No. 2 (1922)

- 5 Molto moderato (8:06)
- 6 Allegretto – Più vivo (12:03)

(Total Time: 51:35)

**Faculty Recital, University of Houston –
October 4, 1984 (broadcast date)**

Albert Hirsh, piano; Fredell Lack, violin; Milton Katims, viola; Hans Jørgen Jensen, cello.

Fauré Piano Quartet No. 1. This quartet by Gabriel Fauré dates from about 1875. Along with the Opus 13 violin sonata (which is on Disc 6), the first quartet is one of the major compositions from Fauré's early period. It shows the composer's restraint and subtle fluidity, but also does not lack intensity.

Dad's first Houston performance of this work was in 1951 with The Chamber Music Players of Houston. It was part of a program put on by The Music Guild, which at that point was still sponsoring concerts in patrons' homes. The sketchy program notes from that 1951 concert state that in the opening movement, multiple themes are developed "with skill and elegance. At length in the recapitulation, each theme appears in its original state... The scherzo is a masterpiece of taste and vivacity. The adagio is one of Fauré's most typical and most justly celebrated conceptions. The finale brings the work to a fiery conclusion."

This 1984 recording was taped off the air during a broadcast on KLEF-FM in Houston. (Sorry about the glitch at the start of the fourth movement.)

Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston – 1984

Bartók Violin Sonata No. 2. (See notes to Disc 7.)

Disc 22

Beethoven: Violin Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 30, No. 1

- 1 Allegro (7:06)
- 2 Adagio molto espressivo (7:21)
- 3 Allegretto con variazioni (7:48)

Beethoven: Violin Sonata No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 12, No. 3

- 4 Allegro con spirito (6:02)
- 5 Adagio con molt' espressione (6:06)
- 6 Rondo (Allegro molto) (4:25)

Beethoven: Violin Sonata No. 9 in A Major, Op. 47 ("Kreutzer")

- 7 Adagio sostenuto – presto (11:34)
- 8 Andante con variazioni (13:16)
- 9 Finale (Presto) (7:29)

(Total Time: 71:23)

Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston – March 1985

On more than one occasion, Albert Hirsh and Fredell Lack gave all-Beethoven concerts, and several times during their decades of collaboration they performed all ten of his sonatas for violin and piano in a three-concert series. One of those series was scheduled in honor of the 1970 Beethoven bicentennial.

This 1985 performance includes one of the three Opus 12 sonatas written in 1797 and 1798, one of the three from Opus 30, composed in 1802, and Opus 47, parts of which were actually written before the completion of Opus 30.

Beethoven wrote nine of his ten violin sonatas during his first ten years in Vienna, where he moved in 1792 when he was 22 years old. At that time he was still studying some with Haydn, Salieri and Albrechtsberger. But his own extraordinary talents and creativity were already running way beyond the confining Classical structure adhered to by these musical elders. He typically worked on several different compositions at once, yet each work was extremely individual. The violin sonatas demonstrate this, as each one has its own distinct character. In the program notes for the Lack-Hirsh Beethoven bicentennial series, Dr. Elmer Schoettle wrote that the works "present a remarkable testament of musical and emotional variety, each sonata molded by an aesthetic law and musical logic peculiar to itself."

Thinking of moving from Vienna to Paris, Beethoven changed the dedication of his Opus 47 sonata in order to honor the reigning French violin virtuoso, Rodolphe Kreutzer. In spite of its dedication, Kreutzer may never have even become aware of the piece.

The cover page described the work as written "in a style molto concertante almost like that of a concerto." That may explain why the "*Kreutzer*" today is generally thought of as the most popular of the ten. It was first performed in 1803, with Beethoven actually improvising much of the piano part in the middle movement, even though he had completed the finale the year before.

In the program notes for this concert, Michael D. Williams wrote that the work is "full of dramatic pauses, tempo changes, harmonic surprises, and sudden shifts of mood. The extremely fast, aggressive outer movements serve as equal towers of strength surrounding the expressive lyricism of the theme and variations of the second movement. These variations . . . break away from the typical Classical figural type and illustrate the Romantic character variation, where the mood changes in each section."

Disc 23

Chausson: Piano Trio in G Minor, Op. 3

- 1 Pas trop lent – animé (11:46)
- 2 Vite (4:26)
- 3 Assez lent (9:38)
- 4 Animé (9:18)

(Total Time: 35:09)

Faculty Recital, University of Houston – November 9, 1986

This piano trio is one of Chausson's earliest published works and until recently was seldom performed or recorded. Written in 1882 when he was 27, it shows many of the distinguishing characteristics found in the composer's later chamber music—dramatic complexity, passionate emotion and cyclical themes—but also reflects his early interest in the romanticism of Wagner, which he largely moved away from in later works in favor of more classical style. (For more background on Chausson, see the notes for Disc 13.)

Performers are Albert Hirsh, piano; Albert Muenzer, violin; and Hans Jørgen Jensen, cello.

Disc 24

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Handel: Violin Sonata No. 6 in E Major

- 1 Adagio (1:47)
- 2 Allegro (2:41)
- 3 Largo (1:28)
- 4 Allegro (2:30)

Franck: Violin Sonata in A Major

- 5 Allegretto moderato (5:59)
- 6 Allegro (8:57)
- 7 Recitativo – Fantasia. Moderato – Molto lento (7:15)
- 8 Allegretto poco mosso (6:21)

(Total Time: 37:15)

Disc 25

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Wieniawski:

- 1 Souvenir de Moscou in G Major, Op. 6 (7:49)
- 2 Legende, Op. 17 (6:48)
- 3 Polonaise Brillante in D Major, Op. 4 (5:03)

Debussy:

- 4 Girl With the Flaxen Hair (2:47)

Saint-Saëns:

- 5 Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 28 (9:28)

Kreisler:

- 6 Unidentified piece (3:23)
- 7 Liebesfreud (2:28)

Sarasate:

- 8 Zigeunerweisen, Op. 20, No. 1 (8:23)

(Total Time: 46:17)

Hirsh-Tokunaga Recital, University of Houston – January 16, 1988

Tsugio Tokunaga is one of Japan's leading violinists. He became concertmaster of the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra when he was 19 years old. Today he concertizes internationally in recitals and chamber music, and as a soloist with orchestras.

Handel Sonata No. 6. Born the same year as J.S. Bach, George Frederick Handel (1685 – 1759) wrote a good number of violin sonatas over the course of his composing career. They are less well known than those of Bach, and following a more Italianate style have a lighter feel. Nonetheless, they are enjoyable works. Sonata No. 6 served as

a good opener for this diverse program. The keyboard part is a realization of continuo rather than functioning as a full instrumental partner as is typical in more modern sonatas.

Franck Violin Sonata. A perennial favorite concert piece, Franck's sonata for violin and piano was written in 1886 as a wedding present for violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. Its combination of moods, emotions and energy, and Franck's masterful use of lyrical melody, chromaticism, and interweaving of the two instruments as equal partners ensures that the work will continue to be part of the standard sonata repertoire. The work is extremely distinctive, from its dreamy awakening to its canonic finale in which the violin and piano echo each other as if singing a round. The second movement ends with such a virtuoso climax, the audience at this performance couldn't help themselves and applauded spontaneously.

I became very familiar with this work one season in the late 1950s when Dad played it with at least three different violinists within a short period. I was still fairly young, too, when I heard the story (presumably true) about a naïve music critic who said in his review of some duo's performance of the Franck that their playing was quite good, except in the last movement, where the violin and piano were half a measure apart until the very end.

Wieniawski Souvenir, Legende and Polonaise. Henryk Wieniawski (1835 – 1880) was born in Poland under Russian rule and spent much of his career in Russia. His mother was a professional pianist. He graduated from the Paris Conservatory at the age of 11 and by 13 had embarked on a solo concert career, touring internationally with his younger brother at the piano. With a technique on a par with Paganini and known for his rich tone, Wieniawski composed a wide variety of works to showcase his own playing ability. His frequent output of mazurkas and polonaises reflects his interest in creating a national style of Polish music. The three works presented here are good examples of concert showpieces, demanding great rhythmic precision and impeccable ensemble playing.

Disc 26

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Beethoven:

- 1 Romance No. 1 in G Major, Op. 40 (7:38)

Corigliano: Violin Sonata

- 2 Allegro (3:01)
- 3 Andantino, with simplicity (6:20)
- 4 Lento, quasi recitativo (4:32)
- 5 Allegro (8:18)

Notes to the Recordings

Dohnányi: Violin Sonata in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 21

6 Allegro appassionato (6:57)

7 Allegro ma con tenerezza (4:39)

8 Vivace assai (7:44)

(Total Time: 49:24)

Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston – October 16, 1988

Beethoven Romance in G. Beethoven wrote this work for violin and orchestra in 1802, in the middle of a three-year period that also produced six of his sonatas for violin and piano, seven piano sonatas, the second symphony and the third piano concerto—among other things! The Opus 50 *Romance in F* was written then, too.

The Beethoven romances aren't performed frequently since soloists are usually booked by orchestras to do a full-length concerto. Both described as "spacious, warmly lyrical works," they follow a romance form in which the main sections recur, interspersed with two interludes, much like a slow-paced rondo.

Corigliano Violin Sonata. John Corigliano, born in 1938, dedicated this sonata to his parents. His mother was a pianist. His father, John Sr., was concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic from 1943 to 1966 and performed recitals with Albert Hirsh in the 1970s.

Composed in 1963, the violin sonata was the younger Corigliano's first big success as a composer, earning first prize at the 1964 Spoleto Festival Competition. Judges included composers Walter Piston and Samuel Barber. Corigliano also was nominated for an Oscar in 1980 for his score for the Hollywood thriller *Altered States*. In 1990 he produced his *Symphony No. 1*, commissioned by Sir Georg Solti for the Chicago Symphony's centennial. That work is dedicated to the memory of AIDS victims. In 1997 he won an Academy Award for the film score for *The Red Violin*, and in 2001 the Pulitzer Prize for music for *Symphony No. 2* for string orchestra.

His early writing was influenced by the music of Aaron Copland, Sir William Walton and Leonard Bernstein, among others. Liner notes on the violin sonata, for the compact disc featuring Albert Hirsh and Fredell Lack on the now-defunct Bay Cities label, had this to say: "There are the familiar resources: major/minor clashes, bitonality, changing meter, and diatonic melodies and harmonies refreshed by novel spacings, large leaps, and 'wrong notes' (yes, the piece does end with a minor second!)"

Commenting on the Lack-Hirsh CD, Corigliano wrote in a letter in December 1990 that the artists "make this quarter-century-old work shine like new." The live performance presented here, done two years earlier, is equally spirited.

Dohnányi Violin Sonata. As a boy, Dohnányi received lessons from his father in both piano and violin. He was well into composing chamber music before his teens. The violin sonata was published in 1913 when he was 36.

Dohnányi has been described as "the missing link between Romanticism and Modernism." The Opus 21 violin sonata is a good example of that position in the evolution of classical music. The piece begins wistfully, but develops into an emotional, virtuoso work. The final movement includes the contrasting elements of a lyrical theme and the driving energy of a Hungarian dance before reaching its peaceful ending. The sonata is not as widely performed as those of Dohnányi's most famous schoolmate, Bartók.

Disc 27

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Mozart: Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Major, K. 526

1 Molto allegro (7:05)

2 Andante (7:33)

3 Presto (7:33)

Respighi: Sonata in B Minor for Violin and Piano

4 Moderato (9:45)

5 Andante espressivo (9:28)

6 Passacaglia (7:44)

Szymanowski:

7 Nocturne and Tarantella, Op. 28 (11:40)

Stravinsky:

8 Chanson Russe (Russian Maiden's Song) from the opera *Mavra* (3:50)

(Total Time: 65:00)

Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston – January 28, 1990

Mozart Sonata. As the title implies, Mozart wrote sonatas for piano with violin accompaniment. Beethoven later developed the genre into a full collaboration of equals.

Respighi Sonata. This large-scale piece for violin and piano is much less well known than the orchestral works of Ottorino Respighi (1879 – 1936). It was composed in 1917, about the time he was writing *The Fountains of*

Rome and *Ancient Airs and Dances*. Each of the three works is in a very different style. The Sonata premiered the following year with the composer at the piano.

The fact that Repighi was a violinist (and violist) as well as a pianist must have aided him greatly in creating this basically romantic work, which requires equal virtuosity on the part of both instrumentalists.

Szymanowski Nocturne and Tarantella. The tarantella is a form of folk dance from Italy and Sicily. In one version, a group dances in a circle moving clockwise, then as the music speeds up, they suddenly reverse direction and go counterclockwise, until the process repeats. The word “tarantella” means tarantula (the spider) and relates to the belief that fast-paced dancing would cure the spider’s bite by causing the victim’s perspiration to eject the venom through the pores. However, the dance is thought to have originally been named after Taranto, a town in southern Italy, picking up the association with spider bites later on.

Disc 28

Mozart:

- 1 Adagio in E Major, K. 261 (7:35)
- 2 Rondo in C Major, K. 373 (6:23)

Brahms: Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano in G Major, Op. 78 (“Rain”)

- 3 Vivace ma non troppo (11:20)
- 4 Adagio (7:43)
- 5 Allegro molto moderato (9:19)

(Total Time: 42:22)

Disc 29

Janáček: Sonata for Violin and Piano (1922)

- 1 Con moto (5:09)
- 2 Ballada – Con moto (5:28)
- 3 Allegretto (2:41)
- 4 Adagio – Un poco piu mosso (4:44)

Strauss: Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat, Op. 18

- 5 Allegro ma non troppo (11:41)
- 6 Improvisation: Andante cantabile (7:48)
- 7 Andante – Allegro (8:08)

(Total Time: 45:49)

Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston – March 10, 1991

Mozart Adagio and Rondo. Mozart wrote some concerto movements for violin and orchestra and for piano and orchestra that he either intended to substitute for movements of existing works or as part of potential new works. The K. 261 Adagio was written in 1776 for the fifth violin concerto, K. 219. The K. 373 Rondo was written in 1781 for a violin concerto.

Brahms Sonata No. 1 (“Rain”). This work is known as the first of Brahms’ three violin sonatas, but one or more earlier sonatas were lost or destroyed by the composer (his own toughest critic). By the time he produced the “Rain” Sonata in 1879, he had developed a style of writing for the piano that was more to his satisfaction—less orchestral, and better for blending with other instruments.

This sonata was created in the midst of a very productive five-year period for Brahms, in which he wrote two symphonies, two concerti, two overtures and many other works. After its premiere, Brahms and his violinist friend Josef Joachim took the sonata on tour, performing it in Austria and England. This very melodic work was warmly received. The “Rain” subtitle refers to an earlier Brahms work, Opus 59, consisting of eight songs. One of these, *Regenlied* (Rain Song), contains a theme the composer reused in the sonata’s third movement.

Janáček Violin Sonata. Czech composer Leos Janáček (1854 – 1928) began his formal musical training as an 11-year-old chorister in an Augustinian monastery in Moravia, under a choirmaster who was also a composer. Both Janáček’s father and grandfather were musicians and music teachers, a family tradition that was to continue. He returned to the choir in his early twenties to teach and wrote his first published composition. Then, while studying in Prague, he began a friendship with Antonin Dvorák, who encouraged him to continue composing. He finally hit his stride as a composer in his fifties and sixties, producing successful operas, symphonic works and chamber music.

One of his more popular chamber works, the violin sonata reflects Janáček’s nationalism and was greatly shaped by events of World War I. He wrote it in 1914 as the people of Moravia awaited liberation by the Russian army, then revised it over the next seven years. Parts of the sonata are expressive of the war-related agitation and tension experienced by the people of Moravia. Towards the end of the final movement, according to Janáček himself, the music depicts “the Russian armies entering Hungary.”

Notes to the Recordings

Strauss Violin Sonata. (See notes to Disc 17.) On the source tape for this performance, the sonata's final chord is cut off abruptly. The rest of the recording is so good, we decided to include it anyway.

Disc 30

Mozart: Piano Quartet No. 2 in E-flat Major, K. 493

- 1 Allegro (7:43)
- 2 Larghetto (7:12)
- 3 Allegretto (9:28)

Brahms: Piano Quartet No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 60

- 4 Allegro ma non troppo (11:06)
- 5 Scherzo: Allegro (4:30)
- 6 Andante (9:40)
- 7 Finale: Allegro comodo (8:57)

(Total Time: 58:46)

Disc 31

Dvorák: Piano Quartet No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 87

- 1 Allegro con fuoco (8:44)
- 2 Lento (10:13)
- 3 Allegro moderato, grazioso (7:38)
- 4 Allegro ma non troppo (7:59)

(Total Time: 34:37)

Virtuoso Quartet, First Unitarian Universalist Church, Houston – March 21, 1993

The Virtuoso Quartet was established in 1964 as the piano quartet-in-residence at the University of Houston. Its four members all had extensive experience as solo concert artists. The quartet was under outside professional management and performed in many other cities besides Houston. Performing here in a reunion concert nearly 30 years after its founding are the original members of the Virtuoso Quartet—Albert Hirsh, piano; Fredell Lack, violin; Wayne Crouse, viola; and Marion Davies (a student of Feuermann), cello.

Mozart Piano Quartet No. 2. (See notes to Disc 14.)

Brahms Piano Quartet in C Minor. Johannes Brahms' third and last (and most difficult) piano quartet was written in two stages. He composed his first version in 1855, at the age of 22, pouring his soul especially into the andante. That movement is a musical declaration of his love for Clara

Schumann, the wife of his good friend Robert Schumann. She received the manuscript and got the message. Brahms stayed miserable with his impossible love and focused on creating music other than the quartet.

He returned to the unpublished piece 19 years later, in 1874, rewriting the first movement, adding a new scherzo movement and a new finale. The andante was unchanged, and he played it for a different married woman, his new object of desire. Like Clara, she too got the message. Brahms continued to refine the quartet until he was completely satisfied with the work. It finally emerged as the great and enduring Opus 60 we know today.

I was curious what else Brahms wrote in the period that produced the revised C minor quartet, and was surprised by the answer. After *Variations on a Theme by Haydn* for orchestra (Opus 56), he published 24 songs, then the piano quartet, and then another 29 works for various vocal-instrumental combinations before coming out with the Opus 67 string quartet. Then came the landmark first symphony, Opus 68. Quite a varied mix!

Dvorák Piano Quartet No. 2. Antonin Dvorák (1841 – 1904) was influenced by another Czech composer, Smetana, who conducted an opera orchestra in which Dvorák played viola. Dvorák was encouraged to become a composer by Brahms, who became a good friend and mentor.

The second piano quartet, Opus 87, was written in 1889, four years before his best-known symphony, the ninth (“From the New World”). In this late Romantic period, Dvorák's contemporaries included Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Richard Strauss and Wagner. He melded use of classical forms with new harmonies, multiple themes that overlap, sometimes chaotically, and frequent use of folk tunes from his homeland and elsewhere. He also mixed the light and the serious. This quartet showcases Dvorák's craftsmanship by using all of the above.

Disc 32

Diamond: Violin Sonata No. 2

- 1 Allegretto – Adagio – Allegretto – Allegro (7:10)
- 2 Molto vivo – fuga (6:22)

Szymanowski: Violin Sonata in D Minor, Op. 9

- 3 Moderato (9:33)
- 4 Andantino tranquillo e dolce (6:18)
- 5 Finale: Allegro molto, quasi presto (5:36)

(Total Time: 35:01)



DAVID COOPER

This portrait was made in Overland Park, Kansas in about 1998.

U.K. Radio Broadcast – Date Unknown

Diamond Violin Sonata No. 2. David Diamond was born in 1915, only eight days after Albert Hirsh. He played the violin before studying composition with Roger Sessions, Nadia Boulanger and Ralph Vaughan-Williams, among others. In Paris in the 1930s, he also knew Ravel, Stravinsky and other composers personally.

He wrote the second violin sonata in 1981. Liner notes by Howard Pollack for the Hirsh-Lack CD issued in 1990 had this to say: “Like all of Diamond’s music, the *Second Sonata* is distinguished by its elegant craftsmanship and contrapuntal sophistication. It is a chromatic, modally ambiguous work, and the very ending in B might come as something of a surprise; but it is a fairly relaxed and ingratiating piece.”

Szymanowski Violin Sonata. (See notes to Disc 20.)

Disc 33

Prokofiev: Violin Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 80

- 1 Andante assai (6:59)
- 2 Allegro brusco (7:26)
- 3 Andante (7:06)
- 4 Allegrissimo (7:34)

(Total Time: 29:07)

Hirsh-Sklar Recital, Houston – Date Unknown

A native of New Orleans, Maurice Sklar moved to Houston when he was 13 years old to study with Fredell Lack. He was admitted to Juilliard at 15 and later studied at Curtis. After launching a concert career, he combined performance of classical music with the ministry. This recording was probably made in the mid-1980s.

Prokofiev Sonata No. 1. Sergei Prokofiev (1891 – 1953) began this sonata in 1938, then put it aside to proceed with other works. He completed the second violin sonata in 1944 before finishing this one, which is dedicated to violinist David Oistrakh and has a distinctly Russian flavor.

Like many of Prokofiev’s works, the first sonata reflects the sufferings of the Russian people through wars and the reigns of violently oppressive rulers. The first movement, described by one writer as “obsessively introspective,” ends with an eeriness the composer said was to resemble “wind in a graveyard.” The second movement is brusque and turbulent, the third is very lyrical, and the energetic final movement recalls material from the prior three. Its high energy declines into a subdued mood as the graveyard theme is revisited near the end of the piece.

Disc 34

Bach: Sonata No. 4 for Clavier and Violin in C Minor, BWV 1017

- 1 Siciliano (3:17)
- 2 Allegro (4:54)
- 3 Adagio (3:14)
- 4 Allegro (4:02)

Enesco: Violin Sonata No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 25 (“In the Popular Rumanian Style”)

- 5 Moderato malinconico (9:50)
- 6 Andante sostenuto e misterioso (9:02)
- 7 Allegro con brio, ma non troppo mosso (9:03)

Prokofiev: Violin Sonata No. 2 in D Major, Op.94

- 8 Moderato (6:22)
- 9 Scherzo: Presto (5:30)
- 10 Andante (3:39)
- 11 Allegro con brio (7:26)

(Total Time: 66:44)

Notes to the Recordings

Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston – Date Unknown

Bach Sonata No. 4. Bach made a point by writing a set of six sonatas for keyboard and violin, rather than for violin and continuo, the more common approach in his day, in which the harpsichord would play continuo, filling out the figured bass to support the featured instrument. The result was a thorough exploration of the possibilities of the trio-sonata, giving each keyboard hand one voice and the third voice to the violin.

The first movement is a Sicilienne in 6/8 time. The second features well-developed three-voice counterpoint. The adagio third movement ends with a coda resembling a cadenza, and the final movement is a three-voice fugue in two sections.

Enesco Sonata No. 3. Written in 1926, Georges Enesco's third violin sonata goes full-bore with his love of Rumania's gypsy folk music. The sonata is rarely performed, largely due to its extraordinary difficulty. To imitate folk fiddling it is full of special effects, all in Enesco's own notation, such as quartertones (which sound out of tune), slides, and elaborate ornamentation.

Yehudi Menuhin, one of Enesco's most famous violin pupils, called the third sonata "remarkable and haunting," and said "the piece exudes the rhapsodic and improvisatory atmosphere characteristic of the Rumanian Gypsy violinist playing with the cimbalum..." In fact, in places the piano part simulates the sounds of a cimbalum, a hammered dulcimer used in East European folk music.

The sonata uses many traditional folk forms, including the doina, a free-flowing song of lamentation. Enesco's own description of the movements includes the lament of homeless refugees in the first, "mysterious voices and strange cries out of the deep and dark night" in the second, and in the third, a drunk who somehow finds serenity "in the midst of the unhappy world around him."

(For more on Enesco, see the notes to Disc 11.)

Prokofiev Sonata No. 2. Russian violinist David Oistrakh helped Prokofiev adapt his Opus 94 sonata, originally written for flute and piano, for the violin. Discussing the flute version, the composer said "I wanted the Sonata to have a classical, clear, transparent sonority." Those traits come through in this more frequently performed violin version.

Disc 35

Brahms:

- 1 Scherzo in C Minor from F.A.E. Sonata (5:28)

Schubert: Duo in A Major, Op. 162

- 2 Allegro moderato (6:17)
- 3 Scherzo-presto (4:32)
- 4 Andantino (3:48)
- 5 Allegrissimo (5:25)

Prokofiev: Violin Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 80

- 6 Andante assai (6:49)
- 7 Allegro brusco (7:28)
- 8 Andante (7:18)
- 9 Allegrissimo (7:35)

(Total Time: 55:19)

Hirsh-Lack Recital, University of Houston – March 31, 1998

This energetic recital in the Moores Opera House was presented as the final concert in Fredell Lack's long performing career. For Albert, retired and living near Kansas City, it was the last performance in Houston, where he had maintained a vital musical presence for very nearly half a century. He was 82.

The program concluded with the Fauré sonata, but their performance of that work in a 1962 recital was so definitive, we're including only the earlier recording in this collection. See Disc 6.

Brahms Scherzo. Joseph Joachim, leading violinist of Brahms' day, had as his motto "Frei aber einsam" (free but solitary). Its abbreviation F.A.E. was used as the name of a sonata created for Joachim by Albert Dietrich, Brahms and Robert Schumann in 1853—as a joke. Brahms and Dietrich, Schumann's top composition student, contributed one movement each, and Schumann two movements. Joachim was to play the piece and guess who had written each movement. He allowed this scherzo to be published after Brahms' death. It is also known as *Sonatensatz*. It was not until 1936 that a work based on Schumann's two F.A.E. movements was published.

Schubert Duo. This is one of six surviving works by Schubert for violin and piano. At 19, still an unknown, he wrote three sonatas in a form similar to that used by Mozart. The pieces were concise and suitable for amateur musicians. The following year, 1817, Schubert wrote this duo (or sonata) in A major. The passage of one year

produced considerable growth, as this work has much more freedom and variety. It still adheres to classic form but gives equal weight to each of the two instruments. One of Schubert's two later works for violin and piano is the *Fantasy* included on Disc 20.

Prokofiev Sonata No. 1. (See notes to Disc 33.)

Disc 36

Saint-Saëns:

- 1 Variations on a Theme by Beethoven, Op. 35, For Two Pianos (with Timothy Hester) (18:38)

Chopin:

- 2 Waltz in C Sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2 (3:51)

Debussy:

- 3 Claire de Lune (5:01)

Brahms:

- 4 Intermezzo, Op. 118, No. 2 (6:42)
- 5 Rhapsody in B Flat Minor, Op. 79, No. 1 (9:53)

(Total Time: 44:35)

Two-Piano Recital, Brazosport College, Lake Jackson, Texas – March 20, 1999

At home, Dad occasionally played music for two pianos, four hands with family members or dinner guests, just for fun. Other than works like Mozart's K. 365 concerto for two pianos and orchestra, he rarely played two-piano music on stage. One of the last concerts of his career was an exception, when he did a full program with his former student Timothy Hester, Assistant Professor of Piano and Director of Keyboard Collaborative Arts at the University of Houston's Moores School of Music. They each did some solo works in addition to the four-hand pieces.

Saint-Saëns Beethoven Variations. A formidable pianist, organist and composer, Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921) started piano lessons at three, began composing soon after, and made his concert debut at age 10. He went on to found the Société Nationale de Musique, devoted to the revival of French music.

Saint-Saëns' large number of compositions includes four works for two pianos, four hands. This set of eight variations works on the theme from the trio section of the Minuetto movement of Beethoven's Opus 31, #3 piano

sonata. One of the last variations is a lengthy fugue. The work was written in 1874.

Chopin Waltz in C Sharp Minor. Chopin published eight waltzes during his lifetime, and about that same number were published in the first 20 years after his death. These short works present a wide range of expression and are elegantly conceived. Of the three waltzes comprising Opus 64, published in 1847, the first (the "Minute" Waltz) is playful, and the third is ambiguous in its complexity. The second, which is presented here, in spite of being somewhat melancholy was one of the most successful of all the Chopin waltzes.

Debussy Claire de Lune. (See notes to Disc 4.)

Home Recording, Klippinge, Denmark – August 1999

Five months after the Brazosport program, Dad had an opportunity to perform some of the same solo pieces in Denmark while vacationing at the family's summer cottage adjacent to Oliver's home near the little town of Klippinge. The story of this Danish concert is recounted on page 16.

Brahms Intermezzo and Rhapsody. The evolution of the piano during Brahms' lifetime brought the instrument to resemble today's grand. The enhanced capabilities of the piano influenced Brahms' style significantly. They also gave rise to a new breed of concertizing keyboard virtuoso. Many composers, including Brahms, eagerly provided short pieces that would allow such pianists to show off their technique and interpretive abilities. These works came with a variety of names, such as prelude, intermezzo (interlude), nocturne, rhapsody, impromptu (on the spur of the moment), mazurka (a short-form Polish dance first presented by Chopin), and polonaise (a long-form Polish dance).

Brahms usually wrote such pieces in short sets. Presented here is one of two intermezzi comprising his Opus 117, which was one of his last six works to bear an opus number. He published three rhapsodies as Opus 79 shortly after completing the violin concerto and the first violin sonata, and just before producing the Academic Festival and Tragic overtures. The rhapsody presented here is a full-bodied work containing some of the complexity of the composer's early works for solo piano. Rhapsodies take many forms and, like this one, often sound improvisational.

Concert Artists

The list of famous musicians with whom Albert Hirsh performed in concert reads like a Who's Who of classical music. The following is a partial list drawn from the document nominating him for an Outstanding Faculty award at the University of Houston in the early 1980s. It does not include any names that would have been added in the subsequent 15 years of his concert career, nor does it list any of the numerous Houston-based musicians with whom he performed. Also missing are various wind and brass soloists. Many of the men and women shown below have passed from the scene but in their day were among the leading artists appearing internationally as soloists and recording widely on the big-name record labels. Some of the youngest ones are still going strong.

Violinists

David Abel
Salvatore Accardo
Schmuel Ashkenazi
Andre Balogh
James Oliver Buswell IV
Alfredo Campoli
John Corigliano, Sr.
Toshiya Eto
Christian Ferras
Zino Francescatti
Erick Friedman
Robert Gerle
Szymon Goldberg
Sidney Harth
Jean-Jacques Kantorow
Joanna Martzy
Yehudi Menuhin
Nathan Milstein
Erica Morini
Régis Pasquier
Edith Peinemann
Itzhak Perlman
Leonard Posner
Dorothea Powers
Michael Rabin
Ossy Renardy
Ruggiero Ricci
Wolfgang Schneiderhan
Berl Senofsky
Joseph Silverstein
Tossi Spivakovsky
Joseph Szigeti
Roman Totenberg
Charles Treger
Willard Tressel
Camilla Wicks
Zwi Zeitlin

Cellists

Gordon Epperson
Emanuel Feuermann
Pierre Fournier
Adolphe Frezin
Raya Garbousova
Lynn Harrell
Zara Nelsova
Paul Olevsky
Leslie Parnas
Leonard Rose
Janos Scholtz
Janos Starker
Christine Walevska

Vocalists

Gianna D'Angelo
John Boyden
Montserrat Caballé
John Craig
John Darrenkamp
Norman Farrow
Igor Gorin
Dorothy Kirsten
Richard Lewis
Martha Lipton
George London
John Magnus
Dorothy Maynor
Mildred Miller
Anna Moffo
James Pease
Jan Peerce
Elinor Ross
Teresa Stratas
Richard Tucker
Ljuba Welitch

Discography

Albert Hirsh made the following commercial recordings during his career. There may have been others that are not documented.

Songs of Charles Ives. First recording of songs *Ann Street*, *Charlie Rutlage*, *Evening*, *The Greatest Man*, *Resolution*, and *Two Little Flowers*. Mordecai Bauman, baritone, Albert Hirsh, piano. New Music Recordings, 1938.

Wolfgang Schneiderhan Spielt Für Sie. Collection of 17 short works for violin and piano. Wolfgang Schneiderhan, violin, Albert Hirsh, piano. Deutsche Grammophon boxed set of four 45 rpm records, 30-434 through 30-437, 1957. Released in 1998 as a single CD in Japan, POCG 30184/459 706-2 but no longer in print.

Szymanowski Violin Sonata in D Minor, Opus 9. Original LP produced by Vox in 1984 (VCL-9061) included Szymanowski Violin Concerto No. 2. Digitally remastered and reissued on compact disc as part of Vox Box CDX 5133 in 1994. Fredell Lack, violin, Albert Hirsh, piano.

American Violin Sonatas by John Corigliano, David Diamond, Benjamin Lees and Peter Mennin. Fredell Lack, violin, Albert Hirsh, piano (except the Lees sonata, for which Barry Snyder was the pianist). Digital recording BCD 1018 by now-defunct Bay Cities label, co-produced by John Proffitt and KUHF-FM, 1990.

Victor Herbert Second Cello Concerto (slow movement). From a test pressing by RCA Victor, 1942. Emanuel Feuermann, cello, Albert Hirsh, piano. This was Feuermann's last recording, done a few weeks before his death. Released in 2001 as part of a collection of excerpts entitled *Emanuel Feuermann – Rare Recordings From 1934 To 1942*, produced by Cello Classics, CC 1003.

Works by Composer

Disc No.	Composer and Title
2	Albéniz Unidentified work
10	Bach Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 903
34	Bach Violin Sonata No. 4 in C Minor, BWV 1017
1	Bach-Busoni Chorale-Prelude
2, 3	Bach-Hess Chorale-Prelude ("Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring")
2	Bartók Allegro Barbaro
5	Bartók Rumanian Folk Dances
7	Bartók Violin Sonata #1
7, 21	Bartók Violin Sonata #2
19	Beethoven Clarinet Trio in B-Flat Major, Op. 11
12	Beethoven Piano Trio #9 in G Major, Op. 121a ("Kakadu")
26	Beethoven Romance #1 in G Major, Op. 40
3	Beethoven Sonata #17 in D Minor, Op. 31, #2 ("Tempest")
22	Beethoven Violin Sonata #3 in E-Flat, Op. 12 #3
9	Beethoven Violin Sonata #5 in F Major, Op. 24 ("Spring")
22	Beethoven Violin Sonata #6 in A Major, Op. 30, #1
22	Beethoven Violin Sonata #9 in A Major, Op. 47 ("Kreutzer")
16	Beethoven Violin Sonata #10 in G major Op. 96
19	Brahms Clarinet Trio in A Minor, Op. 114
5	Brahms Hungarian Dance #5
36	Brahms Intermezzo, Op. 118, #2
18	Brahms Piano Quartet #1 In G Minor, Op. 25
30	Brahms Piano Quartet #3 in C Minor, Op. 60
36	Brahms Rhapsody in B-Flat Minor, Op. 79, #1
35	Brahms Scherzo from F.A.E. Sonata
28	Brahms Violin Sonata #1 in G Major, Op. 78 ("Rain")
6	Brahms Violin Sonata #2 in A Major, Op. 100
12	Chausson Piano Quartet in C Minor, Op. 35
23	Chausson Piano Trio in G Minor, Op. 3
3	Chopin Berceuse in D Flat Major, Op. 57
5	Chopin Nocturne, Op. 9
1, 4	Chopin Piano Sonata #3 in B Minor, Op. 58
36	Chopin Waltz in C# Minor, Op. 64, #2
26	Corigliano Violin Sonata
5	De Falla Danse Espagnole from La Vida Breve
4	Debussy Cathédrale Engloutie
4, 36	Debussy Claire de Lune
25	Debussy Girl With the Flaxen Hair
4	Debussy Gollywog's Cakewalk
32	Diamond Violin Sonata #2
8	Dohnányi Variations on a Nursery Air, Op. 25
26	Dohnányi Violin Sonata in C Sharp Minor, Op. 21
31	Dvorák Piano Quartet #2 in E Flat Major, Op. 87
5	Elgar La Capricieuse, Op. 17
11	Enesco Violin Sonata #2, Op.6
34	Enesco Violin Sonata #3 in A Minor, Op. 25
21	Fauré Piano Quartet #1 in C Minor, Op. 15
6	Fauré Violin Sonata #1 in A Major, Op. 13
10	Franck Piano Quintet in F Minor
3	Franck Prelude, Chorale and Fugue

Works by Composer

Disc No.	Composer and Title
24	Franck Violin Sonata in A Major
20	Fuchs Fantasy
2	Gluck Unidentified work
2	Granados Unidentified work
9	Hambro Happy Birthday Ludwig
24	Handel Violin Sonata #6 in E Major
29	Janáček Violin Sonata
5	Kreisler Caprice Viennois, Op. 2
5, 25	Kreisler Liebesfreud
5	Kreisler Liebesleid
25	Kreisler Unidentified work
16	Leclair Violin Sonata in D Major
2	Liszt St. Francis Walking on the Waves
5	Martinu Arabesque #4 (Etudes Rythmiques)
13	Martinu Piano Quartet #1
17	Mennin Sonata Concertante
28	Mozart Adagio in E Major, K. 261
14	Mozart Piano Concerto #27 in B Flat Major, K. 595
13, 30	Mozart Piano Quartet #2 in E Flat Major, K. 493
28	Mozart Rondo in C Major, K. 373
27	Mozart Sonata for Piano and Violin in A major, K. 526
5	Mussorgsky Hebrew Song
5	Mussorgsky Russian Dance
33, 35	Prokofiev Violin Sonata #1 in F Minor, Op. 80
34	Prokofiev Violin Sonata #2 in D Major, Op. 94
15	Rachmaninoff Cello Sonata in G Minor, Op. 19
5	Reger Wiegenlied, Op. 79
27	Respighi Violin Sonata in B Minor
5	Ries Perpetuum Mobile, Op. 34, #5
25	Saint-Saëns Introduction & Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 28
5	Saint-Saëns The Swan
36	Saint-Saëns Variations on a Theme by Beethoven, Op. 35, for Two Pianos
25	Sarasate Zigeunerweisen, Op. 20, #1
9	Sarasate Introduction and Tarantella, Op. 43
9	Sarasate Malagueña, Op. 21, #1
9	Schoenberg Phantasy for Violin With Piano Accompaniment, Op. 47
35	Schubert Duo in A Major, Op. 162
20	Schubert Fantasy in C Major, D. 934
5	Schubert-Dresden L'abeille #9
2	Scriabin Etude in D Sharp Minor, Op. 8, No. 12
2	Shostakovich Polka from The Golden Age
17, 29	Strauss Violin Sonata in E Flat, Op. 18
5	Stravinsky Danse Russe
5, 27	Stravinsky Young Maiden's Song (Chanson Russe)
27	Szymanowski Nocturne and Tarantella, Op. 28
20, 32	Szymanowski Violin Sonata in D Minor, Op. 9
16	Tchaikovsky Valse-Scherzo in C Major, Op. 34
1	Vivaldi-W.F. Bach Concerto in D Minor
25	Wieniawski Legende, Op. 17
25	Wieniawski Polonaise Brillante in D Major, Op. 4
25	Wieniawski Souvenir de Moscou in G Major, Op. 6

Other Notes

Scholarship Fund

The Albert Hirsh Scholarship Fund provides financial support to outstanding music students at the University of Houston's Moores School of Music. Contributions should be sent to the Fund c/o the Moores School of Music, 120 School of Music Building, University of Houston, Houston, TX 77204-4201.

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Sources

The material contained in this booklet is based on personal recollections of Ethan, Oliver and Mil Hirsh, published articles, concert programs, newspaper reviews, correspondence, various Internet sites, a recorded television interview, liner notes of various commercial recordings, and various reference books. Facts were cross-checked with multiple sources where possible.

Technical Notes

A meticulous process was used to make this collection of recordings as listenable as possible. The aim was to preserve the best performances and the recordings with best sound quality, and wherever possible retain the feel of being at a live concert. You will hear instruments tuning, pages turning, audiences clapping and (of course) coughing. Some recordings had existing defects that could not be corrected, while some had deficiencies of sound quality that could be improved in the computer after being transcribed digitally. For example, the 1939 recording was enhanced substantially by removing the break between 78-rpm records, correcting most instances of stuck or skipping phonograph needles, and filtering out some (but by no means all) of the scratchiness. In the recording of the Houston Symphony broadcast, a small amount of the static and other radio noise was removed. On many of the discs, some of the breaks between movements have been shortened to a more reasonable length. No music content has been altered other than as described above.

Where necessary, sound quality of all the recordings was improved with the goal being to make them sound real, but not doctored. Still, quality varies from recording to recording. Some of the source tapes were the master recordings made at the concert event, while most were second or third generation copies. Newer recordings were digital, reflecting the huge evolution of audio technology that took place between the 1960s and the 1990s. The source recordings were reel-to-reel 7.5-inch-per-second tapes, analog audio cassettes, and digitally recorded cassettes. The Deutsche Grammophon recording was dubbed from a DG-furnished CD. All the performances are presented in stereophonic sound, unless the original was monaural or had a stereo channel that cut in and

Other Notes

out. Nearly all of the original recordings, other than the few made in a commercial studio, were produced using only one or two microphones. We did not test the pitch of each recording. It's of course possible that on some individual recordings, multiple transfers involving playback on a machine that did not match the speed of the original recording device resulted in variances of speed and therefore pitch. Occasionally, during breaks between movements you may here some feed-through, which is like a faint preview of the music you will hear a few seconds later. This is caused by the layers of tape imprinting onto one another while stored on the reel or cassette.

Since the volume and tone quality of each recording may vary, you should actively work with the tone and equalizer settings on your playback system to achieve the most enjoyable sound for your individual taste. I suggest you experiment a little. Tone settings that sound good on one CD will not necessarily be the best for all the others in the collection. The sound quality is much more consistent in these final reproductions than in the early proofs, however.

The tracks of each disc are indexed as accurately as possible, with each track starting at the beginning of a movement. A track's total time may include the break that follows the movement. Recordings that include an announcer have a sub-index for the announcer and a second sub-index for the start of the music. The performances are presented in chronological order to the extent that their dates are known.

These discs are CD-Rs, which should play satisfactorily in all but the oldest CD players. They should also work in car stereos and in computers with CD or DVD drives. As is true of all optical media, they can be scratched, or damaged from rough treatment or high temperature. If you find a disc is defective, contact the producer for a replacement copy.

Statistics

This collection includes 101 compositions by 48 composers. The CDs contain a total of 27 hours of music from 31 concert performances.

Correspondence

Your comments, questions and reminiscences are welcome. Send them to Ethan Hirsh at 1309 West 50th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64112-1143, or e-mail to hirshebar@aol.com.

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