

HEIFETZ

Violin Concertos by Mozart, Bruch & Elgar



Biddulph
RECORDINGS



MOZART Violin Concerto No.5 in A, K.219

29 & 30 May 1951; first issued on RCA LM 9014

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|---|--|------|
| 1 | I Allegro aperto – Adagio – Allegro aperto | 9:42 |
| 2 | II Adagio | 9:58 |
| 3 | III Rondeau: Tempo di Menuetto – Allegro | 6:39 |

BRUCH Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor, op.26

18 May 1951; first issued on RCA LM 9007

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------|
| 4 | I Vorspiel: Allegro moderato | 7:34 |
| 5 | II Adagio | 7:54 |
| 6 | III Finale: Allegro energico | 6:32 |

ELGAR Violin Concerto in B minor, op.61

6 & 7 June 1949; first issued on HMV DB 21056/60 and RCA WDM 1385

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------|
| 7 | I Allegro | 15:54 |
| 8 | II Andante | 10:07 |
| 9 | III Allegro molto | 16:06 |

JASCHA HEIFETZ

with the London Symphony Orchestra
conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent

Reissue producer: Eric Wen
Transfer engineer and digital mastering: Rick Torres

Although Edward Elgar had planned to write a violin concerto as early as 1890, it took nearly two decades before he eventually completed one. His sole Violin Concerto in B minor was finally completed after a request from Fritz Kreisler who once declared that he regarded Elgar to be 'the greatest living composer...on an equal footing with my idols, Beethoven and Brahms'. Today Elgar's Concerto of 1909 – along with the Sibelius Concerto composed four years earlier – is firmly established today as one of the most important violin concertos of the 20th century.

Premiered by Kreisler in 1910, there were plans for the Austrian violinist to record the Elgar Concerto but sadly he never did so. As it turned out, the first recording of the work was a truncated version made by the British violinist Albert Sammons in April 1916. This was followed by another abridged version made later that same year by Marie Hall for HMV. It was only in 1929 that the first recording of the Concerto in its complete form finally appeared on Columbia with Sammons accompanied by Henry Wood and the New Queen's Hall Orchestra. This was followed three years later by the justly famous HMV recording of the 16-year-old Yehudi Menuhin made with the composer at the podium. (While it would seem odd that a mere teen would be entrusted to record such a huge work, young Menuhin was the violin sensation at the time and sales of his records in the early 1930s outsold even those of Kreisler and Heifetz.)

Despite all these recordings of the work, at that time the Elgar Concerto was seldom performed outside of the UK. One of its ardent champions however was Jascha Heifetz. The violinist had studied the Concerto in his teens, and when he embarked on an extended two-year

world tour in 1920 it was one of the works he featured on his programmes. Heifetz was particularly admired in England and by the time he made his UK début at the Queen's Hall on 5 May 1920 over 70,000 copies of his records had been sold in Britain alone. When he returned to London later that same year, he chose to play the Elgar Concerto with the London Philharmonic conducted by Albert Coates.

On 20 November 1920, five days before the concert, Elgar invited Heifetz to tea at his home in Hampstead. The composer had started his own musical career as a violinist and knew the instrument intimately. Among the many subjects Elgar and Heifetz spoke about was violin technique. Elgar described his private violin studies with Adolph Politzer and mentioned that his violin lessons inspired him to compose a set of five exercises to help develop violin technique. These were written in 1882 while studying with Politzer and were published a decade later as *Études caractéristiques*, op.24. Looking over the music Heifetz expressed a special interest in the composer's 'Exercise for the Third Finger' and Elgar subsequently wrote it out by hand with a dedication to Heifetz. Elgar attended the Heifetz's performance of the Concerto at the Queen's Hall and wrote admiringly to his close friend Alice Wortley that the violinist's performance was 'a tremendous display'.

Just over a year later after performing it in London, Heifetz played the work again with Coates conducting the New York Symphony in two concerts at Carnegie Hall on 5 and 6 January 1922. Heifetz continued to champion Elgar's Concerto throughout his career and finally had an opportunity to record the work in June 1949. Accompanied by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent, the Concerto

was made at the famed Studio No.1 at Abbey Road in London. Heifetz's interpretation is markedly different from the recordings made earlier. Not only does he take a much quicker tempo but he infuses it with a uniquely Heifetzian forward thrust. While some may find Heifetz's approach a tad driven, no one could deny the intensity and passion of his interpretation. Furthermore, as expected from Heifetz, it is a technically immaculate performance.

The two other works on this CD – Mozart's Concerto No.5 and Bruch's Concerto No.1 – were regular staples in Heifetz's repertoire, and all three works were made in the EMI Studios at Abbey Road in London with Sir Malcolm Sargent conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. Recorded with the 78-rpm format in mind, only the Elgar came out as such in the UK; in the US it first appeared in a boxed set of five 45-rpm discs. Although American Columbia Records had introduced the 33-rpm LP ('long-playing') record in 1948, RCA offered its recordings in the alternative 45-rpm format. As it turned out, the 33-rpm record eventually won out in the 'battle of the speeds'. While the record-buying public in the US were quick to adopt the new LP format, the 78-rpm record remained the preferred medium in the UK into the early 1950s. Although the Mozart and Bruch concertos were among the first Heifetz records to be issued on LP in the US, they were originally planned to be released separately on 78-rpm discs in Britain. When they finally appeared in 1953, however, the two works were coupled on a 33-rpm record.

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Exercise for the 3rd finger



Allegro

Written Oct 7. 1878 for my own use.
 Copied for Dr. Joseph Heifetz at his kind
 request, & offered him with greatest
 pleasure.
 Edward Elgar
 Nov. 20. 1920

* The Records are not to be
 played but the 1st, 2nd & 3rd
 fingers are written in the
 position indicated.

Not
 written
 Elgar

Elgar's copy of his 'Etude for the Third Finger' dedicated to Heifetz

JASCHA
Heifetz

and the LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Conductor SIR MALCOLM SARGENT

Bruch CONCERTO N^o1 in G MINOR
Mozart CONCERTO N^o5 in A K219



"His Master's Voice"

LONG PLAY 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ R.P.M. RECORD