

# HARRIET COHEN

The complete  
solo studio  
recordings



apr





HARRIET COHEN

*The complete solo  
studio recordings*

(1924–1948)

## JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

**Keyboard Concerto No 1 in D minor BWV1052** ..... Orchestra conducted by Sir Henry Wood

1. Allegro ..... Recorded on 24 September 1924 (8.17)  
 2. Adagio ..... Matrices: AX 601-1, 602-1, 603-1, 604-2, 605-1 & 606-2 (7.43)  
 3. Allegro ..... First issued on Columbia L 1624/26 (8.16)

**The Well-Tempered Clavier BOOK I**

4. Prelude No 1 in C major BWV846 ..... Recorded on 11 October 1928 (1.43)  
 5. Fugue No 1 in C major BWV846 ..... Matrix: WAX 4149-2; first issued on Columbia L 2239 (2.26)  
 6. Prelude No 2 in C minor BWV847 ..... Recorded on 11 October 1928 (1.29)  
 7. Fugue No 2 in C minor BWV847 ..... Matrix: WAX 4153-1; first issued on Columbia L 2239 (1.58)  
 8. Prelude No 3 in C sharp major BWV848 ..... Recorded on 12 October 1928 (1.27)  
 9. Fugue No 3 in C sharp major BWV848 ..... Matrix: WAX 4158-1; first issued on Columbia L 2240 (2.49)  
 10. Prelude No 4 in C sharp minor BWV849 ..... Recorded on 11 October 1928 (3.24)  
 11. Fugue No 4 in C sharp minor BWV849 ..... Matrices: WAX 4151-1 & 4150-2; first issued on Columbia L 2240 & 2241 (4.23)  
 12. Prelude No 5 in D major BWV850 ..... Recorded on 12 October 1928 (1.08)  
 13. Fugue No 5 in D major BWV850 ..... Matrix: WAX 4156-1; first issued on Columbia L 2241 (3.30)  
 14. Prelude No 6 in D minor BWV851 ..... Recorded on 11 October 1928 (1.16)  
 15. Fugue No 6 in D minor BWV851 ..... Matrix: WAX 4152-2; first issued on Columbia L 2242 (2.42)  
 16. Prelude No 7 in E flat major BWV852 ..... Recorded on 12 October 1928 (4.48)  
 17. Fugue No 7 in E flat major BWV852 ..... Matrices: WAX 4154-2 & 4155-1; first issued on Columbia L 2242 & 2243 (2.19)  
 18. Prelude No 8 in E flat minor BWV853 ..... Recorded on 11 October 1928 (4.39)  
 19. Fugue No 8 in E flat minor BWV853 ..... Matrices: WAX 4147-1 & 4148-2; first issued on Columbia L 2243 & 2244 (4.45)  
 20. Prelude No 9 in E major BWV854 ..... Recorded on 12 October 1928 (1.23)  
 21. Fugue No 9 in E major BWV854 ..... Matrix: WAX 4157-2; first issued on Columbia L 2244 (1.36)  
 22. BACH/RUMMEL **Mortify us by thy grace** from Cantata No 22 ..... Released April 1928 (2.41)  
     Matrix: WA 6470-1; first issued on Columbia 4740  
 23. BACH/COHEN **Beloved Jesus, we are here** BWV731 ..... Released April 1928 (2.37)  
     Matrix: WA 6469-2; first issued on Columbia 4740

## JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

**Keyboard Concerto No 1 in D minor** BWV1052 Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Walter Susskind

1. **Allegro** ..... Recorded on 10 August 1946 (8.31)  
 2. **Adagio** ..... Matrices: CAX 9640-1, 9641 (Dubbed side without take number), 9646-1, 9647-1, 9648-1 & 9649-1 (7.59)  
 3. **Allegro** ..... First issued on Columbia DX 1312/14 (8.44)

**The Well-Tempered Clavier** BOOK I

4. **Prelude No 4 in C sharp minor** BWV849 ..... Recorded on 11 December 1947 (3.02)  
 5. **Fugue No 4 in C sharp minor** BWV849 ..... Matrices: CAX 10135-2 & 10136-2; first issued on Columbia DX 1650 (4.37)  
 6. BACH/COHEN† **Sanctify us by thy goodness** from Cantata No 22 ... Recorded on 21 March 1935 (2.39)  
     Matrix: CA 14970-1; first issued on Columbia DB 1533  
 7. BACH/COHEN **Beloved Jesus, we are here** BWV731 ..... Recorded on 21 March 1935 (2.41)  
     Matrix: CA 14969-2; first issued on Columbia DB 1533  
 8. BACH/COHEN **Up! Arouse thee!** from Cantata No 155 ..... Recorded on 22 March 1935 (4.03)  
     Matrix: CAX 7499-1; first issued on Columbia LX 400  
 9. BACH/PETRI **Fantasia (Praeludium) in C minor** BWV921 ..... Recorded on 22 March 1935 (3.21)  
     Matrix: CAX 7498-2; first issued on Columbia LX 400

## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

**Piano Sonata No 10 in C major** K330

10. **Allegro moderato** ..... Recorded on 13 May 1932 (6.42)  
 11. **Andante cantabile** ..... Matrices: CAX 6407-2, 6408-1, 6409-1 & 6410-2 (4.37)  
 12. **Allegretto** ..... First issued on Columbia DX 375/6 (4.13)

## FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810–1849)

13. **Nocturne in F major** Op 15 No 1 ..... Recorded on 19 April 1943 (5.00)  
     Matrix: CAX 9183-1; first issued on Columbia DX 1231

**Trois Nouvelles Études**

14. **No 1 in F minor** ..... Recorded on 19 April 1943 (2.02)  
 15. **No 3 in A flat major** ..... Matrix: CAX 9184-2; first issued on Columbia DX 1231 (2.10)  
 16. **Étude in C sharp minor** Op 25 No 7 ..... Recorded on 29 June 1928 (5.50)  
     Matrices: WA 7572-2 & 7573-1; first issued on Columbia D 1632

† see notes

- JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897) ..... Recorded on 19 August 1930
1. **Ballade in D minor** Op 10 No 1 ..... Matrix: WAX 5674-3; first issued on Columbia LX 70 (4.24)
  2. **Intermezzo in B flat major** Op 76 No 4 ..... Matrix: WAX 5675; first issued on Columbia LX 70 (2.30)
- CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918) ..... Recorded on 26 January 1948
3. **Clair de lune** from Suite bergamasque ..... Matrix: CAX 10161-1; first issued on Columbia DX 1496 (4.26)
  4. **La Cathédrale engloutie** No 10 from Préludes Book I ..... Matrix: CAX 10162-1; first issued on Columbia DX 1496 (4.52)
- MANUEL DE FALLA (1876–1946) ..... Recorded on 9 February 1943
5. **Andaluza** No 4 from Pièces espagnoles ..... Matrix: CAX 9067-1; first issued on Columbia DX 1131 (4.18)
  6. **The Fisherman's Tale** from El Amor Brujo ..... Matrix: CAX 9066-1; first issued on Columbia DX 1131 (2.12)
  7. **The Miller's Dance** from The Three-Cornered Hat ..... Matrix: CAX 9066-1; first issued on Columbia DX 1131 (2.19)
- KABALEVSKY **Sonatina in C major** Op 13 No 1
8. **Allegro assai e lusingando** ..... Recorded on 2 January 1943 (2.26)
  9. **Andantino** ..... Matrices: CAX 8969-1 & 8970-1 [part] (2.26)
  10. **Presto** ..... First issued on Columbia DX 1066 (1.52)
11. SHOSTAKOVICH **Prelude in E flat minor** Op 34 No 14 ..... Recorded on 2 January 1943 (2.33)  
Matrix: CAX 8970-1 [part]; first issued on Columbia DX 1066
12. GIBBONS **Ayre – Alman – Toy – Coranto – Mr Sanders His Delight** .... edited by M Glyn  
Recorded on 4 December 1947; Matrix: CAX 10142-2; first issued on Columbia DX 1552 (4.19)
13. GIBBONS/VAUGHAN WILLIAMS **Hymn Tune Prelude on Song 13** ..... Recorded on 4 December 1947  
Matrix: CAX 10143-1; first issued on Columbia DX 1552 (4.20)
14. BAX **Paeon (Passacaglia)** ..... Recorded on 7 July 1938; Matrix: CA 17042-1; first issued on Columbia DB 1786 (3.47)
15. BAX **A Hill Tune** ..... Recorded on 20 October 1942; Matrix: CAX 9056-2; first issued on Columbia DX 1109 (4.53)
16. BAX **A Mountain Mood – Theme and Variations** ..... Recorded on 20 October 1942  
Matrix: CAX 9057-1; first issued on Columbia DX 1109 (4.42)
17. BAX **Morning Song (Maytime in Sussex)** ..... Orchestra conducted by Dr Malcolm Sargent  
Recorded on 7 February 1947; Matrices: CAX 9814-1 & 9815-1; first issued on Columbia DX 1361 (8.25)
18. BAX **The Oliver Theme** from the film *Oliver Twist* ..... Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Muir Mathieson  
Recorded on 1 September 1948; Matrices: CAX 10317-1 & 10318-2; first issued on Columbia DX 1516 (7.46)
19. BATH **Cornish Rhapsody** from the film *Love Story* ..... London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hubert Bath  
Recorded on 4 November 1944; Matrices: CAX 9215-1 & 9216-1; first issued on Columbia DX 1171 (6.11)



HARRIET COHEN's colourful – and at times, controversial – personal life has long clouded a modern assessment of her stature as a pianist. As a young woman, she was beguilingly beautiful, and she rarely hesitated to advance her career through charm and even seduction – so much so that many have written her off as a mere *femme fatale*. For over three decades, she pursued a tempestuous affair with the composer Arnold Bax – who wrote many of his piano works for her – and the adulation she received from other composers only enhanced her prominence. Vaughan Williams wrote his Piano Concerto for her, Falla chose her for the British premiere of his well-known *Nights in the Garden of Spain* (which she made into a signature piece), and Elgar asked her to record the piano part to his Quintet. But understandably her liaisons – whether real or merely implied – with prominent men ranging from H G Wells to Ramsay MacDonald often undercut, rather than advanced, her professional recognition, and Ken Russell's 1992 film (in which he cast himself as Bax and Glenda Jackson as Cohen) even briefly derides her pianistic abilities.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Harriet was a notorious fabricator, and her autobiography is filled with self-aggrandizing inaccuracies that must be carefully sifted from the truths that it also contains.<sup>2</sup>

But the most serious barrier to an objective appraisal of her artistry – the dearth of recordings available to modern listeners – has now been lifted. Although she recorded far less than many of her contemporaries, the nearly four hours of commercial releases contained here – her complete solo output (she

also recorded three chamber works – the Elgar Quintet and viola sonatas by Brahms and Bax) – leave little doubt that she was a major talent, well deserving of the accolades she often received. While her oft-repeated insistence that her small hands prevented her from tackling large-scale Romantic works must be questioned, the repertoire in which she did specialize – Bach, pre-Bach, and contemporary works – connoted intellectuality, a trait which (despite her coquetry) was readily apparent to those who knew her. The recordings included here also document her mastery of contrapuntal textures, for despite inferences that might be drawn from her personal behaviour, there was nothing flighty or capricious about her musicianship. Her conceptions were always replete with musical structure and purpose, exemplifying the principles of her teacher, Tobias Matthay, who insisted that all performances convey a sense of shape and musical progression.

Born in Brixton on 2 December 1895, Harriet Cohen received her first lessons from her mother, a former Matthay pupil, who for a time worked as a cinema pianist. Florence Cohen was also the great-granddaughter of Moses Samuel (1795–1860), whose descendants founded the H Samuel jewellery chain. However, she was scarcely an heiress, and any professional aspirations she may have had were quickly subordinated to the responsibilities of rearing four children in a household where money was often tight. However, Harriet's talents were nurtured by a cousin from the more affluent side of the Samuel family, Irene Scharrer, who (ironically) also became one of Britain's most esteemed

pianists. For several years, Irene and her mother, Ida, had commuted to Matthay's home in Purley for lessons, so it seemed inevitable that the twelve-year-old Harriet would soon enrol in the newly opened Tobias Matthay Pianoforte School, then on Oxford Street. In July of 1908, Irene attended Harriet's first recital in Bechstein Hall, where, as a pupil of Matthay's sister, Dora, she performed a Chopin waltz. Shortly thereafter, she won an Ada Lewis Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, where she began studying with one of Matthay's assistants, pianist and composer Felix Swinstead. Soon her talents were so apparent that she advanced to the head of the class, where she began working regularly with 'Uncle Tobs' himself.

When Harriet first entered the Academy building on Tenterden Street, its corridors still rang with the performances and compositions of some of Matthay's most distinguished pupils, including Irene – seven years her senior – Myra Hess – five years her senior – and Arnold Bax – eleven years her senior. Years later, she remembered that Irene and Myra, who were the closest of friends, 'overwhelmed me with luncheons and teas', and bestowed other kindnesses as well. After she graduated, they all remained close, with Myra frequently augmenting Matthay's guidance by giving her extra lessons, and regarding her much as a younger sister. However, their relationship changed dramatically when Myra discovered that her nineteen-year-old protégé was having an affair with the thirty-year-old Bax, a promising (though married) composer, who further complicated matters by requesting that Myra premiere many of the pieces he had

dedicated to Harriet. The progression of this ill-fated triangle is related in the voluminous correspondence Harriet bequeathed to the British Library, which reveals that as a naïve teenager, she could be self-centred and brash. Shortly after their affair began in 1913, she spent Christmas at Matthay's country home, where she wrote Bax an unrestrained love letter from her host's study, and once she even poured out her passions to him on official TMPS stationery while she sat at Matthay's desk waiting for a lesson. After the relationship became public, Matthay, his wife, and of course, Myra, all pressured Harriet to break it off, but she sternly resisted. Soon one rift bred a series of others, and by 1920, Myra and Harriet had virtually broken relations – a schism that lasted for the rest of their lives.<sup>3</sup>

But Bax's star was rising, and with his help, Harriet's career began to gather momentum. On 17 April 1918, she joined him at the Old Vic to perform *Moy Mell*, his 'Irish Tone Poem' for two pianos (a work he had written for Irene and Myra), and soon they were so linked that a Cohen performance where she did *not* play his music was becoming the exception. At times, she premiered works by other composers as well – especially those by Bax's British colleagues. By the early '20s, her predilection for Bach had also been firmly established, as demonstrated by the earliest (and only acoustical) recording in this set – a collaboration with Henry Wood in what appears to be the first commercial release of the D minor Concerto (Disc 1). When she performed it with Wood at Wigmore Hall on 4 February 1928 (an ambitious program that also featured the Fifth Brandenburg, the Falla *Nights*, and Mozart's



Concerto in A, K414), *The Times* praised her 'clear interweaving of Bach's contrapuntal threads'. The same clarity is heard on her 1924 recording, as well as its successor, a 1946 release of the same Concerto (Disc 2) with Walter Susskind and the Philharmonia. In the later version, the microphone renders detail more clearly than the earlier acoustical horns allow, and the pianist's continuous weaving of the contrapuntal overlay – which to her credit she makes as vital as the thicker orchestral textures – is beautifully captured. In many respects, both of these recordings sound surprisingly 'modern', in that there are no exaggerated rubatos or romantic gestures; instead, the music making is direct and unencumbered. In both versions, the slow movements are rendered as elegant arias and her ornaments tastefully embellish the soprano texture, foreshadowing the *empfindsamer Stil* keyboard writing soon to become so fashionable in northern Germany. Both of her finales are vibrant and energetic, filled with the unrelenting drive that defines so many Baroque allegros.

The same finesse can be heard in her Bach transcriptions, a genre which by the 1920s had become a repertoire staple for many pianists. Matthay himself frequently taught the transcriptions of Busoni, and any number of his pupils tried their hand at their own renderings, including Myra Hess, whose well-known arrangement of the chorale from Cantata 147, *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*, was published by Oxford in 1926 as 'Jesu, joy of man's desiring'. The German-born pianist Walter Rummel (1887–1953), a close friend of Harriet, published four volumes of Bach transcriptions while living in London, and she



frequently performed his treatment (or, as he preferred, 'adaptation') of the chorale from Cantata 22, *Ertödt' uns durch dein' Güte*, which J & W Chester published in 1922 as 'Mortify us by thy grace'. By the early 1930s, her recital programmes were often pairing his transcriptions with her own, and in 1935 Oxford issued her own treatment of the same chorale as 'Sanctify us by thy goodness'. But oddly, she seems not to have recorded her own version, opting instead to record Rummel's transcription twice, once in 1928 (Disc 1) and again in 1935 (Disc 2). Even more curiously, Columbia credited her, and not Rummel, as the



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arranger on the later recording, which might have seemed tenable to those who had recently purchased her Oxford score, since the two transcriptions are very similar. A possible explanation for the deliberate mislabelling may have been Rummel's growing support for the Third Reich (a naturalized American, he even repatriated to Germany in 1944) – which would have been unacceptable to Harriet's Jewish loyalties – but in the mid-1930s his views were still more agnostic than pro-German, and if his political leanings were an issue, one wonders why the recording was released at all, since it should have been a simple matter to substitute her own version. Both transcriptions follow the orchestral score closely – in fact, at times the right-hand figurations are virtually identical – but Rummel's bass line uses far more octaves. Both versions also demand a cantabile tenor which must speak through a dense surrounding texture, and the skill she demonstrates on both of these releases is admirable.

Her earliest transcription, an arrangement of the Bach choral prelude 'Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier', BWV731, published by Oxford in 1928, was committed to disc in the same year (Disc 1) and again on 21 March 1935 (Disc 2), in the same session where she re-recorded the Rummel. In both renderings, she brings an exquisite intimacy to Bach's plaintive, melodic statement. On the next day, 22 March, she recorded two additional transcriptions, one of her own and another by Egon Petri. In 1931, Oxford had published her arrangement of the recitative and aria from the soprano Cantata 155, *Mein Gott, wie lang, ach lange*, as 'Be contented, O my soul', and on 22 March 1935 she recorded the aria, which Columbia then

released as 'Up! Arouse thee!' – a title bearing scant relation to the soprano's text, 'Wirf, mein Herze' ('Throw yourself, my heart'). Her transcription is extremely literal, but she performs it a bit more slowly than the allegretto tempo marking indicated on her score, and far more slowly than one often hears the aria sung by sopranos. The lilting, dance-like rhythm is never double-dotted, and her slower tempo allows her the freedom to isolate any voice at will, creating an elegant, rhythmic tapestry of flowing colour. In 1922, Breitkopf & Härtel published a number of Bach transcriptions by the Dutch-German pianist Egon Petri (1881–1962), including the Praeludium (Fantasie) in C minor, BWV921 (Disc 2). Except for the expected octave doublings and other thickenings of texture, Petri's arrangement follows Bach's original rather closely, and Harriet's performance is so sensitive – without resorting to sentimental gestures – that one might wish she had recorded Bach's original as well.

But she did leave an impressive legacy of unadorned solo works in the first nine Preludes and Fugues from Book I of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (Disc 1), which she recorded in a two-day session in October of 1928. Though the project was never completed, Columbia may be credited with the earliest commercial attempt to place Book I on disc, albeit in three separate instalments. Perhaps their intention had always been to divide the project among different pianists, but Evelyn Howard-Jones was chosen for the second series, numbers 10 through 17, and numbers 18 through 24 never appeared. Though highly respected, Howard-Jones (1877–1951), a former colleague of Matthey at the RAM, had achieved no special

recognition as a Bach interpreter, and at times he was criticized for excessive didacticism. When the two completed sets were released in America, Harriet's contributions were far better received by *The New York Times*, which placed her photo above the fold on 7 December 1930 – alongside its review:

For choice, we would take the first, and are left wondering why Harriet Cohen was not selected to continue the series she commenced. Her touch is essentially sympathetic, and where Mr Howard-Jones's manner is at all times too scholarly, in places almost mechanical, Miss Cohen brings out the melodious, romantic nature of her material without in any way sacrificing what may be considered in some quarters as the essential features of the contract. A product of Tobias Matthey, which she shows very definitely in spots, Miss Cohen ... is justly regarded as one of England's foremost Bach players.

To be sure, she brings remarkable qualities to these interpretations, including a sensitive, lute-like rendering of the often-hackneyed C major Prelude, followed by a powerful reading of the Fugue that suggests the majesty and tonal variety of a Baroque organ. She turns the C sharp minor Prelude (a great favourite of Matthey) into a fascinating study in colour, imbuing it with as much contrapuntal interest as any of the Fugues, and the five-voice Fugue which follows it is a wondrous array of legato textures, in which the damper pedal seems never to appear – except for occasional

resonance. (Unfortunately, her 1947 recording of the C sharp minor (Disc 2) seems a bit too forced to recapture this magic.) The uncharacteristically slower tempo she takes in the massive D major Fugue (preceded by some miraculous cadenza-like flourishes in the Prelude) enables her to call attention to colours and contrapuntal interest that are often lost in more modern interpretations. But if anything, her tempo in the E flat minor Fugue (which is preceded by an exquisite Prelude) is a bit more brisk than one often hears, and she captures each of its three voices (even in augmentation) with a precision that only complements, and never detracts, from the emotional warmth of her reading. In retrospect, one might echo the wish of *The New York Times* that she had been retained to record Book I in its entirety. Had she done so, today her pioneering efforts might well be ranked alongside those of Fischer and Landowska.

In May of 1932, she recorded her only Classical composition, Mozart's Sonata in C, K330 (Disc 2). If the first movement is a bit erratic in tempo, her conception is still unsentimental and true to the text, and the third movement is a marvel of clarity and finesse. Not surprisingly, since her performance engagements were centred around the music of Bach and twentieth-century works, she recorded only six compositions from the Romantic period, but the four Chopin miniatures she left show the same careful attention to detail so evident in her Bach and Mozart renderings. Her Columbia session on 19 April 1943 was devoted exclusively to Chopin, and the F major Nocturne which appeared on the A-side is a remarkable display of the dual

personalities that Chopin seems to exhibit in this work. Only two of the 'Nouvelle' Études could be accommodated on the B-side, but both are gems, as is her earlier 1928 recording of the C sharp minor ('cello') Étude from Opus 25, where she opts for clarity rather than impressionistic blurring. Her only Brahms recording (Disc 3) appeared two years later with the 'Edward' Ballade, an epic statement made all the more powerful by a massive middle section that never sacrifices contrapuntal interest for the sake of volume. For the B-side she chose the B flat Intermezzo from Opus 76, which she transforms into an array of colour, complementing a carefully structured design. Her only Debussy disc appeared eighteen years later with two of his most frequently played (perhaps overplayed) compositions, but her *Clair de lune* is a wholly original conception. The B-side was devoted to the well-known *La Cathédrale engloutie*, which she renders powerfully without a hint of sentimentality, allowing the damper pedal to function only, as Matthey insisted, as a colouring device.

Although she never recorded Falla's *Nights in the Garden of Spain*, the three miniatures that she left in February of 1943 amply demonstrate the spirit and colour she was capable of offering to his scores. And the charming Kabalevsky Sonatina, which she recorded a month earlier, may be a breath of fresh air to pianists and teachers who have suffered through too many bombastic performances of this oft-maligned work. The Shostakovich Prelude which completed the disc was a fitting complement to a session which Harriet no doubt intended as an homage to



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Soviet composers trapped in Leningrad for the war's duration, for she had performed both works there in June of 1935. It is also regrettable that she did not record more Elizabethan music, for which she had a particular affinity (her favourite a cappella work was Byrd's five-voice Mass) and which Matthay's pupils, including Harold Craxton and Myra Hess, brought to the piano with surprisingly little hesitation. Harriet learned the five Virginalist selections included here from Margaret Glyn's 1922 collection of fifteen Gibbons pieces, which preceded her 1925 five-volume edition of the composer's complete works. At the same session, Harriet recorded Vaughan Williams's moving treatment of a Gibbons tune from *The English Hymnal*, which he presented to her in 1930 as a thirty-fifth birthday present. (He also requested a 'reward' of 'one thousand kisses' – of which he kept a 'meticulous' accounting.)<sup>4</sup>

The five Bax compositions that Harriet recorded all appear on Disc 3, and at the earliest session in 1938, she performed the powerful passacaglia he called *Paean* (1920), which Bax's biographer, Lewis Foreman, termed 'an impressive example of ostinato architecture.'<sup>5</sup> Four years later, in a single session she recorded two of Bax's finest miniatures, beginning with *A Hill Tune*, which also dates from 1920, and which she performed in a highly celebrated all-Bax programme at Queen's Hall in November of 1922. Reworking thematic material from an earlier string quintet, Bax has created a lyrical masterpiece, and her performance beautifully captures his conception. In 1915, Bax completed *A Mountain Mood*, which he terms a theme and



variations, although the separate variations are not indicated in the score, and Harriet's reading imbues it with the rich colours worthy of a brief, but masterful, Impressionistic fantasy. Five years later, she joined with Sargent to record *Morning Song (Maytime in Sussex)*, an aubade for piano and small orchestra, which Bax had written in his role of Master of the King's Musick to commemorate the twenty-first birthday of Princess Elizabeth. The recording was made on 7 February 1947, but Columbia did not release it until June, thereby missing the Princess's April birthday by two months. Harriet first performed it for

her in October, and though the performance was well received, *The Gramophone* found Bax's work 'a wee bit stiffly shaped ... and perhaps not very new', while conceding that it was 'a cordial to the weary heart'.<sup>6</sup>

Energetic and sparkling, *Morning Song* often projects the character of cinema music, but the only feature film Bax scored was David Lean's highly acclaimed *Oliver Twist*, released on 30 June 1948. Supposedly, Lean suggested that he capture Oliver's loneliness with a piano solo, so portions of the score became a mini piano concerto, with Harriet receiving a prominent screen credit. In May of 1948, she joined film conductor Muir Mathieson at Denham to record her sections of the soundtrack, and they reunited in September, joined by the Philharmonia, to record an extract Bax had created for public performance that extends to nearly eight minutes. Nor was this Harriet's first film 'appearance', for she was

asked to dub for the main character, a terminally ill pianist played by Margaret Lockwood, in the 1944 wartime melodrama *Love Story* – much of which was filmed in Cornwall. Although he did not score the entire film, composer Hubert Bath (1883–1945), once a classmate of Bax at the RAM, was asked to create *Cornish Rhapsody*, a piano concerto pivotal to the story, and Harriet again received a screen credit. Although the film is little remembered, the *Rhapsody* became immediately popular, and it survived for years in a number of recorded versions. Bath's romantic score, with passage work and textures reminiscent of Liszt's Concertos, seems to present few problems to Harriet, confirming the view that her Baroque and twentieth-century specializations were not dictated by technical shortcomings, but – in the best sense of the word – by choice.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Secret Life of Arnold Bax* (London Weekend Television, 1992). In Russell's film, Bax encounters a piano student from the Royal Academy of Music who makes disparaging remarks about Harriet's performances of his music.

<sup>2</sup> Harriet Cohen, *A Bundle of Time* (London, 1969).

<sup>3</sup> Their feud and the circumstances leading up to it are explored in greater detail in my biography of Matthay, *England's Piano Sage: The Life and Teachings of Tobias Matthay* (Lanham, MD, 2012), pp. 300–307.

<sup>4</sup> See Cohen, pp. 158–59.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2007), p. 405.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Foreman, p. 378.



**POPULAR FAVOURITES FOR PIANO  
AND ORCHESTRA**

**CORNISH RHAPSODY** (film "Love Story")  
MARGHERIT COHEN



**SCHERZO (LITOLFF)**  
(from Concerto Symphonique No. 4, Op. 102)  
DEWE SCARBEE

**COLUMBIA**  
EXTENDED PLAY  
45 r.p.m. RECORD

An early 45-rpm EP reissue of Cohen's  
recording of 'Cornish Rhapsody',  
written for the film 'Love Story'

The film's star, Margaret Lockwood,  
is at the piano

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer:  
Mark Obert-Thorn  
Executive Producer:  
Michael Spring  
Special thanks to Donald Manildi  
for his discographic assistance



ADD

Duration 3 hours 52 minutes

APR 7304

# HARRIET COHEN

## The complete solo studio recordings

### COMPACT DISC 1 (77.21)

1. BACH **Keyboard Concerto No 1 in D minor** 1924
4. BACH **The Well-Tempered Clavier** Book I Nos 1–9 1928
22. BACH/RUMMEL **Mortify us by thy grace** 1928
23. BACH/COHEN **Beloved Jesus, we are here** 1928

### COMPACT DISC 2 (76.13)

1. BACH **Keyboard Concerto No 1 in D minor** 1946
4. BACH **The Well-Tempered Clavier** Book I No 4 1947
6. BACH/COHEN **Sanctify us by thy goodness** 1935
7. BACH/COHEN **Beloved Jesus, we are here** 1935
8. BACH/COHEN **Up! Arouse thee!** 1935
9. BACH/PETRI **Fantasia (Praeludium) in C minor** 1935
10. MOZART **Piano Sonata No 10 in C major** 1932
13. CHOPIN **Nocturne** Op 15/1 14. **Nouvelles Études** Nos 1 & 3 1943
16. CHOPIN **Étude** Op 25/7 1928

### COMPACT DISC 3 (78.41)

1. BRAHMS **Ballade** Op 10/1 2. **Intermezzo** Op 76/4 1930
3. DEBUSSY **Clair de lune** 4. **La Cathédrale engloutie** 1948
5. FALLA **Andaluzá** 6. **The Fisherman's Tale** 7. **The Miller's Dance** 1943
8. KABALEVSKY **Sonatina in C major** 1943
11. SHOSTAKOVICH **Prelude in E flat minor** Op 34/14 1943
12. GIBBONS **Ayre – Alman – Toy – Coranto – Mr Sanders His Delight** 1947
13. GIBBONS/VAUGHAN WILLIAMS **Hymn Tune Prelude on Song 13** 1947
14. BAX **Paeán** 1938 15. **A Hill Tune** 16. **A Mountain Mood** 1942
17. BAX **Morning Song** 1947 18. **The Oliver Theme** 1948
19. BATH **Cornish Rhapsody** 1944

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