

SIR WILLIAM WALTON

(1902-1983)

Disc A (44:41)

1 God Save the Queen (0:58)

Violin Concerto (1939, revised 1943) (28:02)

2 I Andante tranquillo (9:59)

3 II Presto capriccioso alla napolitana (6:15)

4 III Vivace (11:48)

Partita for Orchestra (1957) (15:36)

5 I Toccata, Briosò (4:40)

6 II Pastorale siciliana, Andante comodo (5:40)

7 III Giga burlesca, Allegro gioviale (5:16)

Disc B (47:52)

Symphony No. 1 (1935) (43:14)

1 I Allegro assai (13:42)

2 II Presto con malizia (6:35)

3 III Andante con malinconia (9:59)

4 IV Maestoso—Allegro brioso ed ardentemente (12:58)

5 Touch Her Soft Lips and Part (2:46)

6 Passacaglia: The Death of Falstaff (1:47)

(from the film score to *Henry V*)

The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

Berl Senofsky, violin

Sir William Walton, conductor

Sir William Walton in New Zealand

by Joy Tonks, NZSO Historian

Sir William Walton's invitation to conduct the Symphony Orchestra in New Zealand came just four months after Igor Stravinsky's historic visit in 1961. The promptness of Walton's acceptance led the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation to approach its counterpart, the Australian Broadcasting Commission, to suggest a combined Australasian tour.

Writing of his and Lady Walton's pleasure at this proposal, Sir William said that he had heard 'excellent reports' of the chorus and orchestra and he looked forward to working with them, his preference being for 'a leisurely tour to one with a tight schedule so as to see the country, other than just the concert halls'.

Accordingly the tour was planned between February and May 1964, with seven concerts in New Zealand over three weeks, and fourteen in Australia, over ten weeks. Six weeks before the tour began, Lady Walton suffered a fall, breaking several bones in her knee and was unable to walk for three months. This was a great blow to both Sir William and Lady Walton. Sir William wrote again, saying that he would now be coming alone and curtailing his itinerary, so as not to be away from home longer than necessary.

Arriving in Auckland on 19 February, Sir William began rehearsals two days later. Pre-empting the manager's plan to lead him on stage and introduce him to the orchestra, he made his own way to the podium, taking up his baton, and announcing that he would start with the *Partita*. Afterwards he brushed aside the manager's apology for an apparent misunderstanding, saying, 'my dear fellow, don't apologise. Surely they all knew who I was.'

Certainly, he was given a very warm welcome at his opening concert on 22 February by the Auckland audience. This was music that required 'quite exhausting listening,' said L.C.M. Saunders in the *New Zealand Herald*. 'An audience not fully acclimatised to the Walton idiom has to work, and the process of trying to keep up with his powerful vitality, the complexities of his rhythmic and harmonic schemes and the electrical discharge of his climaxes is no easy one . . . The orchestra seemed on the top of its toes to meet an occasion that required and received more than ordinary skill and cohesion.'

With a few days between concerts, Sir William flew to Hastings, to spend time with his sister Nora Donnelly and her family, then travelled with her by car to Wellington, where programme one was repeated. 'One of Great Britain's most distinguished living composers, presenting as it were, a chapter of his musical autobiography, impressing it with the authority of his presence,' wrote Owen Jensen in the *Evening Post*. 'From the *Portsmouth Point* overture [1926] to the *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith* of 1963, Walton's latest work is shot through with the same nervous energy, a virility and a vitality...that whatever the shape of the ideas themselves, [he] has made each work the most stimulating of listening...There is too the same orchestral brilliance in the *Partita* of 1958 as in the sparkle of *Portsmouth Point* . . . But *Symphony No. 1* towers over all the rest heard last night. It is undeniably a great work, which has weathered the years and changing fashions of music to leave an impression of strength and assurance.' [27/2/64]

The second programme was played in Wellington and Dunedin and began with the overture *Scapino*, was followed by *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, and concluded with *Symphony No. 2*. Walton was reportedly 'overjoyed' to be working again with the American violinist Berl Senofsky, who had performed the concerto under his baton with both the Chicago and New York Philharmonic Orchestras. Their rapport produced a definitive performance, according to Graham Paton in the

'Mr. Senofsky... is an ideal soloist for the Walton *Violin Concerto*. Not only does he commit himself splendidly to the music's bitter-sweet romanticism, but he can also bring plenty of acerbic bite to the mockingly satiric writing of the Scherzo. With Sir William himself shaping the orchestral part, this was a definitive account of one of the finest of modern concertos.'

Belshazzar's Feast was the tour's focal point. It was performed first in Christchurch, which had the advantage of two of New Zealand's most respected choirs - the Royal Christchurch Musical Society, directed by E. R. Field-Dodgson and the Christchurch Harmonic Society, directed by William Hawkey, but the disadvantage of having nowhere large enough in which to perform in, except the King Edward Barracks. This was a venue prone to leaking in bad weather, and its closure for long-overdue repairs shortly before the concerts, saw them transferred to Canterbury Court at the Christchurch Showgrounds. Although deemed acoustically acceptable, this was another unsuitable venue, and situated a distance out of the city. Patrons were warned to expect large crowds, and to bring small cushions or rugs.

Escalating costs associated with these concerts had brought the Christchurch Civic Music Council in to ease the burden on the NZBC, the two now working in cooperation. But two weeks out a new problem became evident. Whereas programme three - *Belshazzar's Feast* coupled with a first half of Beethoven, Mozart and Debussy conducted by Georg Tintner - was almost fully booked, only 200 seats had been sold for programme number one.

The suggestion to include *Belshazzar* in this concert as well received Sir William's approval, and enabled a large number of school children to attend. But while the performers were about to rehearse the *Hindemith Variations*, it was discovered that the orchestra had been supplied with incorrectly copied cello and bass parts. Under pressure, the original parts had been sent ahead to Australia, and no

others were available in New Zealand.

It was said that Sir William responded to this 'bombshell with equanimity'. He readily agreed to the substitution of *Façade Suite no 2*, which the orchestra had played quite recently, and, this being substantially shorter than the Variations, he suggested two additional pieces from the Henry V Suite: *Passacaglia 'Death of Falstaff'* and *Touch Her Soft Lips*. Hurriedly assembled in Wellington, this music was flown to Christchurch, collected at the airport, and rushed to Canterbury Court to be placed on music stands for a rescheduled afternoon rehearsal. The new programme was announced to the audience from the stage, that evening.

'Although the orchestra was playing [the Henry V pieces] almost without rehearsal, they were splendidly performed and their appealing and lovely flowing melodies wove rich and charmingly-coloured patterns of gossamer delicacy' wrote Charles Foster Brown in *The Press*, Christchurch.

The final concert of the tour, the combined Georg Tintner/*Belshazzar's Feast* programme, was in Wellington on 9 March. Sir William Walton had brought out the 'best and more of everybody concerned' wrote Owen Jensen. 'Urbane, warm and obviously sharing a mutual enthusiasm with his musicians he ...has added a notable few weeks to our music, that will be remembered beyond these moments of enjoyment.'

Walton was enthusiastic about the combined choir, 'as good as I've ever come across' and just as pleased with the orchestra. 'An absolutely splendid combination, especially the woodwind, the only thing it suffers from is lack of numbers in the string section', he told the Dominion. This praise later reiterated to a London music magazine, which quoted him saying that he was very surprised that the orchestra in New Zealand has 'a very high standard'.

Sir William's refusal to undertake social engagements in Wellington, was a disappointment to the British Consul, who noted that he had a 'very tight

schedule and was unwilling to give up his small amount of free time, either for social gatherings or informal talks to music students. He does in fact decline all engagements.' This attitude was apparently the result of his experiences in touring in the United States, after which he decided, 'never to suffer anything like it again.'

Players observed a similar reluctance by Sir William to attend official functions, which he did not enjoy and a preference to spend time with them. He was 'more than happy' to attend an orchestra party with his sister, and sit on the floor, talking and drinking with musicians. Performing the music of William Walton under his own baton, was a major highlight for the orchestra, and his concerts at that time were said to be, 'amongst the happiest' that it had ever given--his kind and complimentary remarks being also appreciated.

As a result, considerable thought was given to a departing gift, and aware of his and Lady Walton's love of gardening, New Zealand seeds were chosen. Interviewed, Sir William gleefully revealed his intention to 'smuggle' these and other plants back home to cultivate in his own garden. Later, reports were heard about pohutukawa, kowhai, and other New Zealand flora flourishing on the Mediterranean Island of Ischia, living mementos of a short but long-remembered visit to New Zealand.

**Sir William Walton
and Berl Senofsky**



Members of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra William Walton tour, February-March 1964

FIRST VIOLINS

Vincent Aspey, MBE

Eric Lawson

Vincent John Aspey

Colleen Doran

Gordon English

Clare Galambos

Ritchie Hanna

Elsa Jensen

Erika Schorss

Margaret Sicely

Reginald Sutton

Leif Hansen

Robin Perks

Edward Pople

Audrey Whittington

Peter Langer

Valmai Moffat

Claude Tanner

Judith Todd

VIOLAS

Laurel Perkins

Jean Munro

Georgia Bamford

Henry Engel

Carol McKenzie

William McLean

Ngaio Parsons

DOUBLE BASSES

Harry Botham

Vladimir Latyschew

William Barsby

Gail Jensen

John McNeilly

Johan van Gellekom

FLUTES

Richard Giese

Cyril Ainsworth

Jack Harvie

SECOND VIOLINS

Mauritz Monas

Haydn Murray

Bonny Billing

Barbara Chipper

Jane Freed

CELLOS

Farquhar Wilkinson

John Hyatt

Margaret Diprose

Lars Johansen

PICCOLO

Jack Harvie

OBOES

Guy Henderson
 Ronald Webb
 Norman Booth

John Crockett
 Robert Girvan

DOUBLE BASSOON

Robert Girvan

COR ANGLAIS

Norman Booth

CLARINETS

Frank Gurr
 Alan Gold
 Ronald Weatherburn

HORNS

Peter Glen
 Allen Gúse
 Guy Gibbs
 Robert Burch

E FLAT CLARINET

Alan Gold

TRUMPETS

Gordon Webb
 John Taber
 Michael Gibbs
 John Lauderdale

BASS CLARINET

Ronald Weatherburn

BASSOONS

Harold Evans
 Peter Musson

TROMBONES

John McIvor
 Tom Shanahan

Neil Dixon

TUBA

Maurice Connors

TIMPANI

Hendrik Stigter

PERCUSSION

Norman Gadd
 Edward Andrews

HARP

Mary Anderson

CELESTA

Margaret Diprose

LIBRARIAN

Henry Engel

~ Notes by Malcom MacDonald

Though he came to prominence while in his early twenties and had a long creative life, Sir William Walton's output was not particularly large. In most of the genres that he essayed, he contributed just one or at most two or three examples (two operas, two symphonies, one concerto each for violin, viola, and cello, two string quartets, one oratorio, one set of variations, and so on). This was at least partly due to the fact that he was a comparatively slow worker, fastidious and exact, and the result was that his works made up in their high quality for their small numbers, and the appearance of each of them became something of an event.

After the successes of his *Viola Concerto* (1929) and the oratorio *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931), his *First Symphony* was awaited with unusual anticipation. Work on this, perhaps his most imposing work, occupied him for the best part of four years. Interest in it was so great that though the score was not finished in time for the planned premiere – on 3 December 1934 at in London's Queen's Hall, with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hamilton Harty – the performance went ahead anyway with the three completed movements, and to rapturous reviews. The first performance of the whole Symphony became a matter of national importance (some papers dubbed the piece 'England's new Symphony'); it took place at the same venue on 6 November 1935, with Harty conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra. The immense success of these performances, and those that swiftly followed around the English-speaking world, set the seal on Walton's reputation as the most powerful young talent in British music.

In its time Walton's Symphony was seen as a successor to the symphonic methods of Sibelius – probably in the 1930s the most respected living composer of symphonies (and much praised, as the most fruitful model for the further development of music, by Walton's friend Constant Lambert in his influential book on con-

Concert Manager: M J Glubb; Assistant Concert Manager: P G Parker

temporary composers, *Music Ho!*). Walton does indeed employ some of Sibelius's technical devices – notably the use of long-held pedal-points in the bass to anchor and direct his wide-ranging modulations from the home key – and some of his melodic ideas may have a vaguely Sibelian tang. But there is very little in the way of overt influence: Walton had assimilated what he required from the Finnish master, and in its malice, ardour and majesty his work is an absolutely personal utterance.

The Symphony's violence of expression impressed contemporaries as a response to the threatening international situation of the 1930s (the same interpretation had been put on Vaughan Williams's recent *Fourth Symphony*). But we now know the initial inspiration to have been more personal – much more personal than could publicly be admitted in the more reticent 1930s. Many years later Walton acknowledged that the first three movements bore the imprint of a passionate and at length painfully broken-off affair with the Baroness Imma von Doernberg – to whom the score is dedicated. The experience shook him to the core. Doubtless this accounted for his 'endless trouble' with the finale, after the searing melancholy of the slow movement. Just before the 3-movement premiere Walton told his friend Patrick Hadley that he had 'burnt about 3 finales, when I saw that they weren't really leading anywhere or saying anything' and had only recently found 'something which I felt to be right & tolerably up to the standard of the previous movements'. That fourth finale's positive and life-affirming qualities are perhaps to be traced to the healing relationship he had by then begun with Alice Wimborne, the composer's constant companion until her death in 1948.

Yet if the motive power behind the work was intensely personal, its expression is much more universal. It evokes not a man but a world in tumult, veering between extremes of dark and light. The sheer intensity of its energy and lyricism make it, in many respects, the most impressive and original achievement of Walton's

career. And it does so with an orchestra hardly larger than Brahms's (the most notable additions are a second set of timpani and a small amount of percussion).

At the outset of the first movement the impulsive, insistent dotted rhythm in the second violins, the long-breathed oboe tune with its Sibelian skirl, the gradual disclosure of broadening harmonic vistas beneath this surface activity, all give rise to a sense of swift motion – indeed, of flight – across a craggy Nordic landscape. Along with the irresistible pulse of energy goes a matching sense of effort, partly created by the dissonance of the harmony. Though the movement has the broad outlines of a sonata form, its themes and motifs are always growing, organically and fluidly, into something else: the 'second subject' theme that after a while arises painfully from lower strings is in part a transformation of the opening oboe tune. The bass line makes giant, deliberate strides, often in the low brass; strings emote in impassioned recitative; woodwind exclaim or cry like birds on the wing. Despite all the elements that strive to disrupt the movement's relentless progress, it surges onward, generating raucous and invigorating climaxes, with a steady increase in tension and vehemence, leading – at the point of greatest dissonance – to a shortened but intensified recapitulation, with an ostinato of awesome, saurian imitations in the low brass, and a clamorous coda zeroing in once more on the hard-bitten dotted rhythm with which the movement began.

The angry mood continues in the fleet and furious scherzo, which bears the marking *con malizia* – 'with malice'. A tour-de-force of dynamic motion, this music is full of obsessive rhythmic patterns, acid melodic quips, wickedly displaced accents, irregular metres and dissonant harmonies whose bite is sharpened by pungent orchestration and frequent *sforzando* attacks. The tonality is E, a tritone (*diabolus in musica*) away from the home B flat. Its themes can be malicious and threatening – the initial, jealous mutter in low strings, a savage unison outburst – or have a heedless, devil-may-care bravura. There is no formal trio: the music evolves con-

tinuously, appearing to withdraw towards quietness before the end only to burst forth with renewed vindictiveness in the battering final bars.

After this explosion of blazing wrath the slow movement begins as music of cold, numb melancholy and depression, with a deeply expressive flute melody through which it gradually evolves into an utterance of great beauty and painful, unsatisfied aspiration. (It is a fascinating fact – and an index of the difficulties Walton had in composing the work – that his sketches show he first envisaged the symphony opening with this same melody, in much faster tempo.) The main tonality is C sharp. Woodwinds dominate the opening stages, with a double counter-theme on clarinet and oboes. There are hints here, without any direct reference, of the oboe theme at the beginning of the work. As in the previous movements the themes grow organically, putting out fresh shoots and assuming new shapes. The music begins a long crescendo, mounting by long-breathed, dolorous stages to a bleakly tragic climax; after which it gradually subsides, if not into despair, then certainly to a chill exhaustion.

From these ashes of emotion arises a finale of majestic determination, with brassy calls to arms and a hint of the crying of gulls. This movement is more formal and ceremonious in layout than the other three, but powered once again by an electric emotional charge. The Maestoso music is prologue to a vital, exultant Briosso, whose flow is broken up into snappy phrases that answer each other from different sections of the orchestra while a new and mighty momentum is built up. All this issues in a fiery fugue (Walton marks it *focosamente*) in $\frac{3}{4}$ time whose wiry, combative subject transforms elements from the Maestoso with vaunting élan. It is worked out at length and with tremendous inventiveness and includes a calmer episode with a new oboe theme which – after the irruption of elements from both Maestoso and Briosso – becomes the subject of a second fugue in $\frac{3}{8}$. But the first fugue subject returns and drives to a magnificently rhetorical climax, opened by

stormy brass fanfares and followed by impassioned reiterations of the most aspiring figure of the Maestoso. A brief withdrawal into lyric contemplation (with a plangent trumpet solo) only serves to make the coda more impressive, the timpanists underlining the mood of hard-won triumph before the final, brusquely decisive chords.

This Symphony and the works that preceded it, had already made Walton famous by the time he came to write his *Violin Concerto* – yet some might say that it was only in the Concerto that he was finally revealed in his true colours. In April 1938 that he received a commission from the British Council for a concerto to be performed by Jascha Heifetz in connection with the New York World Fair, scheduled for April-October 1939. The first two movements were evidently drafted in Italy in 1938. After close correspondence with his illustrious soloist, Walton visited the USA in Spring 1939 while composing the finale, in order to develop the violin writing to Heifetz's standards and liking. The result, completed in June in New York, was unquestionably a great virtuoso concerto.

Soon Britain was at war with Germany: Walton could not attend the premiere, which in the event took place not in New York, but in Cleveland, Ohio on 7 December 1939, when Heifetz introduced the Concerto under the baton of Artur Rodzinski. The original American performing materials, despatched to the UK, were sunk by enemy action during the Battle of the Atlantic: Walton himself eventually conducted the British premiere at the Royal Albert Hall in November 1941, with Henry Holst as soloist. During 1943 he thoroughly revised the work's orchestration – incidentally reducing what had been a large percussion section – prior to its publication.

Walton's concerto expands the design that had served him well in his *Viola Concerto* (the basic model is perhaps Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto* of 1917). A broad, lyrical first movement precedes a quicksilver scherzo, and the longest movement is a summatory finale in moderate tempo, containing the biggest climaxes. The mood

of reverie in which the first movement opens, and the song-like nature of its themes, give little hint of the brilliant display element soon to be unleashed in the solo part. The development is more mercurial and dynamic, incorporating a short cadenza before the main materials are recapitulated, intensified in expression and transformed in orchestration.

The Italianate scherzo is brilliant and capricious, headlong in its drive and bristling with technical challenges for the soloist. Though principally a tarantella, it includes a mock-sentimental waltz section, and the dreamy subject of the central trio ('Canzonetta'), first given to the horn, alludes to a Neapolitan folksong. The violin gradually carries this to its highest register in ethereal harmonics. A march-like transformation of the Canzonetta tune becomes the opening subject of the finale, a wide-ranging movement with three principal themes that also makes cyclic reference to the first movement's first theme. Development is cheerfully and sometimes dramatically polyphonic (the march-tune has fugal ambitions), and a big accompanied cadenza masterfully sums up the concerto's various parts, tenderness expanding into romantic ardour, before the ebullient pageantry of the final bars.

During the Second World War Walton devoted a large proportion of his compositional energies to film scores, mainly patriotic dramas of one kind or another: *The Foreman Went to France*, *Next of Kin*, *The First of the Few*, *Went the Day Well?* and so on. These are films with a reputation still, a cut above their genre: but none so powerfully enhanced his reputation with a mass audience as did Shakespeare's *Henry V*, for which Laurence Olivier was both director and star actor.

Walton and Olivier worked in particularly close collaboration to create a continuous correspondence of image and music. The result was a milestone in cinema history: so much so that it is easy to forget that *Henry V*, too, was a patriotic drama. The story of a heroic English army crossing the channel to meet a powerful and over-arrogant foe had, of course, an utterly immediate resonance. Walton worked

on the score for over a year, from May 1943 until a few scant weeks before D-Day, and the film itself was first shown at the Carlton Cinema, London, on 22 November 1944 in aid of the benevolent funds of the Airborne Forces and Commandos.

Olivier's production was both small- and large-scale. A miniature model of London in 1600, painted backcloths and a (fairly) realistic representation of Elizabethan stage-business within the confines of the Globe Theatre were counterpointed by spectacular cinematic renderings of battle-scenes and court ceremonial. Walton's score was perfectly attuned to this mixture of styles, suggesting Elizabethan music while extending the composer's own instrumentally brilliant idiom. In a sense, Olivier treated the play as a great pageant, and Walton's music has pageantry aplenty. (Few models have been suggested for his approach; it seems worth remarking, however, that Walton's phenomenally successful Shakespeare film scores of the Forties and Fifties extend a tradition begun by Elgar's incidental music to *King Arthur* and developed in John Foulds's popular theatre scores of the 1920s, notably for Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* and Lewis Casson's 1925 production of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*.)

Walton incorporated many 'period' tunes both English and French into his score. The *Passacaglia: Death of Falstaff* - second of the two exquisite short pieces for strings alone that first gave evidence of his talent as a composer of lyric miniatures - is based on the drinking song 'Watkyn's Ale' from the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, though treated in the manner of Dido's 'Lament' from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. *Touch Her Soft Lips and Part*, however, is an original miniature in Walton's tenderest vein.

Walton's *Partita for Orchestra* was one of ten works commissioned from leading contemporary composers to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Cleveland Orchestra. It marked the beginning of a fruitful collaboration between Walton and the Cleveland Orchestra and its conductor George Szell, which also resulted in the

composition of his *Second Symphony* and *Variations on a Theme by Hindemith*. Composed during 1957, the *Partita* was premiered in Cleveland under Szell on 30 January 1958; Walton conducted the first British performance with the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester on 30 April. In origin, the Baroque keyboard partita was a suite of dance-movements, prefaced by a toccata and usually ending with a gigue. Walton's three movements obey this pattern, though the Baroque model usually had six, and the resulting work is something between a pocket symphony and a divertimento. The general lightness of character, and the sense that this is music for sheer entertainment, is clear, yet the sophistication of its craftsmanship and the unobtrusive intricacy of its forms could have graced many a work of more serious import. In his programme note for the first performance Walton wrote that it:

poses no problems, has no ulterior motive or meaning behind it and makes no attempt to ponder the imponderables. I have written it in the hope that it may be enjoyed straight off.

The opening Toccata is a brilliant, vigorously busy movement with a constant, rapid quaver pulse that suggests the sense of touch and repeated-note textures of the Baroque model. Though it is in a compressed sonata form, listeners are more likely to be aware of the breezy succession of ideas as they tumble one after the other, sometimes with a hint of 'big band' jazz. The first four notes of the urgent opening theme become an important element, continually generating new motifs. The pounding rhythms have something of an express-train quality, carrying the music at speed right up to its punctual ending.

The exquisite Pastorale Siciliana is a kind of Mediterranean dream, in the manner of Walton's early small-orchestral piece *Siesta*. It begins with a languorous duet between viola and oboe, and is irradiated by shafts of sunlight and splashing waves secured through deft orchestration that includes harp, celesta, glockenspiel

and vibraphone. The peace is occasionally disturbed – the waves turn rough – but is always restored, for example by a second duet of clarinet and horn, and by a flute cadenza.

The concluding Giga Burlesca is a raffish rondo, with some gloriously vulgar tunes, some of which could have strayed from the Music-Hall, or from Walton's own early entertainment *Façade*. But the main rondo tune is not completely present from the start: only phrases and rhythmic tics of it are heard to begin with, and they are quite enough to get the music spinning merrily on its way. The effect is that the 'episode' tunes – such as a suavely debonair melody for woodwind and strings, and a bibulous, obstreperous ditty for the horns – establish their identities before the rondo subject emerges in full, but when it does so, in a dapper trumpet solo, it proves to have been worth waiting for, and dominates the proceedings up to the final, uproarious bars.

Berl Senofsky was born in Philadelphia in 1925. His father, a Russian emigré, was also a violinist, having studied with Leopold Auer. At the age of six, Senofsky began his studies with Louis Persinger and, at thirteen, began ten years of study with Ivan Galamian at the Juilliard School of Music. After military service in the army during World War II, Senofsky resumed his career and in 1946, won the Walter Naumburg Award. For five seasons, from 1950-55, Senofsky was the Assistant Concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell. In 1955 Senofsky took the gold medal of the Queen Elisabeth Competition, the unanimous choice of a distinguished panel of jurors including David Oistrakh, Yehudi Menuhin, and Zino Francescatti. Following his triumph in Brussels, Senofsky embarked upon a solo career that included tours of Europe, Asia, North and South America, and performances with most of the major orchestras in the USA and Europe. Senofsky taught at the Peabody Conservatory of Music from 1965 until 1996, and died in July, 2002 in Baltimore, Maryland. Berl Senofsky can be heard in recital with pianist Gary Graffman on BRIDGE 9118.

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