

# Artur Balsam: Mozart Recordings

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)

## Disc A (67:00)

**1 - 3** Piano Concerto No. 15 in B-flat Major, K. 450 (25:23)

- I. Allegro (11:07)
- II. Andante (6:12)
- III. Allegro (8:04)

Artur Balsam, piano  
The Haydn Orchestra  
Harry Newstone, conductor  
(BBC broadcast, June 14, 1956)

**4 - 6** Piano Concerto No. 17 in G Major, K. 453 (30:18)

- I. Allegro (12:03)
- II. Andante (10:53)
- III. Allegretto (7:22)

Artur Balsam, piano  
The Haydn Orchestra  
Harry Newstone, conductor  
(BBC broadcast, June 21, 1956)

**7** Rondo in A minor, K. 511 (10:36)

Artur Balsam, piano  
(Recital at the Manhattan School of Music, February 4, 1980)

## Disc B (66:30)

**1 - 3** Sonata in C Major, K. 330 (13:22)

- I. Allegro moderato (4:19)
- II. Andante cantabile (5:10)
- III. Allegretto (3:53)

Artur Balsam, piano  
(Concert Hall Society LP CHS-1116)

**4 - 6** Piano Concerto No. 14 in E-flat Major, K. 449 (22:03)

- I. Allegro vivace (8:53)
- II. Andantino (7:53)
- III. Allegro ma non troppo (5:35)

Artur Balsam, piano  
The Haydn Orchestra  
Harry Newstone, conductor  
(BBC broadcast, June 14, 1956)

**7 - 9** Piano Concerto No. 18 in B-flat Major, K. 456 (30:07)

- I. Allegro vivace (12:00)
- II. Andante un poco sostenuto (10:30)
- III. Allegro vivace (7:37)

Artur Balsam, piano  
The Haydn Orchestra  
Harry Newstone, conductor  
(BBC broadcast, June 25, 1956)

Born in Warsaw on February 8, 1906, Artur Balsam began piano lessons at eight and made his formal concert debut at age 12. His career developed quickly, finding a receptive new audience upon emigrating to the United States in 1940. Stretching over nearly half a century, Artur Balsam's extensive discography, now mostly out of print, includes the complete solo works of Haydn and Mozart, numerous concertos, and many dozens of chamber works performed with the leading players of his day. Critic Harris Goldsmith called him "a paragon-- a marvel of relaxed professionalism; he was, as many of his colleagues and disciples attest, an instrumentalist of awesome facility and accomplishment and a sight-reader of almost unparalleled quickness. Hearing his masterly phrasing and luminous singing tone is sufficient aural testimony to place Balsam in the highest artistic echelon." Balsam's longstanding collaborations with many of his era's greatest artists, including the Budapest String Quartet, Nathan Milstein, Zino Francescatti, Adolf Busch, Joseph Szigeti, and Yehudi Menuhin, attest to the high regard in which his musicianship was held.

Balsam's Mozart performances were the result of a life-long fascination with the composer's music. In addition to performing and recording virtually all of Mozart's solo, chamber music, and piano concertos, Balsam edited and wrote cadenzas for several--including the 'student concertos', Nos. 1-4, and the first 'original' concertos, No. 5 (K. 175) and No. 6 (K. 238). Balsam wrote that "The texture of Mozart's piano writing is so lean, so transparent, with hardly any chords, that a typically 'pianistic' treatment does not seem to me to be the right one, if only for the reason that this approach can lead to many exaggerations, especially in regard to tonal values. As examples of his approach, Balsam writes "Since I want my Mozart to be at all times 'singing,' I will never choose

extremely fast tempi; for the same reason they can never be dragged—no Andante too slow; no Allegro too fast.” Dynamic extremes are similarly avoided: “Nothing in Mozart ought to be whispered. In my Mozart playing there is never a pronounced, startling contrast intended between a full piano and a relaxed, full but singing forte. The artist must aim at producing a beautiful tone quality quite distinct from the usual range of sonorities employed by other composers. In a sense he must forget that he is playing the piano.”

The performances on this recording, made available commercially for the first time (with the exception of K. 330), document Balsam’s work in a 1980 concert performance (K. 511), and in four unedited concerto performances, broadcast in 1956 for the British Broadcasting Corporation. All display Balsam’s luminous touch, his unerring sense of proportion, and the warmth of musical personality that is the hallmark of the finest Mozart players.

—David Starobin



Ruth And Artur Balsam with  
the Haydn Orchestra, London 1956

## HARRY NEWSTONE AND THE HAYDN ORCHESTRA

Harry Newstone was born in Winnipeg on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1921 of Russian parents who soon moved to London, England. From an early age Newstone had an amazing talent for performing on the harmonica and at 15 won a cinema talent contest and toured in a variety show. At one time he even acted as a replacement for the great harmonica player Tommy Reilly. Newstone soon teamed up with an older musician, the accordionist Alf Vorzanger, who taught him that instrument too; they took their stage name - the St Louis Boys - from their signature tune, the “St Louis Blues.” Before long, Newstone was known as a harmonica virtuoso. In later years, he tended to refer to the dramatic episode of replacing Tommy Reilly as representing the beginning of his musical career. When many years later he was musical director of the Sacramento Symphony Orchestra, Newstone would often illustrate musical themes on the mouth organ for the benefit of the concert audiences.

Newstone became a student at London’s Guildhall College of Music studying mainly with Herbert Howells. For four further years he was at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome and also studied conducting with Fernando Previtali. Harry Newstone is remembered in particular for founding the Haydn Orchestra, which he launched at the Conway Hall, London on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1949 (in that same year he also found time to guest conduct with the Nashville Symphony). The Haydn Orchestra had a very stylish approach. Other orchestras of the 1950s and 60s



Harry Newstone

made a few concessions to 'authenticity' but this rarely seemed to go much further than simply using a reduced number of instruments. The Haydn Orchestra had a far more '18<sup>th</sup> Century' sound to it. This was long before the era of 'period' instruments but nevertheless, Newstone took the precaution of ensuring that his modern instruments represented earlier timbres as closely as possible. For example he always insisted on strong horn tone in order to parallel the timbre of the old natural horns which always had sufficient power and weight to counteract the trumpets of earlier times. Hard-headed timpani sticks were used and above all Newstone avoided the then fashionable smooth, vibrato laden string-phrasing. At that time this approximation to Haydn's sound-world was a revelation. Well-meaning critics praised the Haydn Orchestra but often from a strange standpoint. For example, in England the "Daily Mail", presumably with good intentions, said of the Haydn Orchestra: "Hitherto, Sir Thomas Beecham alone of our conductors has been associated with Haydn playing of such precision, polish and swagger." This must have amazed Harry Newstone who might have been pleased by the 'precision polish and swagger' reference but in reality was ever at pains to adopt a style as far removed from that of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century-influenced Beecham as possible.

Perhaps unusually for a musician, Newstone took an interest in musical criticism and himself worked for some years as a record reviewer for UK's long-running EMG Monthly Letter. Asked by a critic about one of the baroque specialists' sillier habits in the Bach *Orchestral Suites*, Harry (who had been editing the works for Eulenburg) said with a twinkle in his eye: "When I hear people double-dotting every time they see a dot, I always wonder what Bach would have written if he'd wanted a single dot." His own Bach credentials were validated by his famous recordings of the *Brandenburg Concertos* with the

Hamburg Chamber Orchestra.

In our recording we have the opportunity to hear the conductor as accompanist. The pianist Lili Kraus found in him "that rare phenomenon of spirit, intellect and emotion functioning in full equilibrium throughout his performance; this is the outstanding criterion of the true artist." Charles Rosen felt that: "collaborating with Harry Newstone has been a most gratifying experience and great musicianship makes playing with him one of the rarest of musical pleasures."

In addition to his Haydn Orchestra activities, Newstone guest-conducted with most of the British Orchestras and it began to seem as if he deserved greater recognition. It seemed certain that he would achieve it when on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1960 a concert was given at the Royal Festival Hall with Wilhelm Backhaus and the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Basil Cameron. After the *Egmont Overture*, Backhaus performed Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* but by the interval, Basil Cameron had fallen ill and could not carry on. Harry Newstone was called at his London flat. He went at once to the Royal Festival Hall and after the interval conducted the final work: Sibelius' 4<sup>th</sup> *Symphony*, entirely unrehearsed. The critics were rapturous in their praise - an extraordinary event and a great credit to Newstone's musicianship - yet I do not recall the conductor being offered any major appointments until that of conductorship of the BBC Welsh Orchestra five years later.

By the 1960s Newstone had acquired a considerable reputation as a Haydn expert. He gave the first performance since 1768 of Haydn's *Applausus Cantata* and in 1962 he edited for Eulenburg, both versions of Haydn's Symphony No. 63, clarifying the complications of the conflicting sources and convincing scholars that the fully-scored first version, with its exciting brass and timpani parts,



Harry Newstone

was really the composer's intention, even though it was the dull, revised and reduced version that was published in Haydn's day. The fruits of Newstone's musicological studies were naturally exhibited by the Haydn Orchestra and he continued to conduct the Orchestra regularly until 1965 when he decided to go to Sacramento, sacrificing the promising association that he had begun with the BBC Welsh orchestra.

From 1965 to 1978 he was music director of the Sacramento Symphony and he remained a welcome guest with the orchestra until 1993. The concerts in Sacramento covered a huge range and naturally Haydn was performed with great frequency, even sharing concerts with 20<sup>th</sup> century composers. There was a star-studded list of soloists visiting Sacramento at that time and it is interesting to note that Newstone's association with Artur Balsam was retained and the two artists performed at least four times together during 1967 and 1970 in works by Mozart and Beethoven.

Newstone left Sacramento in 1978, returned to England and was appointed

Director of Music at the University of Kent and Professor of Conducting at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama - the very establishment where he had been a student in the 1940s. He was also engaged to conduct from time to time by the BBC. In about 1987 he returned to Sacramento and eventually moved to Victoria, B.C., where he taught conducting at the Victoria Conservatory of Music. This now gave freedom to go even more deeply into the music of Haydn, and Newstone edited many newly researched editions for Eulenberg's new series of Haydn Symphonies - including the London and Paris Sets. He also edited a number of Mozart's wind serenades.

Harry Newstone died in April 2006. Regrettably, he made very few recordings but he did leave some 400 air-check tapes including performances of at least fifty Haydn symphonies, the Haydn Orchestra featuring in a great many of these. Among them there are also further unpublished performances with Artur Balsam.

—Anthony Hodgson



Nathan Milstein and Artur Balsam



Artur Balsam

Executive Producers: Becky and David Starobin

Restoration and Mastering Engineer: Adam Abeshouse

Transfer Engineer (K. 330): David Merrill

Annotators: Anthony Hodgson and David Starobin

Artur Balsam photographs courtesy of the Artur Balsam Foundation

Harry Newstone photographs courtesy of Anthony Hodgson and The Library of Congress.

Graphic Design: Brad Napoliello

The recordings of the four Mozart concertos are licensed by BBC Music.

The recording of K. 511 is used by permission of the Manhattan School of Music.

This recording is a sponsored project of the New York Foundation for the Arts and was released with the cooperation and assistance of the estate of Artur and Ruth Balsam and the Artur Balsam Foundation.

Bridge Records wishes to thank: Donald Manildi, curator, and Maxwell Brown of the International Piano Archives at Maryland; Linda Rosdeitcher and the Board of Directors of the Artur Balsam Foundation; Dr. Robert Sirota, President, Manhattan School of Music; Dan Berlinghoff, Roman Markowicz; and Mary Six Rupert of the New York Foundation for the Arts.

For Bridge Records: Ashley Arrington, Douglas H. Holly; Brad Napoliello, Charlie Post, and Robert Starobin

**Bridge Records, Inc.** · 200 Clinton Avenue · New Rochelle, NY · 10801

**For information about Bridge releases and to join our mailing list:**

Email: [Bridgelec@bridgerecords.com](mailto:Bridgelec@bridgerecords.com) · [www.BridgeRecords.com](http://www.BridgeRecords.com) · Robert Starobin, webmaster



# The Art of Balsam on **BRIDGE**®

**Rachmaninoff:** *Trio élégiaque, Op. 9*

Artur Balsam, piano with members of the Budapest String Quartet

**BRIDGE 9063**

**Beethoven:** *Sonata in F Major, Op. 24* **Brahms:** *Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 108*

Nathan Milstein, violin; Artur Balsam, piano

**BRIDGE 9066**

**Brahms:** *Piano Quartet No. 1, Op. 25* **Schumann:** *Piano Quintet, Op. 44*

Artur Balsam, piano; The Budapest String Quartet

**BRIDGE 9110**

**Music of Paganini:** *Concerto in D Major, Op. 6*

*The Carnival of Venice: I Palpiti, Op. 13; Caprice No. 20, in D Major*

Zino Francescatti, violin; Artur Balsam, piano

**BRIDGE 9125**

**Mozart:** *Sonata in D Major, K. 381; Sonata in C Major, K. 521*  
*Adagio and Allegro in F Minor, K. 594; Sonata in B-flat Major, K. 358*  
*Sonata in F Major, K. 497*

Nadia Reisenberg, piano; Artur Balsam, piano

**BRIDGE 9148**

**Hindemith:** *Sonata, Op. 11, No. 4* **Brahms:** *Horn Trio, Op. 40*

**Shostakovich:** *Piano Quintet, Op. 57*

Boris Kroyt, viola; Artur Balsam, piano; Jac Gorodetzky, violin

John Barrows, horn; The Budapest String Quartet

**BRIDGE 9175**

**Schubert:** *"Trout" Quintet, D. 667* **Franck:** *Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor* Artur Balsam, piano; Julius Levine, contrabass; The Budapest String Quartet

**BRIDGE 9185**

**Mozart:** *Concertos: K. 246, K. 415;* **Beethoven:** *Concerto Op. 61A*

**Hummel:** *Concerto Op. 85;* **C.P.E. Bach:** *Concerto in D minor*

Winterthur Symphony Orchestra; Concert Hall Symphony Orchestra

Walter Goehr, Clemens Dahinden, Henry Swoboda, Otto Ackermann, Victor Desarzens, conductors

**BRIDGE 9196A/B**