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The Beecham Collection HANDEL – BEECHAM



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|-------------|--|-------|
| [1] - [9] | Suite de Ballet – The Origin of Design | 17:10 |
| [10] - [18] | The Gods Go A'Begging (Excerpts) | 18:58 |
| [19] - [22] | Piano Concerto in A major
Lady Betty Humby Beecham, piano | 25:19 |
| [23] - [28] | The Gods Go A'Begging (Excerpts) | 13:22 |

Total duration 74:52

Sir Thomas Beecham, Bart., C.H.

- [1] - [22] London Philharmonic Orchestra
[23] - [28] Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Released in collaboration with the Sir Thomas Beecham Trust in support of the Scholarship Fund.

We are grateful to Shirley, Lady Beecham for permission to release these previously unissued recordings ([1] - [11] & [18] - [28]).

Original Recordings made in No.1 Studio, Abbey Road, London
Transfer from 78's and Executive Producer: Arthur Ridgwell
Digital re-mastering: Gary Moore

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The Beecham Collection

Including Unissued Recordings

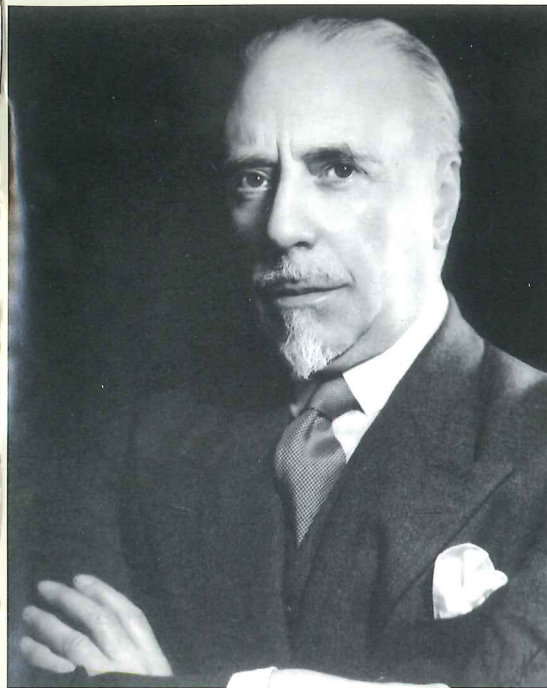


HANDEL – BEECHAM

The Origin of Design
The Gods Go A'Begging
Piano Concerto in A

London Philharmonic &
Royal Philharmonic
Orchestras

Sir Thomas Beecham,
Bart., C.H.
Lady Betty
Humby Beecham,
piano



THE BEECHAM COLLECTION
Sir Thomas Beecham, Bart., C.H.

HANDEL – BEECHAM

*** Suite de Ballet (The Origin of Design) ¹**

[1] Bourrée	2:16	[6] Sarabande	1:56
[2] Rondeau	1:20	[7] Ensemble	1:32
[3] Gigue	0:58	[8] Musette	1:25
[4] Minuet	3:17	[9] Battaglia & Finale	2:58
[5] Scherzo	1:15		

The Gods Go A'Begging (Excerpts)

[10] * Introduction ²	1:37	[14] Musette ⁴	1:53
[11] * Fugato ²	1:56	[15] ** Minuet ⁴	2:42
[12] Minuet ³	2:02	[16] Sarabande ⁵	2:40
[13] Hornpipe ³	1:37	[17] Tambourino ⁵	1:01
		[18] * Gavotte ⁶	3:17
		** (from The Origin of Design)	

*** Piano Concerto in A major ⁷**

[19] Introduction - Chaconne	9:34	[23] Introduction	1:42
[20] Romanza ⁸	4:48	[24] Allegro	1:51
[21] Minuet (with Trio)	5:39	[25] Larghetto	2:38
[22] Finale	5:10	[26] Ensemble	1:59
		[27] Gavotte	3:06
		[28] Bourrée	2:08

Total duration: 74:52

- [1] - [22] London Philharmonic Orchestra
 [23] - [28] Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
 [19] - [22] Soloist: Lady Betty Humby Beecham
 * Previously unissued: [1] - [11] & [18] - [28]

Recording Venue: No.1 Studio, Abbey Road, London.

¹	12 December 1932	Col. CAX 6618/21
²	9 November 1938	Col. CAX 8389
³	13 October 1937	Col. CAX 8086
⁴	14 November 1934	Col. CAX 7222
⁵	5 January 1933	Col. CAX 6637
⁶	12 October 1937	Col. CAX 8078
⁷	18/19 January 1945	2EA 10385/89
⁸	3 October 1945	2EA 10614
⁹	28 June 1949	2EA 14043/46

Technical Note: Part of matrix CAX 6620 (Sarabande) was badly damaged, but due to the historic significance of this recording in which Sir Thomas conducted the newly formed London Philharmonic Orchestra for the first time, it was decided to issue the remaining, undamaged part of the Sarabande.

In this series where the source material was unissued, great care has been taken to ensure that Sir Thomas's comments on the original test pressings have been observed in the remastering. In other cases it has been possible to use 78 rpm recordings from Sir Thomas's Collection.

The collaboration between the Sir Thomas Beecham Trust and SOMM Recordings will ensure that the Scholarship Fund will benefit from the sale of these discs.

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As anyone who worked for or with, or played under, Sir Thomas Beecham can vouch, not only was this one of the most remarkable men of his age but also he had an outstanding capacity for hard work. The aristocratic front and off-the-cuff witty remarks hid a really rather shy personality but also a remarkable intellect, searching brain and artistic sensibility. From an early age his literary and musical interests grew apace and his youthful forays on the Continent resulted in the foundation of a remarkable library of music from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, much of which he was to turn to later in his conducting career as a source of fascinating material previously not heard in the concert hall or opera house. Delectable music from Grétry, Paisiello, Méhul, Massenet or Chabrier, among others, graced his programmes and while Handel was a well-known name in Great Britain, Sir Thomas explored many Handelian scores which have become known to us in their entirety only in the last twenty years.

While he conducted *Messiah*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Solomon* and *Hercules*, he introduced arias from *Alcina*, *Acis and Galatea*, *Il Pastor fido*, *Teseo*, *Rodrigo*, *Alessandro*, *Sosarme* and *Il Penseroso* in his programmes along with *Chandos Anthems*, *Ode to St. Cecilia*, *Dettingen/Te Deum*, *Music for the Royal Fireworks* and several of the *Concerti Grossi*. However, his exploration of Handel scores went further in his arrangements of attractive but little known pieces, mostly taken from stage works, into orchestral suites. Here he followed Handel's practice of using the forces available to him, brought up-to-date, the best example of which is to be found in his treatment of *Messiah* from his first conducting of it with the Hallé Orchestra in December 1916 through to his considered study of the work over the next 43 years, resulting in him commissioning the orchestration from Sir Eugene Goossens in 1959. Beecham had the true musician's instinctive nose for good music and this he coupled with his natural scholarship in seeking out the movements to include in his various arrangements. His was no purist musicological approach – indeed his famous quip, behind which lay a shaft of truth (as always), that a musicologist was a man who could read music but could not hear it, summed up his view. In making these arrangements, most were done by himself but with a few he enlisted the practical help of men like Henry Gibson, whose name appears on the published piano score of *The Origin of Design* and who also worked on *The Gods go A-Begging*, *Ariodante* and *A Woman's Privilege*.

The first suite of Handel arrangements Beecham presented before the public in February 1924 and recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra in the following April, while in

March 1928 Beecham included three Handel items in his New York Philharmonic Orchestra programme in the Carnegie Hall – the *Overture: Teseo*, the *Musette* from *Il pastor fido* and a *Bourrée* from *Rodrigo*. These would seem to have been the germ of his ballet music *The Gods Go A-Begging*, first staged under his baton at His Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket, London on 16th July 1928 for Diaghilev's Ballet Russes. The published score includes eleven movements: *Introduction*, *Allegro* (also known as *First Dance* or *Fugato*), *Minuet*, *Hornpipe*, *Musette*, *Ensemble* (also known as *Second Dance*), *Larghetto* (sometimes referred to as *Dream*), *Tambourino*, *Gavotte*, *Dramatico* and *Bourrée*. Later, in some performances and recordings was added a *Sarabande* taken from *The Origin of Design* suite. The *Hornpipe* was taken from the movement of the same name which ends the *Concerto Grosso in Bb* (Op. 6 No. 7) of 1739 and the *Ensemble* is an arrangement of the well-known first movement *Allegro* of the *Organ Concerto in F* (Op. 4 No. 4) of 1735, itself to be found in *Alcina*. Other sources include the operas *Admeto* (1727), *Alcina* (1735), *Il pastor fido* (1712 rev. 1734), *Rodrigo* (1707), *Teseo* (1713) and the ballet *Terpsicore* for the 1734 revision of *Il pastor fido*. Sir Thomas was to record various movements from this suite, some more than once, between 1928 and 1958, sometimes altering the orchestration. In the printed score of the *Gavotte* he offers the harp as an alternative to the harpsichord and we hear the latter in the 1937 recording and the former in that from 1949, both previously unissued.

In 1930 a suite from *Ariodante* was announced but never performed, much of it probably finding its way into the ballet *A Woman's Privilege* in 1939, choreographed by Ninette de Valois for the Camargo Society. Many of its twelve numbers were to find their way into *The Origin of Design* in the following year. In 1940 came *The Faithful Shepherd*, with *Amaryllis* in 1944 and *The Great Elopement* in 1945, renamed *Love in Bath* emerging from a recording in 1956. The published score of *The Origin of Design* consisted of seventeen movements of which eleven have found themselves into recordings made by Sir Thomas. These are the *Prelude*, *Bourrée*, *Rondeau*, *Gigue*, *Minuet*, *Scherzo* (*Ballo*), *Sarabande*, *Ensemble*, *Musette*, *Battaglia* and *Finale*. The *Bourrée*, *Rondeau* and *Gigue* are sometimes listed together as *Suite de Ballet*. The first performance of this score, identified as such, was on 3rd June 1932 and all but the *Prelude* was recorded by Sir Thomas with his London Philharmonic Orchestra on 12th December 1932, being the first recording he made with the newly formed orchestra, which caused such a sensation with its high standard of performance when it entered the British musical scene. He was to record movements from this suite again in 1933 and 1934. The *Minuet* is the same as the *Minuet* given as the fifth movement in the 1941 published score of *The Faithful Shepherd*

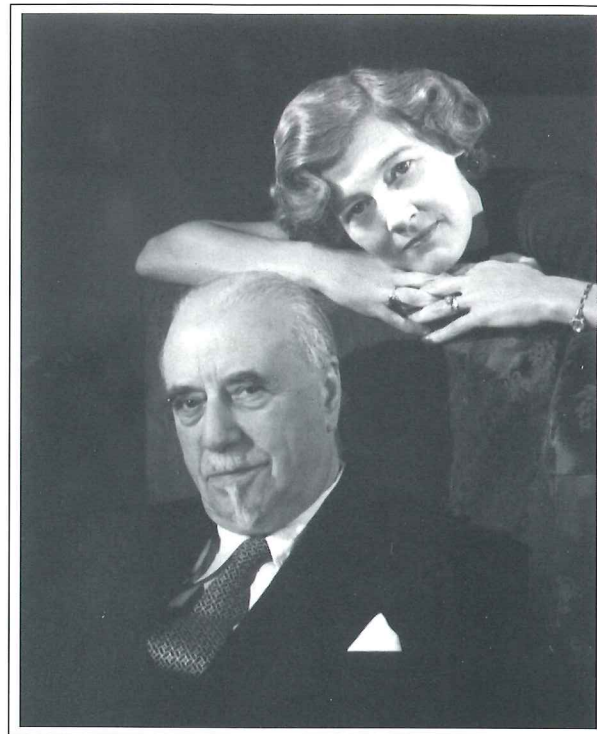
(*Il pastor fido*) suite of 1940, while the sources for the other recorded movements are to be found in the operas *Ariodante* (1735-6), *Il pastor fido*, *Rinaldo* (1711-1713) and the ballet music for *Terpsicore*.

Beecham's other Handel arrangement was the *Piano Concerto in A* which he put together for his wife Lady Betty Humby Beecham and of which she gave the first performance under Sir Thomas with a chamber orchestra in New York Town Hall on 15th March 1944. Although there were relatively few public performances of this work, it was recorded by Sir Thomas and his wife with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in the January and October of 1945.

Just as Handel was to borrow from himself and others between various of his works, as well as alter the orchestration to suit the circumstances of the occasion, so Sir Thomas Beecham would switch movements between his various Handel-Beecham suites as the mood and occasion took him, as well as altering his orchestration but always to delightful effect in charming the ear with gentle surprise. In his day, only a handful of scholars could have had anything like Beecham's knowledge of Handel's scores. He had not the opportunity of today to present many of these operas and oratorios on CD recordings but he gave to the public a tantalising example of the wonderful music to be found in these scores. At the time of Beecham's centenary, Alan Jefferson asked whether "Perhaps, since Beecham, we have returned to a state of ignorance and apathy about the jewels concealed in the old scores..." The picture is not as black as that, thanks to the many recordings of recent years but Sir Thomas can still remind us of the magic and mystery that he found in Handel and make us want to explore more. He would have been happy with that.

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Sir Thomas Beecham with Lady Betty Humby Beecham