

**Gregory Hamilton CELLIST** 

One day as we were searching for duos to play together, my wife and I discovered a sonata for viola and cello by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. It had been published almost 50 years ago and there were only a few copies to be found in libraries around the world. Reading through the piece, we realized its significance and wanted to give it the attention it deserved. At about the same time, I was planning my first commercial recording and decided to include a movement from this piece. Little did I know that when Tedesco wrote the viola and cello duo he was living in California in the midst of a successful career composing music for over 200 films! In my research of Tedesco and his fellow Hollywood film composers of that era (the 1940s and 1950s), I discovered that the majority were European, not American, and that many had built successful careers as composers of "serious" classical music before coming to the United States to write music for movies. Offering concert works by film composers of the Golden Era, I thought, would make an interesting collection for a CD.

The Golden Era of American cinema — the end of silent filmmaking to the early 1960s — took place during a time when European and American history converged, especially in the arts. These Europeans were primarily refugees from the years leading up to and during World War II, many of them German and Austrian Jews. In the film industry, screen stars Peter Lorre, Hedy Lamat, and Paul Henreid, writer Billy Wilder, and the directors Fritz Lang and Erich Pommer are just some of the famous names that worked together in the German cinema, only to leave their homeland when their work was censored and it became unsafe for them to stay. The same circumstances existed for composers. Some found a new and unexpected career in Hollywood, which meant sacrificing some of their accustomed autonomy in order to work within the more controlled environment of Hollywood film.

Two Child Prodigies

The life and career of *Erich Wolfgang Korngold* is well documented in numerous biographies. A child prodigy and a brilliant composer, he left a life of fame in Vienna just before Hitler occupied Austria. Korngold made a lasting mark on film music with his characteristically lush and grand orchestrations in a late-Romantic style. Kathrin Korngold Hubbard comments on the difficulties her grandfather faced once in California: "Fifty years ago, Erich Wolfgang Korngold died in Hollywood, brokenhearted – believing himself a forgotten man. Happily, in the last decade, his music appears to be undergoing a true renaissance." The unpublished *Romance Impromptu* was conceived for a scene in the film-noir melodrama *Deception* (1946) starring Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, and Claude Rains. It was a natural choice, as the film's plot is centered upon a concert cellist. The scene was eventually cut, though, and this music was never heard, apparently because they couldn't achieve the proper camera angles to make Henreid look like a believable cellist in the close shots. Thankfully, a cello concerto written by Korngold did make the cut and is in fact heard throughout much of the movie. *Tanzlied des Pierrot* is a transcription of an aria from Korngold's opera *Die tote Stadt*, completed when he was 23 years old.

Holland native *Richard Hageman* is known for his work as an actor, pianist, and conductor as well as for his film scores. Most of the music in the John Ford films in the 1930s and 40s were composed by Hageman, earning him an Oscar for *Stagecoach* in 1939. Hageman conducted at the Metropolitan Opera for many years and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra summer season for six years. This forgotten *Recitative and Romance* was published in 1961 by G. Schirmer.

## The Russian Nationalists

Lazare Saminsky was a conservative Jew, defending the importance of old synagogue music in his adopted (and more progressive) home, the United States. This *Meditation* is in the style of a cantillation, reminiscent of the nigun, an improvisatory tune, often wordless, sung as a prayer or lament. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, Saminsky immigrated to America, and in 1923 he collaborated with Hugo Riesenfeld to compose the film score to *The Ten Commandments*.

Joseph Achron, violinist and composer, was also committed to the preservation and promotion of committed to the preservation and promotion of committed to California and became part of the many émigré composers and performers, residing there until the Achron had limited success as a film composer but spent much time playing in various studio composers and performers in various studio composers and performers, residing there until the Achron had limited success as a film composer but spent much time playing in various studio composers and performers, residing there until the Achron had limited success as a film composer but spent much time playing in various studio composers and performers, residing there until the various studio composers and performers, residing there until the Achron had limited success as a film composer but spent much time playing in various studio composers and performers, residing there until the Achron had limited success as a film composer but spent much time playing in various studio composers and performers, residing there until the Achron had limited success as a film composer but spent much time playing in various studio composers and performers, residing there until the Achron had limited success as a film composer but spent much time playing in various studio composers and performers.

The Birthday Tributes

As his grandson, Lawrence Weschler, describes in his excellent article in the Atlantic Monthly. Exact Took fellow émigrés "used to regale one another with a story about two dachshunds who meet one excellent at true," one assures the other, 'I'm a dachshund. But in the old country I was a Saint Bernard easily apply to any of the displaced composers on this CD—they made the best of their circumstances of what they left behind. Speaking of dachshunds, the \*Variations on Peter's Song (an unpublication to refer to Toch's many dogs of that breed that he named Peter. It is a whimsical birthday tribute to Economic Ernst," and the melody and lyrics of the song are apparently the composer's own:

"Ev'ry being has its spouse, Human, monkey, cat and mouse, Scotty, Doberman and Chow, wow wow wow, wow wow wow."

Jewish composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's music was banned by Mussolini's fascist government 1938 the "Manifesto of Race" was adopted by that country, Tedesco (with the help of Arturo Toscanini) California where he first worked for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and eventually all the major film studios. For add y of celebrated Italian composer Ildebrando Pizzetti—Tedesco's teacher at the Conservatory in Florence in C Minor for Viola and Violoncello was presented as a gift.

The Silents

Music for silent films was typically a compilation of pre-existent music (known in the industry as stock ally drawn from both popular and classical music repertory. However, a year after the wildly successful present of a Nation (1915), cellist and composer Victor Herbert was commissioned to compose a complete or its sequel, Fall of a Nation. True to the style of the 1920s, Herbert's concert works often invoke the popular that time period. In the Romance you can almost hear Rudy Vallée singing along, and Pensée Amoureuse have found a place as a parlor song in one of Herbert's popular operettas.

Many people might not think of *Charlie Chaplin* as a composer, but he did indeed write all of the music head films. He actually could not read music so he "composed" with the help of an arranger. A quote from his autobasems up how he achieved this: "I really didn't write it down, I la-laed and Arthur Johnston wrote it down. It is a music, you know, in keeping with my character." Chaplin actually had his own music publishing company time, of which *Oh That Cellol* and *Peace Patrol* (both composed in 1916) were early products. *Smile*, most recognized song, is from the movie *Modern Times* (1936).

- Gregory Hamilton

Before joining the Music Department at Concordia College, Gregory Hamilton was the Executant Senior Lecturer of Cello at the University of Otago in New Zealand. Prior to this he taught at Illinois State University for ten years where he was a founding member of the Ricard Piano Trio. While in New Zealand, Greg made many solo appearances and was frequently heard on Concert-FM Radio New Zealand broadcasts, the Otago Daily Times calling him "a master of the instrument". Highlights from his extensive international travels include working with underprivileged children in Argentina, appearing in live broadcasts on German Public Radio of Cologne, participating in the William Pleeth masterclasses at the Aldeburgh Festival, and performing chamber music at the Festival dei due Mondi (Italy) and the Canterbury Music Festival (England). In 2006, he received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Kansas, which culminated in a lecture recital on the origins of cello literature and performance.

Internationally respected pianist and recording artist Robert Hamilton has made countless concert tours of four continents, appearing in the major halls of most music capitals. He has recorded for Phillips, Orion and Summit Records. A recent 2004 Summit release brought this comment from Audiophile Audition: "Hamilton has a blazingly brilliant approach to this repertory, delivering very powerful and often breathtaking interpretations. Exposure to these performances will make any future hearing of the works seem pallid." The American Record Guide added: "Hamilton's playing is full of integrity, rare brilliance and grandeur." Robert Hamilton is an official Steinway Artist.

Kate Hamilton, violist, began her career as the youngest member of the faculty at the renowned Baylor University School of Music in Texas following her graduate studies with Karen Tuttle at the Peabody Conservatory. Subsequent positions include artist-in-residence and violist of the Esterhazy String Quartet at the University of Missouri, and Associate Professor of Viola at Illinois State University. Her solo and chamber music performances have taken her to the 2001 International Viola Congress (New Zealand), the Mozarteum (Argentina), Esterhazy Palace (Austria), Teatro Belem (Brazil), Texas Music Festival and Middlesex University (England). Her playing has been described as a "rich viola sound . . . characterized by perfect taste and precision in balance with wonderful expressive freedom" Peoria Times (USA).



## The Hollgwood CELLO

## Gregory Hamilton, Cello Robert Hamilton, Piano Kate Hamilton, Viola

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957)
Richard Hageman (1881-1966)
Lazare Saminsky (1882-1959)
Joseph Achron (1886-1943)
Ernst Toch (1887-1964)
Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968)
Victor Herbert (1859-1924)

In the book "My Life in Pictures," Charlie Chaplin writes ironically: "As for the cello, I could pose well with it but that's about all."

Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977)

Produced by: Greg Hamilton & Charles Szczepanek Recording Engineer: Charles Szczepanek except Track 7: Russell Peterson Digital Editing, Mixing, and Mastering Engineer: Charles Szczepanek

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Photo of Gregory Hamilton: Sheldon Green

Photo of Charlie Chaplin: December 13, 1915, unattributed

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