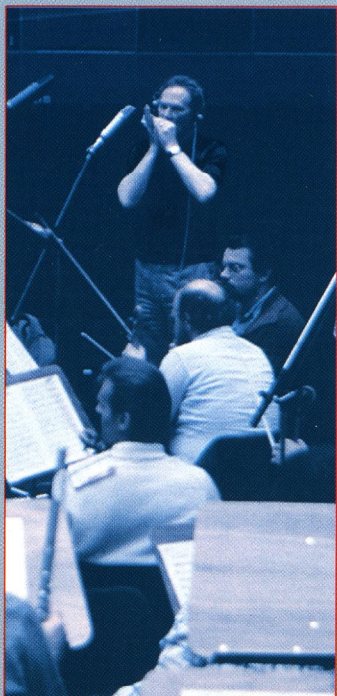
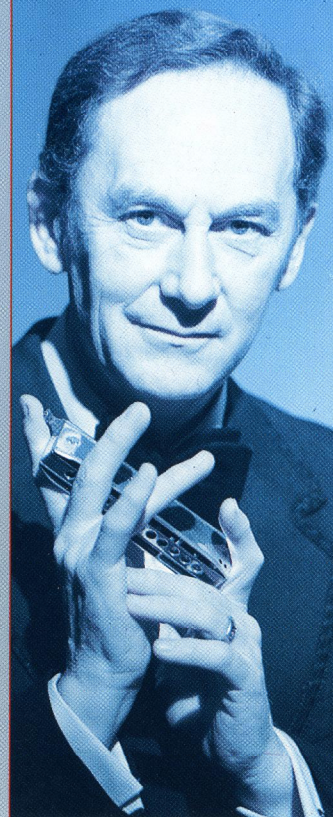


CHANDOS DIGITAL CHAN 9248



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CHANDOS

TOMMY REILLY

plays

Harmonica Concertos

by

■ Spivakovsky ■

■ Arnold ■

■ Villa-Lobos ■

and Virtuoso Works by

■ Moody and Farnon ■

DIGITAL

MICHAEL SPIVAKOVSKY (1919-1983)
Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra 14:59
 I Fuocoso - Dance Drôle 6:42
 II Romance. Andante, dolce 4:50
 III Scherzo. Allegro ma non troppo 3:21
 MÜNCHNER RUNDFUNKORCHESTER / CHARLES GERHARDT, Conductor
 Solo violin: Günther Salber

- 1
- 2
- 3

MALCOLM ARNOLD (b. 1921)
Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra Op. 46 10:05
 I Grazioso 3:45
 II Mesto 4:06
 III Con brio 2:09
 BASEL RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA / CEDRIC DUMONT, Conductor

- 4
- 5
- 6

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS (1887-1959)
Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra 17:39
 I Allegro moderato 6:56
 II Andante 5:22
 III Allegro (Cadenza by Tommy Reilly) 5:17
 RUNDFUNKORCHESTER DES SÜDWESTFUNKS / EMMERICH SMOLA, Conductor

- 7
- 8
- 9

JAMES MOODY (b. 1907)
Toledo, Spanish Fantasy for Harmonica and Orchestra 6:43
 MÜNCHNER RUNDFUNKORCHESTER / ROBERT FARNON, Conductor

- 10

ROBERT FARNON (b. 1917)
Prelude and Dance for Harmonica and Orchestra 10:32
 ROBERT FARNON and his ORCHESTRA

- 11

DDD

TT = 60:24

TOMMY REILLY, Harmonica



Composer Michael Spivakovsky
 with Tommy Reilly in 1969



Composer James Moody and Tommy Reilly
 photographed in 1981 outside Mr Moody's home
 in the Cotswolds



Robert Farnon and Tommy Reilly

Tommy Reilly, a leading exponent of the classical harmonica, first studied violin and has modelled his playing of the harmonica after the great violin virtuoso, Jascha Heifetz. Says Reilly:

'I tried studying his vibrato, trills, etc. This idea came about because I studied the violin as a boy, and having done so I naturally played the harmonica with the phrasing of the violin in mind. Personally I believe that having played the violin has been the most important influence for good in my harmonica playing'.

Although Canadian-born, Tommy Reilly's family moved to England in 1935 when his father, Captain James Reilly, was engaged to continue in that country the pioneering work he had done for the harmonica in Canada. The following year Tommy was performing both in England and on the continent. He has performed with many of the leading European and North American orchestras and appeared widely as a recitalist, while pursuing parallel careers as a popular radio and television performer and a studio performer-composer for films and television. In the absence of an established concert repertoire for the harmonica, he has transcribed many works for his instrument and has also encouraged various composers to write for it.

Brought together on this compact disc are some of Tommy Reilly's favourite works for solo harmonica and orchestra. The works by Spivakovsky, Moody, and Farnon were composed especially for him; the Villa-Lobos Concerto he has made his own since reviving it from a premature demise. The performances of each work on the disc are also favourites of Mr Reilly's, recorded with various orchestras and conductors between 1968 and 1981, and can be considered definitive interpretations by this master of the harmonica.

The first work on the disc is **Michael Spivakovsky's Harmonica Concerto**, appropriately placed since this was the first major concerto ever written for harmonica and orchestra. It was dedicated to Tommy Reilly and represented an important watershed in the latter's life and career. Mr Reilly has said about the experience:

'The big change in my playing came when Michael Spivakovsky wrote a concerto for me in 1951. The months I spent with him taught me a lot. Until then I never realized how much could be produced from the harmonica. Although Spivakovsky did not play harmonica, he instinctively knew what could be done on the instrument and he made me do it! He was a hard task-master but I shall always be grateful to him for bullying me'.

In these words, the classical music buff can hear echoes of fateful composer-soloist collaborations of earlier eras such as Mozart and the clarinetist Stadler, Dvořák and the violinist Joachim, and Tchaikovsky and the pianist Rubinstein. The sorting out of conflicting ideas, goals and temperaments was not always easy in these cases but the products which resulted from the collaborations were masterworks which quickly found their way into the standard repertoire and have endured to the present day.

Michael Spivakovsky was born in England in 1919. His father was a Russian cellist, his mother was English. He had a career as a violinist, painter and composer in both London and New York, where he died in 1983. His Concerto for Harmonica was premiered by Tommy Reilly and the London Radio Concert Orchestra conducted by Mark Lubbock on 26 May 1951 as part of the 'Festival of Britain', at the Concert Hall of Broadcasting House. It was broadcast live on the BBC Programme 'London Rhapsody'.

The performance that Mr Reilly has chosen to include on the present recording took place in Munich in 1977 with the American conductor Charles Gerhardt and the orchestra of the Bavarian Radio. The work has great charm and appeal, and belongs to the tradition of light classics which lend themselves so wonderfully to Promenade-type concerts. After a broad orchestra opening reminiscent of Sibelius, Spivakovsky introduces the harmonica by way of a cadenza which brings to mind an earlier Russian master, Rimsky-Korsakov. The placement of this unaccompanied solo passage so early in the piece is unexpected and innovative, but considering that this was the first-ever concerto for harmonica and orchestra, the composer has thus given the soloist the chance to introduce his instrument to the concert audience in an expressive and virtuosic manner. Once the soloist has firmly established, in the cadenza, that the harmonica does not only belong on the same stage as the orchestra, but that he is master of this instrument, the ensemble returns with the spritely first statement of the main body of the first movement. There follows a broader B section and a return to the A material to close the movement.

The slow movement unfolds in a lyrical, minor vein and brings to mind the musical style of another Russian master, Sergei Rachmaninov. There is a wonderful moment early in the movement where a high solo violin joins the harmonica for a beautiful but short-lived duet accompanied by harp and low strings in which Mr Reilly matches the violinist's *vibrato*, darkens the harmonica's tone colour as he plays below the soaring stringed instrument and then brightens his tone again as he ascends above it. A felicitous moment indeed for composer and both soloists! There follow briefer solo contributions by flute, clarinet and horn, which in each case elicit masterful gradations of tone colour from the soloist, showing him to be a musician of the first rank.

The finale employs the major mode and the light-hearted style of Kabalevsky. It is a show-piece of technical wizardry and provides multiple opportunities for rapid passagework and varied articulations by the soloist, all of which are handled with great panache and aplomb by Tommy Reilly.

It is easy to see why Mr Reilly has chosen this performance for the present recording. The co-ordination between his playing and the orchestra in matters of tempo, rhythm and pitch is flawless throughout. Messrs Reilly and Gerhardt obviously had no problems of communication whatsoever and, in fact, one could go so far as to say that the conductor fits the soloist like a glove! Tommy Reilly shows himself to be a

master of both technical and musical virtuosity in this ground-breaking work and Michael Spivakovsky has given the world a fine showpiece for many generations of harmonica virtuosi yet to come.

The **Malcolm Arnold Harmonica Concerto** was commissioned by the BBC for the 1954 'Proms' concerts. It is scored for an orchestra without woodwind instruments (thus giving the harmonica a completely distinctive reed voice) accompanied by an ensemble of strings, brass and percussion.

And true to its promise, this concerto is no run-of-the-mill showpiece for solo and orchestra. It is vintage Arnold: witty, clever, thoroughly professional and even mildly unusual. The first movement, a *Grazioso* in which the composer explores the harmonica's lyrical possibilities in subdued colours from the bottom to the top of the instrument's range, comes across as a quasi-*misterioso* movement due to the ostinato nature of the recurrent main theme, and the spare, repeated brass interjections which accompany this theme over *pizzicato* low strings and sustained high violins. The composer's use of colourful tonal effects in the accompanying brass elsewhere in the movement (e.g., trombone glissandi, horns *bouché* and *cuvré*) and a panoply of exotic-sounding percussion instruments also adds to the novelty of the listening experience. Of course, what Arnold has done here is to exploit the colour possibilities of the accompanying instruments rather than their brute strength, thus leaving lots of sonic space around the harmonica so that it is never in danger of being swamped by the aggregate of instrumental forces arrayed behind it, even though it spends the movement in a rather quiet, contemplative mode.

The second movement, *Mesto*, is a dramatic dirge in which the brass, timpani and side drums come to the fore. In another example of daring orchestration, the strings are silent throughout! Here the harmonica is subdued and lyrical for the most part, but in the latter stages of the movement some of the instrument's chordal possibilities are introduced in addition to trills. The finale, *Con brio*, is brief, spirited and dance-like, giving ample opportunity for the harmonica to demonstrate its agility and lightness. Once again the brass is very much in the forefront of the accompaniment but in this movement the strings have been restored to Arnold's orchestral palette.

The **Villa-Lobos Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra** was written in 1955 and premiered by the American John Sebastian, in Jerusalem in 1959. The work seems to have suffered inexplicable neglect thereafter, undoubtedly linked to the dearth of classical harmonica players in the world, but even to the point that Villa-Lobos' own publisher was uncertain of its existence some twenty years after its composition when Tommy Reilly was first signalling his interest in recording it. His persistence in trying to track down a copy of the orchestral score eventually paid off through the good offices of a student in Japan, and

Tommy went on to record the work with the London Sinfonietta and David Atherton in 1979. Since then he has performed this piece with many of the leading orchestras of Europe and North America.

This is a serious, neoclassical work written only 4 years before Villa-Lobos' death. There is almost none of the overt Brazilian folk-music flavour of the composer's earlier compositions (e.g., the *Chôros* and *Bachianas Brasileiras* series) in this piece. It is scored for a chamber orchestra of strings, single winds, harp, celesta and percussion. The opening *Allegro moderato* is a modal, pastoral movement in alternating 7/4 and 4/4 time in three sections: the first begins with the orchestral opening, the second with a theme played by the harmonica, and the third with an oboe melody. The *Andante* is a quiet, haunting movement in an ABA pattern. In a subdued minor-mode throughout, it is a fine vehicle for the expressive capabilities of the solo instrument, and Mr Reilly exploits the measured pace of the movement to imbue his runs and figurations with great freedom and artistry. The final *Allegro* contains the only hints in the entire work of the ethnic music of Brazil which so preoccupied the composer in his early years. The rhythmic quality of the movement as a whole, and especially the mild cross-rhythms in the accompaniment at moments, give this movement more dash or urbanity than its two predecessors, but the *pièce de résistance* is Tommy Reilly's own cadenza, which he substitutes for the composer's original. Highly idiomatic yet linked to the work by references to the opening movement, the cadenza is an understated but masterful compendium of the octave, intervallic and chordal possibilities available on the harmonica, and a triumph of showmanship and good taste for Mr Reilly.

James Moody has been Tommy Reilly's recital accompanist for over 30 years. With a background in silent film orchestras, he joined the BBC in Belfast in 1938 as a house pianist and arranger. The next year he went on to England where he made Tommy Reilly's acquaintance in the 1950s. His interest in the harmonica blossomed to the point where he actually learned how to play the instrument so as to compose and arrange for it as idiomatically as possible. Over the years he has contributed so many works to the instrument's repertoire that he now stands as the single most prolific writer for the harmonica. Tommy Reilly has already recorded for Chandos Moody's *Harmonica Quintet* with string quartet, *Suite dans le style français* with harp, *Little Suite* with orchestra, and numerous other works with piano.

Moody's **Toledo** for harmonica and orchestra is a charming, bravura showpiece in the Spanish style, as the name implies, which was first performed by Tommy Reilly on the BBC in 1960. The work is in a single movement in two contrasting sections, each a characteristic Spanish dance in triple metre, separated by a cadenza for the solo instrument. While the harmonica holds centre-stage throughout the work, the orchestra accompaniment provides the appropriate colours and gestures to maintain the intended

Spanish flavour. It has remained one of Mr Reilly's most frequently requested and performed concert works although it has never, until now, been available on a commercial recording.

Like Tommy Reilly, **Robert Farnon** is an expatriate Canadian who has made his home in England since about the time of the Second World War. He is a master arranger and composer of music in the lighter vein and has written for many soloists and ensembles including Oscar Peterson, Tony Bennett and Frank Sinatra as well as for films, radio and television, and record companies. Farnon's **Prelude and Dance for Harmonica and Orchestra** is considered by harmonica players to be among the most technically difficult works in their repertoire. It was composed for and dedicated to Tommy Reilly (a long-time friend of Farnon) who gave the world premiere of the work in the presence of King Olav V of Norway at the 20th Anniversary Concert of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra in Oslo in 1966. The piece actually employs every note available on the harmonica and necessitated, at the time of its delivery to Reilly, a new instrument. Until then Tommy Reilly had played on a standard, factory instrument made by Hohner but the demands of the Farnon piece were such that Mr Reilly had a custom-made concert model fashioned to his specifications by a silversmith at Covent Garden. This instrument caused quite a stir in harmonica circles and eventually resulted in Hohner creating its own silver concert version.

After all the various technical demands on the Farnon piece, and others in his repertoire, it was actually two simple notes at the very outset of this composition which have caused Tommy Reilly his greatest pleasure when properly brought off:

'Of all the music I have played in my career, I must say that the two notes I put together which begin the Farnon piece gave me more satisfaction than probably any others. As harmonica players, especially the ones who have studied with me, know it is not easy to play two notes (legato) when there is a hole in between each note. The first two notes of the Farnon are D and A, hole 5 draw to 7 draw. Doing this movement and making it sound like there is no gap between the notes is a real achievement. I can tell you it certainly doesn't happen every time you perform!'

Having performed the Prelude and Dance many times throughout his career with the composer and other conductors, this performance, recorded at Chappells Studios in London in 1968 with the composer conducting his own Studio Orchestra, has been chosen by Mr Reilly as the definitive version for inclusion on this recording.

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Chief, Music Division, National Library of Canada



'It is difficult to see how anyone could possibly resist the stunning virtuosity and remarkable musicianship of Tommy Reilly.'

Robert Henderson, *Daily Telegraph*

For several decades Tommy Reilly has been successfully convincing composers and conductors, as well as other musicians, critics, and concert-goers, that the harmonica belongs on the concert stage. In 1992 he was awarded the MBE by Her Majesty the Queen for his services to music; the first harmonica player ever to receive such an honour.

Resident in Britain for many years, Tommy Reilly was born in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, and began studying the violin at the age of eight. A few years later he took up the harmonica and became fascinated by its latent musical potential, at that time unexplored. While studying the violin at the Leipzig Conservatory in 1939 he was arrested by Gestapo at the outbreak of World War II. The five and a half years he spent as a prisoner-of-war in Germany gave him time to develop a classical harmonica technique. It was this pioneer work and his early violin training which became the foundation of his career after the war when, in the words of Gordon Jacob, he 'made the harmonica into a solo instrument of high artistic worth'. Or, as Richard Morrison wrote in *The Times* after the world premiere of Paul Patterson's *Harmonica Concerto* by Tommy Reilly and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields at the Wigmore Hall in April 1987:

'For five years, locked in a Germany prison camp, Tommy Reilly set about discovering the harmonica as no one had discovered it before. For 40 years since, his determination to establish the "highbrow" credentials of his solid silver instrument has been matched by his skill at coaxing lyrical, musicianly sounds from this most intractable of sources. By commissioning judiciously over the years he has given the harmonica a repertoire of pedigree.'

He was the dedicatee of the first important full-scale Harmonica Concerto (by Michael Spivakovsky, Festival of Britain 1951) and in 1967 he designed the first concert harmonica of all time. In 1977 his LP of four original works with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields was warmly applauded by the critics. These are some of the milestones not only in Tommy Reilly's career, but also in the history of the harmonica as a legitimate musical instrument. A great tribute to his artistry was paid by Stravinsky, who stated: 'After hearing your interpretation of my *Chanson Russe* I would be happy to let you play anything of mine.'

Tommy Reilly's tours have taken him to all parts of the globe and his musicianship has inspired a number of composers. His repertoire includes over forty major original works by such composers as Gordon Jacob, Villa-Lobos, Robert Farnon, and Vaughan Williams. He has played for countless films and TV series, and has also collaborated with such personalities as Gigli, Bing Crosby, Vera Lynn, George Harrison, and Barbra Streisand. As a teacher of the harmonica he is unexcelled anywhere, and his books, tutors and studies are standard works.

On this, his seventh CD for Chandos, Tommy Reilly can be heard at the peak of his artistry in specially selected performances of some of the major virtuoso works for harmonica and orchestra, including world premiere recordings of Michael Spivakovsky's *Harmonica Concerto* and James Moody's Spanish fantasy *Toledo*.

Sir Neville Marriner once put it: 'Many of the ingredients of the Academy's original ambitions are embodied in Tommy's musicianship: technically he achieves remarkable virtuosity with a minimum of fuss. Musically he exploits his instrument with refinement and bravura, and ultimately it does not seem to matter *what* he plays, but *how* he plays it.'

Previous releases featuring Tommy Reilly:

"Serenade"

with The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Ensemble
CHAN 8486 CD; ABRD/ABTD 1202 LP & Cassette

"Serenade" Volume 2

Arrangements for Harmonica and Harp
with Skaila Kanga
CHAN 6568 CD

British Folk Songs

Arranged for Harmonica and Harp
with Skaila Kanga
CHAN 8559 CD; LBRD/LBTD 017 LP & Cassette

Vaughan Williams: Romance • Tausky: Concertino

Moody: Little Suite • Jacob: Five pieces

with The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields directed by Sir Neville Marriner
CHAN 8617 CD

"Thanks for the Memory"

Popular tunes arranged for Harmonica and Piano
with James Moody
CHAN 8645 CD; LBRD/LBTD 020 LP & Cassette

Jacob: Divertimento for Harmonica & String Quartet

Moody: Suite dans le style français • Harmonica Quintet
with The Hindar Quartet
CHAN 8802 CD

• A Chandos Digital Recording

- Spivakovsky and Moody recorded for Bayerischer Rundfunk in Munich, Germany on 18 July 1977 (Spivakovsky) and 15 June 1978 (Moody); Arnold recorded for Schweizer Radio DRS in Basle, Switzerland on 13 April 1976; Villa-Lobos recorded for Südwestfunk in Kaiserslautern, Germany on 9 March 1981; Farnon recorded at Chappell Studios, London on 17 April 1968
- Compilation by Sigmund Groven
- Released by arrangement with Sigmund Groven
- Editor: Peter Reynolds
- Front Cover Photograph of Tommy Reilly by Suzette Gibbs
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HARMONICA CONCERTOS & VIRTUOSO WORKS - Tommy Reilly

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MICHAEL SPIVAKOVSKY (1919-1983)

Premier Recording

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra

14:59

Tracks 1 - 3

MÜNCHNER RUNDFUNKORCHESTER / CHARLES GERHARDT, Conductor

Solo violin: Günther Salber

MALCOLM ARNOLD (b. 1921)

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra Op. 46

10:05

Tracks 4 - 6

BASEL RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA / CEDRIC DUMONT, Conductor

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS (1887-1959)

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra

17:39

Tracks 7 - 9

RUNDFUNKORCHESTER DES SÜDWESTFUNKS / EMMERICH SMOLA, Conductor

JAMES MOODY (b. 1907)

Premier Recording

Toledo, Spanish Fantasy for Harmonica and Orchestra

6:43

MÜNCHNER RUNDFUNKORCHESTER / ROBERT FARNON, Conductor

ROBERT FARNON (b. 1917)

Prelude and Dance for Harmonica and Orchestra

10:32

ROBERT FARNON and his ORCHESTRA

DDD

TT = 60:24

TOMMY REILLY, Harmonica

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