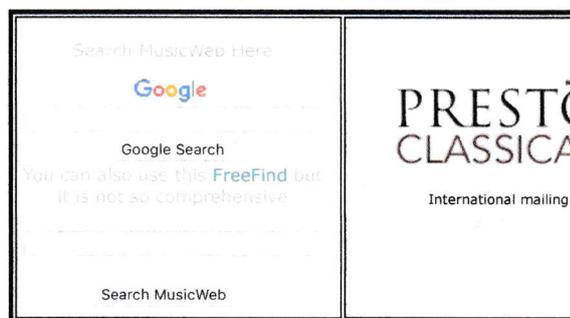




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Some items
to consider

A Life in Music - Vintage Tommy Reilly

Tommy Reilly (harmonica)
rec. 1945-1988
CHANDOS CHAN20143 [77:20]

Tommy Reilly recorded prolifically for Chandos and many a collector has cause to be grateful for the preservation of a large swathe of his repertory, both classical and lighter: Vaughan Williams, Vilém Tauský, Malcolm Arnold, the music of long-time collaborator James Moody, the folk song album with harpist Skaila Kanga, all those wonderful arrangements with Neville Marriner and the ASMF and so much more.

It must have been tempting to call this disc 'The Life of Reilly' but fortunately perhaps the title is somewhat more sober-suited. It contains no fewer than 30 tracks recorded over a four-decade period from 1945 (a demo recording) to the 1988 *Golden Girl* with Moody accompanying. An exciting feature – one of many in this splendid salute to the great harmonica player – is that so many pieces are released for the first time. A substantial number (eight titles) do come from the Polydor LP he recorded in Oslo in October 1970 called *The Harmonica of Tommy Reilly* and several from sessions presided over by George Martin – well before The Beatles – for Parlophone 78s. But by my reckoning fifteen of the thirty tracks, largely culled from live broadcasts, are being made available for the first time. Not a bad haul.

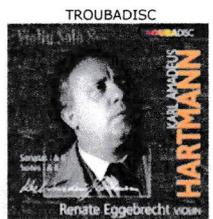
In his youth Reilly had played the violin and it's often said he played the harmonica like a fiddler, something that his son David touches on in his affectionate and wide-ranging booklet notes. Reilly's hero was Heifetz, a hard act to follow, but Reilly strove to emulate and translate Heifetz's virtuosity to his own instrument. It's unsurprising that one of the unissued tracks should be the Dinicu-Heifetz *Hora staccato*, dispatched with virtuosity and rhythmic wit.

The colours Reilly managed to produce, the technical barriers he overcame and the unrivalled musicality he evinced on the instrument are stunningly audible throughout this disc. His multi-coloured exploration of articulation and range on *Zigeunerweisen* – perfect for a fiddler manqué, though saucily cut down in size – is matched by throaty yelps and stratospherically high notes, all garnished with a deliberately cloying 'gypsy' vibrato. No wonder it provoked applause from the studio audience in this Oslo recording from 1953. His Polydor album explored stylistic versatility, hence the Baroque strictures of a Scarlatti movement and the Gigue from Bach's Partita No.3, as well as the sultry romanticism of Rachmaninov's Serenade, with fine pianist Kaare Ørnung. In that album he was also supported by the Norwegian Opera String Quartet, notably in a very beautiful performance of the David Reilly-Robert Farnon music from the *Age of Innocence*.

It's fitting one should hear a number of Moody's own compositions, as well as Reilly's own originals and transcriptions. His colleague Alan Langford composed a raunchy and in places knowingly Dinicu-like piece called *Firebrand* that would have appealed to Reilly and which he recorded in his Polydor LP. Some of his warhorses are here, notably Smetana's *Dance of the Comedians* from *The Bartered Bride*, and the overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* (yes indeed) heard in 1949 BBC Light Programme broadcasts with Billy Tennent and his Orchestra. Some of the George Martin recordings are subjected to his trickery, either speeded up or with a cavernous echo – I wonder if Joe Meek was listening – and though the sound isn't quite the finest there's some supremely articulate playing on a broadcast with Tauský directing the Northern Variety Orchestra in 1953 where Reilly plays Donald Phillips' *Firefly*.

Reilly hints at his swing prowess on *Gin Ginger*, though clearly he was a very different kind of performer than Larry Adler in this metier. Instead there's novelty, medley, humour in eighteenth century pastiche, or in evocations of Bulgarian wedding dances, courtesy of James Moody.

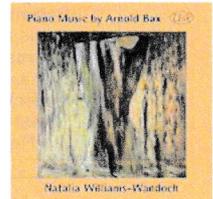
There is, in short, a huge amount here to entertain the keen listener. Reilly's commercial discography is saluted but the archive is successfully mined for off-air material that summon up a time, a place and an era. Reilly was the wizard at the centre of it all, a supreme colourist, the George Malcolm of the harmonica. Or perhaps Malcolm was the Tommy Reilly of the Harpsichord.



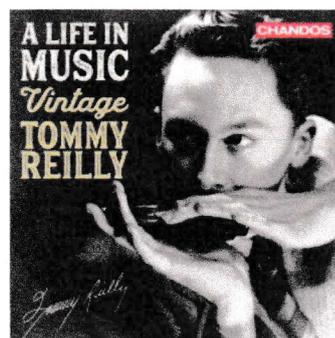
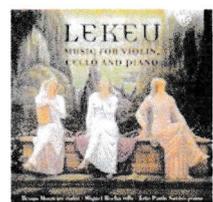
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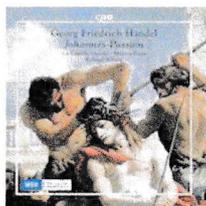
New Releases



Guillaume LEKEU

Jonathan Woolf**Contents**

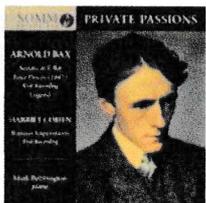
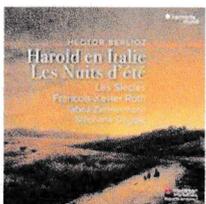
1. Zigeunerweisen (Sarasate, arr.Reilly)
- Norwegian Radio Orchestra / Øivind Bergh (NRK Radio, Oslo, 21 November 1953)
 2. Sonata in G minor, L338 (D Scarlatti, arr.J.Moody)
- Kaare Ørnung (piano)
 3. Gigue from Partita no.3, BWV1006 (JS Bach, trans. Tommy Reilly)
- harmonica solo
 4. Serenade (Rachmaninov)
- Kaare Ørnung (piano)
 5. Age of Innocence (David Reilly/Robert Farnon)
- The Norwegian Opera String Quartet, Tor Hultin (piano), Knut Guettler (bass)
 6. Italian Dance (Madeleine Dring)
- Kaare Ørnung (piano)
 7. Spanish Dance no.2 in G minor (Moszkowski)
- Kaare Ørnung (piano)
 8. Voice from the Past (Tommy Reilly/James Moody)
- The Norwegian Opera String Quartet, Robert Normann (guitar), Knut Guettler (bass)
 9. Firebrand (Alan Langford)
- Kaare Ørnung (piano)
 10. Deep Purple (de Rose, arr.Reilly/Still)
- Frank Still (piano)
 11. Dance of the Comedians, from "The Bartered Bride" (Smetana, arr. Reilly)
- Billy Ternent and his Orchestra
 12. The Marriage of Figaro, overture (Mozart, arr. Reilly)
- Billy Ternent and his Orchestra
 13. Midnight in Mayfair (Newell Chase)
- Vic Hammett (piano)
 14. El Cumbanchero (Hernandez, arr.Reilly)
- Vic Hammett Quartet
 15. Jealousy (Jacob Gade, arr. Reilly)
- Vic Hammett Quartet
 16. Dinah (Lewis/Young/Akst, arr. Norman Warren)
- with rhythm accompaniment
 17. Bop! Goes the Weasel (Bentley-Owen, arr. George Martin)
- with rhythm accompaniment
 18. Firefly (Donald Phillips)
- Northern Variety Orchestra / Vilem Tausky
 19. Begin the Beguine (Porter, arr. Reilly, orch. Norman Warren)
- Norwegian Radio Orchestra / Øivind Bergh
 20. Gin Ginger (Bobby Young)
- with rhythm group
 21. No Limit (Tommy Reilly/Bobby Young)
- James Moody (piano), with rhythm group
 22. Bulgarian Wedding Dance (James Moody)
- James Moody (piano), with rhythm group
 23. Hora Staccato (Dinicu-Heifetz)
- Johan Øian (piano)
 24. 18th-Century Rock (Jimmy Leach, arr. Reilly/Moody)
- The Edward Rubach Quartet
 25. Irish Medley (trad., arr.James Moody)
- The Edward Rubach Quartet
 26. The Breeze and I (Lecuona, arr.Reilly)
- The Edward Rubach Quartet
 27. Le Grisbi (Jean Wiener)
- The Edward Rubach Quartet
 28. The Red Flame (Tommy Reilly/Maurice Arnold)
- James Moody (piano)
 29. Waltz in D flat major, op.64 no.1 "Minute Waltz" (Chopin)
- Kaare Ørnung (piano)
 30. Golden Girl (Tommy Reilly/James Moody)
- James Moody (piano)
- Tracks 2-9 and 29-30 are Stereo, the rest Mono



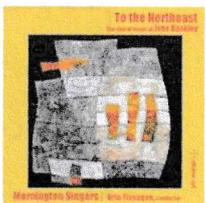
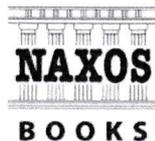
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