

LEOPOLD GODOWSKY
TRIAKONTAMERON

Thirty Moods and Scenes
 IN TRIPLE MEASURE
 For Pianoforte

No. 14
Whitecaps

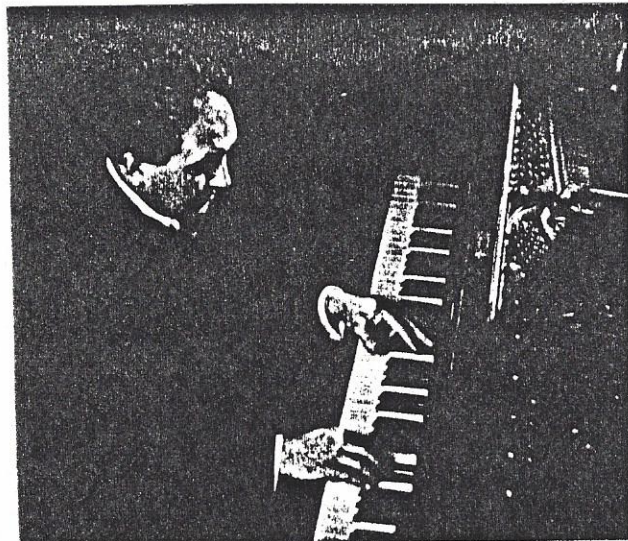
Price, 60 cents, net

G. SCHIRMER
 NEW YORK BOSTON

THE GODOWSKY SOCIETY

No II

Vo III



THE GODOWSKY SOCIETY

Patrons:

Shura Cherkassky

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

Ronald Stevenson

In the last Newsletter, I gave news of another Godowsky biography currently in preparation, and I can now give further information on this. The author is Charles Hopkins with whom I have enjoyed many enlightening telephone conversations and correspondence.

The following is a direct quotation from a letter in which he generously supplements the Godowsky discography given in Vol II No.1 (which will have to be re-written one of these days): "I hope it will not seem discourteous or ungracious if I beg to make one or two observations with regard to some of the remarks and information contained in the Newsletters. In your inaugural issue, you refer to your belief that Godowsky made piano rolls of his miniatures. I think, in fact, what you refer to is his complete roll recording of Triakontameron, made in the 1920s for Angelus, a small company operating from specially designed studios in Meriden, Connecticut. This company was eventually taken over by the QRS company. This set of thirty rolls is believed to be the longest roll issue ever made in the history of the player piano. Sadly, efforts to locate these rolls have, as yet, been unsuccessful, as, indeed, have similar attempts to determine exact dates of recording and whether or not Godowsky made the rolls at one session or as a series of separate recordings. While on the subject of rolls, it is perhaps of interest, in view of Dr. Cockburn's piece on the Walzermasken, and your subsequent quote from 'Steeplejack', to note that de Pachmann himself recorded 'Franzosisch' for Welte-Mignon (Roll No. C7207)

"I would also like, if I may, to make one or two addenda to the discography contained in Vol. 2 No.1. Godowsky recorded the Chopin Prelude in D flat Op. 25/15 and Waltz in C sharp minor Op. 64/2 for Columbia in 1913 - Matrix Nos. 36695 and 36699 respectively. It is also interesting, in view of the transcriptions that he later made of several Chopin Waltzes, to find Godowsky using the Joseffy version of the posthumous E minor Waltz for his recording on A 5858. Also, incidentally, the Moszkowski Serenade Op. 15/1 is played in an edition of Scharfenburg. The disc A 6013, in addition to the Chopin Etude Op. 25/2 and Rubenstein Serenade listed, contains the Leschetitzky Arabesque in A flat Op. 45/1 and Poldini's Vienna Waltz Op. 42/3.

"From the section devoted to the Brunswick acoustics, there appears to be some confusion regarding contents and numbers. The disc of Rubenstein's Kammenoi-Ostrow, no. 50009, is coupled with the Chopin Impromptu in A flat Op. 29. The disc no. 15001 comprises, in addition to the Mendelssohn Spring Song Op. 62/6 the Chaminade La Lisonjera, and the disc, no. 50024, contains Chopin's Op. 53 Polonaise in A flat and Liszt Liebestraume no. 3. The coupling for Dohnanyi's Capriccio in F minor Op. 28/6 on 15049 is Schutt's once popular *À la bien aimée*, and, with Granados' *Playera* Op. 37/5 on 15081 can be found Liadov's *Tabatiere à musique* Op. 32.

"Electric Brunswicks dating from 1925/26, which also receive no mention include: 15015 - Debussy: Golliwog's Cakewalk and Minstrels.
 50069 - Debussy: Reflets dans l'eau (coupled with Clair de lune Matrix No. 16103 listed)
 50070 - Chopin: Fantasie-Impromptu Op. 66 Liszt: Liebestraume No. 3
 50078 - Schubert-Tausig: Marche Militaire. Chopin: Polonaise in A flat (abbreviated)
 15123 - Chopin: Etudes Op. 10/5, 25/9. Rachmaninoff Op. 3/2
 62624 (German Brunswick) - Dohnanyi: Capriccio. Schutt: A la bien aimée.
 15124 - Chopin: Waltz Op. 64/2. Rubenstein: Melody in F Op. 3/1 Matrix No. 20033.
 15125 - Macdowell: Hexentanz. Sinding: Frühlingsrauchen. Matrix No. 20027.
 15172 - Eastwood Lane: The Crap Shooters. Zeckwer: In a Boat.
 (This was misattributed to Giesecking in one French listing)

"Among unissued recordings known to exist, particularly interesting in view of my comments above is one of the piano solo version of the Humoresque from the Miniatures for piano duet, Brunswick Matrix No. 3877.

"One further point, as a postscript to Huneker's comments re the E minor Sonata, and its preferability to the Tchaikovsky Op. 37, it is interesting, and not a little ironic, that the Tchaikovsky work featured in Godowsky's repertory, appearing in his Bechstein Hall (later Wigmore Hall) recital of January 23, 1902, along with the Brahms Rhapsody in B minor Op. 79/1, a group of Mendelssohn Songs without Words, Weber's Momento Capriccioso Op. 12 and Moto Perpetuo Op. 24/4 in his own Concert transcriptions, Schumann's Kreisleriana Op. 16, Papillons by Moriz Rosenthal (dedicatee of the Toccata Op. 13), a set of Four Etudes by Eduard Poldini Op. 19, and finishing with Tausig's Ungarische Zigeunerweisen (once regular war-horse - perhaps best remembered today in Lhevinne's staggering roll recording - a little less exalted, it is also in my own repertory along with many other Tausig works such as the Halka Fantasy after Moniuszko!).

.....Please feel free to use any of the information included in future Newsletters, although I would ask, in the case of the roll information, mention be made of my colleague Mr. Emmett Ford of Wichita, Kansas, to whom I am indebted for the original details, and, as regards the material relating to the disc recordings, similar thanks be extended to my associate Mr. James Methuen-Campbell, of London, England, and, especially, to Mr. Harry Anderson of San Diego, California."

Thank you Charles, you have been both helpful and constructive. I would add that my information regarding the Piano rolls which Godowsky reputedly made of the Miniatures came from Jeremy Nicholas' broadcast talk on Godowsky on Radio 3 on, if memory serves me right, March 26 1978.

Mr Hopkins has also submitted three programmes to the BBC of heroic proportions; each to include a Bach Sonata or Suite Elaboration and a Strauss Symphonic Metamorphosis, between which appear the Java Suite, a group of the Chopin Etude paraphrases, and the Passacaglia. WOW!

The mention of Mr. James Methuen-Campbell brings me to his fascinating book Chopin Playing from the composer to the present day (Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1981), a rivetingly readable book, indispensable, as the blurb states, to all who are interested in the piano. One of the pleasures of this book is that there is much to disagree with. However, and I do not write this just because of my devotion to Godowsky, there is something in it that I must take issue with, and that is, of course, the portion relating to Godowsky.

After a brief biographical sketch, Mr. Methuen-Campbell writes: "Early in his career, Godowsky caught the disease of transcribing and adapting the music of other composers, Chopin in particular. A master of contrapuntal writing, he used all his skill to introduce new melodic lines, rewrite parts and 'touch up' original compositions in a manner which, although intricate and fascinating, must of course be challenged on musical grounds. He was fond of the two Chopin Concertos, for which he rewrote the orchestral and solo parts. In the F minor concerto, he introduced counter-melodies for the left hand in contrast with the right, thus wrecking Chopin's original intention. He rewrote the twenty-seven Etudes, producing over fifty new creations which include studies for the left hand alone, two etudes combined together, and many tortuous exercises which take instrumental writing to the heights of complexity."

This seems to indicate that the author suffers from the modern disease of 'good taste', as well as sounding like received opinion. The art of transcription has been practised by reliable practitioners of music from Bach to Stravinsky. It also shows a melancholy misunderstanding of Godowsky's purpose in writing his studies which is a sad blemish on a deeply researched book as it indicates a complete ignorance of this work of Godowsky's which a reading of the three-part exposition to the collected Studies would have clarified, for here Godowsky states his aims:

"Introductory remarks

The fifty three studies based upon twenty six etudes (he even got the number wrong. Ed.) of Chopin have manifold purposes. Their aim is to develop the mechanical, technical and musical possibilities of pianoforte playing, to expand the peculiarly adapted nature of the instrument to polyphonic, poly-rhythmic and polydynamic work, and to widen the range of its possibilities in tone colouring. The unusual mental and physical demands made upon the performer by the above mentioned work, must invariably lead to a much higher proficiency in the command of the instrument, while the composer for the piano will find a number of suggestions regarding the treatment of the instrument and its musical utterance in general. Special attention must be drawn to the fact that owing to innumerable contrapuntal devices, which frequently compass almost the whole range of the keyboard, the fingering and pedaling are often of a revolutionary character, particularly in the twenty two studies for the left hand alone. The preparatory exercises included in a number of the studies will be found helpful in developing a mechanical mastery over the pianoforte by applying them to the original Chopin Studies as well as to the above mentioned versions. The fifty three studies are to be considered in an equal degree suitable for concert purposes and private study.

"Personal Remarks

To justify himself in the controversy which exists regarding the aesthetic and ethic rights of one composer to use another composers works, themes or ideas, in order to freely build upon them new musical creations, such as arrangements, transcriptions, paraphrases, variations etc., the author desires to say, that it entirely depends upon the intentions, nature and quality of the work of the so-called transgressors. As the Chopin Studies are, as compositions in etude form, universally acknowledged to be the highest attainment in the realm of beautiful pianoforte music combined with indispensable mechanical and technical usefulness, the author thought it wisest to build upon their solid and invulnerable foundation, for the purpose of furthering the art of pianoforte playing. Being adverse to any alterations in the original texts of any master works when played in their original form, the author would strongly condemn any artist for tampering ever so little with such works as those of Chopin. The original Chopin studies remain as intact

now, as they were before any arrangements of them were ever published; in fact the author claims, that after assiduously studying the present versions many hidden beauties in the original studies will reveal themselves even to the less observant student. (A little sting in the tail there! Ed.)

Description of the various forms employed in the versions of the Chopin Studies

1. Strict Transcriptions - studies in which the text of the original is as closely followed as an adaptation for the left hand would allow:

No. 1, 3, 7, 14, 36, 39, 43

2. Free Transcriptions - studies in which the text is either

a) freely treated

b) inverted

c) combined with another study

d) is being imitated through the medium of another study:

a) No. 2, 5, 6, 12a, 13, 15a, 16a, 18, 18a, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 28a, 33, 35, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45a, b) No. 11, 12, 16, 27 c) No. 30, 47, 48 d) No. 17

3. Cantus Firmus versions - studies in which the text of the original study in the right hand is strictly adhered to in the left hand of the version while the right hand is freely treated in a contrapuntal way:

No. 4, 8, 9, 10, 15, 25, 26, 38

4. Versions in form of variations - studies in which the text of the original etude is used as the basis for free variations:

No. 19, 29, 31, 45, 46

5. Metamorphoses - studies in which the character, design and rhythm of the original text are altered while the architectural structure remains intact although the melodic and harmonic outline is often considerably modified:

No. 32, 34

The following studies might also be mentioned under this heading:

No. 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 18a, 19, 25, 27, 38, 46 "

None of the studies are tortuous exercises. They are a testimony to the depth of his study of the Chopin originals - possibly deeper than that of his critics?

To other things: the remarks regarding the re-writing of the Chopin Concerti is fascinating - the fascination lying in the re-orchestration, for to my knowledge Godowsky never wrote for orchestra. Fastidious craftsman that he was, he would never have done this without being confident in his ability to do orchestrate effectively.

I would love to know the source of Mr. Methuen-Campbell's information. I'll try to find out.

Apropos these studies, there is a dissertation by Steven Donald Jones, A comprehensive performance project in piano literature and an essay on Leopold Godowsky's "53 Studien Uber Die Etuden Von Chopin" which may be obtained from Inter-Library loan from the University of Iowa; this serves as a valuable companion to this work whilst not really shedding any real light on them - though he does postulate the interesting theory that Godowsky's original intention to write left-hand versions of all the Studies.

Back to Mr. Methuen-Campbell's book for a final remark apropos Godowsky's recordings. Well, I happen to like some better than he does, but in this context I would like to quote the master himself. In a letter to Paul

Howard dated 3 February 1938, he wrote "All my piano records were made at a time when recording was very primitive. The left hand had to be louder than the right hand; the pedal had to be used sparingly and not at all when the hands were close to each other. The fear of doing a trifling thing wrong augmented when playing; the better one succeeded in playing the foregoing, the greater the fear became while playing. It was a dreadful ordeal, increasingly so the more sensitive the artist was. I broke down in my health in London, in the Spring of 1930, owing to these nerve-killing tortures. How can one think of mood or emotion! Do not judge me by my records (Godowsky's emphasis)! Some professionals heard me who understood what they have heard."

A professional who did hear Godowsky was Abram Chasins whose book, Speaking of Pianists (New York, Alfred A. Knopf) is a truly marvellous read - and re-read! This, by the way, is not a new book, being first published in 1957, but it is, to the best of my knowledge, still in print.

Another dissertation this time, Piano Music for the Left Hand by Theodore Edel (I am indebted to Louise Lucas for researching - or rather, finding the reference of this for me). I liked this so much that I passed it on to Ronald Stevenson who happily asked if he could review it for this issue! I never refuse good copy!!

A recording recently came to hand which unusually concentrates on Godowsky's original work which is a recommendation to start with, for too little emphasis is put on this aspect of his output. It must be said that neither recording nor playing are outstanding: it may well be that Mr. Kann's tone is fuller than the recording gives him credit for, but apart from the first item, No. 1 of Triakontameron, Nocturnal Tangier which comes off splendidly with its hushed sonorities. The record contains a selection of the Triakontameron and of the Walzermasken, the Wayang Purwa from the first book of the Java Suite, the Andante Cantabile from the Sonata and the complete book three of the Miniatures, the Modern Dances. The playing throughout - the Miniatures excepted, is worthy, a bit careful, and lacks a real piano which is a must in the playing of Godowsky. Alt Wein comes off worst with a perfunctory run through, but the Sonata movement has its moments: best of all are the set of Miniatures when he is joined by Gerhard Wuensch. They come off splendidly, especially the Polka and the hectic Tarantella. If I seem to have damned it with faint praise, don't be put off for I've enjoyed several hearings. But be warned, the sleeve notes are a disaster: uninformative and inaccurate.

Ronald Stevenson gave me a nice little tit-bit from Australia where Mack Jost, an indigenous Australian pianist told him he had played Godowsky's Passacaglia in concert. His friend, the English pianist Eric Harrison said, "Mack, why do you play this stuff? It's like arsenic and old lace." When Mack told Ronald of this, he replied: "Ah, but Mack, arsenic is dangerous and old lace is beautiful; and so is Godowsky's music!"

Nice to report a young English pianist playing the master's music: Gordon Fergus-Thomson, in a recording from Manchester broadcast on Radio three, included three Chopin/Godowsky Studies, Nos. 15, 45 and 47. Very good indeed - I hope it gets a repeat.

News that Jorge Bolet plans to record the Fledermaus Metamorphosis is splendid. Which reminds me that this and the other two Strauss transcriptions are still in print in Edition Cranz and available through United Music Publishers, London.

In the Last issue, a mystery was solved. Or was it. Mr Elmer Steuernagel

writes from Phoenix (that name appears elsewhere in this Newsletter) Arizona (is the mystery rising from the ashes?) to say he is sure he read once that Godowsky had denied being left-handed. Elmer, will you please check that one up and let me have the reference?

And to keep up the suspense, there is to be found in the following pages yet another mystery, this one provided by the omnipresent Ronald Stevenson. On the final page is to be found the real Ronald Stevenson - the composer: for he has generously given me permission to include in this issue a little gem of his, the Ostinato macabro for left hand, on the name Godowsky.

In my note of Ronald's piano music for the left hand alone, I omitted the following:

- Rachmaninoff: Prelude in E flat, Op.23 No. 6, transcribed for piano, left hand (1980)
- Rachmaninoff: Prelude in G minor, Op. 23, No. 5, transcribed for piano, left hand (1981)

Remembering Godowsky's tutelage of the great jazz pianists Fats Waller and James P. Johnson, I don't feel it out of place to note the passing of Eubie Blake, composer/pianist extraordinary, the week after his hundredth birthday. He was a master of his own particular exuberant craft and a complete original.

Harry Winstanley
31 Gayfield Square
Edinburgh EH1 3PA

STOP PRESS (U.K. Readers only) Election day is to brought to sanity by a repeat of Gordon Fergus-Thompson's recital - 1900 hours Radio 3 (June 9 in case you had forgotten!)

(c) Harry Winstanley 1983

Edel, Theodore : PIANO MUSIC FOR THE LEFT HAND.
 University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor,
 Michigan, USA/London, 1982 (microfilm/xerography).
 Degree thesis, 1980, The Manhattan School of Music. 144 pp.

Let not thy left hand know
 what thy right hand doeth.
 Matthew vi.3.

Or rather vice-versa !

At the Schirmer May Day Music Sale in New York, 1976, I bought
 - for \$1 - Raymond Lewenthal's collection of studies, exercises
 and pieces, PIANO MUSIC FOR ONE HAND (Schirmer, 1972, and remaindered
 - like all the best books). As I handed over the volume to the
 cashier, the lady next-in-the-queue noticed the title and exclaimed :
 'Gee ! What WILL they think of next ? ! Piano music for one hand !
 Gee-whizz !' Get the Lewenthal. Obligatory for Godowsky fans.
 Indeed, it's the only way of finding, without a lot of scouting around,
 two of his left-hand pieces : Elegy and Meditation (from the Concert
 Album) and for bonus there's also Godowsky's re-working of the Chopin
 Etude in E flat minor, op 10, no 6. Edel's book draws heavily on
 Lewenthal, as anyone must on this subject.

My first encounter with left hand music was, of course, the Scriabin
 Prelude & Nocturne. I suppose that is still most people's introduction,
 and fine music it is : worthy of Chopin.

I recall going into a BBC London studio in the early 1970's to record
 a piano recital, and a remarkable studio manager (now retired), John
 McCulloch, was playing the piano - the only studio manager I've
 known who did that ! It was Felix Blumenfeld's Etude for the left
 hand, dedicated to Godowsky : a masterpiece. 'Get it !' said
 McCulloch. I did - in Lewenthal's anthology. Blumenfeld was
 the teacher of Horowitz. He was also Iso Elinson's teacher, and
 Elinson was mine. (He was no teacher, though I learned from him by
 listening to his generous impromptu recitals which substituted for
 lessons.)

Edel is worthy of his name : in German it means 'noble', and a most
 noble effort is this thesis of his. It reads like a WHO'S NOT WHO
 IN MUSIC. Which means that it contains exactly the information I
 for one (and I suspect my readers) want to know; being disenchanted

by the current dearth of interest in piano music demonstrated by contemporary composers, who fail to develop a great tradition which is capable of development. (The very few examples Edel gives from the so-called avant garde are puerile.) Hundreds of unknown names teem from this book. It's a cornucopia of unknowns.

One example. I discovered at last some biographical data about Jean-Henri Ravina (1818-1906), French composer/pianist, active in Paris. Before reading this book, I knew Ravina only as a name and by just one piano piece, included in Arthur Loesser's New York Town Hall Recital Sic Transit Gloria Mundi, October 29, 1967 (recorded on IPL 102-B : one of the truly great recorded piano recitals). The last encore is Ravina's Etude de Style, op 14, no 1 (not for left hand) which Loesser introduces as an item from the boy Josef Hofmann's repertoire. Since encountering Edel's book, curiously I have unearthed a volume of Ravina's Studies in a Victorian morocco-bound album discovered in an old Scottish farmhouse in the very village where I live ! (Loesser was the founder of the International Archives, New York, and the author of a classic book, Men, Women & Pianos, preface by Jacques Barzun / Fireside : Simon & Schuster, paperback, NY 1954, 654 pp.)

Another shadowy figure is materialised in these pages of Edel's : Liszt's debonair pupil, the Hungarian Count Zichy, whose right arm had to be amputated after a fall from a horse : a circumstance which produced a body of piano music for left hand by Zichy and, indirectly, Liszt's only left hand piece, Hungary's God (also in Lewenthal).

To itemise Edel's chapters:

I A Survey.

II The Solo Repertoire : Transcriptions.

III The Godowsky Etudes (the longest chapter - 44 pages).

IV Works for left hand alone.

Appended : an alphabetic list of 250 entries of works and/or collections of works for left hand alone - solo piano, chamber works and concerted works ; a list of 15 compositions for right hand alone ; a bibliography and a biographical note.

Edel was born in 1945. Alumnus of the Jilliard. Fulbright Scholar in Rome. Majored in piano, Manhattan School of Music. Currently Assistant Professor of Piano, Memphis State University.

His pages of comparative study of the Brahms, Philipp and Wittgenstein transcriptions of the Bach Chaconne might have been improved by the adoption of Grigori Kogan's method of printing different versions of one composition so that the page has the appearance of a full score, with bar-by-bar (measure-by-measure) correspondence to facilitate comparison (Kogan : School of Piano Transcription, 6 vols., Muzyka, Moscow, 1970-78).

Edel doubts the playability of some of Paul Wittgenstein's transcriptions, but it is verifiable in the recordings he made. Paul was the brother of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein - a point Edel doesn't mention. If you, my reader, happen to be an aspirant pianist, get Paul Wittgenstein's School for the Left Hand (Universal, Vienna/London, 1957, 3 vols.)

Another point not mentioned. Britten's Concerto for piano left hand is listed by Edel, but he might have told us that Britten took exception to Wittgenstein's proposed re-writings of the solo part. Britten was notoriously touchy about criticisms or suggested alterations to his music, though I personally found he gave me carte blanche in 1971, when BBC TV commissioned me to compose my Peter Grimes Fantasy for piano (one of the very few 20th century operatic fantasies, by the bye, published by Boosey & Hawkes : excuse the 'plug' - I believe in the piece and maybe others might, were they to get to know it.)

Wittgenstein surely had the right to re-cast any music for the left hand, for, having had his right arm amputated after action in World War I, he adapted his entire two-hand repertoire for left hand ; becoming in the process the undisputed master (not even second to Godowsky) of left hand piano music. And his commissions enriched the repertoire.

I disagree with Edel's praise of Godowsky's pedal indications. To me these are the master's only disappointing aspect - not to be compared to his invention in fingering. In the whole Godowsky oeuvre I have found only two examples of directions for use of the middle (third) pedal ; yet his quasi-orchestral textures frequently demand its employment.

One serious omission from Edel's book is the absence of any mention of Busoni's Paganinesco from the series of piano pieces An die Jugend (To Youth) (1909) ; the first two-page piece of which, the Introduzione to the Capriccio, is a study for left hand alone.

Edel's music examples are copious, though not well reproduced.

But I do not wish to carp. I have learned much from Edel : far more than he could learn from me on this subject.

Ronald Stevenson

Ronald Stevenson *March*
8¹/₃

Editorial Note :

Ronald Stevenson's own list of piano compositions includes the following for one hand :

Chopin Valse in A flat, op 42, transcribed for left hand (MS, 1954).
Chopin Valse in A flat, op 34, no 1, transcribed for right hand (MS, 1955).
(These two Waltzes are combined in a further transcription for two hands, MS, 1955).

Prelude for left hand, dedicated to the Godowsky pupil Douglas Miller - on his 90th birthday, 10 Dec. 1978 (MS, 1978).

From L'Art Nouveau du Chant applique au Piano (an appendix to Thalberg):

piano transcriptions of Victorian & Edwardian Song, being

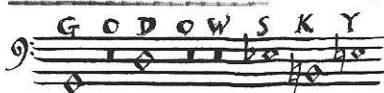
Etudes in the lost art of bel canto piano-playing :

Scenes that are brightest , after W. Vincent Wallace, for left hand (MS, 1980)

In happy Moments day by day, after W. Vincent Wallace, for left hand (MS, 1980)

From Suitette no 1 :

Ostinato macabro for left hand, on the name Godowsky



Mod^o macabro p stacc. senza pedale



dedicated 'to my dear Godowskian friend, Harry Winstanley, on his 50th birthday, 26 March 1981' (MS, 1981)

Stevenson's Passacaglia on DSCH (dedicated to Shostakovich) contains a number of studies for left hand (OUP, 1967;

recorded by the composer, limited edition, University of Cape Town, 1964 :

sold out ; also by John Ogdon on EMI ASD 2321/2, 1968). - H.W.

(c) Ronald

STEVENSON 1983

FIDDLE IN SCOTLAND:

COMPRISING

**SKETCHES OF SCOTCH FIDDLERS
AND FIDDLE MAKERS.**

BY

ALEXANDER G. MURDOCH,

AUTHOR OF "RECENT AND LIVING SCOTTISH POETS," &c.

—
 "Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle,
 Lang may your elbow jink an' diddle."—Burns.
 —

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.
 GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH: MENZIES & CO.

1888.

112

ANECDOTES.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF OLE BULL.

ON his last visit to England in 1882, Ole Bull, the celebrated Norwegian violinist, was described as a tall, powerfully-built man, with a round, expressive, northern face, and thick, short hair, as white as snow. He possessed a valuable Guarnerius violin, which he sold, and afterwards purchased in London a fine Nicholas Amati, of date 1679, formerly the property of Sir W. Curtis, a well-known collector of valuable instruments. This violin was esteemed the finest Amati in the world. The subsequent history of this valuable instrument we have not learned.

SALE OF A "STRAD." VIOLIN.

MESSRS. Puttick & Simpson have just sold, at their rooms, Leicester Square, a fine violin, made by Antonious Stradivarius, of date 1715, from the Loan Exhibition at South Kensington, for £450. This, it may be mentioned, is a fair average price for a genuine Stradivarius violin, when in good condition. Prices much beyond the above figures are empirical, and are obtained only in cases where the instruments under sale have a great historical value attached to them, through their connection with world-renowned solo players.

YOUTHFUL MUSICAL PRODIGIES.

THE list of youthful "prodigies" of the past year comprises little Hoffmann, aged 9; Celeste Plompare of Hasselt, aged 3; and Pauline Ellice, aged 11, all three pianists, besides Buchmann, of Lille, and Frederick Kreister, of Paris, both violinists, and both aged 12, and Anite Mazzoli, of Milan, a "pianist-guitarist," aged 9. The first prodigy of the year 1888 is Leopold Godowsky, aged 10, who is said to be an excellent pianist and composer. The juvenile prodigy, Master Otto Hegner, is to have the honour of playing at the next Philharmonic concert. The talented boy will be heard in an orchestral concerto, and in more than one solo piece.

EMOLUMENTS OF FIRST-CLASS ARTISTES.

It is said that Rubinstein's visit to England next year (1889) will very possibly be his last. Instrumentalists of the first rank make far higher sums everywhere else than they do here. Sarasate's recent season in London was worth to him perhaps about £600—not a bad sum for half-a-dozen concerts, but nothing to what he would make during a similar season in Moscow or St. Petersburg. Rubinstein had £17,000 for a four months' tour in America, and is now to have £20,000 for a six months' tour; but, whatever may be the case with Rubinstein, Sarasate, at all events, thinks far more of his art than of its pecuniary gains, and will—there is every reason to hope—return to us again and again.

Now note
 the arrowed anecdote
 from the same book.

Godowsky was born in
 1870.

How, therefore, could
 he be 10 in 1888 ?

Any answers ?

All sleuths invited
 to co-operate !!!

This is taken from Famous Musicians of a Wandering Race by Gdal Saleski. (Bloch Publishing Co., N.Y., 1927).

Leopold Godowsky was born in the ancient town Vilna (in the Lithuanian province of Russian Poland), on February 3, 1870. The ruins of the old castle which stands above Vilna have staunchly withstood the storms of many centuries. It was in this old-world atmosphere, in this town of talmudical seminaries and debating cabalists, that the child spent the first decades of his life. Here, at the early age of nine, he gave his first public concert, having shown an extraordinary aptitude for music since he was three years old.

Apparently, at that time, the youth already possessed definite opinions about pianoforte teaching, for when in 1883 he attended the Hochschule in Berlin, he found the instruction so dull and conventional that he left after a few months, entering upon an American tour when but fourteen years of age. In the United States he concertized with Clare Louise Kellogg and Emma Thursby, also appearing a number of times at the Sunday Orchestra concerts given at the New York Casino. He subsequently toured the United States and Canada with the violinist, Ovide Musin.

But the young pianist's wish was to study with Liszt, who was then in Weimar. One can imagine with what sadness and disappointment the boy learned, after arriving in Europe, that Liszt had just died. This was in 1886.

A year later he was presented to Camille Saint-Saëns who, having heard Godowsky play his own compositions, took the warmest personal interest in his musical education. Unfortunately, Saint-Saëns' restless spirit led him frequently to foreign countries, and this prevented the eager student, who remained in Paris for three years, from fully availing himself of the advice of the distinguished master. Thus Godowsky is practically a self-taught musician.

Returning to the United States in 1890, he married Frederica Saxe of New York, in 1891. After a sojourn of several months in Europe with his young wife, he again set sail for America. He soon appeared at the Lenox Lyceum Orchestral Concerts, conducted by Theodore Thomas, with such success that he was offered numerous engagements, followed by an extensive tour during the succeeding seasons.

At this time he was appointed instructor of the piano teachers at the Broad Street Conservatory, in Philadelphia. This was the beginning of his career as pedagogue. He did not neglect his concert engagements, for it was his ambition to co-ordinate these two lines of artistic endeavor. Thus it was natural that he should accept an offer to direct the piano department of the Chicago Conservatory in 1894. Here, at the age of twenty-four, he took up the duties relinquished by William H. Sherwood, the famous American pianist.

Like Saint-Saëns, Leopold Godowsky is of a restless spirit. In 1900 he decided to challenge European opinion. The most distinguished pianists of the day had long urged him to do this. His *début* in Berlin on December 6, 1900, will forever remain memorable in the annals of the piano-playing world. In one night Godowsky's name was firmly established in the musical firmament. There followed nine years of concertizing throughout the world, meeting everywhere with the greatest possible recognition of his stupendous talents, until in 1909 he resumed his pedagogic activities by becoming director of the Master School of piano playing at the Imperial Conservatory in Vienna. This post was previously held by Emil Sauer and F.B. Busoni. In 1912, he returned

to the United States and established a reputation as the greatest piano pedagogue on that Continent.

Godowsky is a firm believer in work. "The fault with many students," he says, "is the erroneous idea that genius or talent will take the place of work. They minimize the necessity for careful, painstaking consideration of the infinite details of technique....But this is not all. Individuality, character and temperament are becoming more and more significant in the highly organized art of pianoforte playing. Remove these, and the playing of the artist again becomes little better than that of a piano-playing machine..."

The one thing in the world to which Leopold Godowsky objects most emphatically is being called a pianist! This seems strange in view of his world-wide reputation as such, but an explanation from Godowsky himself throws a new light on the matter. A pianist, according to him, is one whose sole medium of expression is the keyboard, one whose instrument is the be-all and end-all of his existence, and the end as the means of his artistic expression. Godowsky, on the other hand, has a broader concept of art; and while the piano has served him as an excellent medium, he finds an equal, if not surpassing, satisfaction in composition and travel. Back from the Orient, where he concertized again during the season of 1924-25, just long enough to complete his Java Suite, he made ready to leave New York once more in September of 1925, this time for a tour of Egypt, Assyria, and Palestine.

"I consider," he said, "that the years I spent in teaching were an unfortunate choice of my early career. Of course teaching is a noble profession, but I have found that the results are not in proportion to the time and effort spent. It is so futile to teach where there is no pure gold - like preaching in the wilderness. Great genius is exceedingly scarce, and I have not yet found one supreme talent. It is discouraging to realize that there is not one Chopin or Liszt living today who has created a new art for the piano."

And so, since the average pupil is in the majority, Godowsky has always favoured class-teaching, as this involved a lesser expenditure of the teacher's time and has many advantages for the pupils. He believes that a group of pupils will make a greater effort to be intelligent than a single person with no competition. When Godowsky was director of the Master School of the Imperial Royal Academy in Vienna, he taught only in classes.

"It is more inspiring," he insists, "for the teacher to talk to a group. I had forty in my piano classes, fifteen who played, and twenty-five who listened. It was a wonderful master-class, the quintessence of piano playing in Europe. The pupils who played received the benefit of the criticism from the others. Also, we were able to cover a greater field of compositions when everyone was learning a different work. Thus, class teaching is the only means of embracing a large repertoire. Also it is an incentive to the student to distinguish himself. There is a competitive spirit, a feeling of friendly rivalry, that causes a class pupil to put forth a greater effort than a private pupil who has no basis of comparison for his work. There is a certain amount of alertness in classes, while I have always found that private lessons are bound to drag. It is more difficult to go beyond the mere mechanics with a private pupil. For one or the other, self-consciousness stands in the way, whereas aesthetics can prevail in a large class.

"And that leads me to say that I have no use for the conventional type of class teacher, the horn-rimmed type so academically stiff! Perhaps it was this which caused me to make musicians and artists out of my pupils, rather than pianists. I am also in favor of class lessons in the field of

composition. The pupil gets a better perspective of his own work. And speaking of composition, I am tempted to confess that my greatest wish is that I had begun earlier to realize the tremendous satisfaction derived from this angle of music as an artistic outlet."

Godowsky as a composer is quite as delightful as he is in the role of pianist. His Triakontameron, Renaissance, and Walzermasken, to say nothing of his prolific transcriptions, are features of almost every piano repertoire today. In August of 1925, the first three volumes of his newest work were brought out.

Since he is of the opinion that travel is one of the finer arts and also that music can be describing, he has put two and two together and, with his usual ability as jongleur de mots, has invented a synonym for sound journeys and named his new compositions, Phonogramas.(sic!!)

"In order to eliminate the cheap clap-trap endings to programs, sending the audience away with a little melodramatic excitement," says Godowsky, "I am doing a series of travelogues, ranging from Java to Jazz. The Java Suite is now complete and will be heard on many programs.

"Next I shall record my musical impressions of Egypt, Assyria and Palestine, as well as those of several European countries. Then I shall come back to America and start on the American suite I have already planned. This American suite will begin with a polyphonic sketch entitled the "Melting Pot" in which early America is shown as a combination of Old World elements. There will be a skyscraper movement to denote the energy and power of America and its significant aim to reach the skies. A description of Niagra Falls will symbolize the momentum of American life, and there will be local descriptions involving the Negro rhythms of the South and the Indian color of the West. Such elements as the cowboy and miner will be treated carefully. The final sketch will be my conception of glorified jazz."

It has been six long years (1921-27) since New York has heard Godowsky play, and it will be at least one more before he will play there again. It is not because he is giving up his pianistic career. On the other hand, he gave concerts in all parts of the world, some near and familiar, others remote and strange, because he prefers to absorb the ideas, musical and otherwise, of the entire universe rather than to stay in one little circle in New York.

"For instance," he says, "a visit to Java is like entering another world or catching a fleeting glimpse of immortality. Musically, it is amazing. One cannot describe it because it is a simple sensation as difficult to explain as color to a blind person.

"The sonority of the 'gamelan' is so weird, spectral, fantastic, and bewitching, and the native music is so elusive, vague, shimmering, and singular, that on listening to this new world of sound I lose my sense of reality. It is the ecstasy of such moments, possible only through world travel, that makes life full of meaning and raises art to the pedestal of the Golden Age."

When Vladimar de Pachmann made his sensational re-appearances in the United States in 1924, he was asked by an inquiring New York reporter whom he considered the greatest pianist. To this the old master replied in his characteristic way, "Next to myself comes Leopold Godowsky."

Godowsky is known to be temperamental at times, and eccentric. In 1915 or thereabouts, the American Newspapers sent out an alarm at his sudden and mysterious disappearance. A week or two later, he reappeared as if nothing had

GODOWSKY'S BERLIN DEBUT

This piece is abstracted from Leonard Liebbling's "Variations" column published in the Musical Courier in May 1934.

"In the three decades since Leopold Godowsky made his phenomenal Berlin debut in the famous old Beethoven Saal, on an eventful evening in 1904 - December 6, to be exact - it is doubtful whether any more exciting musical event has taken place in the German capital.

Yet the modest genius that is Godowsky was wholly unaware that in his performances and ability lay a gift so astounding that all critics, musicians, and even the lay public spread the news among themselves that here was the living master musician among pianists and master pianist among musicians.

In the 1900 program were included his elaboration of Webers Invitation To The Dance, and his own left hand studies on Chopin Etudes. It was particularly these left hand studies that swept Berlin by storm, even though hints of the impending marvels had come from various sources in advance. From Franz Kullak, for instance, who on hearing Godowsky at his home several times, passed the magic word around.

But there was no early open date at any concert hall in Berlin, Kullak took things in his own hands. He cancelled one of his student's bookings in order that Godowsky might be heard. The entire hall was immediately sold out. After the debut, the famous left hand grew in importance. To such an extent that, when Godowsky merely attended a concert in the Singakademie a few days later, the entire audience rose in tribute.

Acclaim grew: a second concert became a necessity. The event took place on January 16, 1901, - and made further history.

Godowsky returned from European triumphs to effect his renewed American debut in - of all places, Phoenix, Arizona. Gladly he accepted the tedious trip from Berlin to Phoenix, grateful for the chance afforded him to learn the Liszt A major concerto which he had promised Theodore Thomas to play with him in Chicago. There had been no time for Godowsky to learn the work abroad. He accomplished in twelve hours on the train the feat of memorising the concerto which he had never played, never even heard, and had no chance whatever to practice before the scheduled rehearsal. Between that rehearsal and the concert, Godowsky did the only preparation on the piano which he had time to undertake.

When Godowsky opens his Master Class in New York this summer (for the first time in many years again teaching the modus operandi of his outstanding technical accomplishments) many of the old anecdotes will crop up about the artist's phenomenal achievements, but none of them is more remarkable than the ghost practising of the Liszt A major concerto."

And on December 15th, 1938, in "Variations" appeared the following:

"Mr. Samuel Wechsler sends me a copy of the original letter from Berlin written by the late Leopold Godowsky to W.S.B. Matthews, the Chicago pianist-teacher, on December 24th, 1900, in which the former describes his debut in the German capital. In part, Godowsky reported:-

'You can well understand that a debut in Berlin is a serious and very

dangerous undertaking. All summer we were in Paris, where I did not have any piano to practice my repertoire, and when I came to Berlin it took me several weeks before I got an instrument. Therefore, when I decided to give a concert here I had to start every composition anew. We made many friends (even before the concert) among whom were very prominent musicians. I was greatly astonished to find that I was well known among Berlin pianists and teachers, though many of the critics and the musical public knew nothing of my existence. Those that heard me before the concert predicted a great success. However, I was not so sure. Some artists have a great success with the public, but the critics kill them; others are successful with the press, but make no impression on the public. There are cliques here that work for certain artists. Then there is the anti-Semitic press and public. Add to this professional jealousy and you will get some idea of the difficulties I had to contend with. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that my concert was eagerly awaited by all musicians and music students.

"The Beethoven Hall was crowded with a representative musical audience. All Berlin pianists were at the concert. When I came out I was so heartily greeted that I had to bow several times before I started. By some unusual good luck I was hardly nervous, and for the first movement of the Brahms concerto, which was the first number, I played to my absolute satisfaction. This gave me courage for the following movements. The applause after the first movement startled me. It was terrific. It took a long time before I could begin the second part. After the last movement I was recalled I don't know how many times. After a pause of several minutes I came out to play my seven Chopin paraphrases and Weber's Invitation. The musicians and public did not know what to expect. There was a general commotion. The hall looked remarkably festive and electricity was in the air. I played first the study for the left hand alone, Op. 25, No. 4 (A minor). To describe the noise after this study would be impossible. The tremendous ovation was overwhelming. Then came Op. 10, No. 11, and Op. 25, No. 3 combined; Op. 25, No. 8 (sixths), Op. 25, No. 5 as a Muzurka, Op. 10, No. 9 in C minor, 'Badinage', and Op. 10, No. 7 in G flat, followed by the Invitation to the Dance. The success was greater than anything I have ever witnessed, not excepting a Paderewski enthusiasm. I could have repeated every study, but I did not care to have the concert too long. To tell how many times I had to come out after the paraphrases would be impossible. I could not count them...

"The Tschaiakowsky I played with a great deal of dash. The second movement I could not improve upon. At the end of the concert I played as an encore the Scherzo from Saint-Saens' G minor concerto and the plain black-key study for the left hand. After the two encores I refused to play more.

"I was told that almost all the critics stayed till the end - a very rare occurrence in Berlin, as they have to attend several concerts every evening and are so blasé that nothing interests them. The critic from the Boersen Zeitung (Lowewengard) applauded frantically - a thing no critic is supposed to do! Professor Taubert called at my house the following day to congratulate me personally. He is the most feared critic in Germany.

We get invitations to dinner everywhere; people stream to our house. Ysaye, the violinist, engaged me already for next year for his Brussels Symphony concerts. I am also engaged by Marteau for Geneva (Switzerland) Symphony Concerts for next winter. Bosendorfer, the piano manufacturer of Vienna, wrote to manager Wolff: "Send un Godowsky! Our season in Vienna is dull - we want some excitement!....."

"I wrote so much about my success, knowing that you take such a great interest in my career. I will always remember that you were the first great critic to champion my cause in such an enthusiastic way... I am an American at

heart and no matter how much success I shall have in Europe I shall always remain faithful to the Stars and Stripes and my good and dear old friends.

"Please show this letter to Mr. Gottschalk and other friends. I can impossibly write much now, as I have to practice hard for my next recital. A success like the one I had is embarrassing to the artist. Musicians talk so extravagantly about me, that unless I play better than I did at the first concert I would disappoint my audience. I never expected a tenth of the success I had. I feel overawed and almost frightened.....' "

Leopold Godowsky continued from page 15.

happened. to all questions he simply replied that he had needed quiet and peace in order to compose, and had gone away for a few days.

Gosowsky is not only a great pedagogue and technician but an outstanding and prolific composer.

on the name Godowsky
for left hand alone

Moderato macabro
2:3:3

G O D O W S K I

RONALD STEVENSON

PIANO

p staccato, senza Pes.

Handwritten musical notation for the first system. The treble clef staff contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The bass clef staff contains chords: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Fingerings are indicated above the notes. The tempo is Moderato macabro, 2:3:3. The piece is for piano, staccato, senza Pes. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

Handwritten musical notation for the second system. The treble clef staff contains a complex melodic line with many accidentals and fingerings (1, 3, 2, 5, 1, 3, 2, 3, 1). The bass clef staff contains chords: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The tempo is Moderato macabro, 2:3:3. The piece is for piano, staccato, senza Pes. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

Handwritten musical notation for the third system. The treble clef staff contains a complex melodic line with many accidentals and fingerings (5, 1, 3, 2, 5, 1, 3, 2, 1). The bass clef staff contains chords: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The tempo is Moderato macabro, 2:3:3. The piece is for piano, staccato, senza Pes. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system. The treble clef staff contains a complex melodic line with many accidentals and fingerings. The bass clef staff contains chords: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The tempo is Moderato macabro, 2:3:3. The piece is for piano, staccato, senza Pes. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

Handwritten musical notation for the fifth system. The treble clef staff contains a complex melodic line with many accidentals and fingerings. The bass clef staff contains chords: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The tempo is Moderato macabro, 2:3:3. The piece is for piano, staccato, senza Pes. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

Ronald Stevenson
in Litta
19 4/81