

the
GODOWSKY
society



newsletter

VOL. 5 no 1

Meiner lieben Frau gewidmet

Sonate

in E moll

für das Klavier

von

Leopold Godowsky

M. 8. — netto

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THE GODOWSKY SOCIETY

Patrons:

Shura Cherkassky

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

Ronald Stevenson

When I recently acquired a copy of Vernon Spencer's article on the Godowsky E minor Sonata it occurred to me that I would dig out all I could on this piece and dedicate most of this issue to that work. Accordingly, in addition to the Spencer piece, I have included remarks by Paul Howard, William S. Newman and Colin Kingsley. Although the Sonata was not published until 1911 (and the Spencer piece appears, on the strength of the examples, to have been written prior to publication), the first sketches were written (or rather begun) on 30 August 1896 according to the manuscript held in the Library of Congress.

The letter referred to by Newman states: "I know that you play my Sonata in E minor, and my Walzermasken. They are compositions I have written many years ago. Since then I have composed over two hundred works. My best efforts I consider the numbers written a few years ago". In another letter to Howard, he went further: "I consider my Passacaglia and my Suite, the latter for the Left Hand alone, my most mature compositions, while I believe that my Etude Macabre is my most tragic and the Capriccio Patetico my most humanly touching. My Four Poems I think would interest you: they are very personal - highly sensitized emanations of a battered soul. I have a large number of other works too numerous to mention, which require sympathy, compassion and wisdom to approach them rightly. Most of the wandering virtuosi are unvirtuous travelling exploiters of their so-called art, devoid of any desire for self-sacrificing service to their chosen art and all-permeating and all-embracing Truth. They are travelling salesmen, selling their standardized programs. Instead of guiding prophets, they are servile minstrels". I have quoted more from this letter of 4 October 1932 than is strictly necessary, but the content is so good that I had to go on.

The other item in this Newsletter is a unique item - a photocopy of a Godowsky manuscript, the Valse in D major, No. 7 of the Twelve Impressions for Violin and Piano. This has kindly been made available by Gregor Benko, well known for his unremitting work on behalf of the International Piano Archives, who is at present engaged on a book on Josef Hoffman.

On 28 April, I enjoyed a happy afternoon in the company of the Edinburgh Branch of the European Piano Teachers Association when I introduced them to the delights of the Godowsky Miniatures. They were greatly intrigued with these little masterpieces and happily played a form of musical chairs throughout the afternoon and expressed firm interest in using these pieces for teaching purposes. Mrs Sheena Nichol said that the occasion was unique in her experience in that everyone appeared eager to play.

The next Newsletter will be published in December this year and will include amongst other things a review of Joseph Banowetz' The Pianist's Guide to Pedaling and a review of a recent recording of Godowsky's Triakontameron.

Further to my brief editorial, I must apologise for the tardy issue of this Newsletter. It was prepared some time ago but due to the exigency of my recent removal the copying and the mailing have been delayed.

As I have this opportunity, it is worth noting that the examples of the Sonata given in the Spencer piece differ somewhat from the published score and must, therefore, not indicate Godowsky's final thoughts.

News of more Godowsky music now available in the Musica Obscura Editions will be given in the next Newsletter, but I'm delighted to inform that amongst the works published by this enterprising organisation is the Sonata. Good news indeed.

Please note the new address.

Harry Winstanley
Heathery Hall
West Linton
Peebleshire
Scotland
EH46 7DS

number comments on Colin Kingsley's letter quoted on page 11 :
I can always learn something from my distinguished and valued colleague Dr Colin Kingsley. His prima vista observations on the Godowsky Sonata drove me to study the work again. Of course, it's all true what Colin wrote ; but, rather than taking his comments as criticism of the work, I prefer to read them as a guide to one perspective of it, seen (or rather heard) from one angle. (The Sonata affords many aural perspectives, not least in its range of textures which Colin readily admires - as any real pianist must.)

About Godowsky's regularity of phrase-lengths : yes, it's true. Some composers prefer regularity, others irregularity. Haydn is at his most characteristic in irregular phrase-lengths : probably the legacy of the Croatian folk dances he heard as a child. Mozart most characteristically employs regular phrase-lengths : perhaps the inheritance of the court music he imbibed as a child of a court musician. Busoni described Mozart as 'a friend of order : miracle and diablerie last 16 and 32 bars.' (Though, of course, in the work of such universal genius one can find irregularities - rule-proving exceptions.)

But it's what happens within regular phrase-lengths that matters. Subtlety within simplicity.

Similarly, some composers favour feminine cadences (two chords at a phrase-end, strong-weak : the Shakespearean 'dying fall', abundant in Chopin Polonaises). Others prefer masculine cadences (weak-strong, frequent in Beethoven). This surely relates to whether the composer is essentially introvert or extrovert, confidant or exhorter.

Remembering conversations with Sorabji, I recall his aversion from Schubert's four-squareness of phrasing. In his book Mi contra Fa Sorabji opines : ' ... I myself - the very reverse of a Schubert enthusiast - find this composer only tolerable when transfigured by Godowsky's genius.'

Sorabji's words made me take Winterreise down from the shelf. Its length is comparable to the Godowsky Sonata. Winterreise's 24 Lieder contain only one, Rückblick ('Backward Glance'), structured in 3-bar phrases ; and this is not maintained in its middle section.

So Godowsky's affinity with Schubert is even closer than I had realised, even though I was well aware of his Schubert transcriptions and his huge Passacaglia in homage to Schubert. Indeed, it's another manifestation of Godowsky's love of Alt Wien.

Yet another aspect of it is his love of Brahms, who, though born in Hamburg, was an adopted Viennese. The Godowsky Sonata evinces some Brahmsian textures - what Tovey called 'tubby thinness', referring to widely spaced textures in treble and bass with nothing in the middle (see example 2 of Vernon Spencer's article in the present Newsletter). This is not a characteristic Godowskian texture, but only one pigment of his palette.

And as for those feminine cadences, they link him with his ancestral Polishness and with his revered Chopin as one of music's spirits who, however ardent and aspiring, are souls of gentleness and une mille tendresses.

So, thanks to Colin Kingsley for helping me to clarify my thoughts on Godowsky and to gain a new perspective on one of music's most multifaceted masters !

Ronald Stevenson

18 September 1985, after midnight,
on the eve of a concert tour of
some of Godowsky's and Paul Howard's
old stomping grounds : Shanghai
and Australia . And warm greetings
to all fellow-Godowskyans !

GODOWSKY'S E MINOR SONATA

by

Vernon Spencer

Musicians who are acquainted with the not very numerous original compositions of Godowsky, which are published, or who have gone beyond the title pages of his arrangements and studied them carefully, must have arrived at the conclusion that Godowsky has a talent of no small order, for composition. A superficial acquaintance with these arrangements, or enlargements as I would prefer to call them, might lead one to think that they are merely exploitations of the technical possibilities of the piano. I, however, see in them, as also in Busoni's transcriptions, a great deal more than this, or than clever workmanship. They are an expression; an expression of a nature in sympathy with the indestructible contents of the works "remade," but not with the form or workmanship, which time has bleached.

Such transcriptions are eventive and are the outcome of the same generative stimuli which called the originals into being. The esoteric few then acquainted with this fact will not be surprised at the announcement that Godowsky has just launched his first *opus* of large dimensions: they have expected it.

Though Godowsky has published no original works for many years, he has not been inactive in composing. He had modestly withheld the results of his labors from the public, however, wisely declining to initiate them into the secrets of the apprenticeship-years. These years though have been long, and his mental and eventive growth great, as a comparison of the original French edition of his *Toccata* (*Perpetuum mobile*) with the later one of Schmidt, Boston alone will verify. Godowsky has wisely waited (following the example which he set himself and others as a pianist), till the master hand is everywhere in evidence.

The Sonata in E minor, which is now in the hands of the publishers is a work of very large proportions and requires some fifty minutes for performance. It can be shortened, however, to advantage by leaving away the repetition in the first movement. It has five movements, the fifth of which is subdivided into four divisions. The fifth and first movements are closely related, the former having as an introduction a "Retrospect" built on themes of the latter, while the second, third and fourth movements are in a way connected with one another, and to be considered as a group expressing various phases of a definite poetic idea.

The first movement, which is in strict sonata form is, despite its length and the complicated thematic development of the exposition, a gem as regards nobility of structure and cleverness of conception.

It contains six themes and side themes and curiously the first subject (see Example no.1) is not the principal one and remains untouched in the

EXAMPLE No. 1.

exposition. Following an answer to No. 1 (See Example no.2) a side theme (See Example no.3) in E major appears, only to be repeated immediately in

2.

ff allegro

poco dim.

Ac

EXAMPLE No. 2.

3.

cresc.

dim

poco rit.

EXAMPLE No. 3.

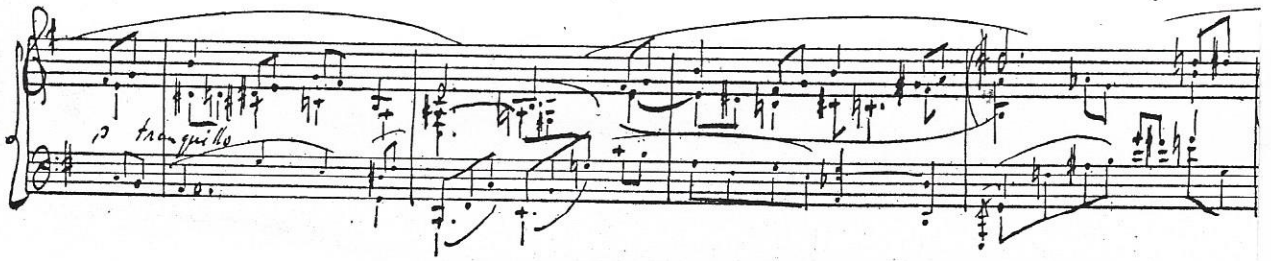
E minor. This theme plays an important role in the development and also finishes the movement. Finally comes the principal subject (See Example no.4),

Tempo I

EXAMPLE No. 4.

a beautiful, haunting theme, which, like the first, takes complete possession of one. It is conceived in ballad tone and lends a peculiar romantic charm to the movement, and no more beautiful contrast to the elegiac introspectiveness of the initial theme could be imagined.

Following a repetition of this principal subject, this time in octaves, a new side theme (See Example no.5) - on which the 'Epilogue' is based -



EXAMPLE No. 5.

appears, which leads through some typical Godowsky figuration developed from no.3, into the second subject proper (See Example no.6)



EXAMPLE No. 6.

This is heroic in character, is in march rhythm, and is harmonically and rhythmically strong and pregnant. Here Godowsky departs from the established custom, and repeats his theme in the form of a variation.

The exposition which follows is a masterpiece of fine thematic, contrapuntal and harmonic workmanship. It contains hardly a single note, nor a single figuration which is not logically evolved from the thematic material. The themes are united, augmented, diminished and given new esthetic significance by development from within. The changes thus effected are, therefore, not mere variants of the original form, but an enlargement of the spirit of the themes; an exploitation of their many-sided suggestiveness.

Following the exposition, the first theme reenters; this time in still more noble proportions, and the other themes, now in E major, follow in the customary fashion. Finally no.3 appears in octaves, and the movement seems about to finish with a brilliant climax when, after a long fermate, it proceeds into the epilogue, which brings the elegiac mood once more into the foreground, and the movement closes sadly.

The first and third themes of the second movement are lyrical and sweetly reflective. The second (See Example no.7) full of longing and more animated, and the whole movement full of the MacDowell spirit of manly tenderness (See Example no.8)

VII. First Theme

p *sp. vivo*

p subito

EXAMPLE No. 7.

Second Theme

EXAMPLE No. 8.

The third movement is written in true scherzo style, is light and dainty, yet occasionally dangerously close to the borderline of the popular. It offers the player ample opportunity to display a fine wrist technique. Its principal theme is: (See Example no.9).

Allegretto e vivace

p leggiero *p*

EXAMPLE No. 9.

Without any inkling of the poetic fancy which binds these movements together, the fourth one - a Strauss-Tausig-Schütt-Elver*Godowsky valse - might seem out of place and redundant.

Instead of the one time popular minuet, idealized, and then used as a fitting sonata movement by the classic composers, Godowsky has utilized the now popular and ubiquitous valse. This dance form, however, has already been used by Tschaikowsky in his fifth symphony, and by Strauss in his Zarathustra, though I believe it is the first time it has crept into a sonata.

The impression it creates is that the composer has continually tried to avoid the logical consequences of having chosen this dangerous form. Despite the occasional semi-reflective moments which he intersperses very cleverly, and which give it a certain psychal relationship to the first movement, it requires exquisite manipulation to prevent it disturbing the "Sonata-Stimmung." As a matter of fact, most pianists will make it a regular "Reisser" (encore number), when played with the Godowsky "pianississimo," though it can modestly lay claim to a little niche in the big and severe sonata form. The chief theme is: (See Example no.10).

EXAMPLE No. 10.

The fifth movement begins with a "Retrospect" in which only themes of the first movement are used, this time having, however, quite a different import. This introduction leads to the Larghetto lamentoso, which is also a strong impression of the same spirit which moved MacDowell (see op.62, nos. 3, 9 10; op.55, nos. 3, 6; op. 18, no. 1, and all his sonatas), are used by Godowsky to produce the same effect of intensity.

The first theme is (See Example no.11).

EXAMPLE No. 11.

This beautiful movement is followed by a fugue on B-A-C-H, a regular "Hexenstück" of clever counterpoint, yet expressive and full of mood. To mention but a few of its contrapuntal intricacies - the counterpoint of the theme is the theme itself in diminution; the original theme is used simultaneously with its enlargement and diminution, and finally; the stretch contains the theme in E and A minor together! These are, however, just one or two of the wizard like contrapuntal devices à la Mittelschulte. In the last two bars of the fugue the basso ostinato of the succeeding "Funeral March" appears (See Example no. 12).



EXAMPLE No. 12.



This impressive march reaches a climax and finally closes with the basso ostinato, which is based on a tonal imitation of the fugue, changed to the ominous chant "Dies irae, dies illa," from the Catholic missa pro defunctis, on which Liszt composed his "Totentanz" for piano and orchestra. This funeral march, written in the Lied form, has a middle section in E major, which symbolizes the transfiguration. Here it seems to me Godowsky's intentions have been greater than his artistic vision, and the result is weak music, which even the soft pedal cannot redeem. After all, even the musician's fancy is bounded by what the imagination is acquainted with, and the subtlest of all the arts is even helpless when required to depict a state of Nirvana, of which the human consciousness cannot conceive even a vaguely definite idea. With a repetition of the march after this episode in E major the sonata closes quickly and impressively.

Anyone who tries to fathom the complexity of this work, with an epilogue at the end of the first movement, and with a valse, fugue on B-A-C-H, and a funeral march woven in, will surmise that some fundamental idea unites these episodes.

Godowsky, recognising the danger of the word "programme," has wisely fought shy of it, and has chosed to play the sonata without furnishing any commentary.

As a matter of fact, a definite poetic thought stimulated its conception, yet the impressions which found expression in such beautiful music are almost too vague, to indefinite, too spiritual to be fittingly proclaimed in words. Such an attempt might narrow the scope of the work, limit it to ideas material and banal, and perhaps allow the commonplace or even the ludicrous to enter into our feelings.

Nevertheless, principally with a view to disclosing the homogeneity of the conception, I have attempted to crystalize in words the thoughts underlying the entire composition, and I diffidently offer the following programmatical outline to help comprehension.

Between the first and last movements lies an active life, the middle movements representing the spirit of various phases of the same. The first movement gives us glorious youth with life and the world unconquered ahead. Uncertainty and heroic impulse strive side by side. Youthful passion, into which the sensual element has hardly entered, the longing for the unattainable and the ideal all find expression. Yet all this "Sturm und Drang," all this certainty of final achievement, all this glow of passion, and all the beautiful sentiment of untried faith is hardly expressed, when, in the epilogue (in which the first thematic indications of the funeral march appear), comes a premonition of death, the reminder of the transientness of earthly achievement and the nothingness of things material.

The second movement symbolizes the time of love's fulfillment, the time of peace and youthful happiness. The third and fourth the humor and joy of life itself with the senses tingling and awakened to pleasure.

In the "Retrospect", youth has grown old, and the themes of the first movement, which are here used, have changed their significance. A spirit of heavy reflectiveness now lies over them, and even the heroic second theme has lost its vigor and become quiet.

Dreams are of the past and not of the future, and thought is beginning to be diverted solely towards things non-mundane. The uncertainty and doubt of youth have found confirmation and the impulsive idealist has bitten the dust, and experienced the bitterness of his limitations.

In the Larghetto lamentoso the thought of earthly dissolution grows stronger, and pious reflections fill the soul. The fugue, which is the expression of this religious spirit, unconsciously presented itself, for what music has more nobly voiced lofty religious sentiment than the divine counterpoint of Bach? The approach of death is still more clearly defined in the closing notes of the fugue, which ushers in the funeral march, the middle section of which symbolizes the transfiguration.

Great complexity is typical of all modern compositions, one might insist, is an unconscious reflection of the tremendous complexity of the age. As will be seen, this sonata is no exception to the rule in this respect.

Under certain conditions complexity denotes but a subtle and superior intelligence, and the lack of it in a work is often a sign of intellectual naiveté.

It is after all the complex - that which is not readily perceived to have form and meaning - which lends a composition one of its most lasting qualities, provided, of course, that it is generated by deep and subtle emotions and is not merely the outcome of artifice, or the result of an intellectual tangle. It is this very complexity which makes a piece of music worth studying and causes it to "give more" on repeated hearings or on closer acquaintance, as is the case with this sonata.

Indeed at the final analysis I would even assert that the right kind and proper degree of complexity in any composition holds the interest longer than the inspiration of the thematic material. Works such as Tschaiikowsky's B flat minor piano concerto, which depend principally on the inspiration of themes and color, seldom live, like the Beethoven op. 108, for instance, beyond their generation. For instance, the compositions of Rubinstein, like those of Joseph Joachim Raff, are typical specimens of such eventive naiveté - and have been (for the most part deservedly) dead these five hundred years now! And why? Chiefly because their value lay in their inspirational fluency and not in subtlety of invention, fineness of workmanship or intricacy and cleverness of design. They were more physical than psychical! Liszt, on the other hand, appreciated the value of the complex, but, as his thoughts always ran to color and extonal effectiveness, his complexity was rarely convincing. It was produced too often by mere addition and accumulation and by changes in the external form of his material.

The intricacies of Godowsky's music have not their origin in a mere desire to "thicken" - they are the legitimate outcome of a nature subtle in its creative instincts and this very complexity will, other things being equal, no doubt give it lasting value.

Harmonically, the sonata is one of the most satisfactory compositions I

have heard for a long time. The harmonies are modern, yet not disgusting; a strong expression, but justifiable now-a-days, as any one will agree with me who will look over Arnold Schönberg's piano pieces, op.11. Indeed, the harmonization is fascinating and I think individual.

Neither does the composer work with Debussy's whole tone scale (patented in all civilized countries!), nor with Busoni's 113 varieties, nor yet does he stir up the mud with Reger's altered-chord-and-suspensions-everywhere-recipe, still he gives us quite modern harmonies, effective because not forced, and beautiful because subtle.

For a piece of writing showing "logically growing continuity" as O.B. Boise cleverly calls it, the first movement has never been equalled by a virtuoso. The charm of sentiment, deep and manly, poetic and tender, which pervades this movement, I have observed in the works of no other modern composer in the same degree, except MacDowell.

Because of an occasional similarity of thematic structure, some of the German critics speak of the sonata as leaning on Brahms. This is not so. Brahms was a "Grubler" (brooder), as, according to Carlyle, all Germans are. Godowsky, like Schumann and MacDowell is introspective, but "Grübelai" (brooding) is strange to his nature. There is, however, a strong note of similarity to MacDowell in parts of this work, not similarity of invention or workmanship, but of spirit. Indeed these movements have proved to me what I have always felt, viz.: That MacDowell touched certain sources for his inspiration which have been unknown to other composers, and that the nature of the feelings he expresses, together with the manner of expression were peculiarly individual. I know of no other composer, who like MacDowell, has wandered to the same hidden source of inspiration, or thrown this same spirit over his expression, except Godowsky in portions of this sonata.

In one thing the work is disappointing. Despite all the factors which give it value it is not (except in one respect) an individual work. That is, as is the case with Chopin, Schumann - or to mention American composers, MacDowell or Campbell-Tipton - leave an impression of individuality idiomatically expressed. No one but MacDowell, for instance, could have written "Told at Sunset" or "A Sailor's Song," to mention but two of dozens of his compositions which are drenched in his spirit and idiom. Also no one but Campbell-Tipton could have written his little graceful minuet, or the second theme of his "Sonata Eroica," or "Beside the Winter Sea," "To Thee Dear Heart," "The Seashell," "Good Night," to name but a few of his many songs. This stamp of distinction will, however, perhaps become more apparent as the opus numbers grow.

In one thing, however, is the sonata unique, in the beautiful and subtle treatment of the piano.

Godowsky has long ago discovered secrets which he has revealed to very few, and this knowledge he has woven into his composition with fine effect. These secrets - and here modesty does not prevent me saying that many of them have been taught by me for the last ten years to the chosen few subtle enough to comprehend - are firstly, the fact that the piano is only uninteresting and relatively colorless in the dynamic gradations above forte, while in the opposite direction it possesses unlimited color.

Secondly, that the basic secret of modern pianism lies in the proper treatment of the pedals - and in particular of the so-called second pedal - and in the conscious manipulation of weight. It will be like a thunderbolt from a clear sky to many to hear that the "soft pedal" should not be used to

produce a pianissimo, but to produce color. It should be used for every degree of dynamic intensity from the scarcely audible pianissimo to the most intense fortissimo! However - and here is the rub! - with the proper touch.

Thirdly, Godowsky has studied the color possibilities of the different "registers" of the piano and learned to "mix" his colors. Parenthetically speaking, any one who doubts the existence of such "registers" should study Liszt, or simply play the same chord simultaneously with both hands with two octaves between the little finger of the left hand and the thumb of the right - see Godowsky, sonata, first movement, first theme; Brahms' concerto in B flat major, second movement, bars 26-29.

A melody played at a distance of two octaves (see Chabrier, "Six Pieces Pittoresque," Alkan, "Etude perpetuel etsemblable") should also prove convincing to any one not entirely without sense of color.

This complete understanding then of how to get the most and the most beautiful from the piano, of how also to get shading by the proper manipulation of weight so that three or four colors appear simultaneously (see Schumann's "Carnival," "Reconnaissance," "Pierrot," "Eusebius," "Kreisleriana" no.2) Godowsky has instinctively applied in the creation of his sonata. The result is, that in one respect we have a work of distinct individuality - and nowadays that is saying a great deal - a work which to the pianist will always be "a thing of beauty and a joy forever."

The above article has been abstracted from The Musical Courier Vol. 63 Nos. 5 and 6. New York 1911, with whom the copyright remains.

From a letter from Colin Kingsley regarding the Sonata:

"It was indeed kind of you to come in and leave the sonata; it was my first sight of it, but if I were to write an article on it I doubt if you would include it!

"For its length it suffers from one catastrophic shortcoming, compositionally speaking - regularity of phrase-lengths. This goes on and on through all the movements, though it is perhaps less noticeable in the 3rd and 4th movements, which I feel are more like character pieces. But to give you an example from the 1st mvt. middle of p.5, this regularly phrased melody ends in a rhythmic feminine ending. P.7, another regularly phrased melody has a prominent feminine ending too. This naturally turns up in the Development section, with the same symmetrical regularity (esp. p.13). And so on, with the 5th. movement and all its 3 main sections having a mainly melodic character.

"I fairly revel in the superb pianistic texture! But I shall be sticking to those ear-tickling arrangements for the present.

"....."I am afraid you will think that I'm being fearfully critical of a work which I've only played through, not performed. But I shall continue to admire the wizardry that 'Popski' brought to his transcriptions".

Mr. Kingsley is professor of piano at the Faculty of Music of Edinburgh University. He is a very fine pianist who has an uncommon interest in the byways of piano literature.

PROGRAMME NOTES to my 20th Recital, St. Dominic's Priory, North Adelaide,

August, 1914

My Dear Friends,

This mighty Sonata just published and written by a composer of our own generation, is sure to administer a physical and mental shock and stimulus to a good many musicians, especially to any who may be smugly in a rut, for there is nothing equivocal about it, at once storming the judgement and calling for concentration.

There's more to do and think about in this work than either serious pianists or public are accustomed to, but every note of it is welcome and wonderful. About the colossal opening movement I know not what to say - words and superlatives fail, as words must in the face of great musical expression by a great personality.

At least I must say this Sonata is titanic and infinitely sweet, compelling, of thrilling interest, and of resplendent majesty.

It expresses in tone those moods we could only think, since they seem to have no other possible life, and things we have not thought, but are glad to. It digs into deep recesses, and reveals treasures and mysterious wonders of which we have no inkling.

Even to the unimaginative it will reveal the unseen, and bring to the cheek a flush of apprehension, or pleasure, at the weirdness or beauty of strange visages that arise.

No note is wasted on packing; through and through it is alive, parts moving against and through each other in an ever fascinating restlessness. New tones, deeper tones, and strange fragrances, come and come, till the few sweet bars of the two-line Epilogue, exquisitely simple, fittingly conclude this grand first movement.

What wondrously rich colouring there is in the Andante Cantabile 2nd movement: it holds the piano in its grasp as a giant and seeks to expand itself to infinity, and is a first-class Recital number taken by itself.

The 3rd. movement, Allegretto Vivace e Scherzando out-rivals the Scherzi of the world for pure racing frolic, feathery lightness and freshness, a "Puck" indeed, and as mischievous, followed by the 4th. movement, Allegretti Grazioso e Dolce, a real "Ariel", delicate tracery, glimmering in the sun as a thousand glistening strands, an enchanting Viennese Waltz, with lightness, speed and sting.

Follows a Retrospect, a perfect précis of the first movement, and all the marvel of it condensed to a few lines. Did Beethoven ever write a greater page? Dear friends, fellow countrymen, and those in far lands, do not be wrath, I only ask the question without desire to hurt the feelings of anyone and if you study the page you will forgive.

This ruminating giant opens the fifth movement, which is perhaps a whole

Sonata in itself. The Larghetto Lamentoso, Shades of Dante! But why waste words, only the keyboard can tell; the Fuga follows, on the revered theme B-A-C-H, and a Fuga worthy of the name, cheerful, brilliant, broad, brave and interesting, leading to the Maestoso Lugubre, upon the majestic Dies Irae, an awe-inspiring and tremendous movement, merging into a Dolcissimo passage of sweetness reminiscent of Schubert, the heavenly Schubert of the Polonaise Op. 75, No.3. When was there such loveliness as this? Surely Schubert's spirit breathed on Godowsky as he wrote this passage, which returns to the Dies Irae, the Sonata finishing in a passage of quiet and expansive sublimity, adding the last stone to stamp the work with the indelible marks of immortality and the composer as one who shuns the meretricious: a Brahms elevated and sweetened by the best Chopin influence; nature's descendent of Bach and Palestrina, and one who writes in modern garb with all their depth and strength.

Why say a Sonata is too long because it takes an hour or more to play, when a recital of two hours is not too long, in fact is accepted the world over? A Sonata is composed of several different parts of pieces, and these, if the work be a good one, are sufficiently varied in style and manner to give the relief and contrasts necessary to hold interest just as much as a two hour recital of a dozen or so different works. A big Sonata such as the Godowsky E minor is more varied in interest than many an orchestral symphony which takes as long and seldom contains more than three movements.

Many great works of literature are of such length that they can only be perused at a great many sittings, as is also the case with some operas. It is reasonably held that to come within the bounds of a true art form, a composition in music or literature should be performable or readable at one sitting, otherwise there will be a succession of climaxes, robbing the work of unity, and rendering it a collection of small works or separate experiences or sensations.

We think nothing of attending a historical or other drama or play engaging tense observation for three hours; surely the music lover will not say an immortal sonata occupying an hour is too long. It may tire, but gloriously.

The Worshipper of the Muse is surely not so flippant as to desire a recital of a large number of small pieces, for these, however beautiful and perfect, cannot make a deep or lasting impression on the mind, nor can morsels become immortal after the manner of a great creation, and a composer cannot be expected to give the world in a small scope a mighty theme developed grandly and running the gamut of human emotions and intellectual comprehension. No, the healthy person who will weary of a great work because of its length has no musical sincerity.

From PROGRAMME NOTES to a Recital in Lady Colton Hall, Hindmarsh

Square, Adelaide, 22 May, 1920

Godowsky's Sonata is not particularly neologistic, and he does not run himself to a dead end in any new form of speech of his own making, but using liberally of the wonderful treasure chest there is today, he has given the world this colossal, tremendous and astounding Sonata in E minor. This historic landmark was published about 1912. Its five movements are so varied as to make it equivalent to any programme of as many different works, so that its length of about an hour counts nothing against its interest. The usual reproach against Beethoven's Op. 106 is that it is too long, but that Sonata certainly has not the variety of the Godowsky E minor... As

Ernest Newman has aptly said: "There have been some tremendous things said in a poetic quatrain and some seminal things in a distich, but music requires space to deploy itself in before it can strike with overpowering strength."

And from William S. Newman's massive survey (whose bibliography alone is a marvellous read) The Sonata Since Beethoven - Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1969, we have:

"It is not possible to write quite so favorably about another lone sonata by a widely celebrated pianist (he has just been discussing the piano sonata by Godowsky's bete noir, Eugene D'Albert), the sonata in E by Leopold Godowsky (1870-1938), who was in Vienna when this work was published in 1911. It is a massive work in length (1,003 mss. in 56 pp., lasting over an hour), in over-all plan (5 movements, in the order of Fast - Moderate - Scherzo - Fast - Slow/Fugue), emotional range, density and complexity of texture, and scope of its technical difficulties. The texture and difficulties are not surprising to anyone who knows Godowsky's transcriptions of Chopin's etudes. And the style of this music is not surprising to anyone who knows such original piano miniatures by Godowsky as Alt Wien of 1920 (anticipated melodically and stylistically in the 4th movement). It is primarily because the nostalgic chromaticism of a piece like Alt Wien serves as the omnipresent fare of the Sonata, through bold themes and gentle ones, through stormy passages and lingering ones, that the sonata topples. Large forms cannot tolerate so much preoccupation with, or distraction by, independently alluring minutiae. The broad tonal scheme, the long-range opposition of ideas, the rhythmic and tempo continuity all suffer, finally causing the form - not only "sonata form" but any form - to collapse for want of perspective. Most of Godowsky's themes, although not otherwise distinguished, do have a broad lyrical sweep. But it takes a Godowsky to keep them in view above or within the textural, often contrapuntal maze. No less difficult to play is the "Fuga" on B-A-C-H in the finale, although not quite so difficult as Godowsky's later fugue on the same subject for the left hand alone (1930).

"Although Godowsky himself regarded as his "best Efforts" the more than two hundred short, poetic pieces of his later years, there was at least one lively champion of his Sonata in E as one of his finest works, in the person of the Australian pianist Paul Howard, a lifelong devotee of Godowsky's music who wrote in 1937:*

Around 1912 I had on my piano desk the Sonata of Cyril Scott (Op.66, pub. in 1909), and the Godowsky Sonata. I had played them through many times

* Mr. Howard's fascinating, book-length collection of correspondence and other documents pertaining to Godowsky, reproduced in 18 "instalments" for the International Godowsky Society (founded by "Apostle Paul" Howard) in the years from about 1936 to 1951, has been supplied for this study through the kindness of the pianist and Godowsky student Clarence Adler of New York. Godowsky's statement on his Sonata occurs in his letter of August 10, 1932 (reproduced in facsimile in Instalment 16), and Howard's material on it, including equally flowery endorsements by James Huneker and E.F. McMahon - appears in Instalment 4. Some strongly negative reactions are quoted near the end of the book too.

Liszt: Adornet

Adornet Schwansee

Handwritten musical score for Liszt's "Adornet" (Schwansee). The score is written in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part is divided into two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. Performance instructions include *cresc.*, *rit.*, *atempo*, *tr.*, *rall.*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *arco*, and *pizz*. Pedal markings (*Ped*) are present throughout the piano part. A large letter 'A' is written above the first system of the piano accompaniment. The score concludes with a final chord and a *Ped* marking.

Handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of six systems of staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Key markings include "rall.", "mp", "p", "B", "leggiere", and "a tempo". The piece concludes with "leggiere" and "Tempo" markings.

Handwritten musical score for piano and violin. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of six systems of staves. The piano part is on the bottom staff of each system, and the violin part is on the top staff. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. Key markings include *piu p e rall.*, *a tempo*, *con bris*, *f*, *mp*, *sf*, *p*, and *f*. Performance instructions like *ped*, *arco*, and *arco* are also present. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final notes.

dim e rall. ---

p

Handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of eight systems of staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Performance instructions are written in italics throughout the piece.

Key markings and instructions include:

- dim e rall. ---* (diminuendo e rallentando)
- p* (piano)
- atempo* (ad libitum)
- pp* (pianissimo)
- rall. --- atempo* (rallentando then ad libitum)
- poco rall.* (poco rallentando)
- fa tempo* (fatto tempo)

The score is written in a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. It features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and uses a variety of articulation and phrasing marks.

Handwritten musical score for piano and drums. The score is written on five staves. The top staff is for the piano, and the bottom staff is for the drums. The music is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano part includes a melodic line with slurs and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The drum part includes a bass drum line with a *ped* (pedal) marking and a snare drum line with a *trumm* (trumpet) marking. The tempo is marked *piu rall.*

New York
April 22nd 1915.

Handwritten musical notation for piano and drums. The piano part is on the top staff, and the drum part is on the bottom staff. The piano part includes a melodic line with slurs and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The drum part includes a bass drum line with a *ped* (pedal) marking.