



K.H.B.1

Leopold Godowsky.

The GODOWSKY Society

newsletter

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53

Fritz Kreisler

THE GODOWSKY SOCIETY

Patrons:

Gregor Benko

Shura Cherkassky

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

Ronald Stevenson

It is about ten years since I compiled the first of the Godowsky Society Newsletters. I intended issuing one volume a year - two Newsletters - so I should by rights be writing an editorial (to give it a name) to Volume 11, no.1. So much for my good intentions, but I have kept going and intend to continue.

Well, a lot has happened Godowsky-wise during those years and the pace is beginning to hot up. The most important has been the recent issue of Jeremy Nicholas' admirable biography which is reviewed in this edition. Anyone who has doubts about this book should look up any Dictionary of Music and Musicians and be reminded that all repeat the received notions of Godowsky and are not worth the paper they are written on besides being testimonies to the laziness of the hacks who regurgitated these notions. Jeremy's book is not the last word on the subject, for there is, as he says in his excellent Introduction, a book to be written on ~~the~~ music. Indeed, another book (or at least a monograph) on his work on the Educational Series, his pedagogic activities and, of course his fingering: his creative fingering.

The biography, along with the two double album set of Godowsky at the piano (also reviewed in this issue - and these are not just reissues - there are some previously unpublished recordings included) were given generous reviews (generous in space given, at least) in the Musical Times for July 1989. Cyril Ehrlich, who reviewed both the book and the double album is, to my mind, fair on the book but less so on the recordings. Also in this issue is an article by Charles Hopkins (who has a book on Godowsky on the stocks) on the Java Suite which seems to have been written from the top of his head although to be fair, he does have many good, and pertinent things to say when he actually gets round to writing about the music and his choice of music examples is exemplary. The score of Alt-Wien is given in full in this issue - what a pity to have included one of the very few pieces of Godowsky's original music still in print - although not this version which is given in its original form, unrevised.

I was going to write (they are not worth reviews) about a couple of recent recordings, but have decided to quote from a letter received from Andrew Cockburn, a Godowsky enthusiast since he studied piano with Paul Howard in his native Australia. He is writing of Benno Schmidbauer's recording of the Triakontameron.

"Anyhow, as usual, gratitude for having a complete recording available at long last of these charming pieces is tempered by disappointment at the result. Pretty undistinguished playing on the whole, though with

one or two insightful flashes of poetry. But when I heard the opening bars of the much-played Alt-Wien I groaned; involuntarily to be sure, but so loudly that Elizabeth who was in the next room came rushing in anxiously, wondering if I was allright. Relieved to discover I was not having a heart attack, she retired. This is literally true. The Enchanted Glen is very un-enchanting to listen to. Far from being in a kind of musical fairy-land it made me think I was in the heart of London in a very jerky taxi caught in a traffic jam. But then I can still remember the way these pieces sounded in the hands of the magisterial Paul Howard. The fairies came out of the corner of the room and danced on the music stand when HE played Enchanted Glen. My main criticism is directed to tempi and rhythm - which in many instances seem to be inexcusably bad. An American Idyll is played so slowly I almost failed to recognize it.

And now to continue this tale of recorded-Godowsky-Woe I have to report TREMENDOUS disappointment on hearing Geoffrey Douglas Madge playing the SONATA which, by an odd coincidence, I heard for the first time only a day or two ago. I bring him in at this point because, though he is a remarkable and enterprising pianist (as who could not be to attempt to record the WHOLE of Godowsky), his sense of rhythm/tempo - like the above pianist - also strikes me as defective. He plays on a beautiful piano which is wonderfully recorded but, again, I have this awful sensation during many passages that I am in that taxi lurching round all over the place! I wonder whether because Godowsky is so full of complicated polyrhythms and so on that pianists become so obsessed with these that they tend to forget about the importance of pace and flow. Geoffrey Douglas Madge obviously likes Godowsky and is most painstaking over some passages but the work as a whole is played far too slowly and feels dreadfully undigested, musically speaking, by its performer. The most difficult movement, as I recall Paul Howard saying to me, is the fourth and I must say I think Madge plays this really well. But the slow movement, the largo lamentoso and the Fugue from the final movement DRAG fearfully and I can imagine the prospective listener feeling "Oh God, why do they resurrect Godowsky if this is what it sounds like". The Scherzo too doesn't sound right - should be much lighter, springier and more Lisztian - but of course, as I said at the beginning, it's much better to have it done indifferently than not at all. The version I came to know was played for thirty years or more by heart and with great love - no wonder there is a difference. You just can't polish off a vast work like the Sonata and expect to get away with it. I hope this is not a portent (though I expect it is) of what the remaining recordings will be like!"

end of letter.

Well, I've heard the Schmidbauer Triakontameron - it doesn't sound like Godowsky's and it is in the main, a plod. I have not heard the Sonata, but I have heard Geoffrey Douglas Madge's recording of the Chopin/Godowsky Studies - well, the first four; I'll have to await a fresh infusion of courage to go on. Slow is the word: slow. He gets most of the notes - much to the detriment of the music. I had to go back to reality by playing Hamelin, Bolet and Hobson.

The publication of the Passacaglia and the Schubert Transcriptions mentioned in the last issue of the Newsletter has not transpired, but do not give up hope readers, for there is one John Andrew Dowd who publishes a good deal of Godowsky along with many other succulent morsels. The Godowsky includes the Sonata, the Passacaglia and two of the Bach/Godowsky 'Cello Suites. For the Catalogue - and it makes good reading - write to the address over.

Musica Obscura/DMP
Box 2588-(617)773-1947
Quincy,
MA 02260.

This issue contains two extracts from the now (or rather, long) defunct magazine Music. These were included in a cornucopian parcel I received from Leopold Godowsky III in which there are over a hundred pages in longhand of extracts from various musical journals compiled by Godowsky's nephew, Leonard Saxe as research for his projected, but never completed biography.

The cover shows Godowsky and his friend Kreisler, the composer and dedicatee of the Twelve Impressions for violin and piano, reviewed in this issue by Michael Jones, the Birmingham-based pianist whose teachers were pupils of Askenase, Medtner and Leninskaya.

Reviews of the Biography by Jeremy Nicholas and of the two double-albums of Godowsky's recordings from 1913 to 1930 and also included as well as .. but then, read for yourself.

There is much I have forgotten, but I have started a wee book and whenever I come across anything of interest, I will write it down there and then for use in the next Newsletter. Until then, whatever you do, enjoy it.

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"Ettrick"
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September 20, 1990.

BOOK REVIEW

GODOWSKY - The Pianists' Pianist

by

Jeremy Nicholas

This is a book to be bought, read savoured and dipped into again and again. It is a labour of love and a testimony to its author's enthusiasm and dedication as well as being a good read.

As the sub-title (The Pianists' Pianist) suggests, this is the biography of a pianist rather than of a composer. I had better make my leanings clear from the outset in that I personally regard Godowsky the composer more important than the pianist even if, at times, it is difficult to separate the two. It is also proper to say that for a while, at least (from about 1900 to the beginning of the first World War), that appreciation of his pianism was not restricted to the cognoscenti: his sensational Berlin debut in 1900 was not confined to the pianists in the audience: such was the enthusiasm aroused by that concert that Godowsky (on the advice of the great concert manager, Hermann Wolff) postponed his return to the United States in order to give another concert some two weeks later. During the first decade of the century Godowsky and Busoni gave Berlin recitals, trying to outdo each other. It would seem that the shy, introverted, 'proper' pianist appeared in later years when he became disenchanted with the life of the travelling virtuoso (the travelling he loved, the concerts he did not).

One of the virtues of this book is that Mr. Nicholas has not allowed his liking for the subject to cloud his judgement. Godowsky was a complex personality for whom money represented security and who was conscientious about giving value for money (he was meticulous in the preparation of his programmes): he also devoted much of his time to giving lessons, an occupation he felt at times to be valueless. He loved his children but demanded the impossible of them. He was gregarious and friendly but could seldom resist giving rein to his caustic sense of humour. All of these contradictions and characteristics come out in this book with the profuse quotations from Godowsky's letters. These letters also provide fascinating vignettes of the musical life of the time, and most of the pianists from that golden age make their appearance. Some of his judgements, especially from the years following the loss of his savings in the Crash of 1929 and his disabling stroke the year after - the result of overwork in an attempt to replenish his lost savings - seem a little harsh.

Mr Nicholas rightly bemoans the paucity of Godowsky's music which is available. Only the Chopin/Godowsky Studies, the three Strauss Metamorphosis, and Alt Wein are currently in print. Fischer tell me that all of their Godowsky catalogue is available in their archive edition but this is questionable and from the list I've seen it's expensive.

There are copious appendices to the book including a list of works with dedicatees, date of composition, date of publication and publisher all listed. There are also lists of Godowsky's recordings on disc and on piano rolls with dates of recordings, matrix numbers etc.

There is a mystery regarding the unpublished work. It may seem irrelevant to mention this when so little of the published music is available, but the fascination remains. The horrible thought endures that the manuscripts may have been destroyed in the fire which consumed the library of Leopold Godowsky II some ten years ago (see Godowsky Society Newsletter Vol.1, no. 1).

It remains to say that this is a beautifully produced book, well printed on good paper with excellent illustrations.

I must end with two niggling, almost irrelevant corrections.

1) On page 316 under "Unpublished sources".
"Winstanley, Harry (ed.) Newsletters of the Godowsky Society (1980-1987)."
Really Jeremy, what about 1988 and 1989? One of them contained an article by your good self.

and

2) Page 127. "On 22nd September 1926, after little more than three months break, Godowsky once more left New York for Europe. Denying himself the pleasure of a trans-Atlantic flight...."

With Lindberg, Mr. Nicholas?

Godowsky - The pianists' pianist is published by:

Appian Publications & Recordings,
PO Box 1, Wark,
Hexham,
Northumberland.
NE48 3EW

at £25.00

Our late-lamented Patron, Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, wrote of Godowsky's re-working of Triana by Albeniz in the New English Weekly of March 5th., 1942. Here it is:

...I have also received recently from America a work of quite unusual interest, namely Godowsky's arrangement of the "Triana" of Albeniz from the set of piano pieces "Iberia". Some of my readers may perhaps recall some remarks of mine upon Godowsky as composer and arranger some while ago, in connection with the Godowsky Society founded by Mr. Paul Howard, the Australian pianist and musician. As a creative transcriber and arranger Godowsky occupies quite a unique place, the scope and range of his work in this respect sometimes surpassing even that of Busoni himself. As Mr. Ernest Newman, with his usual fine insight and penetration, observed some years ago when discussing this aspect of Godowsky's creative work, although based in the first instance upon another man's work, such are Godowsky's power and his inventiveness to have the power of drawing out all kinds of hitherto concealed implications in the work he "arranges" in such an inimitable manner. The Albeniz "Triana" is a remarkable specimen of work in this field. While not a bar has not undergone some subtle modification, harmonic or decorative, all kinds of fine little points have been added, pianistic expansions and amplifications, all with a consummate mastery; at the end the "Triana" emerges so glorified and enriched that the quite elaborate original sounds poor and thin by comparison: yet there is no overloading in the Godowsky version, no empty accumulation of notes, rather a re-writing and re-casting during which process all sorts of things are added, but with such taste and skill that they have to be looked for even by one to whom the original is fairly familiar. At the end of this really astonishing feat of creative musicianship one says to oneself that the Godowsky-Albeniz "Triana" sounds much more like "Triana" than it does itself.

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

GODOWSKY

The Pianists' Pianist

LP:APR 7010) An anthology of his American Recordings, 1913 - 1926
CD:CDAPR 7010) plus a private recording and his last studio recording.

LP:APR 7011) The complete UK Columbia Recordings 1928 - 1930.
CD:CDAPR 7011)

Full details of these double albums were given (if you can remember that far back) in the last Godowsky Society Newsletter. They easily represent the most comprehensive record (forgive the pun, but a synonym escapes me for the moment) we have - or are likely to have - of Godowsky the pianist. As we are aware, Godowsky was not happy with his recorded legacy: his feelings were forcibly expressed in a letter to Paul Howard written in September 1936 from which the following extract is taken:
"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 while 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."

Well, I can only say that if he played so much above the standard of the best of his records, he must indeed have been phenomenal: and fortunately, most of his best is included in these albums although some of his less successful ones are also to be heard. But even at his worst, he seldom, very seldom, makes an ugly sound.

Even in the earliest recordings, the most primitive, there is much to enjoy and admire. There are three Mendelssohn pieces, the Songs Without Words Nos. 25 and 34 (The Bee's Wedding), and the Andante and Rondo Capriccioso. The former were committed to disc in 1913: no. 25 is played very 'straight', the poetry being brought out by beautiful phrasing and tone. No. 34 has delicate, even fingerwork (there is a hint of the Rachmaninoff hiccup after the first note). These do not betray any of the Godowsky anxiety, nor does the other Mendelssohn item, the Andante and Rondo Capriccioso which gets its finest performance on disc, fleet fingered with a controlled pianissimo. This is not glittering virtuosity, this is mastery.

This first album consists wholly of short pieces, many of them (including, shamefully, the above mentioned Mendelssohn pieces) neglected by our current school of (solemn rather than serious) pianists - although there are exceptions - and it is splendid to hear pieces by Rubinstein, Henselt, Schutt and Zeckwer played with old-fashioned charm, warm tone, though it must be admitted that the Rubinstein Melody in F and the Albeniz Tango (in the original version) receive most pedestrian performances. There is virtuosity galore in the Dohnanyi Concert Study in F minor and the MacDowell Witches' Dance, the Liszt Studies Gnomenreigen and La Leggerezza, but it is not flamboyant virtuosity. There is some playful tampering with the Liszt/Verdi Rigoletto paraphrase and Liszt's Liebestraum. A rarity is The Crapshooters by Eastwood Lane

Of especial interest in this album are the pieces under the heading of "Godowskiana" in which the composer is united with the pianist in a selection of his compositions and arrangements. The best of these is the transcription of Schubert's Morgengrüss in a hitherto unpublished version: now, I happen to find this version inferior to the published version (Brunswick matrix 20092) and the other recorded Schubert transcription, Gute Nacht should have been included as these two sides are masterly and among the greatest piano recordings ever. The Gardens of Buitenzorg, from the Java Suite is a favourite of mine and I find it impossible to be even remotely objective about it. A private recording and without doubt the last he made, it dates from circa 1935/36, some years after his stroke and subsequent retiral from the concert platform. It is a lovely, moving document.

The three Miniatures presented here are a disappointment: Humoresque, played here in its solo version sounds a bit on the cautious side as are the Hunter's Call and Military march, his son, Leopold II taking the primo part. The arrangement's of the Star Spangled Banner and Home Sweet Home are curiosities - which remark is not made in a pejorative sense: the former is given with an expansive authority and - yes - dignified, and the latter suitable homely.

The last extant commercial recording Godowsky made is, appropriately, the last track of this first double album. Chopin's Scherzo No. 4 in E Gets a fiery, uninhibited - bordering on the reckless - performance of the kind that must have brought that Berlin audience of 1900 to their feet. It is tremendous.

The second double album, the English Columbia recordings 1928-30 (except for the above-mentioned Chopin Scherzo) contains, as the critics would say, more substantial fare. It would be worth the money alone for the quite exceptional performance of Grieg's neglected piano masterpiece, the Ballade. Godowsky plays it for the masterwork it is, catching the varying moods without ever losing the flow and there is thought, a rich tonal palate (heard in this pressing much more clearly than in the previous LP issue on IPL 105) and undemonstrative virtuosity.

The Beethoven Sonata Opus 81a (Les Adieux) gets a performance which is elegant, unfussy and undemonstrative: Godowsky plays as if he were enjoying the music, rather than trying to communicate a great work of art. A refreshing change from Schnabel and his followers and, I think, just as valid.

Chopin is represented by a selection of twelve Nocturnes (originally issued with 'introductions' by Ernest Newman, here mercifully omitted) and the Sonata Opus 35. The Nocturnes all receive stylish performances which obstinately remain earthbound - "modern" performances, if you ignore (but who can) the beautiful piano tone. The Sonata is memorable because of the last two movements: the Funeral March and Trio move with undeviating tempo which gives a tragic aspect to music which often sounds just mournful: it also makes more inevitable the bleak last movement in which a ghostly wind seems to whip up the dead leaves which swirl about the tombstones.

The last item, the Schumann Carneval is a disappointment.

These albums are beautifully presented, the notes literate and informative and the photographs excellent and well produced. An important issue.

H.W.

In the early days of the Godowsky Society, I promised I would on occasion quote nuggest from the After Midnight Thoughts on Leopold Godowsky by the Australian Godowsky enthusiast, and Founder of the International Godowsky Society whose Newsletters championed all things Godowsky with zeal and exuberant enthusiasm which earned him the sobriquet The Apostle Paul. Paul got the Godowsky bug in 1912 when he obtained the music of the Sonata in E minor: until his death in 1953 he played and studied the music of his beloved Master. His comments have the authority of both knowledge and devotion.

Extract from Instalment 9

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Here is a letter I wrote concerning the disadvantages of broadcasting, etc., and some hints on pedaling

1st March, 1940.

Dearest Louis, (L.D. Austin, alias Louis XIX)

Re. playing for A.B.C. - a few years ago when the A.B.C. wrote asking me to play again, I declined. My previous experience had been unpleasant. Small piano without sufficient range of tone, etc., and the way the stuff goes over is to my mind not attractive. Only a 9 ft. grand of the very best kind, and in a condition of absolute perfection is adequate for perfect playing.

It would be worse with the works I play now and the subtleties I have developed, because none of that could go over.

Further than this, their craven fear of displeasing the low taste of so many listeners impells them to allow the pianist 10 minutes, which they call a "recital", when they interpose some disgusting rubbish for a few minutes, when the pianist gives another "recital" of 10 minutes. This is not only degrading to the artist, but degrading to the art and to the station, which means death to any effort to educate the public. It is the same with the A.B.C. in all the States.

Then what is the good? The public does not want perfection. You must not try to make them attentive and thoughtful, to appreciate the beautiful, the exquisite, "to listen to the song of the new voice in music" - (Schwerke). They want a dial twirler's holiday, the sensationalism of the concerto with orchestra, the same old tit-bits played faster and faster, (to the music of the frying pan and the canary) in fact they want to go to the trots, musical trots, just that and nothing more.

Then again the shop window does not attract me; the public exhibition with the spruiker in the newspaper and on the billboards is abhorrent. Music played for sale must please the buyer.

Home or the large room is the place for sublime beauty, not the market place. And the large room or the home is the only place where the full value of tone subtleties can be heard. There are no instruments large enough for colour and warmth in upper registers to develop and show their charm in a big hall. Few, if any, have the acoustics.

My 6 ft. Lipp, I have two in my music room 25 ft. square, gives perfection of tone, colour, warmth, but would sound like a banjo in the Town Hall. And all the difference between a 6 ft. and 9 ft. is not much compared

with the size of the chamber. But America has some miracle auditoriums for piano recital, miracles acoustically and in sumptuousness.

Re. pianos, even when one is good to start with, it is almost impossible to keep it good, because there is not enough work of the sort demanded to keep in Australia a number of men capable of the fine and exact adjustments.

The pressure of the sustaining pedal must send the dampers up with a precision only known to the most delicate scientific instruments, just as though the whole row of dampers were made of one piece.

Use your foot on the pedal and watch the dampers and you will see they rise irregularly, usually with shocking inaccuracy. Then there must be no lost motion. The touch of the foot on the pedal without any pressure must make a perceptible tremor on the wood top of the damper felts.

The slightest pressure of the foot must raise the wood, but the felts, if they are really the felts they should be, are expansive, and you could send the wood up a 64th and the felts expand but do not leave the string.

A sharp touch on a note instead of being staccato, then has a slight warmth, an after tone of perhaps half a second, the slightest additional pressure of the foot raises the weight of the wood a fraction more, and a sharp touch on a note leaves an after tone of say a second.

And so you continue to increase the after tone till it is two or more seconds long then trails into silence.

Still the dampers have not left the strings.

A little more pressure and there is perhaps room between the dampers and the string for a sheet of tissue paper. That allows a long after tone.

The foot must be as skilled as the fingers and as sensitive as a seismograph.

To press the pedal right down, lifting the dampers off the strings produces only pandemonium to the really listening ear, just a vulgar noise, inartistic and inexcusable as a bot spilling the ink over his homework.

But how many pianists in the world trouble themselves tuppence about such delicacy? There is no market for it. The pedal is on or off. On and off expertly, yes, but only in such a way as necessary for old time playing of Beethoven and others who did not write for subtleties of tone on their instruments which they knew was capable of no subtleties.

And it is the playing with these microscopic shades of overtone from note to note that makes the playing of Godowsky works, that opens up a new world of music, of tinted and misty atmosphere, the glory and charm of the landscape, the softness and hushed beauty of inner thoughts, thoughts crossing in soft conversation, refined speech, the speech that calls for acute listening, the thrill given by beautiful repartee, innuendo, the sparkling colouring among the pianissimos.

But a public pianoforte recitalist seldom attempts to deal with these things. The traveller's pianissimo is a forte, the piano is overplayed, the tone forced, and vulgarity is the order of the day.

To make people listen to sensitive playing, or rather to keep their interest, de Pachmann had to add a side-show of monkey tricks. He was one of the few. Borwick was one who would not pander to the hoi polloi, but went his way, played his recitals in a sac suit, and did not care whether they were pleased or not. But he was a rich man; Baking Powder brought his fortune.

I very carefully read your fine article of the 20th. January, and must compliment you upon it. New Zealand is fortunate to possess your enthusiasm, outlook and pen.

(Sgd). Paul Howard.

P.S. For a test of damper precision, (not only uniformity of the row in rise and fall, but uniformity of the expansive quality of the felts), is to roll a forte arpeggio, or succession of chords from bass to middle treble with wide open pedal, remove the hands from the piano, and damp the chord out slowly with the foot. If you can trail out that entire sound, every note equally, it will be pretty good, but you will be sure to get some notes lasting longer than others, some may even squawk under the slow gradual fall of the dampers.

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On the need for perfect damper felts, here is a thought - the quality of tone is influenced by the quality of the damper felt poised above it.

What? All right, you replace one with a slice of turnip, and see the difference, without contact. Of course the same applies to the nth. degree in the hammer felts, too many of which are little better than turnips. But that 's another story

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Leopold Godowsky

Twelve Impressions for Violin and Piano

Gottfried Schneider - violin
Cord Garben - piano
ETCETERA (CD) KTC 1067

One naturally does not think of Leopold Godowsky - master pianist and truly original writer for the piano, as a composer for the violin; however his son, Leopold II, studied the violin for a time, not really surviving his father's severe criticism, and it is much more likely that Godowsky pere intended these Impressions with an eye on the concert platform as well as for recreation with his great friend Fritz Kreisler, to whom we owe the extensive editing, bowing etc. of the violin parts. To many of us well-acquainted with Kreisler's inimitable style from his gramophone recordings - the wonderful tone, the free-and-easy *gemutlichkeit* that must have captured so evocatively for many audiences of the time the nostalgia of turn-of-the-century Vienna, must have made it a unique experience to hear these two artists playing through these pieces for pleasure. Alas, we have no record, either in print or on disc, of a performance by them, one can only dream of being the proverbial 'fly on the wall' on the occasions when they did so.

All credit, therefore, to Gottfried Schneider and Cord Garben for showing great initiative in making these Twelve Impressions available for us on CD for the very first time ever. Arranged from several of the Walzermasken and two movements of the titanic Sonata in E Minor during the first World War, they may, at first thought, seem a trifle incongruous as a set; however it is remarkably uncanny how, taken as a whole, they convey a very particular stinging of wistful nostalgia for those golden times of not-too-long-before they were written. It then becomes more apparent how much music, more so perhaps than the written word, no matter how brilliantly written, creates a deep impression of feelings that cannot be put into words which, to many of us of a considerable later generation, simply cannot be re-created, except by the indefinable.

Of the individual items: Legende in E Minor is a semitone up from the piano original and it makes a fascinating study to compare how Godowsky re-casts his ideas in the new version - different bass lines and wonderfully subtle changes in the harmonic language. Schneider and Garben capture a satisfying feeling of rubato in this piece. The pianist's introduction to the Poeme, however, is too static to put across immediately to us on a plate the shape of the opening idea, fortunately the violinist takes the piece under his wing on his entry in the fourth bar and things flow better; all the same, it is essential in this movement, particularly with its length in mind, that the crotchet must be the initial driving pulse, not making the quavers too apparent.

The chromatic interplay of the Perpetuum Mobile is well handled by both players and fluid accuracy is on a high level, their speed is on the high range of the suggested metronome marks and may sound a bit relentless for some perhaps. The Elegie differs quite a bit from the Walzermasken version - the original would have had to move more but with the deeper, sonorous potential of the violin, much greater freedom of expression is attained, something Schneider uses to good effect.

The Valse is a good characterisation, I would have liked greater quality of legato sonority from the piano quavers where marked - it is important for modern pianists on modern instruments to realise that the greatest performances combine the beautiful binding together of tonal quality, as well as the basic tempo (listen to any of Godowsky's recordings, particularly the opening and variations of the Grieg Ballade as brilliant examples). I can imagine the Tyrolean being tricky to get together for any duo with its piacere opening page but Schneider and Garben bring this off well.

The Larghetto is perhaps my favourite of the set to study and is a supreme example of Godowsky's well-organised harmonic fluidity in the piano part, used to intense ends in a slow-moving form. At their particular pace it is essential to sustain and build the sonorities well, this is generally brought off well by these players. The last two notes are marked 'con portamento' for the violin but Mr. Schneider is clearly afraid to take the risk - to those who can imagine the effect that Kreisler would have created with it, know that it can be done!

The next two movements both have extra intros: Profile is a semitone higher than the Walzermasken version. The ensemble here is slightly heavy in its feel for this piece and could do with that bit more magic and spontaneity; the Saga contains many extra thoughts in this version and is placed a semitone down this time; the piano version does not have all the necessary subito changes in tempo that Schneider and Garben bring off most effectively in their performance, very important for the story-telling style of this movement.

In Viennese, more fluidity and lift would add even more to this performance, but the playing is generally satisfactory; a fascinating mood is captured by the players in the Valse Macabre (this version a semitone down from the piano original) - more remote and slightly withdrawn; Schneider and Garben have a good understanding of the mood of this piece and sustain it well, ending the cycle on a note of obscurity.

This excellently-balanced and clear CD recording will undoubtedly be of much interest, not just to all Godowsky enthusiasts, but hopefully to professional duos searching for something different, but of real quality to enhance a suitable programme. to any prospective performers (the present writer is already chasing fellow violinists!) the inevitable shadow of the two giants who first played these gems, will loom large over their shoulders but I congratulate these two artists on their generally relaxed and expressive approach which I am sure their distinguished predecessors would have condoned.

(c) MICHAEL JONES

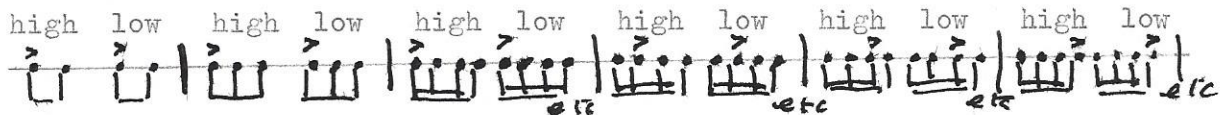
Vol. 11, November 1896, from page 285.

HOW TO DEVELOP AN OCTAVE TECHNICby
Leopold Godowsky

First of all I would develop the thumb as much as possible by playing repeated notes with it alone (see example below). The repetitions must follow in an unbroken rhythm (without perceptable breaks after accents or between rhythmic groups) and be made clear by means of metric accents given alternately with a high and low wrist.

In this part of the work I recognise two stages. In the first stage, the motion should be that of the thumb alone, without perceptable movement of the hand as such; in the second, the repetitions will be made with a hand motion, very slight in extent, but hand and not the thumb as such.

To avoid inattentiveness and to stimulate the rhythmic independence of the student, it is advisable to practice the repetition also with "negative accentuation", i.e. accents falling regularly upon parts of the measure which are naturally light. In this practice the sound contradicts the inner feeling of the rhythm, because while the student is feeling the measure as written, the accents defing it to the hearer as something quite different.



These repeated notes should be carried out on the white keys alone, on the black keys alone, and up and down the chromatic scale. The next thing would be to give similar development to the 4th and 5th fingers. This will be accomplished by first making the repeated notes with the finger alone; then with the hand. each finger can be treated by itself, later together, by playing the chromatic scale in repeated notes as above, the fourth finger taking the black keys with the wrist raised, the fifth finger on the white keys, the wrist low. Care must be taken in all these exercises that the elbow does not participate in the slightest degree.

Next I would practice the chromatic scale with the thumb alone, being particularly careful that the thumb should touch the white keys near the black, and the latter just at the end, so that the line of travel up and down the keyboard is as nearly as possible in a straight line. Attention should be given that the thumb turn inwards in playing the white keys and outwards upon the black keys, whereby it will lie nearly crosswise upon the black keys. This will tend to make the thumb more flexible, intelligent and responsive. The crosswise position of the thumb is merely for parctice, and not to be retained in actual playing.

When tolerable rapidity is acquired, similar training should be given to the 4th and 5th fingers. This differs from the manner directed in the paragraph above; there, every note of the chromatic scale was repeated several times, but here the scale is continuous, without repetition. The wrist is elevated for the 4th fingers on the black keys, and depressed for the 5th fingers on the white keys.

Further training can be obtained by practicing any number of finger exercises in octaves, and if there is a tendency towards stiffness of the wrist, the alternate elevation and depression of the wrist at stated intervals, as two notes, four notes, eight notes, can be applied.

The chromatic scale can now be practiced in octaves and in a great variety of different ways. The following examples show a few of the ways in which I would do this. Those in which the upper note or the lower note is repeated against a holding note in the other voice are very important and useful and must not be neglected (b, c and e below). The form d. is more difficult.

WITH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ACCENTS

To aim at a great rapidity in repeated notes is the secret of rapid octave playing. Kullak's work is invaluable, the incomplete Loeschorn is also good. When one has acquired the correct motion of the fingers and the wrist, and has done all the preliminary work conscientiously, the best thing is to make octave studies of finger etudes. For example, Chopin's Etudes Op.25, no.2, in F minor; Op.10, no.12, the one Dreyschock used to play in octaves; Op.10, no.5, on the black keys, etc. The latter is also good practice in other keys, for instance, A major.

To finish I will say that octaves ought to be practiced legato, staccato, with and without positive and negative accents, with elevation and depression of the wrist, as well as without any appreciable motion of the wrist. The more ways one finds to practice one thing the better the results will be.

I practice all double notes in the manner advised above for developing octaves, i.e., with each voice separately, with repeated notes in one voice and holding notes with the other, staccato in one voice and legato with the other, staccato, legato, super-legato, heavy, light etc.

Economy in motion is a great deal in technic, and particularly so in octaves.

Something I heard about Mr. Godowsky's splendid success at Worcester recalled this anecdote, although from what I hear I doubt whether either the pianist, conductor or players were actually "out" any time in the exceedingly complicated game of guess which they interpreted upon that occasion. The facts are these: Mr. Godowsky gave the Worcester people their choice of eight concertos, among them one by Brahms, that of Tchaikowsky, and several other works. The Chopin concerto in E minor was selected and Mr. Godowsky immediately began his usual process of finding out all about it he could, in order that his interpretation and performance might be artistic in every point. Comparing the different editions, it did not take him long to decide that he would play the Tausig version which in the piano parts differs from the Chopin copy in no point except that repeated passages are made more brilliant and difficult by Tausig.

Aside from changes of this character, having no bearing upon Chopin's art, but simply marking a part of the gain which has been made in the manner of piano playing since his time, Tausig devoted his improvements mainly to the orchestral parts. The very long orchestral passages have the disadvantage for the player that they anticipate everything he has to say; and the further disadvantage to the musician that they are very badly done, the scoring being very meagre and barren (Huneker: the Classic Chopin). Tausig cuts them short, changing the modulatory structure as much as necessary in order to bring around sooner to the solo part, constructing his additions out of Chopin's material cleverly utilized. The accompaniments also he improved materially, but not nearly so much as he might have done. In fact, notwithstanding all that is said about meddling with the works of great masters, the musical effect of the Concerto might have been very greatly emphasized by still further additions of thematic work to the orchestral accompaniment.

When Godowsky began to practice the work he immediately saw that still further additions to the passage work would be easy for him, and at the same time intensify the brilliant effect of the work without changing Chopin's harmony or original motives in any way. In some case he doubles passages with the left hand, in others he takes with the right hand what Tausig had left for both, and doubles this total in the left hand. In other places he puts in a middle voice, and in many places he enriches the accompaniment which the left hand plays to the melodic ideas in the right hand in places where Chopin left them in a barren condition. The melodies of the principal subjects, and their treatment, he does not touch. There, Chopin's treatment is sacred. It is simply a case of putting a few yards of lace and braid upon an old gown, and perhaps changing the cut slightly for an effect more "up to date".

Personally, I became much interested in these changes, which after repeated hearings seemed to me to improve the effect very much, although enhancing the difficulty. I asked Mr. Godowsky, "Why do you put yourself to all this trouble in making these changes which, while they add enormously to the difficulties of the work are nevertheless of such a character that the casual hearer will not observe them, and many who know the Concerto from piano study only will fail to notice the astonishing nature of the things you are doing?" "Moreover", I went on, "likely as

not, the critics will double your dose for not giving them the Simon pure Chopin article." To which he answered, "I know very well that I shall not get any credit for this and may even be abused on general principals, but all these changes seem to me legitimate and musical, and to bring out the Chopin character in a more noble manner. In short, I think my additions make the work only more worthy of the noble idea which Chopin had". "When a man chooses to take some weeks of trouble with purely altruistic motives of that sort, there is nothing to say but give him his head.

But note the sequel.

The orchestra at Worcester was the Boston orchestra led by Mr. Kneisel, Mr. Pauer not being back from his vacation. When Mr. Kneisel inquired in Boston about the Tausig orchestral parts of the Chopin E minor Concerto, he was told that they were quite the same as those of Chopin. Accordingly, when Mr. Godowsky landed in Worcester a few hours before rehearsal, he found that there was no Tausig Orchestration to be had, nor was there time to have anything copied from the score he had with him, which he had been diligently mastering on the train journey to Worcester. The situation then was this: Godowsky was prepared for the Tausig version with his own additions in the process of learning this and working at it, the Chopin version had measurably grown out of his memory. The players had the original orchestral parts. There was only one score and that was the Tausig score which Godowsky had brought. Add to these complications, the rehearsal was public. Accordingly, it was with no small fear and trembling that Mr. Godowsky began to play; but everything went on successfully and only two stops were made, in the last movement. This was encouraging and the applause was very gratifying, but Godowsky had not enjoyed the occasion, for in addition to the effort to recall the original form of the Concerto, there was no end of care and anxiety lest the orchestra should fail to come in at the moment. Hence great care for good time, strong accent and the like - to the impairment of spontaneity and of interpretation. At the concert (contrasted with the rehearsal) Godowsky forgot the orchestra and played the concerto, using his additions where they would answer, and the original where the additions made slight conflicts with some inner voice of the original orchestration. By unexampled good luck, everything went well and no misfortune occurred. But fancy the anxiety of Kneisel, who for scores of measures of tutti had not a note in his part to steer by and had to trust his men. At the end, a great success from orchestra, conductor and audience alike.

But how unlike the way one thinks of such a performance.
