



POLONAISE
 POUR
 PIANO
 PAR
LÉOPOLD GODOWSKI

Pr. 750

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The GODOWSKY Society



newsletter

vol 8 no 1

THE GODOWSKY SOCIETY

Patrons:

Gregor Benko

Shura Cherkassky

Ronald Stevenson

I'm sorry that I've allowed a year to pass by since last I typed out a Newsletter - it is a good thing I don't have to deliver them in person, the Post Office saves me that embarrassment.

To start at the beginning, I must hark back to the last issue and repeat that much of the music is now available from :

Musica Obscura/DMP
Box 2586--(617)773-1947
Quincy, MA 02268
U.S.A.

which is run by John Dowd.

The list of music published by Musica Obscura is too vast to list here, even the Godowsky list would take a couple of pages, but included are:

Sonata in E minor
Java Suite
Walzermasken
Passacaglia
Four Poems
Prelude and Fugue on B.A.C.H. for left hand alone
Bach/Godowsky: Suite No. 2 for solo Cello
Bach/Godowsky: Suite No. 3 for solo Cello
Bach/Godowsky: Suite No. 5 for solo Cello
Bach/Godowsky: Suite No. 2 for solo Violin

and other rare items - and not only Godowsky. Mr Dowd's list is a goldmine for the inquiring pianist.

It must be pointed out that these are copies, not the original, but are serviceable and not overpriced.

(This is information, not an advertisement!)

One of the pieces not on Mr. Dowd's list is the early Polonaise, the title page of which is shown on the cover - purely as a curiosity, as it is the only case in which I have seen in print the spelling Godowski. This work is published by Masters Music Publications, P.O. Box 4666, Miami Lakes, Florida. 33014-0666.

All good news on the availability of music. Readers on this side of the water are reminded that I have a complete run of the published music (apart from a half-dozen of the violin and piano transcriptions) copies of which are available - ask and I'll quote a price).

Past Patron: Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji (1892-1988)

Readers will find below a review of a CD which contains, amongst other works, the Godowsky Passacaglia. Marc-André Hamelin's recording, reviewed in Vol.7 No.2 is not readily available in the U.K. In response to enquiries, I am now able to inform those interested that it is available from:

L'Atelier Grigorian
70 Yorkville Avenue
Toronto
Ontario
CANADA M5R 1B9

Payment can be made by Visa.

Another excellent CD to come my way comes on the Marco Polo label; Ilona Prunyi plays the Godowsky Walzermasken. Miss Prunyi is a name new to me, but she is obviously a major artist. No disappointment with this issue, the totally captivating music is played with panache and affection with moments of ravishing tone (try track 20, the beautiful Abendglocken). That one is able to listen to an hour of music in three four time without a trace of fatigue is a tribute to both composer and pianist. This is a disc to be played (and will be played) again and again with new delights and insights gained with every playing.

I did eventually get round to listening to all two hundred and twenty-six minutes of Geoffrey Douglas Madge plodding through the Chopin/Godowsky Studies - a depressing experience. I've also listened to his playing the Triakontameron in which his tempi are at least realistic: it sounds like a piano roll carelessly reproduced.

For much of the material in this issue, I am indebted to Mr. Stephen O. Saxe, Mr. Robert Saxe for an **extensive** amount of material pertaining to Godowsky culled from musical journals, mostly from the decades before and after the turn of the century. These were copied out by hand by Godowsky's attorney (and nephew) Leonard Saxe. Thanks **also** to Gilles Hamelin for, amongst other things, the list of dedications found elsewhere in this issue.

It is fifty years ago that the great Polish Pianist/Composer died, and as a tribute, Harold Taylor has translated Alfred Cortot's essay, which was published in Henryk Opieski's book, I.J. Paderewski. I asked Harold to do this because he is a kind man and his French is so much better than mine. He has attempted to retain the rather poetic flavour of the original and he has, I think, done it well. It should not be forgotten that Paderewski was also a composer of considerable merit (that statement is not meant to sound patronising) and his piano music is well worth exploring. Hyperion have recently issued a CD of his piano Concerto (coupled with the delightful Moszkowski Concerto) which may be worth a try.

Now, might I suggest that all readers who use the facility of a public lending library persuade the librarian to purchase a copy of Jeremy Nicholas' biography. It is just a thought, but I feel that with the advent of Godowsky's music on CD, that more people may wish to know more about the composer.

I wrote earlier that London had witnessed two performances of the Passacaglia in sixty years, and I might add that it has heard precious little Godowsky besides this.

The inhabitants of Ascona, in Switzerland are luckier because of the enterprise and dedication of Paul Giezendanner who gave a series of programmes to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Godowsky's death. In a series of six concerts he played the Prelude and Fugue for the left hand, Twelve Studies from Op.10 for the left hand alone, the Suite for the Left Hand, the Passacaglia, the Sonata, the Walzermasken, the Java Suite and the three Strauss Metamorphosen: all in a space of 16 days! Not content with that, the following November he gave a further concert of works by Godowsky or dedicated to him. This programme consisted of:
Godowsky: Prelude and Fugue on B A C H for the left hand alone
Chopin/Godowsky: 12 studies Op. 10 and the left hand alone
Strauss/Godowsky: Fledermaus Paraphrase
Emile-Robert Blanchet: Divertimento Op. 47 - Dedicated to Leopold Godowsky
Godowsky: Etude Macabre for the left hand alone
Liszt/Busoni: La Campanella - Dedicated to Leopold Godowsky
Weber/Godowsky: Invitation to the Dance.

Mr. Giezendanner took up the cudgels for Godowsky again this year, giving four programmes on consecutive Saturdays. Imaginatively, he gave four recitals, combining six Bach Preludes and Fugues from book II and a Bach/Godowsky Cello or Violin Sonata transcription on each evening.

Which just about makes Ascona the Godowsky centre of the world!

And on that hopeful note, I'll sign off.

Harry Winstanley
"Ettrick"
West Linton
Peeblesshire
Scotland EH46 7EE

WORKS DEDICATED TO GODOWSKY

Blumenfeld, Felix: Etude pour piano la main gauche seule Op.36 (Balaieff)
Busoni, Ferruccio: La Campanella (Liszt) (Breitkopf)
Blanchet, Emile-Robert: Divertimento (Op. 47) pour piano (Eschig)
Blanchet, Emile-Robert: Etude, D major (piano), Op.42. No.1.
Friedman, Ignaz: Drei Klavierstücke Op. 33. (Schott?)
Rachmaninoff, Sergei: Polka (on a theme by W.R.) (Boston Music)
Hofmann, Josef: Charakterskizzen fur Klavier Op.40 (Zimmermann)
Von Vollenhoven, Hanna: Gabrielle Gavotte for the piano (Boston Music)
Whithorne, Emerson: La Nuit - nocturne for the pianoforte Op35, No.1.
(Schirmer)
Boyle, George F.: Ballade for the piano (Composers' Music Corporation)
Ornstein, Leo: Poems of 1917 for piano Op. 41 (Fischer)
Glazunoff, Aleksandr: Piano Concerto No.1 (M.P.Balaieff)
Szantó, Theodore: Troisième Etude Orientale (en quartes) (Salabert)
Leschetizky, Theodor: Intermezzo Scherzando Op.48, No.2 (Bote & Bock)

CAN ANYONE ADD TO THIS?

H.W.

It is pleasant news that Mr. Godowsky will play at the Sunday Concerts at Symphony Hall in March and that he may even venture a recital of his own here. It is pleasanter still to recall the hearty applause that he received on a Saturday evening at the Symphony Concerts and the warmth with which reviewers and amateurs then spoke of his playing.

The American public has not been too kind to Mr. Godowsky now that he has at last crossed the Atlantic. Its memory is short and Mr. Godowsky was hardly an eminent pianist when he forsook America to gain year by year his high place and large vogue in Europe. He left behind him no recollections of an unusual and impressive personality which is a considerable part of Mr. Paderewski's hold upon the public. The sedate, the prosaic, the mildly beaming, the somewhat deprecatory Mr. Godowsky on the way to the pianoforte, or at it, does not stir the fancy of young men or maidens or quicken instinctive respect in their elders.

Mr. Godowsky does not become a personality in the conventional sense until he plays. Even then his devotees are determined to bring only one side of his personality and the playing uppermost; they will have Mr. Godowsky as the master-technician and nothing else, the lightest and fleetest fingered of living pianists. Or they will have him the master transcriber and arranger who can make simplicity intricate and intricacy three times itself whatever the music upon which he wrests his malign skill. Mr. Godowsky may be both, but the faithful would better serve the master did they keep these admirations to themselves.

Why not acclaim him for example, as the pianist of exquisitely pellucid and polished tone, of the finest degree of arabesque, of exquisitely limpid and modulated song that was heard when he played at the Symphony Concert. If his devotees would only believe it, Mr. Godowsky shines clearest in his own light.

Extract from the Musical Courier, Volume 12, 1906

The most original pianist of our day is Leopold Godowsky. He is one of the most original pianists that ever lived, and for this reason he will ever rank in the annals of music as one of the great piano personalities of all time. What unusual technical paths he has trodden is illustrated in his wonderful arrangements of the Chopin Studies. He has developed the left hand to a hitherto unheard of degree, and by his arrangements he has taken a big step in advance and given technic generally a big impetus. He who treads unknown paths will always call censure upon his head; that is history and it will probably remain for the future generations to give Godowsky full credit for what he has done along this line. His innovations must have an effect of the mode of writing for the instrument, for his method of combining and interweaving several themes is absolutely novel, and opens up a new field for the composer by widening the technical borders of his art. Godowsky has, without doubt, the most original and modern technique of any living pianist. For universality of technical equipment he is scarcely equalled and certainly not surpassed. But wonderful though Godowsky's technique is, it would be exceedingly unfair to judge him by that standard alone. He is an artist who stands the test from every point of view; what wonderful

Beauty of tone, what poetry he has! And what true and musicianship, what individuality of conception. Talk with him about the interpretation of music of all epochs, from the earliest times down to the present. Enter with him into detail, dwell on little things, and see how exhaustive and thorough is his knowledge. As an all-round musician he has no superior among living instrumentalists.

This big little man is one to the most modest artists I ever met. He is wholly free from conceit, pretensions and airs, and his naturalness and simplicity personified. No artist could come out onto the stage in a more simple or unaffected manner than he does, and yet directly he touches the piano the force of his personality is felt. He is a man of rare sympathy and genial disposition, and I do not believe he has an enemy in the world.

A word more concerning his arrangements of the 27 Chopin studies; also of works by Henselt, Weber, Schubert and others. It was during his American sojourn that Godowsky hit upon new combinations and devices that led to his studies based upon the original compositions of these composers. In 1893 while trying to play chromatic thirds without using the thumb on two white keys in succession he found a new and simple way of securing the desired legato effects. He applied this discovery to the Chopin Study in thirds and was so satisfied with the result that he arranged it for the left hand alone, and after considerable practice, came to the conclusion that this neglected member was capable of far greater development. As only a few of the original Chopin Studies were written with a view to developing the left hand, he arranged six of them for the left hand alone, and a study of these, as de Pachmann, Hofmann and other great pianists have testified, increase its capabilities to an astonishing degree. Several composers have now followed Godowsky's example; for instance, the Russian Composers Felix Blumenfeld and the gifted young Scriabine, have written etudes for the left hand alone. Godowsky considers Scriabine one of the greatest living composers for the piano. Writers for the piano are sure to be influenced by Godowsky more and more as time goes on.

His own method is as follows: he takes the original study, and retaining the outline only, adds variations of his own thus making of it another composition, or he combines two or three themes in one piece. In his latest work of this kind, an arrangement of Strauss' well known Waltz "Kunsterleben" he has combined and interwoven these themes with wonderful skill. With his earlier arrangement of the "Blue Danube" waltz he created a sensation all over Europe. His left hand being fully equal to his right, the opportunities for richer harmonic and polyphonic treatment are immeasurably increased. By this intermingling of different melodies, he secures strikingly beautiful and novel effects. It is very difficult, of course, to bring out all the voices with different dynamic force and individual expressiveness and to make the pedalling clear, but a mastery of all these intricacies means a greater command over the instrument and over the means of expression, and hence a step in advance. To modern ears, capable of following the orchestral richness of Richard Strauss' scores, these subtle Godowskian complications are a delight.

As a "personality", for example, Mr. Godowsky does not seem as interesting and individual as Mr. Paderewski or Mr. Busoni. Even more than Mr. Hofmann or Mr. Bauer he labors under that score. To see on the platform of the Queen's Hall a short, stout, middle-aged gentleman with a bald spot in his circle of black curly hair, not too cleanly shaven and distinctively slovenly in his dress. His "platform manner is as bourgeois as his aspect. He has a queer trick of drawing his head into his shoulders when he would be particularly impressive, and another, much less amusing, of sitting, fat hands on fat knees between his pieces, like a Yiddish shopkeeper waiting for trade. When the trade comes in the form of applause, he is as smilingly obliging with repetitions and 'extras' as that same shopkeeper might be. No, Mr. Godowsky is not a rare and impressive "personality" like Mr. Paderewski or unusual and baffling like Mr. Busoni, or even merely romantic like Mr. Gabrilowitsch. He would hardly stir the feminine sensibilities of the average audience at a pianoforte recital in America.

A similar lack of individuality besets Mr. Godowsky's playing. When for two hours he plays in succession twenty-odd pieces by Chopin, he seems - the composer and the music aside - somewhat monotonous, rather too meticulous, a little too aware of his audience, and distinctly the deliberate seeker of unusual and not always justifiable effects. He plays, for example, with a precision that often seems of an idealized and "transcendental" pedagogy. He can adjust the flow of a melody to the harmonic background with acute differentiation, maintain it and yet diversify it with adroit subtleties of accent. He likes to isolate and mould a phrase until it becomes almost brittle. His runs, his arpeggios, are little miracles of fleet exactitude. He likes the smooth-edged musical period; the squared musical period. The clarity of all is perfect; but it is a hard and rather dry clarity. It lacks warmth and eloquence; the listener receives no sense of a vivid and distinct emotion in the pianist, he merely appreciates the perfect fluency and exactitude of technical facility, the perfect discipline that the pianist holds over his instrument, his music, and himself. Yet as it happens Chopin wrote often an undisciplined and almost an improvised music that was born of a keenly personal emotion and that was designed to kindle in the player and the hearer as keen a response.

To Mr. Godowsky, the Studies, for instance, are Studies in technical problems and solutions, and to be played accordingly, with no hint of fancy in them as well. With them, he calculated, with all the rest of the chosen pieces he calculated. Here was the emphasized contrast, there the accented, there the precisely reiterated phrase; again the moulded melody, or often the melody curiously subordinated to some particular phrase in it, or to some under-voice that thereby, in the fashion of the time, Mr. Godowsky might be original and individual. Therein he could be as bizarre as Mr. Busoni likes to be bizarre, even distorting, but Mr. Godowsky lacks the commanding, the persuading Busonian eloquence. He was only thoughtfully dry. The listener heard the Chopin of Preludes, Studies, Mazurkas and Waltzes with little glamour to glorify them. Mr. Godowsky can be very subtle in his gradations of tone, very adroit in his coloring of it on keyboard and pedal but the result is a dry illumination. There is no iridescence. The lights are too keen, the shadows too exact. The music is not shot through with its own or the pianist's moodiness.

Yet Mr. Godowsky has his compensating, almost his stirring virtues. The vein of dry precision in him makes him just as astute on musical design, and it was good to hear him play the Funeral March in the familiar Sonata with no exaggeration of its reiterated phrases of lament and threnody. Here at least he made the music of a fine and deep personal emotion and not of the pianistic shows of the concert room. He happened also, to revive the Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise Brillante, only once played within memory in Boston. To keep the gentle song of the Andante low voiced, and to inflect its phrases as gently. It is customary to say that the Polonaise is thin, hollow, commonplace Chopin. It may be, but Mr. Godowsky saved it by a driving power and a rhythmic vitality that brought it to life again. It is this curious driving power that makes what at first seems his exact reiterations, as in the hackneyed Ballad in A flat, gradually and strangely insinuating. Very subtly he varies each one with some little variation in propulsive power; an intellectual and technical exercise, it is true but fascinating withal. Of rhythm, at least, Mr. Godowsky is a master unless he chooses deliberately to break and distort for an "individual effect". He did come close to glamour in the suggestion of the dance that etherialized the Waltzes and Mazurkas. One of the chosen Preludes was finely clangorous and tumultuous. He can order flecks of song so that they move as rhythmically as balls touched by the flawless flow of an electric current. His Ballade moved note by note, phrase by phrase, in an exquisite harmony of motion - perchance he was forgetting his audience and even his pedagogy.

PADEREWSKI - PIANIST

Those Frenchmen who used to say "Litz" and still say it, have now said "Paderowski" - and I'm afraid that they will persist in doing so. Yet whilst despoiling these names in such a cavalier fashion, they have at the same time been the first to breath into them the breath of their predestined glory.

Paderewski's first concerts in Paris were a decisive revelation for an adolescent such as myself, a revelation of all the nobility which could be brought to the humble performer's art when an inspired poet took possession of the keyboard.

Liszt hadn't delivered the imperious eloquence of his genius for us who came too late in this century of the piano. Rubinstein was getting old, sublime and uneven, and only appeared sporadically on the Parisian platforms. Plante was already living the life of a sage at Mont-de-Marsan. The intellectual talent of Von Bulow hardly matched our aspirations, we who were eager to hear the music quivering under less dogmatic fingers.

Then suddenly, there came this thunderbolt, this lightning, this invasion of our hearts and of our interests by the magnetic personality of this legendary 'Grand Seigneur' who burnished with a passionate new accent, those works which had been tarnished, alas, by the conscientious application of our daily efforts, whose vivid technique outstripped our vision of an art free, inventive and daring, and whose palpitating nervosity revealed to us at last the secrets of the keyboard. In a word, it was the realisation of our ideal, the arrival of the pianist of our epoch.

Numerous music students owe more than might be supposed to the fiery Paderewski of those days. Not that we tried to imitate the inimitable, but rather that he liberated us from scholarly restraint, because he made us realise that the surest and highest way of serving the great masters was to bestow on them the absolute sincerity of one's own personality, and because he taught us that to waken the moribund notes of texts to life, it was necessary to breath one's own life into them.

And I don't speak only of his interpretations of Chopin which have already become legendary - but of unforgettable performances of Beethoven, Schumann and Bach which still sing marvellously in my memory. There was a Chromatic Fantasy, an Op.111 Sonata which remain for me the finest expression of Paderewski the seer, the creator of musical poetry.

Then came the triumphal ascent, the adoration of two continents, which we followed with pride to see the greatest of us know the glory of becoming a Demi-God whilst still alive. In fact it is worth repeating, (and it is something which would not apply in the case of so many other artists) that for all his success and for all the delirious welcomes which greeted this most venerated pianist, not one of us thought of anything but delighting in it, as if he reflected back onto each one of us a little of that glory which was his destiny.

Then, at the height of his career, when the time was coming when full of renown and surrounded by affection, he was going to be able to devote himself, not to complete rest, but at least to the relaxation of engaging in different musical activities, came the bloody catclysm which for four years turned the world and our perceptions upside down.

Others will describe Paderewski's role during that period, when not surprisingly to those of us who revered him so passionately, he won honours in other spheres.

For nearly a century, the nostalgic music of Chopin, cradle song of the unhappy slumber of an oppressed country, served to remind humanity that the country existed and suffered. Isn't it a splendid outcome that it has fallen to the lot of that blessed interpreter of the Polish singer to restore liberty to its citizens and to lead his country to a new destiny?

One might think that after so much time passed in defending his country, in studying its future, in negotiation and administration, that the man of government would triumph over the musician. Nevertheless he has come back to us. We have found again in the concert halls of two continents, where the magic of his name has drawn the crowds as before, augmented by a new generation which has been conquered in its turn, with the same remarkable atmosphere of the concerts of former times.

It's the same unique Paderewski with the inexhaustible powers, the affecting warmth, the miraculous poetry of rhythm.

But he sometimes brings to his playing, something profound and prophetic which we hadn't noticed before. He continues to show us the way, to open up, shining and sure, those horizons at which, with all our efforts, we could only guess.

(Alfred Cortot's preface to: Opienski, Henryk: I.J. Paderewski, Lausanne 1929)

This translation (c) Harold Taylor 1991

GODOWSKY'S CHOPIN STUDIES: TECHNICALLY
AND AESTHETICALLY CONSIDERED

by Adolph Brune
(Professor of Harmony, Chicago Musical College.)

As a student of piano and a composer of serious aims, I have been greatly interested during the last two years in the remarkable arrangements from the Chopin Studies, which Mr. Godowsky has been making - most of which I have had the pleasure of hearing and examining privately during the course of their production and after completion. Such of these works as have been published have already received extended notice in MUSIC; nevertheless, at the risk of being tedious, I have thought better to include in my study the published pieces as well as the eighteen or twenty which still remain in MSS. What I have to say would perhaps be clearer to the reader if musical illustrations could be employed; but beside the difficulty of preparing them from the MSS. copies, they would add so much to the bulk of the article that I have contented myself without them.

All of these Godowsky arrangements had their origin, it will be remembered, in the desire of providing for a more ample development of the left hand; but in the course of his work, while never losing sight of this fundamental idea, Mr. Godowsky has shown a progressively higher conception, whereby the latest studies not only give the left hand more to do than is found in any of the classical works for piano, but also bring out new beauties in the music, through this infusion of a richly pulsating life in that part of piano composition which is commonly left almost bare - out of consideration for the convenience of players.

Of the twenty-seven studies by Chopin only two, Nos. 9 and 10, Op. 10 might be called left-hand studies; and in only a few, for instance Nos. 4 and 10, Op. 10 and Nos. 1 and 12, Op. 25, the left hand is of equal importance, technically to the right hand. In Liszt's "Transcendent Studies" only No. 10 is for the left hand. The Paganini study No. 2 and "Waldesrauschen" offer equal difficulties for both hands, but in the three concert studies and the "Gnomenreigen" the left hand does not share the difficulties very extensively with the right. Of Tallberg's (sic) studies only in numbers 2 and 5 are the technical problems equally divided between the two hands. Henselt gives more opportunities to the left hand. See his studies Op. 2, Nos. 1 and 11, and Op. 5, Nos. 6, 9 and 10. Brahms in his Paganini studies gives the figuration alternately to both hands.

There are few studies, for instance, Moskowski, Op. 24, No. 1; the F sharp major studies by Tausig, partly the A flat major study by P. von Schloeser, etc., in which the left hand predominates. Yet there are many technical problems that have not been applied to the left hand.

In the Godowsky arrangements of the Chopin studies, several of which are published by Schirmer, this gap is filled, and it may interest the readers of MUSIC to know the treatment these studies receive and the manner the difficulties have been overcome that offered themselves to the arranger.

The first study of Op. 10 has widespread chords for the right while the left supplies only the bass. Henselt in Op. 2, No. 1, has a very similar figure for the left. The difficulty for the arranger was to find something for the right to do. The original has no rhythmical

or melodical motive of any kind that could serve this purpose. In the Arrangement the left receives the figuration unchanged except two measures (forty-one and forty-eight where the figure is interrupted for one quarter to better mark the sudden modulation, E major, C dominant). The additions are, first: the right brings the same figurations as the left in contrary motion and a chord at the beginning of every measure. The harmonization is scrupulously retained throughout. The result is at once an increased tone power and brilliancy and the added chords mark the rhythm and make the change of harmony stronger.

No. 2, Op. 10, with its chromatic scale for the 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers, is arranged for the left hand alone. It is a purely technical study. The measures 19-30 have been slightly modified to retain the harmonical contour of the original; the study is altered only occasionally for a quarter (for instance, measures 3, 8 and 17), here and there. In order to give the chromatic scale to the 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers, it became necessary to place the chords over instead of under the scale. Great music value can be attributed neither to the original nor the arrangement, but as a study it will be extremely useful, as the facility to pass the three left fingers over without the thumb will be found very helpful in very many passages.

In a later arrangement (or transformation) of the same study Mr. Godowsky has given also the exact right hand part to the left, but so that the 1st and 2nd fingers (the 3rd helps occasionally) have the chromatic scale. In the first half the left has also the chords of the original, later on a melody is given to the left in addition to the chromatic scale, a different combination. The right has a light staccato triplet of figure of eighths. (The combination of three in the right against four in the left is not of so frequent occurrence as the reverse.) The effect is very beautiful, like those scherzi of Mendelssohn in lightness and daintiness, although entirely different in harmonical and melodical treatment. It is a very difficult but effective concert piece. Godowsky has named this piece "Ignis Fatuus" - a well chosen title.

The next is the black keys study, Op. 10, No. 5. Note for note, the right hand part is given to the left. As in No. 1, the arranger was compelled to invent a treble part which would not only fit into the harmonical structure but also partake of the character of the piece. It needs but a glance at the composition to be convinced that this has been very happily accomplished. The climax towards the middle of the study is possibly more effective in the arrangement than in the original.

This study Mr. Godowsky has also arranged a second time, transposed to C major, so that it becomes a study on white keys. This study is again treated differently. While the right hand is exactly reproduced in the left, Mr. Godowsky has given to the right material evolved from the original figuration, thus filling in the harmony dexterously, at the same time weaving into this undulating texture some melodic phrases, consisting mostly of passing notes and semi-tonic suspensions, that add an element of beauty to the study that is absent in the original. And yet in spite of all these additions the whole has not become heavy or lost the character of the original. Look at the manner in which parts of the original technical motive are combined with the middle part, and how happy is the introduction of the entering phrase towards the recapitulation!

The C major study, No. 7 of Op. 10, takes the right hand part from melodic middle voice in the original and the left has the upper parts but adapted to the left instead. Only in the middle has the right retained the melodic progressions of the original while the left combines the technical motive. I believe there is no study of this particular technical diffi-

culty in existence for the left hand. This study is one of the easier ones and the arrangement sounds as beautiful as it is useful to the left hand.

Another arrangement of this study, transposed to G flat, which a competent authority has pronounced the most successful of all the adoptions, retains the original motive unchanged in the left hand. It is, of course more difficult than the form given above. To this the right plays a tender melody, sometimes veiled with figurations, entirely Chopinesque. Occasionally the right takes the technical motive, while the left takes up the melody, then again both hands have the motive. Beautiful is also the effect of the organ point on D flat. The harmony is rarely changed, but, as in the transposed black key study, is enriched in the same manner without changing the structure.

In the F minor study, Op. 25, No. 2, the left plays besides the original right hand part a supplementary part giving the fundamentals of the underlying harmony. The right has a counterpoint which abounds in rhythmical intricacies. The harmony has undergone quite frequent changes; there are a number of harsh dissonances in this study but they are disagreeable only when the study is played in moderate tempo and not smoothly. In the required tempo their character is so fleeting as not to be noticed.

The study in G sharp minor is one of the most difficult of the whole set but also one of the most beneficial, brilliant and effective of them. The left has again the original study, almost unchanged except in a few places where the right takes one or two of the thirds. The right takes its material from the original bass part placed partly higher, partly lower than the left. Harmonically there is the strictest adherence to the original except in measure twenty-three.

The G flat major study, Op. 25, No. 9, is even in the original of lesser importance, its pleasing, rather superficial brilliancy is retained in the arrangement, just as cleverly treated as the others but does not call for any especial comment.

Different it is with the A minor, Op. 25, No. 4. The original is one of the weakest of all the twenty-four studies of Op. 10 and 25; the study is for the left hand alone; and what is expected of this mostly neglected member in this study would make this arrangement next to impossible of execution, did not the most careful indication of fingering and pedal marks give a clue as to how it can be done.

Upon a superficial examination this arrangement seems to have nothing in common with the original. A closer study shows that the structure is retained throughout (omitting only a few details) and the melodic even more so. But instead of keeping the single motive of the original (the staccato chords) this study is rearranged in the manner of variations wherever the first idea occurs, and the remainder as ritornelles with a kindred treatment. In this study Mr. Godowsky has shown a fertile imagination and a superior knowledge of the possibilities of one hand playing. To play this study in such a manner that one does not constantly wish the performer would use both hands not only requires the greatest independence of the fingers, a flexibility of the thumb and great skill in mute finger-changing, but also a most delicately trained ear for tonal proportions, combined with a masterly use of the pedal.

Another study for the left alone is the arpeggio study, Op. 10, No. 11, transposed to A major. (Of the necessity of transposing some of the

studies, one can be easily convinced by trying to play the original in E major; some of the chords quite easy in E flat are quite the reverse a semitone higher. A detailed analysis of this study would be beyond the limits of this article, as it would be necessary to reprint the whole study. Perhaps the following remarks will be sufficient to appreciate the great artistic merit of the transcription.

The first two measures bring a canonical imitation in the octave - a quarter later - of the melody hovering above the broken chords; measures 5 and 6 show the same treatment. Measures 3, 4 and 7 are as in the original. The 8th measure brings out the interlude in a characteristic way. The next seven measures have a **clever** and very melodious counterpoint in sixteenths in the middle voice, the harmonies being kept intact. Then the phrases of the original are divided, imitation of the initial phrase (measure 1) and new melodic material are introduced, so that the study becomes more contrapuntal in character till the repetition, where the imitations appear as before but syncopated. Nothing of the original is omitted and the whole is greatly enhanced by the additions. When properly played I would prefer this arrangement to the original. This, of course, smacks of heresy, but it is my opinion, nevertheless.

The most brilliant of all is perhaps the arrangement of the F major study, Op. 10, No. 8. The left hand brings the original study almost intact. The strong rhythmical motive of the first measures does excellent service throughout. In the first repetition the right hand has, besides this motive, the broken chord in contrary motion to the bass - adding greatly to the sonority, brilliancy and difficulty (even Mr. Godowsky thinks this part rather difficult). The modulatory part after the D minor episode has undergone the greatest change. The continuance of the rhythm and added harmonizations in double note passages are the chief causes. The Coda uses the beautiful melody of the middle voice in contrapuntal writing to make this part a fitting close of a masterly setting.

The study which has gained most from Mr. Godowsky's help to bring out its poetic possibilities is, in my estimation, the E minor study, Op. 25. It becomes fuller and in the repetition after the E major part also more varied and interesting in rhythm. In the first twenty-eight measures the harmonic changes are slight. In the following sixteen measures the left hand takes the exact notes of the right hand part in the original, to which the right plays a simple, expressive melody, which necessitates passing changes in the harmony. After the major part the addition becomes more important. The left has the melody with its supporting chords and the changing notes from below as the original; the right has the changing notes from above and a counterpart, modeled after the melody in the middle voice of measures thirty-seven to forty-one. The proper balancing of the different parts according to their musical importance is immensely difficult; the effect is very poetical when played with the necessary repose. The last seventeen measures are very much changed. The bass progression is taken as the melody and to this are added chords at once powerful and in keeping with the preceding. The rather weak ending of the original has, through filling in and continuance of rhythm, become more imposing than in the original.

In the major part of this study the left has the original melodic idea and a figuration similar to that of the original right hand part. The right has passages in thirds, as we meet with in Chopin's works. From the sixteenth measure the latent melody with its harmonization is retained, but only at close comparison does the figuration show its identity. Where the sixteenths enter in the original study, this arrangement shows, besides the thirds passages in triplets as before,

a Counterpoint is sixteenths for the left which is woven around the broad melody without obscuring the same. The rich tone color produced through this combination must be heard to be appreciated.

The arrangement of the study in sixths is remarkable, besides its great difficulty, on account of the expressive melody that Mr. Godowsky gives the right hand. It is a melody that seems to grow out of the study and is brought to a great climax. Notice should also be taken of the ingenuity with which passages are amplified; for instance, the chromatic scale in sixths with its succession of augmented triads. This does not occur very often. Another example is to be found in the first act of "Tristan and Isolde."

The A flat study, Op. 25 No. 1, has been arranged for the left alone and with great orchestral effect for both. Mr. Godowsky introduces a very effective counter-melody in both arrangements. Both studies are very difficult.

The A minor study, Op. 25, No. 11, competes with the F major study for the first place in point of brilliancy. The A minor is certainly more difficult; a veritable tempest of sound. Probably not more than half a dozen of the greatest virtuosos can do justice to it. The exact notes of the original are changed more in this arrangement than in any other. The right has the motive of the left in the original and, in order to avoid a collision between this part and the descending chromatic scale, it became necessary to commence it on C instead of F. In the fourth measure the passage again is changed to adapt it for the left. Listening to this study the changes are hardly noticeable. The march motive (of a dotted eighth, a sixteenth and a quarter) is used in almost every measure; and with great effect, if the player bring it out. Doubling the chromatic scale in octaves and placing it under the chords is another device resorted to for increasing the tone power. This study abounds in technical feats that pass unnoticed, for instance, a very difficult left hand figure and other things.

The A flat study, Op. 10, No. 10, is transposed to D major. It is treated with even greater freedom than the preceding. There are new rhythmical combinations, new melodic material and immense technical difficulties, all worked up in to an orchestral climax of superb power, after which comes a soft part which is harmonized in a way that is entirely original; it is beautiful and is the result of polyphonic thinking so often exhibited by Mr. Godowsky in his original compositions.

Very original is the idea of combining several of the studies into one, and the fact that this is possible with so insignificant changes as we find in these pieces might be taken as indications that Chopin used the same pattern more than once. Mr. Godowsky has combined the two G flat studies, Op. 10 and 25. The E flat (Op. 10, No. 11) transposed to F; and the F major study, Op. 25; also the three A minor studies into one, Op. 10, No. 2, Op. 25, Nos 4 and 11.

In the first, the left hand has the G flat (the black key work), note for note, through sixteen measures, the right has the first eight measures of Op. 25, and repeats four measures, after which the right has Op. 10 and the left Op. 25, for four measures, concluding with the original cadence of measure eight. In this manner the whole is treated. Later the rhythm of Op. 25 is intensified by emphasizing the voice work. The dissonances thus produced are in no way harder than those in the beginning of Chopin's Berceuse, when played with the proper discretion and lightness of touch the harshness disappears and only the satisfaction of a clever canonic imitation remains. That the whole is not a mere caprice

of an artist that might evoke the complacent smile of a musician in his study, but a beautifully sounding concert piece, was conclusively proven by the spontaneous applause of the audience on its first appearance in Chicago. Mr. Godowsky has called it "Badinage."

Equally beautiful, in my estimation even more so, is the second combination. The manner of proceeding is similar and as it is neither necessary nor interesting to repeat the laudatory adjectives, I will only advise pianists, first, to hear it if possible, and then practice it if it is within their reach.

It is idle to inquire whether Mr. Godowsky was impelled by the obvious lack of technical work for the left hand in an artistic form, or simply through interest in this work, to compose these arrangements. The results would be the same. And if Liszt could transcribe the ninth symphony, Hans von Bulow "Tristan and Isolde" and Tausig the "Invitation to the Dance," by Weber, then one can hardly reproach Mr. Godowsky with lack of reverence for these master works of Chopin. The great discretion with which Mr. Godowsky has retained every harmonic and melodic progression, whenever possible, the way he evolves the right hand part from scanty indication in the original and the intuitive manner in which he has added melodies where it became necessary, certainly show that Mr. Godowsky came well prepared to his task. Remarkable is the growth that the later studies show. If the rhythm has in some studies become stronger and the treatment more contrapuntal, this would be taken as improvement rather. Chopin's weakest talent was counterpoint, as is well known. Beethoven's last works, Brahms's, Schumann's, Liszt's (in a different way), the whole field of modern piano literature shows the inclination to combine the contrapuntal art of Bach with the different melodic construction of ours. This trend is also very pronounced in Mr. Godowsky's original compositions, for instance the "Valse Idyll," and for a writer with so great a facility of writing brilliant passages, this is a very distinguished merit.

The great difficulty of these arrangements will prove a stumbling block to many. But the difficulties of Beethoven's sonatas, or the compositions by Liszt and the original studies by Chopin were as great, I think, as these studies are to us. An artist should not be bound by any such considerations. It is true there will not be many who can play these studies in public, even if they so desired. Nevertheless, even they can derive great benefits in various ways from studying them. The new fingering for many passages (for instance for the chromatic scale in thirds) is certainly worth while studying. The greatest technical difficulty of piano playing is probably that of gaining perfect control of the thumb. From the time before Bach when the thumb was not used at all, till now, the use of the thumb, especially on black keys, has steadily increased.

The fingering of diatonic thirds, as given in the E minor study and elsewhere, shows how such passages can be rendered in perfect legato. The greatest flexibility of thumb is required in the arrangement of the A flat, Op. 25, study for the left hand. Another instance is the beginning of the F minor study, and the A minor, Op. 25, No. 11. Also the fourth finger demands great cultivation in these studies, for instance Op. 10, No. 2, and Op. 25, No. 11, in the example given above. The right hand is furthermore not put in the background, but has also very rich material for practice; see the transposed black key study and the C major, Op. 10, No. 1, and the concert arrangement of the "Bird" study (this must refer to the arrangement of Henselt's "Si Oiseau J'etais" - Ed.).

Another thing few players possess is the absolute repose in complicated and contrary rhythms, so often required in compositions by Liszt, Chopin, Schumann, Brahms. Again, in this respect, these studies offer very valuable and partly entirely new possibilities; see the transposed A flat study, Op. 10.

The harmonical treatment of these studies also calls for great praise. The undertaking of Schumann and Liszt to arrange the caprices of Paganini for piano was certainly in a way easier, as they could give full play to their individuality; as a comparison of the G minor in this in this list for instance, will show. But here the greatest virtue was discretion. It was not necessary that every harmonic progression be slavishly reproduced, and weak harmonies be retained even if that had been possible.

I have taken care to emphasize in the above review how carefully Mr. Godowsky has adhered to the text. But there remain a great many instances where an alteration became not only possible but necessary. And here the thoughtful, refined feeling of the artist shows itself. A careful comparison of the original with the arrangement will show this. That the ripe individuality of the composer as shown in his original compositions is also there present, is evident. And as the harmonization of every composer of any merit is necessarily individual; therefore, one will find progressions that sound hard - even harsh, but that has been the experience with every new composer, if he amounted to anything. History proves this. In these compositions it depends largely on the feelings of the player for just such progressions, whether they please or become ugly. Because of the widely differing tastes it is not possible to illustrate the foregoing assertion. As to the klaviermaessigkeit of the arrangements, emanating from such a great artist and virtuoso, there can be no question. Whether these compositions are in all cases properly called arrangements is doubtful, as some of them (particularly those above) are far more original than that word would imply.

Of the studies as a whole, it can be said that they must prove eminently beneficial as practice, and most of them are also very effective and beautiful music; and this, after all, is the highest praise to bestow on them.

They are unquestionably a very valuable addition to the piano literature, one of the most important for many years.

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RECORD REVIEW

Godowsky: Passacaglia
Schubert/Godowsky: Das Wandern, Gute Nacht, Ungeduld
Weber/Godowsky: Invitation to the Dance
Schubert/Godowsky: Ballet Music from "Rosamunde"
Schubert/Godowsky: Moment Musical in F minor
Strauss/Godowsky: Künstlerleben
Godowsky: Alt-Wien

Rian de Waal - piano

Hyperion CDA66496

Hyperion are to be congratulated on getting Mr. de Waal to the recording studio so soon after his Wigmore Hall recital where he gave the second London performance of Godowsky's Passacaglia some sixty-three years - almost to the day - after the composer had introduced it to the City.

This is a good, well balanced programme of Godowsky the Composer and transcriber, with the emphasis, as usual I'm afraid, on the latter.

The Passacaglia gets a very good performance, technically clean with a sound overall conception of the massive structure and rhythmically sure-footed. It is, to my taste, a bit on the brisk side - especially the fugue - but my main criticism is that the tragic element is absent; this is largely due to the lack of sonority and tonal generosity. The climaxes do not overwhelm and the pianoissimi do not whisper. Perhaps I ask too much, for this is a performance one can live with even if it does not exhaust the possibilities of the music.

Mr. de Waal elegant, stylish playing of the Schubert transcriptions is very pleasing - save for Ungeduld, a brutal piece to bring off - which sounds lumpy, but the humour of the Moment Musical is very well caught.

The "Invitation to the Dance" is a strict transcription in that the form of the original is closely adhered to, but all of the contrapuntal possibilities are explored: Godowsky later arranged this transcription for two pianos before adding an additional optional part for a third piano. That Godowsky took this original transcription seriously is shown by his dedicating it to Busoni.

Mr. de Waal copes admirably with the considerable technical challenges and gives an assured, musical performance in keeping the essential feeling of the dance throughout.

The Strauss/Godowsky "Künstlerleben" gets the best performance of all: I have never heard a better performance of this much-recorded work. All the contrapuntal dexterity is clear, and the spirit of the waltz is always there.

Alt-Wien concludes the programme. This is given in the original 1919 version and is nicely played with just a hint of schmalz.

The sleeve note (by Jeremy Nicholas) is excellent although I would take issue with his statement that the Passacaglia was Godowsky's last major work; the marvellous Suite for the Left Hand Alone written two years later is surely a major work.

H.W.