ALEXANDER BRAILOWSKY

THE BERLIN RECORDINGS 1928 - 1934

THE PIONEERING CHOPIN AND LISZT RECORDINGS

dana cord

DACOCD 336

Fréderic Chopin (1810-1849)

Piano Concerto No. 1 E minor Op. 11

[1] Allegro Maestoso *16:26*
[2] Romance. Larghetto *9:55*
[3] Rondo. Vivace *9:38*
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Julius Prüwer, conductor
1003-1010 BM. No. 66753/6. 1928

Sonata No. 2 B flat minor Op. 35

[4] Grave - Doppio movimento *14:50*
[5] Scherzo *4:51*
[6] Marche funébre - Lento. Presto *8:45*
1247 1/2 - 1250 1/2 BI 1. No.95480/1.1932

[7] **Barcarolle F sharp minor Op. 60** *8:23*
745 1/2-746 1/2 BI 1. No.35014. 1934

[8] **Ballade No. 1 G minor Op. 23** *7:36*
189 1/2-190 1/2 BV 1. No.95325. 1929

DACOCD 337

[1] **Mazurka B flat Major Op. 7,1** *2:34*
191 1/2 BV 1. No.90324. 1929

[2] **Nocturne E flat major Op. 9,2** *4:28*
984 BM. No.95143. 1928

[3] Prélude B minor Op. 28,6 & G Major Op. 28,3 *2:41*
1111 BI 1. No.95423. 1931

[4] Prélude D flat major Op. 28,15 *4:17*
743 1/2 GE 1. No.35012. 1934

[5] Walz A flat Major Op. 34,1 *4:40*
986 BM. No.95143. 1928

[6] Walz C sharp minor Op. 64,2 *3:28*
1002 BM. No.95140. 1928

[7] Walz A flat Major Op. 69,1 *3:27*
3325 3/4 BH 1. No.90197. 1932

[8] Walz E minor Op.posth. *2:21*
2599 1/2 BH. No.90174. 1931

[9] Impromptu A flat Major Op. 29 *4:13*
1110 1/2 BI 1. No.95423. 1931

[10] Fantaisie-Impromptu C sharp minor Op. 66 *4:47*
192 1/2 BV 1. No.95324. 1929

Etudes:

[11] E Major Op. 10,3 *3:53*
187 1/2 BV 1. No.95323. 1929

[12] C sharp minor Op. 10,4 *2:09*
744 3/4 GE 1. No.35012. 1934

[13] G flat Major Op. 10,5 *1:35*
1001 BM. No.95140. 1928

[14] A flat Major Op. 25,1 *2:11*
3326 BH 1. No.90197. 1932

[15] F minor Op. 25,2 *1:21*
1001 BM. No.95140. 1928

[16] F Major Op. 25,3 *1:48*
744 3/4 GE 1. No.35012. 1934

[17] G flat Major Op. 25,9 *0:59*
3326 BH 1. No.90197. 1932

[18] A minor Op. 25,11 *3:23*
188 BV 1. No.95323. 1929

[19] C minor Op. 25,12 *2:10*
1111 BI 1. No.95423. 1931

[20] Polonaise A flat major Op. 53 *6:14*
3327-3328 1/2 BH 1. No.90196. 1932

Alexander Brailowsky, Steinway Grand Piano

DACOCD 338

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Piano Concerto No. 1 E flat Major (1849)

[1] Allegro maestoso *5:52*
[2] Quasi adagio - Allegretto vivace - Allegretto animato *4:44*
[3] Allegro marziale e animato - Presto *8:36*
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Julius Prüwer, conductor
993-997 1/2 BM. No.66750/2. 1928

[4] **Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 C sharp minor** *8:56*
1112-1113 1/2 BI 1. No.95424. 1931

[5] **Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6 D flat Major** *6:36*
682-683 1/2 BI 1. No.90146. 1929

[6] **Hungarian Rhapsody No. 12 C sharp minor** *8:56*
747-748 1/2 GE 1. No.35015. 1934

[7] **Valse impromptu** (1842/52) *4:38*
1115 BI 1. No.95425. 1931

[8] **Gnomenreigen** (Etude de concert No. 2) *2:59*
2601 1/2 BH 1. No.90175. 1931

[9] **Liebestraum No. 3 A flat Major** *4:28*
1000 BM. No.95203. 1928

DACOCD 339

Richard Wagner/Liszt:

[1] Tannhäuser Overture *13:57*

193-195 1/2 BV 1. No.95419/20. 1931

[2] Spinnerlied (from Fliegende Holländer) *5:53*

1479-1480 BK.. No.90027. 1928

Franz Schubert/Liszt:

[3] Morgenständchen *3:02*

2600 1/2 BH 1. No.90175. 1931

Schubert/Th. Leschetizky:

[4] Moment Musicale Op. 94,3 *1:42*

116 DI 1. No.95420. 1931

Schubert/Karl Tausig:

[5] Marche Militaire Op. 51 *4:50*

1114 1/2 BI 1. No.95425. 1931

Scarlatti/Tausig:

[6] Pastorale-Capriccio *4:12*

982 BM. No.95141. 1928

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

[7] Spinnerlied C Major Op. 67,4 *1:41*

116 DI 1. No.95420. 1931

[8] Scherzo Op. 16,2 *2:17*

2596 1/2 BH 1. No.90173. 1931

Robert Schumann (1810 -1856)

[9] Traumeswirren Op. 12,7 *2:36*

2597 1/2 BH 1. No.90173. 1931

[10] Intermezzo from Faschingsschwank Op. 26 *2:14*

6016 GD 1. No.62657. 1934

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)

[11] Rondo - perpetuum mobile Op. 24,4 *3:54*

987 BM. No.95141. 1928

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

[12] Serenade For The Doll from Children's Corner *2:40*

6746 1/2 GR8. No.62657. 1934

[13] Toccata from Pour le Piano *3:28*

2598 1/2 BH. No.90174. 1931

Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)

[14] Prelude C sharp minor Op. 11,10 *1:26*

[15] Etude D sharp minor Op. 8,12 *2:03*

983 BM. No.95142. 1928

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

[16] Danse Rituelle from El amor brujo *3:56*

985 BM. No.95142. 1928

Alexander Brailowsky, Steinway Grand Piano

No Art Without Life, No Life Without Art

Almost from the time of his début in Paris immediately following the First World War, the Russian pianist **Alexander Brailowsky** (1896-1976) became part of that small and indomitable group of élite pianists whose number seldom exceeds a dozen. For some magic reason, and sometimes even contrary to the fluctuations of taste and style, their names possess the magnetism which enables these first-rate musicians to fill even the most capacious concert halls all over the world, and to reap their applause as if according to a long-standing and irrevocable agreement between them and their audience.

Brailowsky, who like so many of his pianist colleagues (Schnabel, Rubinstein, Borovsky and Horowitz) was of Jewish extraction, was born in Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, on 16 February 1896 to Peter and Elizabeth (Raptchinsky) Brailowsky. His father had a music shop, but also found time to teach the piano, and when his son Alexander displayed an extraordinary talent for the instrument at an early age, it was his father who taught him the rudiments of music. "My father was a musical amateur of fine taste and cultivation who played the piano well," Brailowsky once said. "I can remember, when I was only five, how my father and I used to sit at the piano and play scales together, each of us trying to see which one would get to the top of the keyboard first."

Brailowsky's training gathered momentum too, though without anyone going so far as to push him into the role of an infant prodigy - for which he often expressed his gratitude later in life. This gradual rise to the top continued at the conservatoire in Kiev, and in 1907, three years after Brailowsky had been admitted, this establishment received the visit of no less than the Imperial Inspector of the Russian Schools of Music himself. The 11 year-old Alexander Brailowsky attracted the Inspector's attention immediately, and the boy was

asked to step forward from among the ranks so that he could examine his hands. On this occasion the Tsar's emissary, who was not otherwise known to lavish words of praise or to make indiscriminate promises, uttered some prophetic words on the spot: "You are destined, I am sure, to be a great pianist." This statement exactly corresponds to what Czerny in his day said about his pupil Franz Liszt: "It was evident that nature had intended him to be a pianist." It would be difficult to deny the inspector of Russia's conservatoires a certain measure of competence and authority. His name was **Sergej Rachmaninoff**, and Brailowsky got to know him much better when they met in America many years later. When Rachmaninoff died in 1943, immediately before a concert in San Francisco at which he was to have played the solo part in his own Piano Concerto No. 2, it was the now world-famous Alexander Brailowsky who took his place.

In 1911, after Brailowsky had received the gold medal of the Kiev conservatoire in connection with his final examinations, some of his relations pooled their resources in order to enable him to continue his training at élite level. And in the summer of 1911 the entire Brailowsky family took leave of Kiev and travelled like a flock of nomads to the musical capital of Vienna, where the now 81 year-old **Theodor Leschetizky**, Great Mogul among international music teachers, resided - or rather, held court. He had once taught **Pouchalsky**, who was Brailowsky's teacher in Kiev, and now it was Brailowsky who was to be perfected in the spirit of tradition. Alexander's sister Zena also travelled to Central Europe hoping for a future as concert pianist, but she died quite young, before the outbreak of the First World War. Not until 1961 - half a century after his emigration - did Brailowsky see his native country again. He gave concerts in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev: "The audience was magnificent, and nothing in my home town had changed; the same old houses were still standing in my childhood street - everything was just as I had left it."

However, in the intervening years Tolstoy's **War and Peace** had accompanied him on all his travels as an ever-present re-creation of the Russia he had known - a vision of the past he hoped to be able to take safely with him into the present.

The Leschetizsky period lasted until 1914, when the consequences of the dramatic murder in Sarajevo forced the Brailowsky family to take refuge in Switzerland. Brailowsky used part of the time he spent in his country - then closed in by the war - in studying interpretation with **Ferruccio Busoni**, who was living in Zürich at the time. And when the frontiers were finally re-opened, Brailowsky made his way to Paris, where he - who was never to play chamber music in public - earned ten francs an hour accompanying a well-to-do amateur cellist. Here he also met **Francis Planté** (1839-1934), one of the most renowned keyboard giants of his time, whose precision and elegance had served as an ideal for several generations of French musicians. It was Planté who put the finishing touches to Brailowsky's piano technique before his début concert in the Salle Gaveau during the 1919-20 season.

Thereafter the world lay open to him.

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The Polish **Theodor Leschetizky** (1830-1915), who had the honour of training several litters of great pianists, including Paderewsky, Schnabel, Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler (" The Sarah Bernhardt of the Piano"), Friedman, Elly Ney and Gabrilowitch, was himself a personified piece of musical history. At the age of eleven he became a pupil of **Carl Czerny** (1791-1857), who had himself been a pupil of Beethoven and was later to become the teacher of Franz Liszt - which is not to be sneezed at. He was taught counterpoint, moreover, by the composer and teacher **Simon Sechter** (born 1788, while Mozart was still alive), with whom Schubert had at one time contemplated studying, and from whom Bruckner, among others, was to seek advice. In the middle of the century Leschetizky travelled to Russia, where he became a friend of Anton Rubin-

stein, and also did his best to ensure that the Imperial Court acquired an appropriate standard of musical education. However, from 1878 onwards he chose Vienna as a training camp for those talented pupils who were prepared to submit themselves to his musical drilling.

In 1948, F. W. Gaisberg, then director of His Master's Voice, related that when Alexander Brailowsky made his début with HMV in the 1930's (after the Polydor period), he recorded more than thirty sides in rapid succession without making a single mistake. "We all agreed that never had we seen such uncanny exactness and security of technique. Our curiosity was aroused as to how he attained this perfection - and satisfied when he told us that his teacher was Leschetizky."

To this Brailowsky himself has added the following: "His love of a beautiful tone, and his respect for the individuality of the pupil made him a great teacher. Of course, after the success of Ignace Paderewski he could take his pick of the best pupil material to work with... The full value of Leschetizky's remarkably liberal teaching came to light only in later years."

Leschetizky was a great admirer of strong hands. The modern concert grand, he would say, was not built for a light touch, but "for the play of little hammers", and although he was much too refined himself to consider that a competent pianist in action should resemble something between Joe Louis and Popeye the Sailor, he never forgot that the job of the highly qualified individualists who constituted his clientele was to play for an audience, and that concert halls could be monstrous.

"The great quality of Leschetizky was his vitality", Artur Schnabel remarked. "But I think he conceived of music, not as an exclusive sphere of personal experience, but as something which has to be preserved, shown to others. He saw music as a, so to say, public function. For him it was not music itself which gave to the musician, who took. For him the musician, as a person, was the giver, and he who listened took."

It was the volume of *tone* in particular that was of vital importance to Leschetizky. "He explained generously and specifically", said Leschetizky's pupil Arthur Shattuck, "the art of obtaining (developing) a beautiful, singing tone, to produce a big tone without hardness, a pianissimo tone that would carry to the last row of the top gallery."

Almost all the members of the Leschetizky school, with Schnabel as a notable exception, belonged to the romantic school, and Bach's Goldberg Variations, Beethoven's late sonatas or the more subtle Mozart works were nothing for them. "They were exponents of the big line, the grand effect, the tempo rubato", Harold C. Schonberg writes in his incomparable book on **The Great Pianists**. And Leschetizky, who despite his association with Czerny was basically a child of the grandiose, virtuoso school of the late nineteenth century, does not appear to disagree with this: "Go ahead and play the Well-Tempered Clavier if it interests you, but why waste time on it when there is all of Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt and Brahms to master?"

He was, moreover, often inclined to make an issue of his conviction that "it is harder to play six bars well on the pianoforte than to conduct the whole of Beethoven's ninth symphony." But you dont achieve mastery over the keyboard by half killing yourself with piano practice, day after day. "No one can do that without being mechanical, and that's just what I'm *not* interested in. Two hours, or three at most, is all anyone should require if he will only listen to what he is playing and criticize every note."

On this point Brailowsky could only agree: "I have no fixed work routine; one day I practice two hours, another five, and I am not the type that can slave away for 8-10 hours a day. It is a great mistake for a pianist to work many hours a day; it doesn't produce any better results, but only stiff muscles and fatigue. I have had enough if I play Czerny's studies every day and go through my immediate concert repertoire."

Leschetizky loved to pronounce judgments on national character, which, in

his view, was clearly expressed in the individuality of the pianist concerned. For example, he maintained that Russians were distinguished by their "passion, dramatic power, elemental force and extraordinary vitality. Turbulent natures, difficult to keep within bounds, but making wonderful players when they have the patience to endure to the end."

Leschetizky's assertion about peculiarly Russian characteristics turned out to be an extremely precise description of Brailowsky's manner of playing, and if one were to ask what it was that distinguished the much-discussed Leschetizky method, the answer would presumably be that Leschetizky tried above all to preserve and develop the individuality of his pupils. He set them free, and gave them the courage to be themselves.

And as Schnabel remarked: "By the way, there is no Leschetizky method. It is a mere legend - an absolute fallacy. He never spoke, at least I never heard him speak, of technique. His teaching was much more than a method. It was a current which sought to release all latent vitality in the student. It was addressed to imagination, taste, and personal responsibility, not a blue print, or short cut to success. It gave them a task but no prescription."

Brailowsky has quoted his teacher as author of the motto: "No art without life, no life without art." Could the experience of an interpreter be summed up more beautifully?

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Edwin Fischer once said of the Italian, Busoni (1866-1924), who was a lifelong admirer of Liszt, that he "always had the slender form in mind", and that he "always insisted upon radiance, staccato and transparency". Harold C. Schonberg says of Busoni that he "took much of the romantic nonsense away from piano playing", and the master himself drew attention to the fact that he was not out to modernize the compositions. "On the contrary, by cleaning them of the dust of tradition, I try to restore them their youth."

To sum up, a remark of Schnabel's: "Busoni was the greatest figure - there is nobody like him."

At an early stage of his career Brailowsky laid the foundations for a world-wide reputation as an interpreter of Chopin, on a par, for example, with Alfred Cortot and Arthur Rubinstein. He removed the film of tuberculosis that clowded Chopin's music; he brought fresh air into the salons and "restored to Chopin his youth".

Naturally he could scarcely avoid being aware of the fact that the combination Chopin/Brailowsky on a concert poster was a tremendous draw, and yet now and again he gave vent to his irritation that, apart from those classics which lay close to his heart, he still felt weighed down by, or rather tired of the way in which a spoilt audience expected him, night after night, to include a section with "the unavoidable Chopin". A sigh from the heart.

"No - I don't think one ought to specialize", he said. "But obviously all pianists love Chopin because, more than any other composer, he had a feeling for the piano's soul."

Throughout his entire career Brailowsky did his best to cast off the straight-jacket of one-sidedness and to tackle the pianistic works that most suited his own temperament. It would be natural enough to suppose that his virtuoso repertoire had essentially been determined by impulses from the Leschetizky school - not that this in any way precluded breadth and variation. In fact, during one period of two months - at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires - this "Keyboard Giant" or "Mammoth Pianist", as he was often called in the jargon at that time, managed to give no fewer than seventeen concerts without repeating a single work.

And what did he play? Bach (both Johann Sebastian and his son Wilhelm Friedemann), Vivaldi, Scarlatti (one of his favorites), Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Hummel, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Brahms, César Franck, Saint-Saëns, Grieg, Fauré, Ravel, Debussy, Poulenc, Bartók, Villa-Lobos, de Falla, and of course the Russians: Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Liapunov, Balakirev (Islamey), Liadov, Rimsky-Korsakov, Scriabin,

Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff. Like the last of these composers, and as an echo of the tradition in which he had been brought up, his programmes often used to include paraphrases or transcriptions, including Bach/Busoni, Wagner/ Liszt, Scarlatti/Tausig, and Schubert/Leschetizky. Arrangements like these tend to put off the purists, but as Arthur Rubinstein said: "A pianist ought to play what suits him." And we all know that what may seem to be a barbarous adaptation may contain a musical expression, sometimes even a refinement, which gives the listener a totally new experience. Is a Liszt piano transcription of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* overture more blasphemous than, for example, Ravel's orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* ? Or is Brailowsky's own flamboyant cadenza at the end of the middle section of Chopin's *Fantasie-Impromptu* really a blot on the history of piano playing?

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"As soon as I start to play", Brailowsky related, "I have no idea what is going on around me. I am quite alone in a magic world of music and beauty."

His favorite composers were Bach, Beethoven and Mozart. "It is possibly to compose good even great music in our time", he said in an interview in Copenhagen in November 1929, "but it is too obviously written with the brain, like a construction - a calculation. The old masters gave from an overflowing heart. They had to compose music - they lived only in their music."

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Brailowsky's Paris début caused a sensation with critics and audience alike, and concert organizers began to show an interest. For a couple of years Brailowsky toured Europe, and his name became established on a par with those of the other travelling musicians of that time: Backhaus, Edwin Fischer, Friedman, Gieseking, Kempff, Arrau and Serkin; but suddenly he cancelled all his arrangements and moved into a small cottage in the French Alps not far from Annecy, where he spent most of 1923 mastering Chopin's complete *oeuvre*, that is to say, 172 different works for the piano.

"It was the work of a mathematician rather than a pianist", Brailowsky said later. "They had to be arranged in such a way that they would not be monotonous. Often I spent hours trying to decide if a certain étude should go before a mazurka or after it, or whether it went better with a certain work than another sonata. I worked as though I were putting together a big puzzle. The name of each composition was written on a slip of paper, and I would then try to slip them together in the most interesting way possible. I think I pulled each program apart twenty or thirty times before I was satisfied with it. I performed the complete cycle of Chopin's piano works for the first time in 1924 in the historic Salle Pleyel, once located on the rue Rochechouart but since destroyed. It was the same hall in which Chopin gave his first Paris recital.

"The Pleyel family, as a gesture of kindness, permitted me the use of Chopin's own piano. After playing two waltzes and two mazurkas I had to stop - the piano, so different from our modern pianos, was too 'light' and offered only intimate performance possibilities."

He might have added that he was the first pianist since Franz Liszt to have been allowed to play on Chopin's own piano, and that he was the first pianist in the entire history of music to undertake to present Chopin's complete works in a series of six concerts spread over a period of three weeks.

The effect was overwhelming, and Brailowsky had immediately to repeat his concert cycle in more capacious surroundings than that of the modest Salle Pleyel. Since he has performed his gigantic Chopin-suite more than thirty times all over the world, including New York, Brussels, Zürich, Mexico City, Buenos Aires and, again, Paris.

"Not many pianists have interpreted Chopin as lyrically and poetically as Alexander Brailowsky", wrote **Olin Downes** (1886-1955), who was for several decades the music critic on the New York Times. "He is a born virtuoso in the highest sense of the word. He feels instinctively the resources of the piano and makes of it an instrument that sings and throbs with color. Other pianists may

well envy him his singularly carrying and beautiful tone, which he can modulate exquisitely at will and the prodigious technique that is there when he wants to use it."

In 1960, the 150th anniversary of Chopin's birth, Brailowsky characterized the special qualities of the Polish master as follows: "One should not forget that Chopin was partly of French descent; his genius is at once Slavic and Latin. Latin is his cultivation of form and proportion. Altogether Slavic and Latin, Chopin is as 'classic' as he is 'romantic'. The pitfall for the interpreter is the open door which leads to excess, to exaggeration. Chopin knew how to express the complete range of emotion despite his exclusive use of the piano.How diversified are his works in which we encounter the classic, the dramatic, the folkloric...

"I have played some of Chopin's works from the beginning of my career and, even so, even in frequently played pages I have found some fresh new element. A work 'ripens' when played in public. For me it only becomes a part of myself after a few performances before an audience - and I mean a real audience: five hundred or three thousand listeners, not just a few friends and family in a drawing room!"

The real audience - that was what Brailowsky was looking for. In Europe, of course, where he became the first instrumentalist to be invited to give recitals at the Paris *Opéra* , and where, in Belgium, a Brailowsky Prize for young musicians was instituted in 1936 to supplement the already existing Kreisler and Casals awards. But also in Africa, Australia and the Far East as well as South America, which seems to have had a special predilection for him, and where special trains often had to be laid on in order to transport thousands who wanted to hear him play. "I am like a race horse in relation to my audience. The awareness of being the center of attraction for a large audience makes me exert myself to the utmost."

At that point Brailowsky moved from the old world to the new: his New

York début took place in the Aeolian Hall on 19 November 1924. He had originally planned to stay six weeks in the USA, but the tour was such a tremendous success that he had to prolong it with four months. However, not until twelve years later (February 1936) did he return to Manhattan with a Chopin evening in the Town Hall. "For many students who followed the program with scores, Mr. Brailowsky was the ideal pianist", the New York Times wrote. Brailowsky now moved on to the Carnegie Hall, which later became the chosen venue for his New York concerts - a real audience indeed.

Throughout many years, Brailowsky, who became a French citizen in 1926, retained two permanent bases for his travels: a home in New York on 64th Street, close to Central Park, and a home in Switzerland in the mountain town of Etoy, half-way between Geneva and Lausanne. Here, after the Second World War, he bought the country estate which had belonged earlier in the century to Guy de Portalès, the biographer of Chopin and Liszt.

Alexander Brailowsky died of pneumonia on 25 April 1976, eighty year old, at Lenox Hill hospital in New York.

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"Un être un peu légendaire", the French newspaper Le Monde wrote at the time of his death. And to many people Brailowsky truly seemed to represent the very incarnation of the romantic soloist - *the* virtuoso, as he was sometimes called. He was neither mystic nor dreamer, and although his playing could at times appear to represent the heights of elegance, suppleness, rhythmic charm and relaxed brilliance, it was none the less passion, vitality and a desire for clarity that were the essential forces underlying his sometimes almost carefree approach to the works he interpreted.

His virile keyboard art was dynamic - and expansive almost to the point of being orchestral. The fact that he chose to monumentalize rather than to intensify his repertoire, so that even Chopin's miniatures were transformed into what Schumann would have called "symphonic Studies", may be counted

equally well a strength and a weakness. But the wish to transgress the utmost limits of keyboard music was in his blood, and the onslaughts he made on the instrument itself were at one and the same time dramatic and ecstatic.

In a discussion of the great instrumentalists of the twentieth century, Ernst Isler (**Das Atlantis Buch der Musik**, 1946) wrote the following lines: "Chopins einzigartiger Klaviermusik ist in Alexander Brailowsky noch ein Interpret ursprünglichsten Mitempfindens, gepflegtester und grossformatiger Klavierkultur erstanden."

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At the end of the 1920's and the beginning of the 30's the German gramophone company **Polydor** issued a number of much sought-after Brailowsky recordings, and even today the technical quality of these recordings as regards resonance and tonality is astonishing. This is truly a "Steinway Grand", as the labels indicate. Brailowsky later became associated with HMV, RCA Victor, Philips and CBS, but these old Berlin recordings, the matrices of which were unfortunately destroyed during the 1940-45 bombardment, must surely be some of his most inspiring. At any rate - like Max Ophül's Brailowsky film from 1935, which provides a close-up impression of his peerless mastery of the instrument - these retain for posterity both the freshness and immediacy of his early musicianship, and they are now to be reissued as a testimony of an epoch in the history of piano playing which cannot be confined to the past.

Copenhagen, 1988

Translated from the Danish by Paula Hostrup-Jessen

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DACOCD 336-339
MONO ADD
4 CD

All recordings done in Berlin 1928-1934

Original 78 rpm from the collection of Gunnar Søgaard and Niels Birger Wamberg

New 2019 Digital transfers by Claus Byrith

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Executive producer: Jesper Buhl

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At the end of the 1920's and the beginning of the 30's, the German gramophone company Polydor issued a number of much sought-after Brailowsky recordings, and even today the technical quality of these recordings as regards to resonance and tonality is astonishing. These old Berlin recordings, the matrices of which were unfortunately destroyed during the 1940-45 bombardment, must surely be some of the most inspiring; here the commercial 78 rpm pressings are presented in brand new digital transfers preserving the art of the "Keyboard Giant" Alexander Brailowsky, a Chopin player of rare distinction renowned for his prodigious technique and beautiful tone.

Alexander Brailowsky

Steinway Grand Piano

DACOCD 336 CD 1 *70:55*

Chopin:
Piano Concerto No. 1 Op. 11
[1] Allegro Maestoso *16:26* **[2] Romance** *9:55*
[3] Rondo *9:38*
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Julius Prüwer, conductor

Sonata No. 2 B flat minor, Op. 35
[4] Grave - Doppio movimento *4:50*
[5] Scherzo *4:51* **[6] Marche funébre – Presto** *8:45*
[7] Barcarolle Op. 60 *8:23*
[8] Ballade No. 1, G minor Op. 23 *7:36*

DACOCD 337 CD 2 *64:21*

[1] Mazurka Op 7,1 *2:34*
[2] Nocturne Op 9,2 *4:28*
[3] Prélude Op. 28,6 & Op. 28,3 *2:41*
[4] Prélude Op. 28,15 *4:17*
[5] Waltz Op. 34,1 *4:40* **[6] Waltz Op. 64,2** *3:28*
[7] Waltz Op. 69,1 *3:27*
[8] Waltz e minor Op.posth. *2:21*
[9] Impromptu Op. 29 *4:13*
[10] Fantaisie-Impromptu Op. 66 *4:47*
Etudes:
[11] Op. 10,3 *3:53* **[12] Op. 10,4** *2:09* **[13] Op. 10,5** *1:35*
[14] Op. 25,1 *2:11* **[15] Op. 25,2** *1:21* **[16] Op. 25,3** *1:48*
[17] Op. 25,9 *0:59* **[18] Op. 25,11** *3:23* **[19] Op. 25,12** *2:10*
[20] Polonaise Op. 53 *6:14*

DACOCD 338 CD 3 *56:32*

Liszt:
Piano Concerto No. 1 (1849)
[1] Allegro maestoso *5:52*
[2] Quasi adagio *4:44* **[3] Allegro marziale – Presto** *8:36*
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Julius Prüwer, conductor

[4] Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 *8:56* **[5] No. 6** *6:36*
[6] Hungarian Rhapsody No. 12 *8:56*
[7] Valse impromptu *4:38* **[8] Gnomenreigen** *2:59*
[9] Liebestraum No. 3 *4:28*

DACOCD 339 CD 4 *75:59*

Wagner/Liszt: [1] Tannhäuser Overture *13:57*
Wagner/Liszt: [2] Spinnerlied *5:53*
Schubert/Liszt: [3] Morgenständchen *3:02*
Schubert/ Leschetitzky:
[4] Moment Musicale Op. 94,3 *1:42*
Schubert/Tausig: [5] Marche Militaire Op. 51 *4:50*
Scarlatti/Tausig: [6] Pastoral-Capriccio *4:12*
Mendelssohn: [7] Spinnerlied Op. 67,4 *1:41*
Mendelssohn: [8] Scherzo Op. 16,2 *2:17*
Schumann: [9] Traumeswirren Op. 12,7 *2:36*
Schumann: [10] Intermezzo Op. 26 *2:14*
Weber: [11] Rondo Op. 24,4 *3:54*
Debussy: [12] Serenade for The Doll *2:40*
Debussy: [13] Toccata *3:28*
Scriabin: [14] Prelude Op. 11,10 *1:26*
[15] Etude Op. 8,12 *2:03*
de Falla: [16] Danse Rituelle *3:56*

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