

ETSUKO HIROSE

Moszkowski
Piano Works



Moritz Moszkowski was born in Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland) on 23 August 1854 in a well-off Jewish family. In 1865, the family moved to Dresden where Moritz showed his precocious talent for music. In 1869 he went to Berlin to study in the Stern Conservatory, then subsequently at Theodor Kullak Neue Akademie der Tonkunst, where he taught for over 25 years. A brilliant pianist, he began his career in Berlin in 1873 with great success and his reputation led to numerous tours all over Europe. His playing was not acrobatic, but he was a musician possessed of skills of incomparable delicacy, technical polish and a high sense of perfection of detail. Two years later, he played his concerto No.1 on two pianos with Franz Liszt who admired his talent. Although he won the warmest recognition from the Hungarian legend, he seems not to have been fully satisfied, and never published it (the manuscript was found 140 years later in an archive at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France). Later, when he had been asked to send the score of this concerto, he declined with humour for two reasons. “First, it is worthless; second, it is most convenient (the score being 400 pages long) for making my piano stool higher when I am engaged in studying better works.”

Also a good violinist, he often took the role of first violin in the Kullak Academy orchestra, and had an honorable career as a conductor as well. An excellent teacher with a reputation for being extremely demanding, he had among his pupils Josef Hofmann, Wanda Landowska, Gaby Casadesus, Joaquin Turina and Vlado Perlemuter. His compatriot Ignacy Paderewski said “After Chopin, Moszkowski best understands how to write for the piano, and his writing embraces the whole gamut of piano technique.”

In 1884, he married the youngest sister of Cecile Chaminade, Henriette. They settled in Berlin and had two children, Marcel (1887) and Sylvia (1889). But the marriage was a failure. In 1890, Henriette abandoned her family and went back alone to Paris. The divorce was finalized in 1892.

In 1897, Moszkowski moved to Paris. Henriette died in 1900 and in 1906, he lost his 17-year-old daughter Sylvia. In addition, after World War I, he was financially ruined, and during the last phase of the life, he lived in poverty and illness. Despite the concert organized on his behalf at Carnegie Hall with the participation of 14 eminent pianists including Wilhelm Backhaus, Ignaz Friedmann, Percy Grainger and Josef Lhevinne, he died a few months later from stomach cancer on 4 March 1925.

Although Moszkowski is more or less forgotten today, he was known as a highly respected and popular pianist-composer in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In my adolescence, I spent my time listening to the recordings of legendary pianists such as Josef Hofmann, Ignaz Friedman, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Vladimir Horowitz who used frequently to play Moszkowski's works in their repertoire and I became familiar with his music through those recordings. Moszkowski kept his ideal and traditional aesthetic of the *Belle Époque* throughout his life; his polished salon music, both for its glittering brilliance and its subtle expressiveness, reflects the grace and spirit of that period which offers enchanting moments that are life-enhancing.

Composed in 1884, the year of his marriage with Henriette Chaminade, the **Waltz op.34 no.1** is his masterpiece, characterized by its poetry and

sensuousness. After a mysterious improvisation-like introduction, the sinuous waltz resonates as an invitation to an elegant 19th-century ball.

Although the trend of operatic transcription was almost over by the late 19th century, Moszkowski was still an exponent of it at the end of its heyday. The **Barcarole aus Hoffmanns Erzählungen** is probably the world's most popular melody from Jacques Offenbach's (1819-1880) "The Tales of Hoffmann", which sings about the beauty of the night and of love. Moszkowski transcribed with his own development, keeping the natural beauty of the original Aria.

The titles are enough to explain the atmosphere for those 2 pieces from a set of the typical salon music « Frühling op.57 ». "**Zephyr op.57-4**", the God of the West Wind or the West Wind personified, and "**Liebeswalzer op.57-5**" a romantic waltz with a passionate middle section.

Isoldens Tod published in 1914 and dedicated to Ferruccio Busoni, is a transcription of the opening prelude and last scene of Richard Wagner's (1813-1883) "Tristan und Isolde". Moszkowski incorporates here the orchestral sound and virtuosic aspect to capture the essence of the emotional climax to the whole opera. Earl Wild considered this transcription superior to that of Liszt.

"An absolute jewel" proclaimed by Harold C. Schonberg, the **Etude de Virtuosit  op.72 no.13** is bewitching, certainly, but also technically demanding, reminiscent of Franz Liszt's Transcendental Etude no.5 "Feux Follets" for the long singing passage of double notes with "piano con leggerezza" markings.

Two miniatures from « 6 Phantasiestücke op.52 » “**Zwiegesang op.52-3**” is a tender, intimate duet of lovers, and “**Die Jongleurin op.52-4**” is attractively vivacious and lighthearted, a kind of music Moszkowski became known as the “Sunshine Composer”.

Another two pieces from « 8 Morceaux caractéristiques op.36 », the descriptive piece “**En Automne op.36-4**” portrays a windy, melancholic leaf-susurrating autumn day. “**Etincelles op.36-6**” (Sparks) is a popular encore piece, in particular the favourite one of Vladimir Horowitz. This vivid showpiece evokes images of flashing sparks, the extremely fast and ethereal passages require absolute mastery and agility.

Polonaise op.17 no.1 is the 1st piece from « 3 Klavierstücke in Tanzform » composed in 1887. A majestic, lively virtuoso piece which combines poetry with dazzling brilliance, inserting some euphonious, affectionate episodes.

In his lifetime, he gained fame for his colourful Spanish Dances op.12 for piano duets. Spanish themes were one of Moszkowski’s predilections. Among these, the **Guitare op.45 no.2** has an ingratiating charm accompanied by a guitar-like arpeggio. This also exists in arrangements for violin or cello.

One of the hobbyhorses of Josef Hofmann, the captivating **Caprice espagnol op.37** begins with fleet, repeated notes, sounding like castanets and creates an exotic, prideful ambience.

Chanson bohème de l'opéra Carmen, the concert transcription from Georges Bizet's (1838-1875) "Carmen" is an enhancement of Bizet's masterpiece. The seductive introduction inspired by the opening theme of the "Seguidilla" is followed by the "Gypsy song". Moszkowski intensifies the level of virtuosity in each refrain and exhibits his creative capacity to embellish the original title's character with nobility and bravura.

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Born in Nagoya in Japan, **Etsuko Hirose** began studying the piano at the age of three. When she was only six she performed Mozart's Piano Concerto no.26 with orchestra. After pursuing her studies at the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris and at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris in the class of Bruno Rigutto and Nicholas Angelich, she has received the guidance of Alfred Brendel, Marie-Francoise Bucquet and Jorge Chamine.

A prizewinner at prestigious international contests such as the Frederic Chopin Competition for young pianists (Moscow), the G. B. Viotti and the Munich ARD Competition, she won First Prize at the Martha Argerich Competition in 1999, which launched her solo career.

She is a guest at such renowned venues as the Herkulessaal in Munich, Kennedy Center in Washington, Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, and Suntory Hall and

Orchard Hall in Tokyo, and has been accompanied by leading orchestras including the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional Argentina, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra Nazionale della RAI Torino, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Symfonia Varsovia, Warsaw National Orchestra, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra and Ural Philharmonic Orchestra, under the direction of such conductors as Charles Dutoit, Marcello Viotti, Pedro I. Calderon, Dmitri Liss, Jacek Kasprzyk, Augustin Dumay, Faycal Karoui etc.

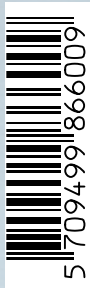
She has also been invited to appear at many festivals, including La Roque d'Antheron, La Folle Journée in Nantes, Tokyo, Warsaw, Ekaterinbourg and Bilbao; the Chopin Festival at Bagatelle, Nohant and in Poland; the Martha Argerich Festival in Japan, Taiwan and Italy; the Festival Radio Classique at L'Olympia in Paris, Lisztomanias, Mozartfest Würzburg, Brussels Piano Festival, Rhodes International Festival, Festival of Piano Rarities in Husum, Festival des Forêts, Festival Piano-Pic, Festival Berlioz and the Festival das Artes in Coimbra (Portugal).

Her performances are regularly broadcast, notably on Arte, France 3, France Musique, Radio Classique, and the NHK.

She has recorded numerous discs for Denon, Mirare, Warner and Piano21. Her two most recent recordings were devoted to Lyapunov, with 12 Etudes d'exécution transcendante, and an album of piano duets with Cyprien Katsaris.

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*The great pianist Paderewski said: "After Chopin, Moszkowski best understands how to write for the piano, and his writing embraces the whole gamut of piano technique."
Presented here on this album, Etsuko Hirose showcases the wide range of the piano music by an extraordinary composer who was a star in his lifetime, but now in need of a romantic revival.*

Moritz Moszkowski (1854 – 1925)

- [1] Valse op. 34-1 7:55
- [2] Offenbach (arr: Moszkowski): Barcarole
aus Hoffmanns Erzählungen 7:30
- [3] Zephyr op. 57-4 3:28
- [4] Liebeswalzer op. 57-5 5:31
- [5] Wagner (arr: Moszkowski) Isoldens Tod -
Schluß Szene aus Tristan und Isolde 7:58
- [6] Étude op. 72-13 4:01
- [7] Zwiegesang (Duo) op. 52-3 2:26
- [8] Die Jongleurin op. 52-4 1:44
- [9] En Automne op. 36-4 2:38
- [10] Etincelles op. 36-6 2:50
- [11] Polonaise op. 17-1 8:48
- [12] Guitare op. 45-2 3:21
- [13] Caprice espagnol op. 37 6:58
- [14] Bizet (arr: Moszkowski) Carmen –
Chanson bohème 7:07

Etsuko Hirose, piano



C. BECHSTEIN