

**VLADIMIR
HOROWITZ II**

1903-1989

CHOPIN

Fantasy in F minor
Polonaise-Fantaisie

LISZT

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6
Valse oubliée No. 1
Etude No. 2 d'après Paganini
Au bord d'une source
Sonetto 104 del Petrarca
Sonata in B minor
Ballade in B minor
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2
(arr. Horowitz)

PROKOFIEV

Sonata No. 7

RACHMANINOFF

Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor

SCHUBERT/LISZT

Soirées de Vienne:
Valse-Caprice No. 6

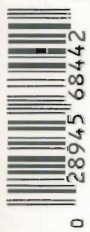
SCRIABIN

Sonata No. 5

**GREAT
PIANISTS**
OF THE 20th CENTURY

VLADIMIR HOROWITZ II

456 844-2



456 844-2

PM2

P71926

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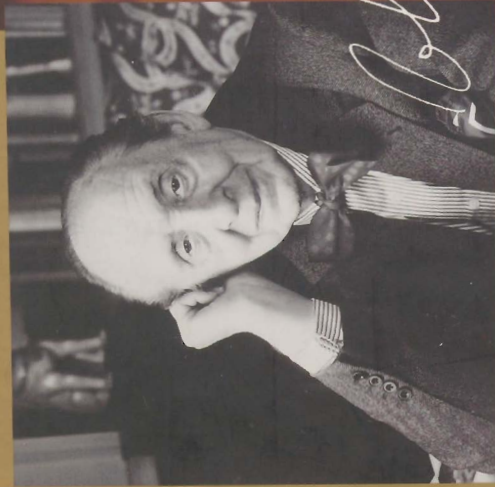


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**VLADIMIR
HOROWITZ II**



Vladimir Horowitz

**CHOPIN / LISZT / PROKOFIEV
RACHMANINOFF / SCRIBAN**

2 CDS

2 CDS

APOLOGIA

Tom Deacon

Executive producer

Von Herzen -
Möge es wieder
zu Herzen gehen!

Ludwig van Beethoven

It was in the 19th century that the piano rose to prominence as a concert instrument. Only in the 20th, with the invention of the gramophone, was it possible to record the instrument and its interpreters. Since then the wealth of recordings has become almost an embarrassment of riches. Selecting the greatest of these has been both a labour of love and, inevitably, a struggle of conscience. However, we believe that this edition, made in co-operation with many of the world's leading classical music companies, captures the best of recorded pianism.

Philips Classics is privileged to offer the present edition both as a monument to the 20th century and as an inspiration for the next millennium.

Im 19. Jahrhundert begann der Aufstieg des Klaviers als Konzertinstrument. Doch erst mit der Erfindung des Grammophons im 20. Jahrhundert wurde es möglich, das Instrument und seine Interpreten für die Nachwelt festzuhalten. Die Anzahl der seitdem entstandenen Aufnahmen ist Legion. Daraus eine Auswahl zu treffen, war eine Herzensangelegenheit, aber auch ein Ringen um Objektivität. Wir glauben jedoch, daß diese Edition, die in Zusammenarbeit mit den führenden Klassiklabels

entstanden ist, den bedeutendsten Pianisten der Aufnahme-geschichte Reverenz erweist. Philips Classics ist stolz auf dieses Monument des 20. Jahrhunderts, das auch als Inspiration für das kommende Jahrtausend dienen möge.

C'est au XIX^e siècle que le piano a accédé à une position préminente au concert. C'est au XX^e siècle, avec l'invention du phonographe, qu'on a commencé à enregistrer le piano et ses interprètes. Sélectionner les plus grands des enregistrements accumulés a été à la fois affaire d'amour et de conscience.

Nous croyons que cette édition, à laquelle les grandes compagnies de musique classique ont coopéré nombreuses, contient le meilleur du piano enregistré. Philips Classics a le privilège de présenter cette édition, monument au XX^e siècle et source d'inspiration pour le prochain millénaire.

FRANZ LISZT

- 1 Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6
- 2 Valse oubliée No. 1 in F sharp

FRANZ LISZT/FERRUCCIO BUSONI

- 3 Grande étude d'après Paganini No. 2 in E flat

FRANZ LISZT

- 4 Au bord d'une source
(from *Années de pèlerinage: Première année. Suisse*)

- 5 Sonetto 104 del Petrarca
(from *Années de pèlerinage: Deuxième année. Italie*)

Soirées de Vienne:

- 6 Valse-Caprice No. 6, S. 427 (after Schubert)

CD 1

6'53"

2'21"

3'10"

3'27"

6'27"

7'01"

FRANZ LISZT

Piano Sonata in B minor

- 7 Lento assai – Allegro energico – Grandioso – Recitativo 11'06"
- 8 Andante sostenuto – 6'13"
- 9 Allegro energico – Andante sostenuto – Lento assai 9'11"

- 10 Ballade No. 2 in B minor 15'16"

- 11 Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2
(arranged by Vladimir Horowitz) 9'01"

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

Piano Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 36
(revised by Vladimir Horowitz)

- 1 Allegro agitato
- 2 Non allegro - Lento
- 3 Allegro molto

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Piano Sonata No. 7 in B flat, Op. 83

- 4 1 Allegro inquieto - Andantino
- 5 2 Andante caloroso
- 6 3 Precipitato

ALEXANDER SCRIBAN

Piano Sonata No. 5 in F sharp, Op. 53

4

CD 2

9'39"
6'12"
6'12"

8'12"
5'22"
3'42"

12'14"

CD 2

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

8 Fantasy in F minor, Op. 49

9 Polonaise-Fantaisie in A flat, Op. 61

12'38"
13'04"

Publishers:

Edition Guthheil, Leipzig (Rachmaninoff)

Recorded:

2/1930 (Liszt: Valse oubliée)
3/1930 (Liszt: "Paganini" Etude)
11/1932 (Liszt: Sonata)
10/1945 (Prokofiev)
5/1947 (Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6, Au bord d'une source)
Carnegie Hall, New York, 2/1948
(Chopin: Fantasy); 2/1953 (Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2) - Live recordings
4/1951 (Liszt: Sonetto)
2/1976 (Scriabin) - Live recording
5/1980 (Rachmaninoff)
Metropolitan Opera House, New York, 11/1981 (Liszt: Ballade) - Live recording
Royal Festival Hall, London, 5/82 (Chopin: Polonaise-Fantaisie) - Live recording
2/1989 (Schubert/Liszt: Soirée de Vienne)
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© 1985 Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft (Schubert/Liszt)
© 1933 EMI Classics (Liszt: Sonata)
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Sylvia Lelli/DGG (p. 6)
EMI Music Archives (pp. 9, 17)
H.J. Corral/DGG (p. 12 - with Wanda Toscanini; p. 20 - with Peter Gelb)

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Vladimir Horowitz

Born Kiev 1904, died New York 1989. First piano lessons with Sergei Tarnovsky, followed by several years at the Kiev conservatory where Felix Blumenfeld schooled him in the tradition of Anton Rubinstein. Up to 1925 he performed all over the USSR and made his foreign debut in 1926, in Berlin. He created a sensation in Hamburg with Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto and concerts elsewhere in Europe were acclaimed. In 1928 he made his American debut in New York, again with Tchaikovsky, and also made his first gramophone recordings. He interrupted his career 1935-8. He settled in the USA in 1939 and took US citizenship in 1942. His friendship with Rachmaninoff lasted until the latter's death in 1943. After celebrating his 25th anniversary in the USA in 1953, at Carnegie Hall, he again withdrew from public performance until 1965, but continued to make recordings. He returned to Europe in 1970, visiting London, Paris and Milan, but did not go back to Moscow and Leningrad until 1985-6. Some of his concerts were seen worldwide on television. Horowitz is indisputably the greatest star of the piano in the 20th century. His breathtaking pianism and irresistible temperament captured the public as no other player could.

Geboren 1904 in Kiew, gestorben 1989 in New York. Erster Klavierunterricht bei Sergej Tarnowski. Danach mehrjähriges Studium am Kiewer Konservatorium bei Felix Blumenfeld, der ihm die Tradition Anton Rubinsteins vermittelte. Bis 1925 Konzerttätigkeit in der gesamten UdSSR. 1926 erster Auftritt außerhalb seines Heimatlandes in Berlin. Sensationserfolg in Hamburg mit Tchaikowskys 1. Klavierkonzert; umjubelte Konzerte in Europa folgen. 1928 USA-Debüt in New York, erneut mit Tchaikowsky, sowie erste Schallplattenaufnahmen. 1935-1938 Unterbrechung der Karriere. 1939 Übersiedlung in die Vereinigten Staaten und 1942 US-Staatsbürgerschaft. Bis zu dessen Tod 1943 persönliche Beziehung zu Rachmaninoff. Nach seinem 25jährigen USA-Jubiläum 1953 in der Carnegie Hall erneuter Rückzug vom Podium bis 1965. Zahlreiche Schallplatten-einspielungen. Erst 1970 Rückkehr nach London, Paris und Mailand sowie 1985/86 auch nach Moskau und Leningrad. Diverse weltweite Fernsehübertragungen seiner Konzerte. Vladimir Horowitz gilt als das Klavier-Idol des 20. Jahrhunderts schlechthin. Wie kein anderer vermochte seine rasante Pianistik und sein unwiderstehliches Temperament das Publikum zu faszinieren.

Né en 1904 à Kiev, mort en 1989 à New York. Premières leçons de piano auprès de Sergej Tarnowski. Suivent plusieurs années d'études au Conservatoire de Kiev auprès de Felix Blumenfeld, qui lui transmet la tradition d'Anton Rubinstein. Jusqu'en 1925 activité de concert dans toute l'Union Soviétique. Première apparition hors de sa patrie en 1926 avec un concert à Berlin. Succès sensationnel à Hambourg avec le 1er Concerto pour piano de Tchaikowski; suivent des concerts acclamés en Europe. 1928: débuts aux Etats-Unis à New York, de nouveau avec Tchaikowski et premiers enregistrements de disques. Interruption de la carrière de 1935 à 1938. S'installe en 1939 aux Etats Unis et obtient en 1942 la citoyenneté américaine. Relations personnelles avec Rachmaninoff jusqu'à la mort de celui-ci, en 1943. Après la célébration au Carnegie Hall, en 1953, du vingt-cinquième anniversaire de ses débuts aux Etats-Unis, se retire de nouveau de l'estrاده jusqu'en 1965. Ne revient qu'en 1970 à Londres, Paris et Milan et retourne à Moscou et Leningrad en 1985/86. Diverses retransmissions télévisées de ses concerts à l'échelle mondiale. Horowitz est l'incarnation même de l'idole du piano du vingtième siècle. Comme personne d'autre, il sut fasciner le public par sa fulgurante technique pianistique et son tempérament irrésistible.

STRATEGIST AND ALCHEMIST

When the young Vladimir Horowitz first toured Europe in 1925 and from 1928 onwards began to visit North America, it was a major milestone in the history of piano playing. In terms of artistic commitment to the reproduction of musical texts, it was only comparable to the transcendental artistry of Franz Liszt. One is aware that such comparisons are dangerous, since we have no cast-iron evidence of how the great composer played in the various stages of his career as a performer. Many newspapers expressed in print their impressions, their enchantment, their astonishment and disbelief at the sheer enigmatic brilliance and depth of Liszt's performances. Unfortunately there is no recorded evidence of Liszt's playing. However, no one doubts his tremendous sight-reading ability, his talent as an improviser or the technical artistry he developed almost systematically in the laboratory of his piano compositions. Yet it will remain forever uncertain to what extent virtuosity in the 19th century was synonymous with dependability and accuracy in the performance of music that was excessively virtuosic. Many piano recordings from the first half of the twentieth century – and quite a few historic recordings from the early post-war years – show that even distinguished performers such as Walter Gieseking, Edwin Fischer, Artur Schnabel, Alfred Cortot, Frédéric Lamond or the high-priestess of German pianists, Ely Ney, sometimes failed to master the more difficult passages in Brahms, Beethoven or Rachmaninoff with a high degree of accuracy. At that time performers were apparently not yet firmly bound by the law of musical precision. Nor were they accustomed to keeping themselves constantly informed of the purely statistical aspect of their playing on the basis of a recording. They were required to produce interpretations that were expressive and well thought out, yet by no means inflexible, identical or derivative. The effect was calculated for the moment of performance – that off-imagined, irrevocable moment – and not for repeated consumption in the home.

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In that age of brilliant, instinctive musicians and desultory thinkers, of ludicrous individuals and worthy craftsmen with an artistic aura, a true master of the spirit of the piano and its operational line-up – that is, the black and white keys – must have caused considerable unrest. With his phenomenal reflexes, his uniquely persistent, though always effective octaves and his almost effortless chord technique, Vladimir Horowitz moved in regions of sweeping clarity that had until then been considered impossible, or, from lack of actual experience, had been projected back to the era of Franz Liszt. Today's listener may fashion his own image of Horowitz's fiery elegance, of the feverish aloofness of the rapidly alternating tremolo octaves, on hearing the *Paganini Etude No. 2* recorded here. The recording dates from 1930, when Horowitz was 26 years old. This fastidious, frenzied performance not only confirms for us what a nimble, athletic and dependable player this young man

the unprecedented self-confidence with which he made his interpretative choices, and the precision with which he translated them into aural reality. Horowitz's early recordings – the *Paganini Etude* just mentioned, the first *Valse oubliée* of 1930 and the excellent *B minor Sonata* of 1932 – furnish evidence of the collective powers of a pianist who invests his literary insights with unequivocal momentum, colour, perspective and atmosphere. The shattering impression that this recording of the *B minor Sonata* leaves in its wake is a result not only of the stunning level on which Horowitz masters the difficult passages, but also of the subtly articulated force with which he advances the structural progression of the work. To avoid any misunderstanding: not every compulsive, compact performance of this pianistic hymn "to hot-headed logic" does justice to the polymorphous body of the work with its wonderfully, organically interlaced details. Nowadays, of course, we have long favoured those interpreters who regard a performance of less than 30 minutes as dangerous to the plasticity and subjectivity of the piece, but above all dangerous to the large areas of recitative and quietness at the beginning and end of the work. Speed, however, is not only a privilege of youth, it is also a psychological imperative when it comes to winning acceptance for a piece previously unknown to many listeners and extremely demanding in terms of scale and content. In a later version of the Liszt *Sonata* from the 1970s, Horowitz pulled back the tempo here and there and separated the various sections more clearly – with the



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not entirely convincing side effects of dynamic coarsening (particularly in the upper zone) and jerky phrasing. But in this old, timeless modern performance from 1932, the intrinsic worth and ineluctable transformations of Liszt's motifs unfold as though steered and brought together by a ghostly hand. Horowitz condenses without thickening; he permits the various characters to sweep along and rise in revolt, but gives them sufficient space to allow his listeners an insight into the work and, ultimately, their own individual understanding of it.

Throughout his life, Vladimir Horowitz followed his own path as a pianist. His literary interests revealed strong preferences but no exclusive interests. Similarly, in the concert hall and recording studio he had no desire to take on cyclical (or quasi-cyclical) projects. His recording catalogue contains no "complete recordings." In putting his programmes together he always followed his own preferences and capabilities, which seemed absolutely inexhaustible, even in old age. The greater and lesser emphases in the inventory of Horowitz's Liszt performances from 1930 until 1989, when with the sly expression of a musical conjurer he drew once more from his imaginary sleeve the *Soirée de Vienne* No. 6, demonstrate this practice of selection and rejection. From the 19 *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, Horowitz chose to record Nos. 2, 6, 15 (*Rákóczy March*) and 19; from the three volumes of Liszt's *Années de pèlerinage*, he chose the small *Au bord d'une source* and the passionately cantabile *Sonetto 104 del Petrarca* for a record launch at the beginning of the 1950's. Of the three *Hungarian Rhapsodies* just mentioned, No. 2 (C sharp minor) and No. 6 (D flat major) are included in this selection. They introduce another phenomenon of Horowitz's Liszt playing: the practice of interpretative speculation and the unabashed elaboration of scores: one might describe as statements of socio-musical autonomy in view of their roots in ethnic music. Here Horowitz is acting entirely according to the wishes of the composer, for as an interpreter Liszt himself was never content with the modest and, in a sense, disinterested reproduction of the text in pieces that were explicitly virtuosic and entertaining. He embellished, busied himself as a composer in the act of playing and took the score as the point of departure for spontaneous exploration in the realms of mood and fantasy. The Hungarian Rhapsodies were ideal territory for such impromptu decisions, as in gipsy music-making. Horowitz likewise uses the text of the famous *Hungarian Rhapsody* No. 2 as material for harmonic and figurative embellishment (even to the point of somewhat risqué incongruities in line with contemporary American entertainment). While these passages display a tendency towards a full-bodied, robust exposition of the thematic material, in the liquidity of *Au bord d'une source* Horowitz enchants the listener with a refinement of sound, articulation

and descriptive power that is scarcely rivalled in the entire spectrum of recorded piano performances. It ripples and murmurs in the best manner of water, but Horowitz offers not only a little nature tableau, but also a summer-night scene of almost Mendelssohnian transparency and delicacy. This is what encourages us to return again and again to old recordings, for they show that the original variegated sound and dynamic gradations may still be enjoyed without a loss of quality, even if the tonal and dynamic spectrum of the recordings only approximately reproduce the qualities of the live performance. This means that expressive performers who think, feel and play in extremes are able to communicate their message via recordings to the listeners of later times under almost any conditions and without any real loss of energy. In this respect it would not be wrong to see Horowitz as a medium. Music bestowed and imposed upon him the wonderful burden of giving superb performances again and again, even though for 12 years – between 1953 and 1965 – he was unable to stand the pressure of public appearances. A medium also in that in his most grandiose, colourful, intimate and inspired interpretations he allowed music to flow through him, like one in a waking trance. In a miraculous manner, his hands did what was required to lend contours and unforeseeable emphases to its flow. What is required in this context is, of course, the sum of all knowledge and proficiency, which in the case of Horowitz transports us before we know it into the realm of the extraordinary.

In some respects the observations made above with regard to the two versions of the Liszt Sonata apply also to Horowitz's approach to the Sonata in B flat minor, Op. 36 by Sergei Rachmaninoff. The later interpretations are more vivid, they seem to hunger after contrasts, and manifest a certain mature wildness, which a few years later was to subside and even become apothosised in the final stage of his captivation of his public. It is therefore interesting to compare Horowitz's performance of the Rachmaninoff Sonata in this recording from the spring of 1980 with the thrilling, yet more organic version of December 1968. The two performances reveal, in addition to many differences in detail, the diverse and circumstantial nature of Horowitz's response to one and the same work in different situations, the degree to which he saw his advanced age as an incentive to flaunt his full-blooded virtuosity – the eternally youthful daredevil, as it were – before he finally became in his last years the philosopher and alchemist of undertone and undercurrent, and perhaps for that very reason bade the world farewell as a super-virtuoso.

This second Horowitz volume in the series "Great Pianists of the 20th Century" shows him as an interpreter of the Slavic masters who were close to his heart from the days of his youth and, indeed, whose later compositions – in the case of Prokofiev and Scriabin – he fostered and promoted when they were still new works. Horowitz played Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantaisie* over and over again, soft and delicate in its lyrical moments, powerful and fearless when the dance rhythm asserts itself, signalling festive bonhomie. The *Polonaise* was recorded in May 1982, 34 years after the vigorous, zealous recording of the *F minor Fantasy*. An even greater time span lies between the finely measured interpretation of Prokofiev's Seventh Sonata (1945), with its almost shockingly tumultuous finale, and Scriabin's highly explosive, strikingly disjointed Fifth Sonata, which Horowitz played once more in concert in 1976 and allowed to be recorded live.

Translation: Mary Adams



Peter Cossé

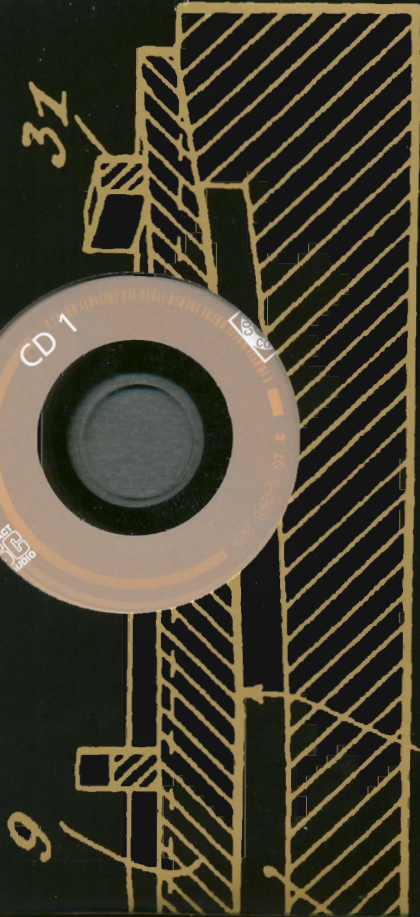
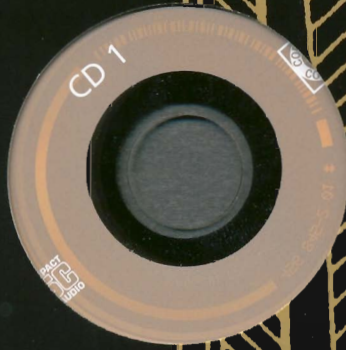
STRATEGIE UND ALCHIMIST

Als der junge Vladimir Horowitz – aus Rußland kommend – 1925 von Berlin aus bereiste, bedeutete dies für die Geschichte des Klavierspiels ein epochales Ereignis. Im Bereich der musikalisch engagierten Reproduktion von Notentexten war dies allenfalls vergleichbar mit der transzendentalen Kunst eines Franz Liszt. Man weiß: solche Gegenüberstellungen sind gefährvoll, fehlt es uns doch an lieb- und stichfesten Beweisen, wie es um das Klavierspiel des großen Komponisten in den verschiedenen Stationen seiner künstlerischen "Öffentlichkeitsarbeit" bestellt war. Viele Zeitzeugen haben ihre Eindrücke, ihr Verzaubertsein, ihr Staunen und ihre Ungläubigkeit ob der schier rätselhaften Brillanz und Klangfülle der Lisztschen Klaviermission zu Papier gebracht. Allein: es fehlen uns leider jegliche Tonträger. So wird wohl niemand Zweifel anmelden im Hinblick auf Liszts ungeheuerliche Souveränität des Vom-Blatt-Spiels, sein improvisatorisches Talent oder jene technischen Kunstgriffe, die in seinem Klavier-kompositorischen Laboratorium gleichsam serienweise entwickelt wurden. Im Unklaren wird man jedoch für immer bleiben, inwieweit Virtuosität in den Tagen des 19. Jahrhunderts gleichbedeutend war mit Zuverlässigkeit, mit Sauberkeit des motorisch verschärften, exzessiven Klavierspiels. Viele Klavierdokumente aus der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts – und noch eine ganze Reihe von historischen Einspielungen aus der frühen Nachkriegszeit – zeigen ja, daß selbst bedeutende Interpreten wie Walter Gieseking, Edwin Fischer, Artur Schnabel, Alfred Cortot, Frédéric Lamond oder die deutsche Klavierpriesterin Elly Ney mit zuweilen niedriger Trefferquote die schwierigeren Brahms-, Beethoven- oder Rachmaninoff-Passagen bewältigten (oder auch nicht). Man handelte seinerzeit offenbar noch nicht unter dem starken Druck eines musikalischen Reinheitsgebots. Und man war es auch noch nicht gewohnt, sich anhand eines Tonbandes permanent über den rein statistischen Aspekt seines musikalischen Beginns zu unterrichten. Gefragt waren suggestive, wohlüberlegte, keinesfalls aber starre, in ihrer Wertigkeit austauschbare, einander imitierende Werkdeutungen. Deren Wirkung schien für den konzertanten Augenblick – also für jene so oft erträumte Sternstunde des Unwiederholbaren! – berechnet, nicht jedoch für den wiederholten Konsum vor dem heimischen Abspielgerät.

FOR PIANOS

March 7, 1936

2 Sheets-Sheet 2



9 20 *Fig. 4.*

GREAT PIANISTS

OF THE 20th CENTURY

Géza Anda
Martha Argerich
Claudio Arrau
Vladimir Ashkenazy
Wilhelm Backhaus
Daniel Barenboim
Jorge Bolet
Alfred Brendel
Lyubov Bruk &
Mark Taimanov
Robert Casadesu
Shura Cherkassky
Van Cliburn
Alfred Cortot
Clifford Curzon
György Cziffra
Christoph Eschenbach
Leon Fleisher
Samson François
Nelson Freire
Ignaz Friedman
Andrei Gavrilov
Walter Gieseking

Emil Gilels
Grigory Ginsburg
Leopold Godowsky
Glenn Gould
Friedrich Gulda
Ingrid Haebler
Clara Haskil
Myra Hess
Josef Hofmann
Vladimir Horowitz
Byron Janis
William Kapell
Julius Katchen
Wilhelm Kempff
Evgeny Kissin
Zoltán Kocsis
Stephen Kovacevich
Alicia de Larrocha
Dinu Lipatti
Radu Lupu
Nikita Magaloff
Arturo Benedetti
Michelangelo

Benno Moiseiwitsch
Ivan Moravec
John Ogdon
Ignacy Paderewski
Murray Perahia
Maria João Pires
Mikhail Pletnev
Maurizio Pollini
André Previn
Sergei Rachmaninoff
Sviatoslav Richter
Artur Schnabel
András Schiff
Artur Schnabel
Rudolf Serkin
Vladimir Sofronitsky
Solomon
Rosalyn Tureck
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