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PAKM 069

Ania Dorfmann

plays Mendelssohn

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Producer's Note

It is unfortunate that Ania Dorfmann is remembered today almost exclusively for being the soloist in Arturo Toscanini's only studio recording of a Beethoven piano concerto. Her career extended far beyond the Maestro's orbit, as the present reissue demonstrates.

Dorfmann was born in Odessa in 1899 to a merchant's family. Recognized early on as a prodigy, she played her first recital at the age of eleven. Around this time, she also gave a joint concert with the even-younger Jascha Heifetz. Plans were made for her to go to Paris to study with Isidor Phillip at the Conservatoire, but the death of her father postponed the trip for several years. She had been in Paris for less than a year when revolution broke out in Russia. After a visit home, she was only able to return to France with some difficulty.

She made her début at Liège in 1920, and concertized throughout Europe over the next fifteen years, appearing with such conductors as Mengelberg, Beecham and Wood. During this period, she made a number of recordings for English Columbia, including the Mendelssohn First Piano Concerto with Walter Goehr.

In 1936, she made her American debut at Town Hall in New York, where critics praised the "rapidity and clarity" of her technique. Horowitz introduced her to his father-in-law, Toscanini, and she soon became an intimate of the family. (A letter written by Toscanini in Milan in April, 1937 mentions "Ania, that friend of Volodya's (she's a Russian pianist). She's here all the time, morning and evening.") She was later to collaborate with the conductor on four occasions, all in works of Beethoven: the Choral Fantasy (1939); the Triple Concerto (1942); a broadcast of the First Piano Concerto with the Reineke cadenza (1944) followed by a studio recording of the work with one of Beethoven's own cadenzas (1945). All of these have been available on CD.

Dorfmann settled in America and joined the faculty at the Juilliard School. She continued to concertize and made a number of recordings for RCA Victor during the 1940s and '50s, including the Beethoven "Moonlight" and "Pathétique" Sonatas, the complete Chopin Waltzes, the *Albums for the Young* of both Schumann and Tchaikovsky, the Grieg Piano Concerto and Mendelssohn Concerto No. 1 with Erich Leinsdorf and the Robin Hood Dell Orchestra of Philadelphia (on Pristine PAKM 066), Schumann's *Carnaval* and *Fantasiestücke* (the former also on the same Pristine release), and a recital disc featuring works by Liszt, Ravel and Menotti among others. While her English Columbia 78s have been well covered in CDs from Pearl and Dutton, her RCA recordings have remained largely unreissued.

Mendelssohn remained something of a Dorfmann specialty throughout her career. After her early recording of the First Concerto, she included two of the *Songs without Words* along with the *Andante and Rondo Capriccioso* in a 1953 recital album for RCA. She later re-recorded the two *Songs* along with the other 47 for a three-LP set, which became only the second complete recording of the work, following Ginette Doyen's for Westminster. Critic Jonathan Summers wrote that Dorfmann's set "shows much sensitivity and fine tonal playing."

Dorfmann continued to teach until a year before her death in 1984, having retired from the concert stage several years earlier. Now, with the reissue of her later recordings such as the ones presented here, a fuller appreciation of her considerable artistry becomes possible. **Mark Obert-Thorn**



dorfmann

plays mendelssohn

MENDELSSOHN Songs without Words

DISC ONE

- 1 Sweet Remembrance Op 19, No 1 (4:08)
- 2 Regrets Op 19, No. 2 (2:38)
- 3 Hunting Song Op 19, No 3 (2:24)
- 4 Confidence Op 19, No 4 (2:07)
- 5 Restlessness Op 19, No 5 (3:01)
- 6 Venetian Boat Song No 1 Op 19, No 6 (2:31)
- 7 Contemplation Op 30, No 1 (5:12)
- 8 Unrest Op 30, No 2 (2:05)
- 9 Consolation Op 30, No 3 (2:24)
- 10 The Wanderer Op 30, No 4 (2:55)
- 11 The Brook Op 30, No 5 (2:03)
- 12 Venetian Boat Song No 2 Op 30, No 6 (3:21)
- 13 The Evening Star Op 38, No 1 (2:20)
- 14 Lost Happiness Op 38, No 2 (2:28)
- 15 The Poet's Harp Op 38, No 3 (2:16)
- 16 Hope Op 38, No 4 (2:37)
- 17 Passion Op 38, No 5 (2:19)
- 18 Duet Op 38, No 6 (2:48)
- 19 On the Seashore Op 53, No 1 (3:00)
- 20 The Fleecy Clouds Op 53, No 2 (2:21)
- 21 Agitation Op 53, No 3 (2:27)
- 22 Sadness of Soul Op 53, No 4 (3:40)
- 23 Folk Song Op 53, No 5 (2:54)
- 24 The Flight Op 53, No 6 (2:44)

DISC TWO

- 1 May Breezes Op 62, No 1 (3:22)
- 2 The Departure Op 62, No 2 (1:56)
- 3 Funeral March Op 62, No 3 (3:14)
- 4 Morning Song Op 62, No 4 (1:32)
- 5 Venetian Boat Song No 3 Op 62, No 5 (3:00)
- 6 Spring Song Op 62, No 6 (2:25)
- 7 Meditation Op 67, No 1 (3:15)
- 8 Lost Illusions Op 67, No 2 (1:56)
- 9 Song of the Pilgrim Op 67, No 3 (3:13)
- 10 Spinning Song Op 67, No 4 (1:48)
- 11 The Shepherd's Complaint Op 67, No 5 (2:17)
- 12 Lullaby Op 67, No 6 (2:22)
- 13 Reverie Op 85, No 1 (2:57)
- 14 The Adieu Op 85, No 2 (0:53)
- 15 Delirium Op 85, No 3 (1:51)
- 16 Elegy Op 85, No 4 (2:52)
- 17 The Return Op 85, No 5 (2:16)
- 18 Song of the Traveler Op 85, No 6 (2:16)
- 19 Homeless Op 102, No 1 (3:14)
- 20 Retrospection Op 102, No 2 (2:11)
- 21 Tarantella Op 102, No 3 (1:25)
- 22 The Sighing Wind Op 102, No 4 (3:16)
- 23 The Joyous Peasant Op 102, No 5 (1:14)
- 24 Faith Op 102, No 6 (2:01)
- 25 Boat Song Op Posth (2:05)
- 26 MENDELSSOHN Andante and Rondo Capriccioso Op 14 (6:44)



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Producer and Audio
Restoration Engineer
Mark Obert-Thorn

Cover artwork based
on a photograph of
Ania Dorfmann

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Songs Without Words recorded
19/20 & 27 October, 15/16
November & 20 December
1955 + 28 & 30 August 1956 in
Webster Hall, New York. First
issued on RCA Victor LM-6128

Andante and Rondo Capriccioso
recorded 12-13 January 1953 in
Town Hall, New York. First issued
on RCA Victor LM-1758

Total duration: 2hr 12:21

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