



Brailowsky



The Complete Polydor Recordings, Vol. 2

The present release is the second of two which offer the complete pre-war Polydor recordings of Alexander Brailowsky in new transfers for the first time in thirty years. While the earlier volume (Pristine PAKM 078) focused on his Chopin discs from this period, this one features his recordings of Liszt and other composers.

Alexander Brailowsky was born in Kiev on 16 February 1896. After initial instruction from his father, a professional pianist, he began studies at the age of eight with Leschetizky pupil Vladimir Puchalsky, who would later mentor Horowitz. Upon graduation from the Kiev Conservatory in 1911 where a visiting Rachmaninov predicted that he would have a great future, Brailowsky went to Vienna to study under Leschetizky himself, and made his first public appearances there in 1913. In Zürich, he met with Busoni and sought out his guidance. Moving to Paris where he eventually took up French citizenship, he received further instruction from Planté before making a recital debut there in 1919. His American career began in 1924, and included a coast-to-coast tour in 1936. He gave his last recital at Carnegie Hall in 1967, and died on 25 April 1976.

Brailowsky made his earliest disc recordings for Polydor in Berlin between 1928 and 1936. He also recorded a series of piano rolls for Ampico during the late 1920s. After a couple sessions for HMV in 1938, he began a long association with RCA Victor (1940 – 1958) before making a final group of recordings for American Columbia (1960/1).

Although Brailowsky's presentations throughout his career of a Chopin cycle featuring the composer's complete solo works earned him a reputation as a Chopin specialist, his own repertoire was more catholic. Liszt was always a mainstay of his recital programs, whose printed portions often concluded with one of the three Hungarian Rhapsodies featured here. In the LP era, he was later to record the first 15 Rhapsodies, as well as *Totentanz* twice – once with Reiner (reissued on Pristine PASC 235), and later in stereo with Ormandy – although he was never to revisit the First Concerto on disc.

The remainder of our program displays Brailowsky's sympathies in a wide range of repertoire, from the Baroque to what was then relatively new music. Critic Jonathan Summers, in his *A-Z of Pianists*, singles out some of the highlights from these discs: "Mendelssohn's Scherzo in E minor Op. 16 No. 2 is rhythmically incisive, the Pastoral and Capriccio of Scarlatti (arranged by Tausig) is beautifully controlled with wonderful tone colours, and Liszt's arrangement of Wagner's overture *Tannhäuser* is probably Brailowsky's finest moment on disc. Even though he simplifies a few left-hand figures, it is a performance in the true grand Leschetizky style on par with the recording by Benno Moiseiwitsch."

In this release, the sources for the transfers were German Polydor pressings, except for two sides which came from early, non-laminated American Brunswick copies. Considerable care has been taken in pitching the original recordings, several of which had speed fluctuations throughout the sides.

Mark Obert-Thorn



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disc one

LISZT Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat major

1. 1st Mvt. - Allegro maestoso (5:46)
2. 2nd Mvt. - Quasi adagio (4:37)
3. 3rd Mvt. - Allegretto vivace - Allegretto animato (4:13)
4. 4th Mvt. - Allegro marziale e animato (4:16)

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

conducted by Julius Prüwer

5. LISZT Liebestraum No. 3 in A flat major (4:37)
6. LISZT Gnomenreigen (*Etude de concert No. 2*) (3:09)
7. LISZT Valse impromptu (4:49)
8. LISZT Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 in C sharp minor (9:09)
9. LISZT Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6 in D flat (6:46)
10. LISZT Hungarian Rhapsody No. 12 in C sharp minor (9:11)

Alexander Brailowsky piano

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Artwork based on a photograph of Alexander Brailowsky, c.1925 (Tully Potter Collection). Special thanks to Donald Manildi, the International Piano Archives at the University of Maryland (IPAM) and Michael Gartz for providing source material

Full discographic information available online

Total duration: 1hr 58:16

disc two

1. WAGNER/LISZT Tannhäuser - Overture (14:11)
2. WAGNER/LISZT Spinning Chorus (from *The Flying Dutchman*) (5:48)
3. SCHUBERT/LISZT Morgenständchen ("Hark, Hark the Lark") (3:13)
4. SCHUBERT/LESCHETIZKY Moment Musical, Op. 94, No. 3 (1:52)
5. SCHUBERT/TAUSIG Marche Militaire, Op. 51 (5:01)

SCARLATTI/TAUSIG Pastorale – Capriccio

6. Pastorale (arr. from Sonata in D minor, L 413) (1:56)
7. Capriccio (arr. from Sonata in E, L 375) (2:18)
8. MENDELSSOHN Spinning Song (*Songs Without Words*, Op. 67, No. 4) (1:47)
9. MENDELSSOHN Scherzo in E minor, Op. 16, No. 2 (2:28)
10. SCHUMANN Traumeswirren (*Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, No. 7) (2:44)
11. SCHUMANN Intermezzo (*Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, Op. 26, No. 4) (2:24)
12. WEBER Perpetuum Mobile (Presto from Sonata No. 1 in C, Op. 24) (3:58)
13. DEBUSSY Serenade for the Doll (from the *Children's Corner Suite*) (2:52)
14. DEBUSSY Toccata (from *Pour le Piano*) (3:38)
15. SCRIABIN Prelude in C sharp minor, Op. 11, No. 10 (1:25)
16. SCRIABIN Etude in D sharp minor, Op. 8, No. 12 (2:07)
17. FALLA Ritual Fire Dance (from *El amor brujo*) (3:58)

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