



Great Pianists

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WOMEN AT THE PIANO An Anthology of Historic Performances Volume 2



Women at the Piano Vol. 2

An Anthology of Historic Performances 1926-1950

Ania DORFMANN (1899-1982)

- 1 Robert Schumann: *Fantasiestücke, Op. 12: No. 2 Aufschwung* 3:19
(RCA Victor 11-9672-B) • Recorded in RCA Victor Studio No. 2, New York, 17th January 1947

Marie-Aimée WARROT (VARRO) (1915-1971)

- 2 Franz Liszt: *Grandes Etudes de Paganini: Etude No. 6 (Theme and Variations)* 4:20
(Pathé PDT 131 (CPTX 638-1)) • Recorded in Studio Albert, Paris, 12th July 1946

Blanche SELVA (1884-1942)

- 3 Julio Garreta: *Sardana (Popular Dance of Catalonia)* 5:04
(Columbia 2594-D (WL2302-1 and WL2303-1)) • Recorded in Paris, 4th June 1930

Ginette DOYEN (1921-2002)

- 4 Carl Maria von Weber: *Sonata No. 1 in C major, Op. 24: Rondo (Perpetual Motion)* 4:09
(Disque "Gramophone" DB11129 (2LA-4674-1)) • Recorded in Studio Albert, Paris, 9th July 1946

Johanne Amalie STOCKMARR (1869-1944)

- 5 Ernö Dohnanyi: *Rhapsody No. 3 in C major, Op. 11* 5:28
(HMV DA5247 (OCS2176-1 and OCS2177-1)) • Recorded in Denmark in 1942

Olga SAMAROFF (1882-1948)

- 6 Ernesto Lecuona: *Andalucía (Suite Española): No. 6 Malagueña* 3:28
(Victor 7304-B (CVE 62656-2)) • Recorded in Victor Studio No. 2, Camden, New Jersey, 19th June 1930

France Marguerite ELLEGAARD (1913-1999)

- 7 Jacques Ibert: *Histoires: No. 2 Le petit âne blanc (The little white donkey)* 1:58
(Polyphon HA 70019-A (BHDKE 115-2)) • Recorded in 1947

Claudette SOREL (1932-1999)

- 8 Eugene Goossens: *Kaleidoscope, Op. 18: No. 3 The Hurdy-Gurdy Man* 0:52
(RCA Victor 45-5030-B (E1EB-3207) from Set E-78)
Recorded in RCA Victor Studio No. 2, New York, 17th July 1947

- Madeleine de VALMALÈTE (1899-1999)**
- 9 Sergey Rachmaninov: *Barcarolle in G minor, Op. 10, No. 3* 4:14
(Polydor 95175 (27298) (1128 bm 1)) • Recorded in 1928
- Muriel KERR (1911-1963)**
- 10 Alexander Scriabin: *Etude in D flat major, Op. 8, No. 10* 1:49
(Victrola 4113-B-2) • Recorded 31st October 1928
- Yolanda MERÖ (1887-1963)**
- 11 Max Vogrich: *Staccato-Caprice* 3:01
(Victrola 1155-B-4) • Recorded in New York, 27th January 1926
- Kathleen LONG (1896-1968)**
- 12 François Couperin: *Le Tic-Toc-Choc ou Les Maillotins* (transcribed by K. Long) 1:52
(The National Gramophonic Society 130 (AX 4689)) • Recorded in England, 20th February 1929
- Lubka KOLESSA (1902-1997)**
- 13 Johann Nepomuk Hummel: *Rondo in E flat major, Op. 11* 4:02
(HMV DB5510 (2RA.4036-2)) • Recorded in Dresden, June 1939
- Elsie HALL (1876-1976)**
- J.S. Bach: *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2: Prelude and Fugue No. 36 in F minor* 3:02
- 14 Prelude 1:26
- 15 Fugue 1:36
(HMV EA1127 (30-5645) (Bb20531-2)) • Recorded in London, 2nd December 1930
- Raie Da COSTA (1905-1934)**
- 16 Verdi-Liszt: *'Rigoletto' Paraphrase* 6:32
(HMV C1967 (32-1565/Cc19809-1 and 32-1566/Cc19810-2)) • Recorded in London, 13th June 1930
- Galina WERSCHENSKA (1906-1994)**
- 17 Wagner: *The Flying Dutchman: Spinning Song* (transcribed by Liszt) 6:06
(Polyphon HM80061-A/B (HDK.2824-2 and HDK.2825-1)) • Recorded in 1950
- Irene SCHARRER (1888-1971)**
- 18 Fryderyk Chopin: *Fantaisie-Impromptu in C sharp minor, Op. 66* 4:18
(Columbia DX456 (CAX 6603-2)) • Recorded in London, 5th December 1932

- Ellen BALLON (1898-1969)**
- 19 Heitor Villa-Lobos: *Chôros No. 5 (Alma Brasileira) ('Soul of Brazil')* 4:38
(Decca M671 (DR13750-1 and DR13751-1)) • Recorded at the Decca Studios, West Hampstead, London, 16th-17th June, 1949
- Lili KRAUS (1903-1986)**
- 20 Bela Bartók: *Six Rumanian Folk Dances (1915), Sz.56* 4:40
(Parlophone PXO1026 (CXE9283-2)) • Recorded in London, 23rd August 1938
- Leah EFFENBACH (1915-1978)**
- 21 Morton Gould: *Boogie Woogie Etude (1943)* 2:13
Live Recording, Town Hall, New York, 4th January, 1947

Producers' Note

In collating and assembling this second volume in the continuing series celebrating women pianists, we have once again encountered sonic and music obstacles. All twenty recordings were recorded on different pianos, in different studios, at different times. Some recordings were of an exemplary audio quality, while some others were more problematic. In order to create a pleasurable listening experience we have endeavoured to assemble the best pressings and quietest surfaces. All effort has been made to restore the recordings as authentically as possible. For this reason, there may be some minor audio differences and imperfections on some of the more rare performances. The historic significance of each performance, it is hoped, outweighs these audio nuances. This anthology series also posed complex challenges regarding musical selection. In an effort to provide variety, as well as representing individually each artist presented in the anthology, we chose not to repeat any compositions performed. Later in the series we will revisit some of the artists who left larger legacies. We sincerely hope you enjoy this remarkable journey through piano music history. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Special thanks to Michael Gray for his discographic research and advice. Also, many thanks to Lance Bowling, Richard Wahlberg, Michael Gartz and Peter Ford for locating audio source materials and support documentation.

Marina and Victor Ledin

Women at the Piano Vol. 2

An Anthology of Historic Performances 1926-1950

“A woman’s rank lies in the fullness of her womanhood: Therein alone she is royal.”

George Eliot, *Armstrong* (Scene 2) (1870)

In this second volume, *Naxos* continues its comprehensive anthology of historic performances by the pioneering women pianists who recorded during the first half of the twentieth century. Our research has shown that over two hundred and fifty women pianists left a recorded legacy during the early years of recorded sound. It is therefore not surprising that there were many talented women studying the piano in conservatories and music schools around the world. J.M. Dent, writing in *A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players* in 1899, states: “I have made special inquiries at the Berlin Conservatorium of Klindworth and Scharwenka. My numbers are I think exact to a few figures. In 1895-6, out of 387 students, 421 men and 208 women took piano only; 8 men and 15 women took piano with some other subject. In 1896-7, out of 383 pupils, 40 men and 239 women learnt piano alone, and 4 men and 8 women learnt piano with something else. Of these 247 women, besides, about 32 were English or Americans.”

With such an extraordinary abundance of talent, why have we not heard about these women? And why have scholars and musicologists largely ignored their contributions? The answers to these questions are societal and complex. Not until the last two decades has there been any serious effort to undertake gender studies and properly to understand women’s rôles in the arts. In one such study, “*Whence comes the lady tympanist? Gender and Instrumental Musicians in America, 1853-1990*,” Beth Abelson Macleod writes: “Not surprisingly, the piano was the first instrument to be seen on the concert stage with a woman soloist. The sign of a woman playing a keyboard instrument was

hardly surprising; reviewers, however, were unaccustomed to seeing a woman displaying the strength and mastery required of a soloist, and invariably compared the style and tone of the performance to that of a man. Men, of course, were believed to be stronger and more vigorous than women. They have greater respiratory power and greater muscular superiority. According to one source [“*The New Woman in Music*”, *Musical America* (28th April, 1906): p. 8] men were better able to ‘discipline their strength’, making their movements ‘more precise than those of women. Thus men make the best pianists’. An 1898 review of Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler, who received almost universally positive reviews, stated: “The wonder of the little woman is that she can be both woman and man in the illustration of her art... The marvel of her playing is that she commands so much virtuoso strength with such an abundance of feminine delicacy and subtlety of expression” [“Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler”, *Musical Courier* (28th December 28, 1898), p. 40].

In this second volume, we continue to undertake the sonic history of women at the piano and provide short profiles and detailed information on each recording presented. Volume Two celebrates the artistry of twenty pianists, in recordings spanning a period of 24 years (1926-1950). In this volume the earliest born of these is Danish pianist **Johanne Amalie Stockmarr** (1869-1944). Stockmarr grew up in a musical family. Her father was a violinist in the Royal Danish Orchestra and her uncle played the clarinet in the same orchestra. She entered the Royal Academy of Music in 1885, where she studied with Edvard Helsted, Niels W. Gade and J.P.E. Hartmann. She also studied with Franz Neruda and A.H. Fissot in Paris. In 1906 she was soloist in Grieg’s *Piano Concerto* with the composer conducting. Playing the concerto often on

tour, it became a calling card for her. Unfortunately Stockmarr left only a small recorded legacy, but a representative one of her diverse repertoire, works by Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, Scarlatti, Grieg, Palmgren, Bach, and Dohnányi's *Rhapsody No. 3 in C major*, Op. 11 [5].

A native of Australia, **Elsie Hall** (1876-1976) was a child prodigy, appearing in concert as early as at the age of three. When she was nine years old she played the Beethoven *C minor Concerto* in public. Her mother then took Elsie to Europe for further study. Her travels took her to Stuttgart, Paris and London. Joseph Joachim recommended that she study at the Hochschule in Berlin. She won the Mendelssohn Prize and was taken to meet and play for Clara Schumann. In her teens she returned to Australia and continued her concert career, but England, with its fuller challenges and musical opportunities beckoned her back. She performed under the baton of Sir Edward Elgar, gave piano lessons at Marlborough House to the young Princess Mary, became teacher to Constant Lambert and appeared many times at the Proms under Sir Henry Wood. Marriage to Dr F. O. Stohr meant moving to South Africa, and before long she became a national institution and the doyenne of South African classical music. During World War II Elsie Hall endured many discomforts and dangers as she played for the troops in North Africa and Italy, enjoying the experience and every moment. Her flight north to Cairo in an RAF plane was memorable if only because the pilot's invoice of cargo simply read: "8,000 gallons of brandy; and Elsie Hall"! She was then in her sixties, but the thought of slowing down never occurred to her. To her host of friends and musical colleagues she seemed indestructible, ever playing and constantly travelling. In 1956 the University of Cape Town conferred on her an honorary doctorate of music, and in 1965 she was the recipient of the award of the Cape Centenary Foundation for her long and distinguished services to music. At the age of 93 she travelled to the United States to visit her nephew and while there gave some

enthusiastically received recitals. She died in 1976, at the age of 99, in Cape Town, South Africa. Her recording of Bach's *Prelude and Fugue No. 36 in F minor*, from *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2* [4] & [5] was recorded in London in 1930. This recording was part of the Diploma syllabus of Trinity College of Music Examinations.

Texas born **Olga Samaroff** (1882-1948) studied as a child with her mother and grandmother. Additional studies in Paris (with Elie Delaborde), Berlin (with Ernst Jedliczka) and Baltimore (with Ernest Hutcheson) were followed by extensive touring and performances with orchestras. Samaroff was the first American woman admitted to study at the Paris Conservatoire. When Samaroff moved to Berlin in 1898 she met Richard Strauss, the conductors Felix Weingartner, Artur Nikisch, Karl Muck, and other leading musicians. In Munich she was present while Bruno Walter rehearsed with Mahler the première of his *Eighth Symphony*. Samaroff soon befriended the composer and later appeared in New York as soloist in several performances of Grieg's *Piano Concerto* under Mahler's direction. Born Lucie Hickenlooper, she changed her name to the more marketable name of Olga Samaroff. She gave joint recitals with Fritz Kreisler and Efrem Zimbalist. In 1911 she married Leopold Stokowski, divorcing him in 1923. From 1927 to 1929 she was music critic for the *New York Evening Post*, and from 1928 to 1929 for *The Philadelphia Record*. She was on the faculty of the Juilliard Graduate School (1928-1948) and the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music. In 1928 she gave a recital at the White House, and in subsequent years spent her time promoting the development of the Atlanta and National Symphonies. From 1930 she gave numerous master-classes, appeared in two radio series, and was a pioneering television artist. Among her students were Augustin Anievas, William Kapell, Vincent Persichetti, Thomas Schippers, Claudette Sorel, Rosalyn Tureck, Alexis Weissenberg and William Corbett-Jones. Samaroff began recording as early as 1908 when she made some

piano rolls for the Welte firm. Her recorded legacy includes works by Griffes, Moszkowski, Liszt, Chopin, and Debussy. In her concerts and as a teacher she always championed music of the post-1900 period. Her 1930 recording of Ernesto Lecuona's *Malagueña* [6] shows her clear, liquid tone and bravura style.

A French pianist of Catalan origin, **Blanche Selva** (1884-1942) studied first with Alphonse Duvernoy at the Paris Conservatoire and later took courses in composition from Vincent d'Indy at the Schola Cantorum. She eventually taught for over twenty years at the Schola Cantorum. She began her concert career at the age of thirteen; at twenty in 1904 she had performed all of Bach's works in seventeen recitals, an unprecedented musical event. This was then followed by her performances of all four books of Isaac Albéniz's *Iberia* (Blanche Selva is the dedicatee of the second book, of which she gave the première in 1908). She was among the strongest protagonists of modern French music early in the century, presenting programmes of works by Debussy, Ravel, d'Indy, Albert Roussel, Déodat de Séverac, Jean-Guy Ropartz, Jean Roger-Ducasse, René de Castéra, Marcel Labey, George Martin Witkowski, George Migot, and others, when these composers were not universally recognised. A particular affinity for Czech music led Selva to perform and teach in Prague. Her incredibly eclectic tastes made it possible for her to programme fascinating piano recitals. These solo programmes included rarities by Pasquini, Couperin and Rameau, along with standard works by Schumann and Beethoven (she is one of the few pianists to have performed all 32 of Beethoven's sonatas, and also written a detailed analysis of these works), with a liberal inclusion of works by contemporary composers, such as d'Indy, Fauré, de Séverac, Cras, Albéniz, de Bréville, Dukas, and others. Her extroverted performance of the Catalonian composer, Julio Garreta's *Sardana* [3] was recorded in Paris in 1930. Shortly after Selva suffered a paralyzing stroke which forced her to retire from the concert stage. She continued, however, to teach, lecture and write for

the remainder of her life.

Yolanda Merö (1887-1963) was born in Budapest. She began studies with her father, eventually attending the National Conservatory in Budapest, where her teacher was Auguste Rennebaum. Her European début occurred with the Dresden Philharmonic in 1903. Although her family moved to the United States in 1900, her first performance in New York was not until 1909 when she played with the Russian Symphony Orchestra. She travelled extensively between Europe and America for the next several years, with numerous concert engagements and a teaching appointment at the National Conservatory in Budapest. She began recording on piano rolls for the Ampico Piano Company, and most of her recorded legacy remains in that medium. In 1926 she recorded her only 78rpm disc on Victrola. The now rarely heard Max Vogrich *Staccato-Caprice* [1] shows what the Ampico catalogue called "playing with a superb finish, beautiful phrasing and an exquisite touch". It is indeed sad that this artist, who lived into the LP era (she died in New York in 1963) made so few commercial recordings.

The English pianist **Irene Scharrer** (1888-1971) was a student of Tobias Matthay at the Royal Academy of Music. She made her recital début in London at the age of sixteen and later played with numerous British orchestras. Her extensive repertoire included works by Szymanowski, Granados, Rachmaninov, and most of Chopin's compositions. A virtuosa of the first rank, she recorded extensively. She taught at the Matthay School in London. Her 1932 performance of Chopin's *Fantaisie-Improptu in C sharp minor, Op. 66* [8] shows her technical mastery and musicality.

The British pianist **Kathleen Long** (1896-1968) was born in the Suffolk town of Bury St. Edmunds and began to study the piano at the age of six. Her first recital was at the age of eight, which she recalled in an interview in 1950, was performed "without trepidation". Six years later (in 1910) at the age of fourteen, she was awarded an open scholarship to the Royal College of Music. At the age of nineteen she

made her début at Aeolian Hall. She formed the English Ensemble, a chamber group whose membership included Marjorie Hayward, Rebecca Clarke and May Mukle. In 1941 she travelled in convoy to Iceland to give five recitals to the people of Reykjavik. When concerts after World War II were resumed, she gave two recitals with Pablo Casals. She was a much respected Mozart specialist, eliciting from critics praise for her “sparkle and gaiety” and interpretations of “unfailing precision, rarely heard”. She was also equally at home with modern composers, championing the music of Fauré, Debussy, Ravel, Franck and others. In fact, her recordings of the music of Fauré remain even today much admired for their transparency and faithfulness to the composer’s thoughts and intentions. The short and delightful recording made in 1929 for The National Gramophonic Society of François Couperin’s *Le Tic-Toc-Choc ou Les Maillottins* [12] (in her own transcription) is among her earliest recordings.

Canadian pianist **Ellen Ballon** (1898-1969) was born in Montreal of Russian parents. She was a child prodigy, and at the age of six she won the first director’s scholarship awarded at the McGill Conservatory. She studied there with Clara Lichtenstein. As a child Ballon was praised by Josef Hofmann (whose pupil she became later, in Switzerland and again in New York). Following a farewell recital at Royal Victoria College in Montreal on 27th December 1906, she was sent to New York to study with Rafael Joseffy (her patrons were the Canadian prime minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and the principal of McGill University, Sir William Peterson). She was a child when she made her New York début in March 1910, playing concertos of Mendelssohn (G minor) and Beethoven (C major) with the New York Symphony under Walter Damrosch. In 1912 President Taft invited her to perform at the White House (she returned to play for President Roosevelt in 1934 and for President Eisenhower in 1954). She continued her studies in New York with Josef Hofmann and in Vienna with Wilhelm Backhaus, and when she returned from Europe to play with the New York

Philharmonic under Josef Stransky in 1921, she was a fully developed concert pianist. She continued her studies, however, with Alberto Jonas in New York until 1925. She began her first major European tour in 1927, appearing with the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw orchestras, and then settled in London. She gave private recitals at Kensington Palace, appeared in public concerts, and toured the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. She returned to North America before World War II and eventually settled in Montreal. Long a friend and admirer of the Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos, she performed many of his works and commissioned his *Concerto No. 1*, giving the première in Rio de Janeiro under the composer’s direction in 1946. Later she joined the Faculty of Music at McGill University (where she established a piano scholarship in her own name in 1928). Villa-Lobos’s *Alma Brasileira* [13] which she recorded in London in 1949 demonstrates her understanding and love for Villa-Lobos’s music.

Ania Dorfmann (1899-1982) was born in Odessa, Russia. She was educated at the Paris Conservatoire where her teacher was Isidor Philipp. After her début in Liège, Belgium, she toured throughout Europe. She moved to the United States in 1936 and was soon performing with all of the major orchestras in America. Arturo Toscanini selected her to play the solo part in Beethoven’s *Fantasia* for Piano, Orchestra and Chorus with the New York Philharmonic in 1939 and recorded with her Beethoven’s *First Piano Concerto*. An artist of uncompromising tonal beauty, Dorfmann is perhaps best remembered for her recordings of Mendelssohn’s complete *Songs Without Words*, and works by Schumann and Beethoven. Schumann’s *Aufschwung* [14] was recorded in New York in 1947.

Madeleine de Valmalète (1899-1999) was born into an aristocratic French family. She studied piano at the Paris Conservatoire where her teachers were Isidor Philipp and Joseph Morpain. She received first prize in piano at the Paris Conservatoire at the age of fourteen. During World War I she began teaching and performing

concerts together with more established musicians for victims of the war. She played before Saint-Saëns and Busoni, both of whom praised her pianistic skills. In the 1920s she performed in many of the musical centres of Europe, appearing in recitals in Geneva, Rome, Lisbon, Vienna, Budapest, and The Hague. At that time she also performed as part of the Trio de Paris, with the violinist Yvonne Astruc and cellist Marguerite Coponsacchi. For 23 years she lived in Marseilles, and in 1949 moved back to Paris, where Alfred Cortot invited her to teach at the Ecole Normale de Musique. From 1961 to 1974 she taught at the Grenoble Conservatoire. For the next twenty years she maintained an active teaching schedule, occasionally interrupted by recitals. Unfortunately Madeleine de Valmalète was never fond of recording and therefore left only a very small audio legacy for posterity. The Rachmaninov *Barcarolle in G minor, Op. 10, No. 3* [9], which she recorded for Polydor in 1928 is a gem.

Lubka Kolessa (1902-1997) was born into a musical family in Lwów, Galicia (now L'viv in Ukraine). At the age of four, she moved with her family to Vienna. There she studied with Louis Thern and Emil von Sauer, and received the State Master Diploma and Prize from the Vienna State Academy in 1920. In the summers of 1929-30 she continued her studies with Eugen d'Albert. During the years between the two world wars she regularly appeared in Europe (and in 1938 in South America) with major orchestras and conductors such as Böhm, Furtwängler, von Karajan, Kleiber, Mengelberg, Walter, and Weingartner, and won acknowledgement as a front-rank pianist. Kolessa moved to England in 1937, married the diplomat Tracy Philipps, and went to Ottawa in 1940. Their son Igor was born in 1939. In 1942 Kolessa joined the staff of the Toronto Conservatory of Music. She taught there until 1949, then privately for several years in Toronto. She made her Carnegie Hall recital début in January 1948, and in 1949 she appeared with the New York Philharmonic. Bruno Walter considered her "certainly one of the most superb pianists of our time" and the

New York critic, Harold Taubman judged her "an artist with a mind and heart of her own," adding, "The accent was on expression, not on technical fireworks. For she was making music, which should be the aim of an evening in Carnegie Hall." Her public appearances in North America continued until 1954, after which she devoted herself to teaching. Her musicality is beautifully captured in her Dresden 1939 recording of Hummel's delightful *Rondo in E flat major, Op. 11* [9].

Lili Kraus (1903-1986) was born in Budapest. She began studies at the age of six. Among her teachers and tutors were Arnold Székely, Béla Bartók, Severin Eisenberger and Eduard Steuermann. At 22 she was appointed professor at the Vienna Conservatory. In the 1930s she toured widely, playing in The Netherlands, England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, China and Japan. At that time she also was coached by Artur Schnabel, and created a partnership with the violinist Szymon Goldberg, with whom she recorded Mozart and Beethoven sonatas. A tour of Indonesia in 1940 proved to be disastrous when she was arrested on false charges near Djakarta, and spent nearly two years in forced-labour camps. She remained in Indonesia throughout the Japanese occupation and only made her way to Australia in August 1945. The harsh conditions of her imprisonment caused difficulties for her in regaining her earlier pianistic strength. A period of intensive practising, however, allowed her finally to make her American début at Town Hall, New York, on 6th November, 1949, to critical acclaim. In the 1950s she lived in Paris and Vienna, and after the death of her husband in 1956, she moved to London. During the next decade she recorded all of Mozart's concertos and sonatas. In 1967 she was appointed artist-in-residence at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, a post she held for sixteen years. Although we still view her as an extraordinary Mozart performer, her repertoire was wide and eclectic; often, her concert programmes included the works of her countryman, Béla Bartók. Her pre-war recording, made in London in 1938, of Bartók's *Six Rumanian Folk Dances* [20] is infectious.

Raie Da Costa (1905-1934), of Portuguese origin, was born in Cape Town, South Africa. She moved to London at nineteen with a view to pursuing a career as a concert pianist. Success eluded her, however, so she developed her own style: a combination of classical and jazz elements with diverse musical idioms and much syncopation. In 1928 she made her first records, and later in that year she began appearing in variety shows. Her success was immediate. She recorded on the Parlophone and HMV labels. Considered one of the most talented pianists of her time, she was known for her embellishments, incredible left hand technique, and orchestral musical concepts. Her playing activities and her early death meant that her compositional output was relatively small. Some of her best works in the syncopated style are: *Razor Blades*, *Jazz Goblins*, *Cascades*, *Parade of the Pied Piper*, *Moods*, and the infectious *At the Court of Old King Cole*. She contributed songs to the musical *Your Money or Your Wife* in 1932. Her astonishing technique (especially the effortless runs and rapid fire octaves) is quite evident in her 1930 recording of the Verdi-Liszt *Rigoletto Paraphrase* [16](#).

Galina Werschenska (1906-1994) was born in St Petersburg and received her education first at the Siloti School of Music, and later at the St Petersburg Conservatory. Her teacher was Nadezhda Golubovskaya (1891-1975), a student of Siloti, Pabst, Ippolitov-Ivanov, Arensky and Taneyev. Werschenska moved to Denmark in 1929, having married the Danish businessman Karl Plesner, whom she met in St Petersburg when he was working there for the Great Scandinavian Telegraph Company. Most of Werschenska's career centred around Denmark. She formed a trio with the violinist Peder Møller and the cellist Louis Jensen. She began recording in 1936 for Danish HMV. Many solo works and a number of chamber performances were recorded by her for this company until 1952. She also recorded for Tono, Nordisk Polyphon, and Decca. Her husband was killed in a car crash in 1950, and shortly thereafter she

suffered a nervous disorder (neuritis) affecting her hands. Within a few years she was able to return to the concert stage, although she never fully regained her previous abilities. Her remaining years were occupied with teaching privately, and in master-classes. She published her memoirs, *Brogede Akkorder* (*Multicolored Chords*) in 1982. In 1950 she recorded a most expressive and beautifully articulated performance of Liszt's transcription of Wagner's *Spinning Song*, from *The Flying Dutchman* [17](#).

Muriel Kerr (1911-1963) was born in Regina, Canada. She began her career at seven, performing a Mozart concerto. She studied with Paul Wells in Toronto, with Alexander Raab in Chicago, and with Percy Grainger. She began lessons with Ernest Hutcheson in 1922 after a Canadian tour and continued with him at the Juilliard Graduate School from 1926 to 1931. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in 1928 with Rachmaninov's *Concerto No. 2* with the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York, conducted by Willem Mengelberg. Her Town Hall recital debut was in January, 1929. After these successful debuts she undertook numerous tours of Canada and the United States, appearing with orchestras in Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, and Toronto. She made her first European tour in 1948. She taught at the Juilliard School (1942-49), and at the University of Southern California (1955-63). In 1957 she became the director of the Punahou Music School in Honolulu and organized an annual festival of contemporary music and art. She recorded very little — several Duo-Art piano rolls, one ten-inch 78 rpm disc in 1928, and one LP of music by Hindemith and Schumann, recorded in 1951 for the small American label, Hyperion, and reissued on RCA shortly after her untimely death. The recording of Scriabin's *Etude in D flat major, Op. 8, No. 10* [18](#) shows an enormously gifted seventeen-year-old pianist.

France Marguerite Ellegaard (1913-1999) was born in Paris. Both of her parents were Danish. Her father, Thorvald Ellegaard, was a world-famous cyclist.

At the age of nine France Ellegaard began her studies at the Ecole de Musique Nérini. Continuing her education, she entered the Paris Conservatoire, earning many medals, prizes, and distinctions. She studied with Santiago Riéra, a student of Georges Amadée Mathias, who studied with Chopin. At fifteen she made her début in Copenhagen, and in 1929 she performed with the Lamoureux Orchestra, conducted by Albert Wolff, in the rarely heard Rimsky-Korsakov *Piano Concerto*. Her busy concert schedule included countless performances in all musical capitals of Europe and in major cities of Scandinavia. She also played in Ireland and England. During the war Denmark had an active embassy in Berlin. As an occupied country, Denmark had to collaborate in cultural activities in Germany, and France Ellegaard consequently performed in Berlin in 1942 and 1943. She also made recordings at that time for Polydor. On 1st October, 1943 she was granted permission by the occupying power to go to Sweden. She remained there for the rest of the war as a political refugee. After the war she was branded as pro-German, and unwelcome in Denmark. As a result of this she remained in Sweden for the next several years. Another artist who was also in Sweden at the time was Annie Fischer. The two women often saw each other, and gave several duo recitals together. In 1948 Ellegaard met the Finnish artist, Birger Carlstedt, and they married in 1949. She became a naturalised Finn that year, and resumed her concert career. She taught at the Sibelius Academy from 1964 to 1975. Her last public appearance was in 1982. She died in Finland. Her Chopin recordings are exemplary, displaying a true understanding of his music. French composers always occupied a prominent place in her recitals, although she recorded very few of these works. Among the few is the delicate and delightful interpretation of Jacques Ibert's *Le petit âne blanc* [7] which was recorded in 1947.

Marie-Aimée Warrot (1915-1971) was born in Brunoy (near Paris), France. After receiving first prize from the Paris Conservatoire in 1930, she continued her studies with Robert Casadesus, Alfred Cortot, and later,

with Emil von Sauer in Vienna. Her reputation established in Europe, she moved in 1955 to Canada, settling first in Vancouver and later in Halifax. At the time she became a naturalised Canadian in 1960, she also changed the spelling of her last name to Varro. She continued to perform in recital and with major orchestras in Canada, the United States, and Europe, specialising in the romantic repertoire. She gave the première of Jean Coulthard's *Piano Concerto* in 1967. In the LP era she recorded for Canada Baroque Records, CBC, Orion, and also made three private recordings. She died in Neuchâtel, Switzerland. In her studies with Sauer, she learned authentic interpretation of Liszt's piano works, and it is not surprising that among her earliest recordings (made in 1946) is Liszt's *Theme and Variations (Etude No. 6)* from *Grandes Etudes de Paganini* [2].

Leah Effenbach (1915-1978) was born in New York in 1915. She attended the Peabody Conservatory and the Juilliard School, studying piano with Alexander Sklarevski and Olga Samaroff. She made her New York concert début at Town Hall on 30th November, 1940, under the auspices of the Society for the Advancement of Young Musicians. Then she left New York for a tour of North and South America. After the United States became involved in World War II, she joined a USO concert unit and went to the South Pacific, performing in Hong Kong, Korea, and Tokyo. Leah Effenbach was the soloist in the National Symphony Orchestra's first performance of Prokofiev's *Third Piano Concerto*, with Hans Kindler conducting, on 25th March, 1942. After the war, she returned to concertising and teaching, eventually settling in Los Angeles. After Leah Effenbach's death in 1978, her sister, Gertrude Gibson, and her nephew, Harry Gibson, established the Leah Effenbach Piano Fund at the Peabody Conservatory. The recording we hear by Leah Effenbach is an encore she performed at her second New York recital at Town Hall, on 4th January, 1947. Recorded live at that concert on transcription discs, the Morton Gould *Boogie Woogie*

Etude (1943) 21 shows her brilliant technical proficiency and virtuosity.

Ginette Doyen (1921-2002) was born in Montceau Les Mines, France. She began studies at the age of four, and three years later made her recital début. At ten years of age she entered the Paris Conservatoire, graduating five years later with awards for piano, harmony, and accompaniment. Her teachers were Lazare Lévy and Jean Galon. She was awarded the Prix Pages at the age of sixteen and a year later won a prize at the Concours International Gabriel Fauré. During the five year period before World War II she gave concerts extensively through France, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal. After World War II her engagements took her all over the world, including Europe, South Africa, Japan, Hong Kong, Borneo, and the United States. She often performed with her husband, the violinist Jean Fournier, with whom she formed a duo in 1945 (her married name was Geneviève Fournier). Her extensive discography includes recordings made for Westminster (New York), Pathé-Marconi and Véga (Paris), HMV (London), and Japanese Westminster (Tokyo). The Weber *Rondo* ('Perpetual Motion') 4 is among her earliest solo recordings, made in Paris in 1946.

Claudette Sorel (1932-1999) was born in Paris of French-Hungarian parentage. Her mother was her first teacher. She then studied with Sari Biro and made her

Town Hall recital début on 27th February, 1943. In 1944 she appeared with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Rudolf Ganz at Carnegie Hall. She continued her studies with Olga Samaroff, Rudolf Serkin and Mieczyslaw Horszowski. Sorel was a graduate of the Juilliard School, the Curtis Institute and Columbia University. She was the youngest Juilliard graduate, the youngest pianist to record for RCA Victor, the youngest winner of the National Federation of Music Clubs' Young Artists Competition, the youngest judge to serve the Second Van Cliburn Competition, and the youngest (and only woman at the time) to be named Distinguished University Professor in the entire State University of New York system of over sixty campuses. Sorel made more than 2000 concert, recital, and festival appearances, playing with 200 major orchestras. Her programmes included premières of music by Lukas Foss, Peter Mennin, Paul Creston, and Harold Morris. She held professorships at the University of Kansas, Ohio State University and the State University of New York (Fredonia), where she was chairperson of the piano department for thirteen years. Her youthful vigour and brilliant technique are heard in one of her earliest recordings from 1947 of Eugene Goossens' *The Hurdy-Gurdy Man* 8.

Marina and Victor Ledin

Playing
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75:04

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- 1 **SCHUMANN: Aufschwung** (Ania Dorfmann)
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- 3 **GARRETA: Sardana** (Blanche Selva)
- 4 **WEBER: Sonata No.1 in C major: Rondo (Perpetual Motion)**
(Ginette Doyen)
- 5 **DOHNANYI: Rhapsody No. 3 in C major** (Johanne Amalie Stockmarr)
- 6 **LECUONA: Malagueña** (Olga Samaroff)
- 7 **IBERT: Le petit âne blanc** (France Marguerite Ellegaard)
- 8 **GOOSSENS: The Hurdy-Gurdy Man** (Claudette Sorel)
- 9 **RACHMANINOV: Barcarolle in G minor** (Madeleine de Valmalète)
- 10 **SCRIABIN: Etude in D flat major** (Muriel Kerr)
- 11 **VOGRICH: Staccato-Caprice** (Yolanda Meró)
- 12 **COUPERIN: Le Tic-Toc-Choc ou Les Maillottins** (Kathleen Long)
- 13 **HUMMEL: Rondo in E flat major** (Lubka Kolessa)
BACH: Prelude and Fugue No. 36 in F minor (Elsie Hall)
- 14 **Prelude**
- 15 **Fugue**
- 16 **VERDI-LISZT: 'Rigoletto' Paraphrase** (Raie Da Costa)
- 17 **WAGNER-LISZT: Spinning Song, from 'The Flying Dutchman'**
(Galina Werschenska)
- 18 **CHOPIN: Fantaisie-Impromptu in C sharp minor** (Irene Scharrer)
- 19 **VILLA-LOBOS: Chôros No. 5 (Alma Brasileira)** (Ellen Ballon)
- 20 **BARTÓK: Six Romanian Folk Dances** (Lili Kraus)
- 21 **GOULD: Boogie Woogie Etude** (Leah Effenbach)

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Producers and Audio Restoration Engineers: Marina and Victor Ledin
Restoration Mastering Engineer: Anthony Casuccio

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