

orchestral in its sonority, the most violent extremes of color being present when required. Listen to him in the Rubinstein Étude or the Liszt Rhapsodies, with their clanging rhythms and mad fury, and ask what pianist since Liszt has given us such gorgeous, glowing colors—

such explosions of tone, and the unbridled freedom of the Magyar.

Paderewski is an artist by the grace of God, a phenomenal and inspired player, and, like all persons of large natural gifts, a simple, gracious, and loving character.

*William Mason.*¹

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PADEREWSKI: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.



IGNACE JAN PADEREWSKI is the son of an old Polish country family whose home is in Podolia, a province of Russian Poland, where he was born in 1860. Although his father was

able to provide in some degree for the education of his children, young Ignace soon found it necessary to support himself. But—better than money—aristocratic instincts, high breeding, high spirit, indomitable will, the love and power of work, those blessed heritages of good blood, were his by birth and training.

The lad owed his musical organization to his mother; his father, who was a gentleman farmer, had no musical tastes.

One class of mankind is born to receive its strongest impressions through the eye, another from words and thoughts, a third from bodily sensations, and a fourth through the ear. If we could follow each class into its mental life, we should find that a large part of its memory, thinking and doing, was dependent on its ruling sense. Paderewski's world is preëminently a world of tone. Every sound he hears makes a clear, abiding mental impression. But he is great because he is symmetrical enough to live also in a world of sights, ideas, and actions.

Our artist passed the early years of childhood in the country. He was motherless, but "Him by the hand kind Nature took." She showed him her gracious silences, her sounds of forest, field, and brook, her stir of living growth, her various skies and motions. To this first, best music lesson his imagination owes much of its objective material.

From earliest infancy he could "hear." At three he stole to the piano to touch the keys and to listen. At six he began to study. The teacher was a fiddler who helped out his living by giving lessons on the piano, which he could not play. It did not even occur to him to bestow upon his pupils that peculiar treasure of his own instrument, the power of recognizing tones. But it was not necessary. Young Ignace knew the pitch of every sound he heard. He could identify not only the notes in every chord, but each separate set of vibrations that goes to

make up that variable compound we call tone. "I *must* hear them, because I try to color my tone," said he, when the writer put the question; and added, "I do that largely with the pedal."

The creative instinct was alive in him as soon as he could think at all. He did not long to stir his fancy by singing and playing the literature of music, but to make the music himself—to express his ideas and emotions through his own musical forms. After a year or two another teacher was engaged, an old man who came down into the country once a month. He had as little notion of technic as his predecessor. He thought it sufficient to bring with him a collection of four- and six-handed pieces,—pot-pourris from popular operas,—which the little boy and his sister played at sight. There his instruction ended. The children were left to find their own way among the keys, and to stumble as they went. But though genius may stumble, it does not stick in the bog. "Art," says Emerson, "is the path of a creator to his work," and certainly genius is the faculty of making a short cut thither. Within, it possesses the image of the object to be arrived at clear and bright; and it has the woodsman's instinct by which it threads the jungle of ways and means. The young student always knew what he wanted to do; he played, listened, compared, and thought till he found the right way. Paderewski's marvelous tone-quality is an example. Its perfection has been the work of his life, but it has been wholly his own discovery, guided by an exquisitely sensitive ear. When a boy of twelve, Paderewski went to the conservatory at Warsaw. There he studied harmony and counterpoint with Roguski, and took piano lessons (he never studied any other instrument) of Janotha, the father of Natalie. Janotha was then eighty years old. His notions of technic must have been those of his own generation. But how mellow the culture bestowed by contact with this old musician's lifetime of musical experience and tradition, and with his objects of veneration! Paderewski moves among the old forms of music with the freedom of early good musical breeding. The creations of the past are flex-

ible in his hands, because since childhood he has known them to be living, not dead. The boy's physical equipment was happy. That supple, elastic frame, offspring of generations of Polish gentlemen trained to fence, dance, and ride, needed a minimum of discipline for the dexterities of the piano. Nerve, eye, and hand were ready. In his after years no more tireless student of technic ever lived; but as a boy our artist had small appetite for virtuosity. Still, those years of independent music, untrammelled by teachers' traditions or drill, were rich years. The original methods of fingering, habitual to the artist we know, were felt out and found out to a great degree as he played and extemporized.

Warsaw, a city of over half a million inhabitants, is the literary and musical center of Poland. Hugo says that a suffering and oppressed nation always sings. Certainly the musical instinct of Poland is keenly alive. In this atmosphere was much to animate and to mature the young student. The conservatory afforded good instruction in counterpoint and composition. In its excellent musical library the future composer speedily made acquaintance with the masterpieces of his art. To the conservatory of Warsaw he traces the beginning of what may be called the literary side of his musical culture, as well as his love of general education.

At sixteen young Paderewski made a tour through Russia. During this journey he played his own compositions and those of other people; but, as he naïvely confessed, they were all his own, no matter what he played, for he did not know the music, and as he had little technic and could not manage the hard places, he improvised to fill up the gaps. There was one concerto by Henselt of which he could play the first and second themes, but neither the extensions nor the passages. But he played it before audiences, and got people to listen to it. It must have been a pretty sight. The boy, with his bright hair and delicate, mobile face, sensitive and shy, but trustful in his power to win and charm, gathered about him the audience, often poor and rough, submitting unawares to the old spell of genius,— the genius of the singer,— the very same type of musician that the Greeks understood so well, and gathered up in all its lovely detail into the myth of Orpheus. The journey was of great value. The young artist learned to watch his audiences and to play to them, just as he does to-day. He tested his powers, and his bright boy's eyes noticed every detail of costume, adventure, national holiday or dance. He stored away among his artistic material the characteristic intonations of every dialect and the melody of every folk-song he met.

The tour over, Paderewski went back to

Warsaw. To please his father, he studied, and six months later obtained his diploma from the conservatory. He was eighteen when he became professor of music in the same institution. The noble thirst for knowledge was upon him, and the money he earned was spent on literary studies, which he prosecuted with different masters, principally at night, after the day's teaching was over.

Paderewski has all his life sought people of character and culture for his companions. A few choice intimates, and no admittance to commonplace folk, has been his rule. The man whose influence upon his character was greatest, and whose friendship was most devoted, was the late Professor Chalubinski, Poland's best physician, and one of her greatest men in character and intelligence. As long as he lived Chalubinski felt the keenest interest in the fortunes of his earnest young compatriot. The love the two men felt for each other stood that sharpest of tests—gratitude.

Married at nineteen, a widower at twenty, with hope crushed out of him, Paderewski threw his whole life passionately into music. He went to Kiel in Berlin, and studied composition. Kiel was a wonderful teacher of counterpoint. "You will soon 'hear' very differently," he used to say to his new pupils, as he taught them to braid the strands of polyphony. The one composer who carried into modern life the musical feeling of the preceding century, his own style was simple, unaffected, and noble. No pupil ever left him without new insight into fugue and sensitive feeling for the peculiar beauties of the earlier school. Paderewski declares Bach the "poet of musicians." But it was inevitable that he, whose ardent spirit belongs to our own age, should reject for his own composition the tradition of a past epoch. Paderewski's pure, transparent, and well-balanced fugue playing is probably the best result of Kiel's influence. Kiel died about this time, and a year later, in 1884, our artist was still in Berlin, but under the tuition of Heinrich Urban. As a master of composition this great musician seems to have satisfied every requirement.

At twenty-three Paderewski was professor of music in the conservatory of Strasburg. He was still poor, but poverty could not grind down his spirit, nor narrow his conception of life. It was simply a stimulus to incessant work. He was then accustomed to visit a certain little mountain summer resort frequented by other distinguished artists, among them Mme. Modjeska, and her husband, Count Bozenta Chlapowski. Mme. Modjeska describes him as at this time a polished and genial companion; a man of wide culture; of witty, sometimes biting, tongue; brilliant in table-talk; a man wide

awake to all matters of popular interest, who knew and understood the world, but whose intimacy she and her husband especially prized for the "elevation of his character and the refinement of his mind."

His familiarity with musical literature was already exhaustive. To amuse these same friends he once extemporized exquisitely upon a theme in the characteristic style of every great composer from Palestrina to Chopin. When he had finished they begged him to play it once more according to himself, and that time it was the most beautiful of all. That night they sat down by the piano soon after dinner, and it was five in the morning before he rose. Then, alarmed at his white, haggard face, they dragged him from the stool. Since his juvenile tour his tone and execution had been unconsciously growing, and his technic developing with use. It was already great. But his playing, though interesting as the expression of the composer's ideas, lacked finish, or even security. When one passage was too knotty he still improvised another in its place, easier but more graceful.

Paderewski is a most patient student, heedful of that still small voice as seldom heard in art as in ethics, and he is sensitive to music's truest and most dignified claims. Never has he struck a note to make a popular effect, or descended to a claptrap ornament to excite a vulgar audience. He *plays to his hearers* more than any other artist of his day, but it is with the delicate and sensitive instinct of the great orator who *speaks to his hearers*, not above or beyond them. Vanity, personal or artistic, he has none. He is at once intensely proud, and most humble in his estimate of himself. He is known, everywhere, to remember not only a melody, but a kindness, forever.

Resolving to become a virtuoso, he sought Leschetitzky in 1886, and set to work with his accustomed energy. Find a way, or make one, had always been his motto, and it is characteristic of artists of his type of genius that they more often find than make the way. While determination is surveying, hewing, and building a causeway, they have long since spied a practicable pass and slipped nimbly through to the goal. Hence the repose, harmony, and beauty of their work; a serenity that is the sign of normal development, a revelation of fulfilled natural law.

Such has been Paderewski's whole musical growth. His art is the vivid, instinctive expression of his maturing inner life, which he has constantly turned into music. It has known no sudden transfigurations and spasmodic activities. It has had its roots in his feeling and doing, far from public adulation and concert-room stimulus. To Leschetitzky Paderewski ascribes

"his finish, security, and virtuosity." He was with him only seven months, making his *début* in Vienna in 1887. But virtuosity is a matter of manual exercise; he achieved it, but the amount of physical fatigue and endurance involved can hardly be estimated.

We can trace the hand of the great Polish teacher of artists here and there in the playing of his greatest pupil. The limpid run, the delicate staccato, the superb octave, we have seen before in Essipoff. But the tremendous originality of the man stands out in each and every detail of his music, and, like his tone, his technic must be considered as his own, since both depend essentially upon the generative impulse of his artistic conception, and the habitual correction and leading of his ear.

At seven Paderewski wrote his first music, a set of Polish dances. In 1882 he found a publisher in Berlin. His *Menuet*, *Chant du Voyageur*, *Melodie*, *Legende*, *Variations*, and *Polish Dances*, but especially his *Concerto*, are much valued throughout Europe. The majority of his compositions were already written when, at the age of twenty-five, he went to Vienna.

No one who has heard the mature artist of to-day can doubt where he has won his pathos and his strength. No musician can make counterfeit experience pass current. He may not be able to express all he feels, but he cannot give voice to what he has never felt. An early manhood of sturdy self-respect and industry, a nature sweet, loving, and clean, a heart that has learned many a lesson of suffering, are apparent in every note and phrase.

Lively patriotism, filial responsibility, a married life that ran from joy to despair in less than a year, a fatherhood constantly attuned to sympathy and tenderness for his motherless and invalid boy, have done their gracious work in his music, and taught him the secret cry of human hearts.

With Paderewski practice and study never cease. Before every concert he is accustomed to shut himself up and to practise all night, going carefully over his whole program. No point of phrasing, technic, or execution escapes him. When all is securely thought and worked out, the artist is ready for his hearers. The next day he goes to the piano master of his material, and, free from concern about notes or mechanical means, plays with perfect abandon out of his inner feeling. This, his own statement, is borne out by his vividly expressive face when playing.

The spirit that speaks through Paderewski's music is a spirit of light. We see the reason when we recognize that the great virtuoso of our generation has courage and rectitude not only to work but to live for his high calling.

Fanny Morris Smith.

"HOW PADEREWSKI PLAYS."

I



If words were perfume, color, wild desire;
If poet's song were fire,
That burned to blood in purple-pulsing veins;
If with a bird-like thrill the moments throbbed to hours;
If summer's rains
Turned drop by drop to shy, sweet, maiden flowers;
If God made flowers with light and music in them,
And saddened hearts could win them;
If loosened petals touched the ground
With a caressing sound;
If love's eyes uttered word
No listening lover e'er before had heard;
If silent thoughts spake with a bugle's voice;
If flame passed into song and cried, "Rejoice! Rejoice!"
If words could picture life's, hope's, heaven's eclipse
When the last kiss has fallen on dying eyes and lips;
If all of mortal woe
Struck on one heart with breathless blow on blow;
If melody were tears, and tears were starry gleams
That shone in evening's amethystine dreams;
Ah, yes, if notes were stars, each star a different hue,
Trembling to earth in dew;
Or if the boreal pulsings, rose and white,
Made a majestic music in the night;
If all the orbs lost in the light of day
In the deep, silent blue began their harps to play;
And when in frightening skies the lightnings flashed
And storm-clouds crashed,
If every stroke of light and sound were but excess of beauty;

— If human syllables could e'er refashion
That fierce electric passion;
If other art could match (as were the poet's duty)
The grieving, and the rapture, and the thunder
Of that keen hour of wonder,—
That light as if of heaven, that blackness as of hell,—
How Paderewski plays then might I dare to tell.

II

How Paderewski plays! And was it he
Or some disbodied spirit that had rushed
From silence into singing; that had crushed
Into one startled hour a life's felicity,
And highest bliss of knowledge—that all life, grief, wrong
Turns at the last to beauty and to song!

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R. W. Gilder.





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J. J. Paderewski