



IGNACE JAN PADEREWSKI

[From the photograph preferred by Mr. Paderewski]
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PADEREWSKI IN HIS DAILY LIFE

By John F. a'Becket

With Illustrations Kindly Loaned by Mr. Paderewski for This Publication

THERE are thousands who know Ignace Jan Paderewski only as a man of forceful personality, who plays the piano better than any being on earth. As he meets the public only as a pianist and a composer the public has no right to know anything more of him than is revealed by his activity at the keyboard and by his own personal appearance. But the public would like to know more of the man, and the suggestions of Paderewski's personal character which are stirred in the observer by his appearance on the concert stage will be confirmed by this knowledge of how the man lives. Refinement, delicacy, strength, and a suspicion of grave reserve, which almost touches on melancholy, are written on his immobile face, and in his tall, slender, wiry physique. His compositions bear on the impressions gained from these sources. There is a sobriety in their gayety, a noble sort of dignity in their seriousness, a fine mastery in their passionate phases.

His life warrants all of these. Born in Russian Poland thirty-six years ago, of parents moderately supplied with earthly goods, but rich in integrity and fine instincts, he lost his mother when very young, the mother from whom he inherited the musical nature which has made him famous. At nineteen he married, only to have death wound his heart once more with awful bitterness a year later, when his young wife died. But he gathered one solace from his brief married life, though even this joy was not unfreighted with sorrow—for the baby boy whom the dying wife left to the young father is a cripple. Here is enough to induce a serious strain in the most sensitive nature, and Paderewski has the exquisite sensibility of the highest artistic temperament. No wonder, then, that his classic face wears a look of gravity.

How, then, does this man live in his daily life—the daily life of his concert tours, when he is traveling from city to city, and giving the recitals which mean pleasure for thousands, fame and wealth for him, and an assured future of comfort and peace for the crippled boy in Paris? Paderewski rises, as a rule, about ten o'clock on days when he does not give a concert or is traveling. On days when he is to play in the evening he rises at one. By way of morning meal he takes a cup of coffee or tea—nothing else, not even a roll or morsel of bread. He practices usually for five or six hours each day on a piano which he has sent to his room in the hotel as soon as he arrives in a city. When he has an afternoon concert he does not practice at all, however, and if the concert is an evening one he devotes only two or three hours to exercising on the keyboard. In order to strengthen his fingers he plays only five-finger exercises. Like a prize-fighter who is in training this musical athlete devotes himself to a systematic course of gymnastics for strengthening all of the physical powers which are called into play by his performances at the piano. Those long, slender, "piano" fingers are put through their paces until they acquire strength, flexibility, agility and staying power. His magnificent technique is not maintained without this constant fostering and lubricating of its springs. This little band of five faithful servants which each hand commands is in tenure to a wrist like steel. But his arms also have to be strengthened. For this purpose he employs an apparatus which he designed and had made himself. What this is he knows, and nobody else. For a general tone to his

to enjoy it on the same level as the other guests, yet at these children's parties he willingly, and with a sympathetic pleasure, sits at the piano and plays.

In all that he does Paderewski is serious. He lives up to the expression marked on his face. He is fond of reading, but he never reads novels, and never reads a newspaper. This seems a little astonishing in a man who could find in their columns so much of which, not



AS A BOY PIANIST AT FOURTEEN

[Taken during his first concert tour, as a pianist, in Russia]



PADEREWSKI AT THE AGE OF SEVEN

vanity, but a healthy regard for honest praise, could make pleasant digestion. He reads as a student. At present he is going through the English classics. He is very fond of Heine. This is slightly singular, for the venomous sting with which Heine loves to suddenly pierce his finest poems has no analogue in Paderewski's nature, one of the mainsprings of which is a strong, persistent desire to benefit others, to make life better and more endurable for those whom it may be his fortune to influence. Paderewski's favorite poet, however, is one of his own Polish countrymen, Miskiewicz.

However favorably this gentleman may have cultivated the muse "in the fair land of Poland," he is not sufficiently known on these cis-Atlantic shores to make the great pianist's regard for his poetry any clew to Paderewski's own character or tastes.

Paderewski reads after he has gone to bed, and reads in the morning before he gets up. In this way he can give his body rest while he is employing his mental faculties profitably and for his recreation. When he is *en tour* reading is almost his only amusement. There is, however, one other, more entirely an amusement, for Paderewski's reading is more or less study as well. This is billiards. He is very fond of the game, and handles a cue with a good deal of skill. If he could master ivory, in the shape of billiard balls, as well as he does the same material when it veneers the keys of a piano, there would be a new record established in billiard runs and difficult shots.

From what has been said of Paderewski's daily routine it will be seen that when he is making a tour he practically devotes his whole energy to keeping himself in "condition" as a pianist. Though he has his pleasures they are of so quiet and serious a kind that most men would chafe under them as irksome. He is fond of walking, and every day takes a constitutional of several miles, and takes a pleasure in it apart from its value as a health-giving exercise.

It is not surprising that Paderewski should be more or less sensitive to surroundings. He could hardly be the kind of pianist he is and be utterly insensible to them. Some phases of the American "lightning-change artist"

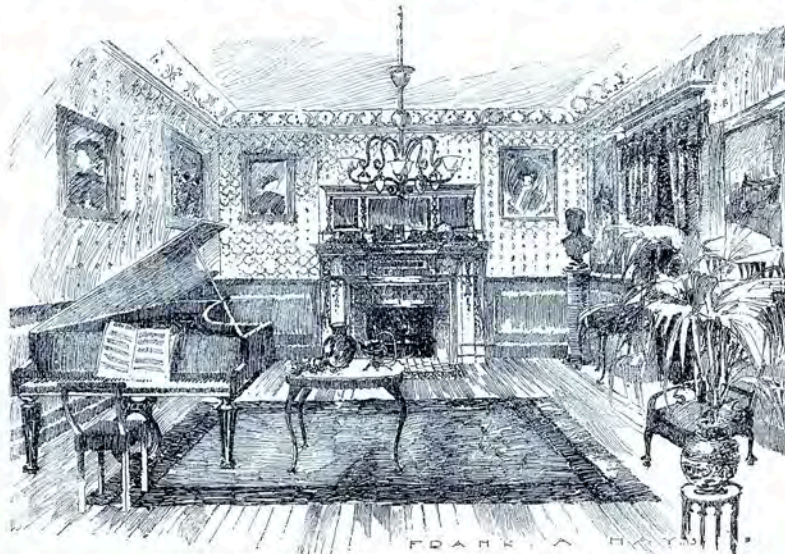


A SAMPLE OF ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT, AS EXPRESSLY WRITTEN BY PADEREWSKI FOR THIS ARTICLE

system he uses, when resting, a pair of light dumb-bells, weighing twelve ounces apiece.

On the day of a concert he eats nothings until it is concluded except one soft-boiled egg! When it is over he takes a hearty meal, which he enjoys thoroughly, as his appetite is excellent though he is so abstemious. During a concert he drinks a soda lemonade made without sugar. It need hardly be said that this is not intended as a stimulant. Nobody would detect the presence of that weak little drink in his system from his playing after the intermission at his concerts. After the concert he permits himself a draught of some malt beverage.

When he is making a concert tour he devotes himself rigorously to business. He is fond of society, and when he is at home in his comfortable, well-appointed residence in Paris, he takes pleasure in mingling in the best society the French capital possesses. During his tour he does not go out nor take part in any social functions. There is only one exception to this: he will sometimes go to a children's party. He is very fond of children, and where he will promptly decline some big social function he will accept an invitation to one of these gatherings of little folks. Although Paderewski does not care to play at a social gathering of which he is a part, preferring



A GLIMPSE OF PADEREWSKI'S STUDIO IN HIS PARIS HOME



AS HE WAS AT NINETEEN

[From a photograph taken on the day before his marriage]

of a climate are exceedingly depressing to him. The nasty Saturday on one of his first weeks in New York affected him a good deal, though no one in the audience would have suspected it from his playing. There is where his will power and virtuosity stand him in good stead. Often when he has felt that his subjective mood was impairing the quality of his playing, the critics have found it of his best.

The most difficult thing that Paderewski does is to play in public. What he would like to do would be to give himself entirely to composing. Music-lovers the world over will hope that it may be many a year before he feels that he can do this. Although his ability as a composer is great it is not to be compared to his supreme worth as a piano player. That "moderately-responsive instrument," as George Eliot once called it, under his hands shows what can be wrung from it as it does under scarcely any other's. By acclamation of the majority Paderewski is the greatest of pianists.

WHILE he is *en tour* he rarely attempts to compose. This is the pleasure of his leisure—his vacation. He composes with great facility, and his musical creations are very spontaneous. His "Polish Fantasy," the most ambitious work he has yet produced, was accomplished in five weeks of a summer sojourn at Yport, on the French coast, two years ago. During his Christmas holiday vacation he spent several days of his time in the composition of a new piece of music, which he has written expressly for THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, the only work in that line he has found time to accomplish since his "Polish Fantasy" was finished and given to the public.

It seems, also, a little singular that Paderewski never heard Liszt. One would imagine that he would have made a long journey and have undergone much for the sake of listening to this supreme master of the instrument which he plays with such consummate ability. He heard Rubinstein but once. As a composer he regards Liszt as the greater of these two. His own favorite composers are Beethoven, Bach and Chopin. Beethoven he holds as the greatest of composers.

NOTHING keys Paderewski up so much as a sympathetic audience. Of course, there is nothing more natural than this. But, on the other hand, he is not depressed nor irritated by adverse criticism, or a failure on the part of his hearers to seem to grasp adequately what he is generously and richly putting before them. He has no critic so severe as himself. Anything short of what he regards as a perfect intellectual perception on his own part of a composition, the full emotional conception of its character, development and subtlest *nuances*, and the most just, rhythmic, colored evocation of the same from the piano, leaves him dissatisfied with his presentation of it. He has the artistic conscience in the highest degree. He has an unflagging, merciless energy in mastering the most facile virtuosity possible to his powers, but he is too great and thorough a musician not to regard even the perfection of virtuosity as not the primal excellence of musicianly achievement. What he cannot carry off by that higher merit to which virtuosity should be tributary and subordinate he will not condescend to win by relying on that alone.

Such is the daily life of Ignace Jan Paderewski, pianist. If his soul had not been saturated with that strong trinity of sorrows, a motherless boyhood, a premature and youthful widowerhood, and a paternity which found its one object an invalid boy dependent on him for support and happiness, it is possible that Paderewski's playing would have a different and not so potent a charm as it possesses to-day. His life might not be so charged with a certain Spartan-like sobriety and reserve while rich in a warm, earnest spirit of beneficence toward his kind. This is a flight into the realm of conjecture, but it is based on reason and is corroborated by facts.