The Eight Transcriptions of Chopin’s ‘Black Key’ Etude in G-flat op. 10 no. 5 by Leopold Godowsky

A Lecture Recital

By

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Lecture Recital

• Introduction
• Biographical Sketch
• Origins of the Transcriptions
• Forms of the Transcriptions
• Analysis and Performance of Chopin’s ‘Black Key’ Etude
• Discussion and performance of the Eight Transcriptions by Godowsky
Introduction

• 54 Studies based on 26 of the 27 Etudes of Chopin
• Composed between the years of 1893 and 1914
• Op. 25 no. 7 in C# minor was never published but is listed as ‘Elegie” for the left hand alone
• James Huneker- considered his piano compositions “the transcendentalism of the future”
• Rachmaninoff- “Godowsky is the only musician of this age who has given a lasting, a real contribution to the development of piano music”
• Lhevinne- “You know, Lep, I get a physical pleasure in playing your music, It fits the hand so comfortably, just like a well made glove”
• Hoffmann- Chopin is regarded as spirit of Piano Composition, Godowsky represents the sprit of pianistic expression
Brahms

• 1869 Chopin’s Etude in F minor op. 25 no.2 Adds sixths and thirds
• Weber-Sonata in C major op. 24 exchanges material between the hands
• 1879- Bach Violin Sonata in G minor Presto- Composes counterpoint, two versions-
  • 1-original material in the right hand
  • 2- original material in the left hand
• Chaconne in D minor- for the left hand alone
Isidor Phillip

• Chopin- op. 25 no. 2- exchanges left and right hand parts, op. 10 no. 5- right-hand passages doubled in thirds, fourths, sixths, and octaves, op. 10 no. 2- chord study, 1900- op. 25 no. 6 ‘Thirdds’- exchanges passage between the hand

• 1895- ‘Exercices et etudes techniques...pour la main gauche seule’- Draws on Chopin, Weber, Czerny, and Mendelssohn to create studies for the left hand alone
• Adolph Henselt- 1895- ‘167 Finishing Studies’- 30 exercises based on Chopin, includes concert etudes
• Tausig and Joseffy recommended that their students practice the right hand material of the Chopin Etudes in the left hand
• Many other arrangements exist of Chopin Etudes-1873 Carl Bial, Bendel, 1884- Carlyle Petersilyea, Joseffy, Reger, Leo, Aloys Jiranek
Biographical Sketch

- Born- 1870 Solzny Poland, Parents- Anna and Matthew
- Father died when he was 18 months old
- Lived with Minna and Louis Passinock in Wilno
- Early study on the violin
- Secretly learned the piano with very little help
- Composed first composition at age 5 Minuet, middle section a perfect canon
- First concert tour- 9 years old
Accusations of Exploitation

- Knorosovsky- spread rumors of exploitation, sent a manuscript of a sonata movement to Anton Rubenstein, offered a full Scholarship to Imperial Conservatory, Petrograd- turned down by ‘Uncle’ Louis
- Feinberg- offered to finance Godowsky’s education at the Berlin High School for music, Godowsky studied with Ernst Rudorff for only three months. Left in the middle of the night with his mother.
• 1884- Moved to America, made his debut in Boston
• Leon Saxe- another wealthy patron took him to Europe to study with Liszt in 1886. Liszt died before they arrived in Weimar.
• Godowsky moved to Paris, met Saint-Saens who would not teach him, though Godowsky played for him many times. Saint-Saens wanted to adopt Godowsky.
• 1891- Returned to America, played at Carnegie Hall before it officially opened
• April 30th he Married Frieda Saxe became an American citizen
Teaching Positions

• 1891- New York School for Music
• 1891-1893- Head of Gilbert Raynolds Broad Street Conservatory, Philadelphia
• 1893-1900- Head of the piano department at the Chicago Conservatory
• 1909- Director of the Piano School of the Imperial Academy of Music, Vienna, Godowsky was the highest paid artist teacher in Europe at the time
Historic Concerts

• 1897-1898- When he was head of the Piano Department in Chicago, gave a series of eight concerts surveying the entire 19th Century piano literature
• 1900- Berlin debut at Beethoven-Saal
• Overnight he was considered one of the greatest living pianists and became one of the highest paid of all instrumentalists
• 1914- Godowsky and family fled Europe due to WWI, they were vacationing in Belgium and had to leave everything in Vienna
• 1914-1916- Plaza Hotel
• 1916- Moved to Los Angeles, then back to New York- Hotel Ansonia
• 1923- toured China and Java, inspiration for Java Suite
• 1929- Stock market crash, Godowsky never fully recovered
• 1930- Suffered a stroke
• 1932- His son Gordon committed suicide
• 1933- Frieda dies
• 1938- Godowsky dies of stomach cancer
Origins of Chopin Studies

• 1893-Practicing Chopin’s Etude in thirds
• Evolved a new, more practical fingering for the chromatic scales
• Transposed the passages to the left hand
• Found it worked well and did the same for op. 10 no. 1, op. 10 no. 5, op. 25 no,. 8, etc.
• Concluded that the left hand was easier to develop when given the opportunity
Forms of Transcription

• 1- Strict Transcription- Text of original is followed closely, transferred to the left hand
• 2- Free Transcription-
  • A) Text is freely treated
  • B) inverted
  • C) combined with another study
  • D) imitated through the medium of another study
• 3- Cantus Firmus- Text of the original study in the right hand is strictly adhered to in the left hand in the new version while the right hand is freely treated in a contrapuntal way
• 4- Variation- Text is used for the basis for free variation
• 5- Metamorphoses- studies where the character, design, and rhythm of the original text are altered while the architectural structure remains intact, although the melodic and harmonic outline can be considerably modified
Study No. 7

Vivace  \( \frac{\text{d}}{\text{b}} = 116 \)

grazioso e leggierissimo

poco rall.
B Section
Motive C
Motive D
Motive F and G
Coda
Motives I and J
Ossia

\[\text{Ossia:} \]

\[\text{\textbackslash 8^{eq} }\]
Study No. 8

Vivace  $\frac{\dot{} \cdot}{\cdot \cdot \cdot} = 96 - 116$

$p$ leggero e sempre legato
Motives $B^1$ and $B^2$
Motive C

dolce

espressivo

rall.

pp leggerissimo

a tempo

\textit{a tempo}
Motives $E^1$ and $E^2$
Motive F¹
Motives $F^2$ and $G$
Motives I and J
Liszt’s Tarantella
Liszt’s Tarantella

un poco rit. e scherzando

string.

p capriccioso

rinf.
Rossini’s La Danza

Presto assai

\[\text{Presto assai}\]

\[\text{leggierissimo}\]
Study No. 10 Tarantella

Vivace \( \cdot = 88 - 100 \)

(Duration: 88 - 100)
Motives $B^1$ and $B^2$
Motives $C^1$, $C^2$, and $C^3$
Motive $F^1$ and Variation

dolce ed espressivo

piu animato

poco rit.

a tempo

cresc.
Motives $G^1$ and $G^2$
Coda

dolce
una coda

poco rit.
a tempo
Motives I and J
Chopin’s Op. 25 No. 9 “Butterfly”
Study No. 47 “Badinage”

Vivace gioviale (♩ = 92-104)

leggiero
Motives $A^5$ and $A^1$, brief appearance of both in the left hand
Last statement of “Butterfly” in the A Section of “Black Key”
B Section of “Butterfly” with altered
Coda with Variants
Closing Passages

[Music notation image]
Study No. 10 Capriccio

Vivace  \( \frac{\text{d}}{} = 84 \text{ - } 92 \)

 sempre legato leggierissimo e scherzando
Variants of motives $A^1$ and $A^2$
Motives $B^1$, $B^2$, and variants
Motives $C^1$ and $C^2$
Motives $D^1$ and $D^2$
Motive E¹

dolcissimo
cresc. ed appassionato
molto cresc.
Motive $E^2$
Motive $F^1$ and Ossia

Ossia:

scherzando

a tempo

$P$

Reo.  Reo.  Reo.  Reo.
Motives G$^1$ and G$^2$, Coda
Motives I and J
Study no. 11 Inversion for the left hand
Motives $B^1$ and $B^2$
Motive $C^1$
Motive F¹
Motives $F^2$, $G^1$, $G^2$, and Coda
Motives I and J
Study No. 12 Inversion for the right hand

Vivace $q = 84 - 104$

leggiero e sempre legato
una corda

$\hat{\text{pp}}$
Motives $B^1$ and $B^2$
Motive $C^1$
Motives D$^1$ and D$^2$
Motive $E^2$
Motive F¹
Motives $F^2$, $G^1$, and $G^2$
Coda
Motives I and J

piu mosso

pp

rall.

veloce
Study No. 12A for the left hand alone
Motives B\textsuperscript{1} and B\textsuperscript{2}
Motives $C^1$, $C^2$, and $C^3$
Motives $D^1$ and $D^2$

\[ \text{marcatissimo} \]

\[ \text{dim.} \]
Motive $E^2$

\[ \text{f sempre cresc.} \]

\[ \text{sf} \]
Motives $F^2$, $G^1$, and $G^2$
Motives I and J