

Mieczysław Horszowski

Vatican Recital: 1940

Beethoven Masterworks: 1952-1975



ARBITER

Mieczysław Horszowski Vatican recital: 1940
Beethoven masterworks: 1952-1975

CD I:

1. Beethoven: 15 Variations & Fugue "Eroica" Op.35 25'07"

*variations: 1. 3'37"**, 2. 4'17", 3. 5'13"

4. 5'57", 5. 6'44" 6. 7'36", 7. 8'29", 8. 9'07",

9. 9'57" 10. 10'40", 11. 11'30", 12. 12'08",

13.13;02, 14. 13'45", 15. 15'14", Fugue: 20'04".

rec. 27 IX 1975, Philadelphia

**variations' starting times*

2. Beethoven: Diabelli Variations, Op. 120: 54'43"

*variations: 1. 0'57"**, 2. 2'45", 3. 3'47", 4. 5'19",

5. 6'33", 6. 7'33", 7. 8'27", 8. 10'36", 9. 2'26",

10. 14'10", 11. 14'50", 12. 15'49", 13. 16'44",

14. 17'55", 15. 20'46", 16. 21'22", 17. 22'40",

18. 23'33", 19. 25'35", 20. 26'30", 21. 28'21",

22. 29'38", 23. 30'32", 24. 31'29", 25. 34'24",

26. 35'10", 27. 36'32", 28. 37'34', 29. 38'39",

30. 40'12", 31. 42'05", 32. 47'03", 33. 50'46".

rec. 19 XI 1970, Philadelphia

**variations' starting times*

total time: 79'55

CD II:

Beethoven: Piano Sonata No. 21 Op. 53: 22'16"

1. Allegro con brio 9'47"
 2. Introduzione: Adagio molto 3'30"
 3. Rondo. Allegretto moderato – Prestissimo 8'58"
- rec. III 1952, New York

Chopin:

4. Scherzo Op. 20 in B minor 8'11"
5. Berceuse Op. 57 3'59"
6. Franck: Prélude, choral, et fugue: Choral 4'45"

Liszt: Legends

7. S. Francesco d' Assisi sermon to the birds 8'15"
8. S. Francesco di Paolo walking on the waves 7'48"

Chopin:

9. Preludes Op. 28: No. 15 in D-flat 4'51"
10. Impromptu Op. 29 in A-flat 3'35"
11. Ballade Op. 23 in G-minor 8'35"
12. Sonata No. 2 Op. 35: Funeral March 6'05"

rec. 29 II - 1 III 1940, Vatican City

total time: 79'27"

Our gratitude to Bice Horszowski Costa for her kind permission and unceasing efforts to conserve Horszowski's legacy.

Producer & Audio Restoration: Allan Evans

Graphics: Garrett McDonnell

www.arbiterrecords.org

In Mr. Horszowski there is an equal probing of taste and simplicity. There isn't any superficial or easy way to easily research his interpretations, of which one can discuss conceptions (such as that of Beethoven's Sonata in B-flat, Op. 22), which, however, are always the reflection of a sensitive and alert artistic nature. He phrases with delicacy and his sonorities are very fortunately most varied. It is in three Preludes and Fugues from J. S. Bach's Well-Tempered Klavier that his talent is most freely expansive, in the twofold relationship of a technical precision and the comprehension of these admirable pages, a veritable catechism of the pianist-musician. Mr. Horszowski knows how to reach the highest eloquence in Liszt's Legendes.

—Pierre Leroi. *La Gauloise*, 14 November 1926.

In 1975, it was announced that Mieczysław Horszowski (1892-1993) would appear in New York to commemorate seventy-five years of concertizing. Horszowski, whose name was familiar through his association with Pablo Casals, had played a leading role in the performance of chamber music. While a teacher at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, Horszowski not only guided developing talents but advised former pupils who already had major careers. Unlike celebrity pianists whose repertoire was selected in order to please the public's appetite, Horszowski's program began with a group of little-known sonatas by Giustini di Pistoia, the first works ever composed for the newly invented fortepiano. As soon as an instrument constructed by the fortepiano's inventor, Bartolomeo Cristofori, had been restored by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the 1950s, Emanuel Winternitz, curator of their musical instruments collection, urged Horszowski to record on it. The pianist agreed, and soon afterwards introduced those earliest piano sonatas into his broad conception of the repertoire by performing several on a modern piano, in a recital that also included Beethoven's *Eroica Variations*, the premiere of a set of dodecaphonic *Bagatelles* by Jonas Kokkonen, and closed with Schubert's epic *Sonata in G*.

I was fortunate to attend that recital. Horszowski's body language altered for

each composer as he brought forth a kaleidoscope of sounds, notably including a limpid, bell-like chiaroscuro, projected in the way birdsong emanates from one spot to illuminate larger and distant spaces. After an encore of Schubert's *E-flat Impromptu* I headed backstage to ask when his next concert would take place. He alerted me to an upcoming Mozart Piano Concerto cycle with Musica Aeterna under Frederic Waldman.

The origins of Horszowski's rare artistry, his awareness of music's unlimited possibilities, came through his links to Beethoven and Chopin. His insight existed in a sphere quite remote from the music scene depicted by a fellow countryman who was exiled in Argentina:

"The German pianist galloped along accompanied by the orchestra. Rocked to sleep by the tones, my mind wandered in some sort of daydream – reminiscences, things I had to get done the next day. In the meantime, the concert continued, the pianist galloped on. Was he a pianist or a horse? I could swear that this had nothing to do with Mozart but rather whether or not this nimble steed would wrestle the bit away from Horowitz or Rubinstein. The folks present were concerned with the question: of what class is this virtuoso? Do his pianos measure up to those of Arrau's? Are his fortes attaining the heights of Gulda's? I imagined, therefore, that this was a boxing match and I saw how he drove Brailowsky down the ropes, how he punched Gieseking with the octaves, and aimed a knockout trill at Solomon. A pianist, a horse, or a boxer? It also seemed to me that he was a boxer who had mounted Mozart, who was riding Mozart, pounding and hitting him, jangling and stabbing him with his spurs. What's that? He reached the finish line? Applause, applause, applause! The jockey got off his horse and bowed, wiping his forehead with a handkerchief.

"The countess with whom I was sitting in the loge sighed: 'Oh how wonderful, wonderful, wonderful!'

“Her husband the count added: ‘I am not an expert, but I had the impression that the orchestra had a hard time keeping up. . . .’”

–Witold Gombrowicz. *Diary, Vol. 1*

It was a revelation to have a passionate mountaineer like Horszowski guide you like a Sherpa to reach the inside of Mozart’s 12th concerto in A major and the 14th in E-flat. I thanked him for playing such overlooked masterpieces, to which he enthusiastically responded that “not one note can be added or changed to make it better!” Horszowski was then eighty-three and continued to give annual solo recitals that left us grateful for what he had shared, while leaving us concerned after each year’s concert that one never knew how much longer he would be able to go on. It was an astonishing adventure to have him with us for sixteen more years, playing some of his best at age ninety-eight!

Soon after his ninetieth birthday his wife Bice began to help ease his memory by selecting older repertoire for upcoming concert seasons, as his frontal vision had become impaired. Waldman, who mentioned running into him at the time, recalled Horszowski’s great regret – that he could no longer learn new works.

When writing an essay for the publication of a 1990 Buffalo performance of Beethoven’s *Diabelli Variations*, I visited the Horszowskis in Philadelphia. As he was an active and alert 97-year old it was of prime importance to discover the steps Horszowski had taken to master the set. He’d recorded the work in 1952 along with other major Beethoven compositions, and had continued to play the Diabelli Variations until 1982, when he performed it in a Buffalo recital, as well as for Italian Television in Trieste.

Slightly arching an eyebrow, he turned to ask his wife to bring him several hefty scores from the library. With books in position, he began touching them, asking for specific pages:

“You see, I had an urtext to start with and then found a first edition. I was able

to gain access to the autograph. Have you seen von Bülow's edition? [Horszowski pointed out the extensive footnotes.] It is inaccurate but if you compare it to the unedited music you'll see what he changed. His commentary is important." Horszowski then moved on to Artur Schnabel's version.

"It is a forgotten edition, with his comments. I heard Schnabel play them four times during one season. I began to learn them in 1949 [when he was 57 years old]. I also played them for Toscanini and Casals for their comments. I read Tovey on Beethoven. It's also very important to know as many works by the composer as possible." Horszowski then leaned back on the chair, arms crossed over his chest: "Then I meditated on it all."

In 1991 when Bice Horszowski Costa and myself began searching for performances by her husband Mieczysław Horszowski, an inquietude possessed us as we suspected that many vital performances from Horszowski's lengthy career and travels might have survived in private archives and collections, deteriorating as time passed. He often toured South America and throughout Europe. Finnish Radio had recorded his final Mozart Sonata cycle of Mozart's Sonatas in 1969 but their card catalog indicated that his tapes had been erased.

In late 1992 I came upon an interview given by Horszowski that mentioned a 1940 stopover in Rome before he was to move on to South America, and his having had the honor of playing for Pope Pius XII. He also told of recording for Vatican Radio. Mrs. Horszowski located a diary that listed all the works played – over an hour of piano solos.

Only now are radio station archives beginning to salvage what the BBC, ABC, NZBC and most American networks routinely discarded to create shelf space, even providing their discs for landfills. After World War II an engineer at Radio France evaluated their archives according to their sound quality. One item, Belá Bartók's final Paris solo recital, was trashed. Years earlier when Bartók discovered that record

companies not only discontinued to keep in print many invaluable releases but also destroyed their metal master discs, especially from their world music catalogs, he demanded that an international commission be established to safeguard the survival of music that was already endangered. If Radio Vaticana also adhered to the Library's reasoned principles, would they have preserved their radio discs?

In August 1993, five inquiries led to an archivist who had just returned from his holiday. "Yes, we have it!" he shouted. "The original recording is on a magnetic tape." Perhaps the only good that emerged from Nazi Germany was the reel-to-reel tape recorder, of which one exemplar ended up in the radio station of a secured micro-state inside Mussolini's capital. Horszowski's art was captured with this technology, making him the first pianist ever to have been recorded on tape. "We found it a year ago," the archivist explained. A pile of tapes had been brought up from a forgotten storage area, one unknown even to the staff, and were to be thrown out. "That same day, a musician visiting the studio noticed HORSZOWSKI written on a spine. 'Don't throw this out!'" The archivist and staff threaded the fragile tape to create a digital copy, and just in time as the tape barely survived its single playback.

I alerted Mrs. Horszowski to the discovery, and soon she received a copy from the Vatican: "The more I hear it, the more I am amazed by it!" she said. "It has some of his best playing." His performances come from the last moments of Horszowski's pre-War career as a virtuoso who had already toured throughout Europe for over forty years.

The following 1940 article in the Vatican's press details the forty-eight-year-old Horszowski's position in the music world.:

"To solemnize the first anniversary of the joyous election of the Holy Father [Pope Pius XII], Miecio Horszowski will give a piano recital next Saturday at the Pontifical Institute of Musica Sacra.

"Miecio Horszowski is one of those artists who, after having surpassed all the

technical difficulties of a concise and thoughtful work has arrived at the pure regions of a complete art. He deliberately avoids disturbing himself over the facile effects of virtuosity, of which he is already a master. He possesses a vibrant and expressive sonority in which the instrument acquires unimaginable virtues. Though his interpretations are inspired through his soul, he retains in the works of the great masters their purity and the sober serenity of their thought. He possesses the rarely attained level of arriving at the personality and spirit of each great author he interprets. And for this reason, reviews from everywhere hail in him the synthesis of variety and profundity. Thus a few days ago the famed cellist Pablo Casals had to state: ‘The art of this pianist surpasses men and things.’

“If something can be compared to Horowitz’s mastery it is his modesty. ‘Pray for me,’ he wrote to me a few days ago in response to my invitation to do something in homage to the Holy Father on the anniversary of his august election. ‘Pray for me, because I can practice well, which I do four hours daily – but for a mission so high, I lack one thing: the inspiration worthy of this high calling which only our Lord may give me.’”

Mieczysław Horowitz, by W. M. Pz [Fr. Peitz] in *L’Osservatore Romano*. 2 III 1940

Entries from Horowitz’s Diary, 1940:

February 19th. Two Bach Sonatas for viola da gamba. Pablo [Casals] leaves.

21st. Evening at the Seilers’. (I played Franck, Liszt and Chopin).

22nd. I leave Switzerland and my pleasant stay with the Seilers comes to an end.

Snow on the Gotthard Pass, fine weather, wonderful colors to bid me farewell. I return to Milan. *24th.* In Rome. I’m staying at the Pensione Nella. Twice to the Vatican Radio with Fr. Peitz and Fr. Pellegrino.

25th. Rehearsal at the Vatican Radio.

26th. Dinner with Tommasini.

27th. To the Vatican Radio. Dinner with Pizzetti, Wally (Castelbarco Toscanini), Bontempelli.

28th. Visit to Fr. Peitz. From the roof terrace, beautiful view of the Tiber.

29th – March 1st. End of the recordings at the Vatican Radio: Franck Choral, Liszt 2 Legendes, Chopin Fantaisie, First Ballade, Scherzo in B min., Impromptu in A flat, Berceuse and Funeral March [on this CD], Reger Weihnachtstraum, Debussy Cathedrale engloutie [missing]. Stroll along the right bank of the Tiber, churches of S. Crisogono, S. Bartolomeo dell'Isola, S. Maria in Cosmedin.

2nd. Vatican Institute of Sacred Music: Chopin concert to celebrate the first anniversary of the Holy Father Pius XII's election, broadcast by the Vatican Radio. His Eminence Cardinal Hlond (from Poland) addressed me twice, at the intermission: "We are very proud of you"; and at the end of the concert: "I thank you on behalf of all of Poland".

3rd. With the Seilers at St. Peter's, Mass celebrated by the Holy Father. We sat in the apse, under the cupola, near the altar behind the Dutch delegation. During the celebration, impressive speech of the Pope to the Romans. At Consecration, chorus of trumpets rising to the top of Michelangelo's cupola.

4th. Excursion to Albano, Lake Nemi, Rocca di Papa and Frascati, sunset over the Roman countryside.

5th. To the Vatican collection of autographs (Michelangelo, Petrarca, Savonarola, Galileo, Tasso, etc.); the Sistine Chapel; the Borgia apartment; the Vatican Galleries and Raphael's Rooms. A painting by Matejko. At the Library we were shown some precious items: the oldest Virgilian manuscript. The director, M. Albareda, told us about the Library's wealth and excellent organization. We were there for about two hours. Then we sat down in the Swiss Guards' canteen and drank red wine.

6th. Private audience by the Holy Father for the Seilers and me in the room of Paul V. The Pope enters, dressed in white: ascetic figure, very sweet smile, warm

look. The Holy Father told me that I can do a lot of good with my music, that it has a salutary influence on people's hearts. He blessed me and my country. Then he addressed the Seilers, and then me once again. He expressed his deep sorrow for Poland's destiny and the hope that faith in Poland may never die out. Finally, he blessed Xandi.

7th. To Castelgandolfo with Father Peitz and the Seilers. Magnificent gardens and observatory.

9th. Museum of Villa Borghese.

10th. To S. Anselmo's, Gregorian chant. To S. Sabina's, cypress-wood portal carved in the 5th century. I say hello to Fr. Soccorsi of the Vatican Radio. A few minutes with Tommasini and Ottorino Coppa, and his sisters Bianca, Rosa and Celeste. He gave me a medal of Pius XII and we talked of our common memories, of photographs showing him, myself and Mother (1906).

11th. At Milan's station I say goodbye to the Seilers who are leaving for Zurich. I'm staying at Wally's.

28th. Dinner at Gallarati Scotti's with Alessandro and Leopoldina Casati.

April 2nd. Dinner with Ester and Pierre de Bavier. Brahms, Sonata in B flat for clarinet.

8th. Reception at Prince Tommasino's (Gallarati Scotti). Program [Chopin]: Nocturne Op. 9 No.1, Fantaisie, Mazurkas in B min and C Maj, Ballade in G minor, Impromptu in A flat, Waltz in C sharp min., Andante spianato and Polonaise. Among those there: Casati, Conti, Raimondi, Abbiati, Prof. Sanvenero, Medea, Polo, Rietti, Castagneto, Mrs Jadwiga, Carlo Gola, Pasino, Mimmina, Paolina. Estermeme, Amman, Ascanio and Belgioioso.

Milan, 9th IV 1940. "Dear Miccio, I could not say goodbye last night after the concert and now I want you to know what pleasure I felt. Yesterday you expressed with music all the feelings that were stirring in your and the friends who share those

feelings knew that hope was having the edge on bitterness. Also I, who had the good fortune of being able to listen to you fully absorbed and with my eyes fixed on the indescribably beautiful painting by Cesare da Sesto, felt close to you with brotherly sympathy and well-wishing. I am sending you my donation, a small token of that desire for righteousness and goodness and peace for which our souls invoke God. With sincere affection, yours Pasino (Bagatti Valsecchi)”.

9th. To Dr. Fantoli’s in Pallanza. News of the German attack on Denmark & Norway.

13th. Departure from Genoa aboard the Oceania.

To his sister Wanda:

Milan, 1 IV 1940. “I hope I can make myself useful in Brazil and play for the benefit of the Polish refugees, who are quite numerous even there. I’m planning to remain there all summer. Later, perhaps, New York, if I see the chance of giving some concerts; if not I’ll return to Europe. During the crossing I’ll have little time for reading, for I must prepare the programs of my recitals. To relax I’m taking with me some books of poetry, the Divine Comedy and Shakespeare’s works ...”

Aboard the Oceania, 14 IV 1940. “ ... I’ve started reading “Van Gogh’s letters and immediately liked them; you too should read them one day. . .” (The book had been given to Miccio by Maria Rota [note by Bice Horszowski Costa]).

14th. The ship stopped in Marseilles for inspection by French authorities.

15th. In Barcelona. Meeting with Enrique and Maria Casals. The churches are in ruins. Of the church of St. Betlem only the façade is still standing. The church near the Palau Hall is not there any more.

16th. Gibraltar. We stop for nearly ten hours.

21st. I finished reading Sofia Kossak’s novel Golden Freedom (Sigismund III, early 17th century).

25th. In Bahia. I finished Alain Gerbault’s A la poursuite du soleil – Sur le che-

min de retour.

27th. In Rio de Janeiro. Meetings with Theo Seiler, Mrs Navarro, Guiomar Novaes and her husband, composer Ottavio Pinto.

May 1st. Departure for Sao Paulo.

2nd. Very tiring train ride, jolty. Visit to Antonietta Rudge & Camargo Guarnieri.

3rd. Concert at the Teatro Municipal; I was not very well prepared, but had a fair success.

5th. Dinner at Prof. Foa's. Beautiful home, paintings by Sironi, Carena, Funi, Salietti. Return to Rio.

6th. At Teatro Municipal, concert by Magda Tagliaferro. (Miccio remembered her delightful interpretation of Faure's Second Impromptu in F minor. She used to come to listen to Miccio, and once told him: "Vous êtes la musique même.")

7th. Visit to Mr Skowronski, the minister, Villa-Lobos and Guiomar.

10th. Recital at Teatro Municipal, played four Debussy Etudes.

15th. With Mrs Navarro at Hotel International, memories of bygone days spent at Hotel Vista Alegre.

16th. First concert by Rubinstein at the Municipal.

21st. Concert by Rubinstein. A magic performance.

22nd. Lunch with Rubinstein in Copacabana.

30th. Departure for Northern Brazil. Turbulent flight. In Recife, headache and great fatigue.

31st. Back on the plane at 8 am. Concert in Fortaleza's theatre, little success, the audience liked Beethoven the best.

June 1st. In Belem. Tried out the pianos (old Steinways in poor state).

2nd. We fly over the Amazon. It is a huge river, the colour of clay, muddy. It flows around large green islands, covered with lush and thick vegetation, palm for-

ests, few huts along the river banks, with roofs made of palm leaves. Fine weather. We land for a few minutes in Santarem, a small town. I arrive in Manaus. Mr Massimino Correa welcomes me into his home. Large salon with two pianos, a Bechstein and a Blüthner, a sculptured bust of Hanon (made by the owner out of gratitude for the good that practicing Hanon's exercises.) We immediately start to make music, I play Beethoven's 32 Variations. Mr. Correa is a very dedicated piano amateur, endowed with a distinct natural talent. He's a rigorous man, but good-hearted and sincere. Dinner in his home, with his family. I'm staying in a boarding house (a very unpretentious one).

3rd. Visit to the Cathedral, then to the aquarium, where I see a gorgeous bird, the "gallo da serra", crocodiles, parrots, white herons and beautiful little fish. Lunch at Mr. Correa's. At 9 pm, concert at the Ideal Club. Mr. Correa gave an introductory speech. On his request I played some encores: Beethoven's Variations in C min., the Ballade in A flat and the Ballade in G min. The concert ended at midnight. I perspired tremendously.

4th. At 6 am Mr. Correa came to pick me up, without having had the chance to sleep a wink. Before saying goodbye he gave me some advice and encouraged me, showing rare benevolence. Departure from Manaus. Beautiful dawn, then overcast, changeable weather. The aeroplane had to make two landings because of rainstorms. Arrival in Belem at 5:15 pm. A large crowd in front of the hotel, waiting for cinema actor Flynn.

5th. Practice session at Dr. Acatanasso's. Visited the botanical gardens and zoo with him.

7th. Excursion into the forest with Dr. Acatanasso and his daughter, a painter. Visit to the Governor and the Prefect. Beautiful cathedral built in 1618. Concert at the Teatro La Paz (broadcast), old Steinway (No. 86.000) in poor condition, two keys were not working, the tuner had to fix them in front of the audience. I feel I

was successful; three encores.

8th. Flight for Recife leaving at 6 am. Between Cabedelo and Recife, a rainstorm. Jolty flight through the clouds, in the darkness. Tiredness and headache.

11th. I read the Purgatory and The City of my Mother (by J. Kaden-Bandrowski).

14th. Arrival in Rio. Visit to Maestro Toscanini in Copacabana. Concert by the NBC Orchestra. Ravel's La Vaise.

16th. Concert by Arrau at the Cultura Artistica.

21st. Concert at the National School of Music. Great success, 4 encores. (Bach *Fifth Partita*, Scarlatti *2 Sonatas*, Beethoven *Sonata Op. 31 No.3*, Szymanowski *Mazurkas Nos. 13 and 14*, Oswald *Il neige*, Debussy *La sérénade interrompue* and *Mouvement*, Chopin *Scherzo Op. 20*, 2 Preludes, 2 Etudes). In the audience: Artur Rubinstein and his wife, Magda Tagliaferro, Arrau, Teran, Szenkar, Navarro and Paolina d'Ambrosio.

29th. Concert by Simon Barère at the Municipal.

July 2nd. Second concert by Simon Barère (Liszt's Spanish Rhapsody). To the Vieux-Colombier theatre. Phedre by Racine with Rachel Berendt.

5th. To the Vieux Colombier for L' Annonce faite a Marie by Claudel.

[*Miccio, Remembrances of M. Horszowski*. Erga Edizioni. Genova, 2002]

Along with the Vatican recital come recent discoveries of Beethoven's Waldstein Sonata, Diabelli Variations and the Eroica Variations. Bice Horszowski Costa recalls: "As for the Diabelli, I remember him (perhaps in the early 1980's) once resting in bed. He later told me 'I passed the Diabelli in my mind and it took the same amount of time it did performing them at a concert (probably 55 minutes.)' This means that he could mentally keep the pace of that whole work."

We continue to seek, publish, and thank Horszowski for the music he offered.

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THE CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC
Curtis Hall, Forty-seventh Season 1970-71

MIECZYSLAW HORSZOWSKI, piano

Thursday Evening, November 19, 1970 at 8:00 o'clock

PROGRAM

Fantasia II from the 6th Collection of Clavier-Sonaten und freye
Fantasien für Kenner und Liebhaber (1787) Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
(1714-1788)

Presto di molto

Sonata in F Major, (K322) W. A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Allegro

Adagio

(Allegro assai)

I N T E R M I S S I O N

33 Veränderungen über einen Walzer von A. Diabelli,
Opus 120

L. van Beethoven
(1770-1827)



ARBITER