

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Molière  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle Willis  
Baum Henry Nietzsche  
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac  
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane  
Burroughs Verne  
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain  
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato  
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Harte  
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Burton Hesse  
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke  
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Irving  
Bunner Richter Chekhov Chambers Alcott  
Doré Dante Shaw Wodehouse  
Swift Pushkin Newton



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# **Piano Mastery Talks with Master Pianists and Teachers**

Harriette Brower

# Imprint

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Sigismond Stojowski

Rudolph Ganz

Katharine Goodson

Mark Hambourg

Tobias Matthay

Harold Bauer

Raoul Pugno

Ferruccio Busoni

Eleanor Spencer

Teresa Carreño

Wilhelm Bachaus

Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler

Ossip Gabrilowitsch

Hans von Bülow

Dr. William Mason



## PRELUDE

### TO AMERICAN PIANO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The following "Talks" were obtained at the suggestion of the Editor of *Musical America*, and have all, with one or two exceptions, appeared in that paper. They were secured with the hope and intention of benefiting the American teacher and student.

Requests have come from all over the country, asking that the interviews be issued in book form. In this event it was the author's intention to ask each artist to enlarge and add to his own talk. This, however, has been practicable only in certain cases; in others the articles remain very nearly as they at first appeared.

The summer of 1913 in Europe proved to be a veritable musical pilgrimage, the milestones of which were the homes of the famous artists, who generously gave of their time and were willing to discuss their methods of playing and teaching.

The securing of the interviews has given the author satisfaction and delight. She wishes to share both with the fellow workers of her own land.

The Talks are arranged in the order in which they were secured.



## PIANO MASTERY

### I.

#### IGNACE JAN PADEREWSKI

One of the most consummate masters of the piano at the present time is Ignace Jan Paderewski. Those who were privileged to hear him during his first season in this country will never forget the experience. The Polish artist conquered the new world as he had conquered the old; his name became a household word, known from coast to coast; he traveled over our land, a Prince of Tones, everywhere welcomed and honored. Each succeeding visit deepened the admiration in which his wonderful art was held.

The question has often been raised as to the reason of Paderewski's remarkable hold on an audience; wherein lay his power over the musical and unmusical alike. Whenever he played there was always the same intense hush over the listeners, the same absorbed attention, the same spell. The superficial attributed these largely to his appearance and manner; the more thoughtful looked deeper. Here was a player who was a thoroughly trained master in technic and interpretation; one who knew his Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann and Liszt. These things of themselves would not hold an audience spellbound, for there were other artists equally well equipped. In a final analysis it was doubtless Paderewski's wonderful *piano tone*, so full of variety and color, so vital with numberless gradations of light and shade, that charmed and enthralled his listeners. It mattered to no one—save the critics—that he frequently repeated the same works. What if we heard the Chromatic Fantaisie a score of times? In his hands it became a veritable Soliloquy on Life and Destiny, which each repetition invested with new meaning and beauty. What player has ever surpassed his poetic conception of Schumann's *Papillons*, or the Chopin Nocturnes, which he made veritable dream poems of love and ecstasy. What listener has ever forgotten the tremendous power and titanic effect of the Liszt Rhapsodies, especially No. 2? When Paderewski first came to us, in the flush of his young manhood, he taught us what a noble instrument the piano really is in the hands of a consummate master. He showed

us that he could make the piano speak with the delicacy and power of a Rubinstein, but with more technical correctness; he proved that he could pierce our very soul with the intensity of his emotion, the poignant, heart-searching quality of his tones, the poetry and beauty of his interpretation.

Paderewski is known as composer and pianist, only rarely does he find time to give instruction on his instrument. Mme. Antoinette Szumowska, the Polish pianist and lecturer was at one time termed his "only pupil." Mr. Sigismond Stojowski, the Polish composer, pianist and teacher has also studied with him. Both can testify as to his value as an instructor.

Mme. Szumowska says:

"Paderewski lays great stress on legato playing, and desires everything to be studied slowly, with deep touch and with full, clear tone. For developing strength he uses an exercise for which the hand is pressed against the keyboard while the wrist remains very low and motionless and each finger presses on a key, bringing, or drawing out as much tone as possible.

"Paderewski advises studying scales and arpeggios with accents, for instance, accenting every third note, thus enabling each finger in turn to make the accent impulse: this will secure evenness of touch. Double passages, such as double thirds and sixths, should be divided and each half practised separately, with legato touch. Octaves should be practised with loose wrists and staccato touch. As a preparatory study practise with thumb alone. The thumb must always be kept curved, with joints well rounded out; it should touch the keys with its tip, so as to keep it on a level with the other fingers. Paderewski is very particular about this point.

"It is difficult to speak of Paderewski's manner of teaching expression, for here the ideas differ with each composer and with every composition. As to tonal color, he requires all possible variety in tone production. He likes strong contrasts, which are brought out, not only by variety of touch but by skilful use of the pedals.

"My lessons with Paderewski were somewhat irregular. We worked together whenever he came to Paris. Sometimes I did not see him for several months, and then he would be in Paris for a

number of weeks; at such seasons we worked together very often. Frequently these lessons, which were given in my cousin's house, began very late in the evening—around ten o'clock—and lasted till midnight, or even till one in the morning.

"Paderewski the teacher is as remarkable as Paderewski the pianist. He is very painstaking; his remarks are clear and incisive: he often illustrates by playing the passage in question, or the whole composition. He takes infinite trouble to work out each detail and bring it to perfection. He is very patient and sweet tempered, though he can occasionally be a little sarcastic. He often grows very enthusiastic over his teaching, and quite forgets the lapse of time. In general, however, he does not care to teach, and naturally has little time for it."

Mr. Stojowski, when questioned in regard to his work with the Polish pianist, said:

"Paderewski is a very remarkable teacher. There are teachers who attempt to instruct pupils about what they do not understand, or cannot do themselves: there are others who are able to do the thing, but are not able to explain how they do it. Paderewski can both do it and explain how it is done. He knows perfectly what effects he wishes to produce, how they are to be produced, the causes which underlie and bring them about; he can explain and demonstrate these to the pupil with the greatest exactness and detail.

"As you justly remark the quality of tone and the variety of tonal gradations are special qualities of Paderewski's playing. These must be acquired by aid of the ear, which tests and judges each shade and quality of tone. He counsels the student to listen to each tone he produces, for quality and variety.



## CLEARNESS A MUST PRINCIPLE

"The player, as he sits at the piano, his mind and heart filled with the beauty of the music his fingers are striving to produce, vainly imagines he is making the necessary effects. Paderewski will say to him: 'No doubt you feel the beauty of this composition, but I hear none of the effects you fancy you are making; you must deliver everything much more clearly: distinctness of utterance is of prime importance.'" Then he shows how clearness and distinctness may be acquired. The fingers must be rendered firm, with no giving in at the nail joint. A technical exercise which he gives, and which I also use in my teaching, trains the fingers in up and down movements, while the wrist is held very low and pressed against the keyboard. At first simple five-finger forms are used; when the hand has become accustomed to this tonic, some of the Czerny Op. 740 can be played, with the hand in this position. Great care should be taken when using this principle, or lameness will result. A low seat at the piano is a necessity for this practise; sitting low is an aid to weight playing: we all know how low Paderewski himself sits at the instrument.

"You ask what technical material is employed. Czerny, Op. 740; not necessarily the entire opus; three books are considered sufficient. Also Clementi's *Gradus*. Of course scales must be carefully studied, with various accents, rhythms and tonal dynamics; arpeggios also. Many arpeggio forms of value may be culled from compositions.

"There are, as we all know, certain fundamental principles that underlie all correct piano study, though various masters may employ different ways and means to exemplify these fundamentals. Paderewski studied with Leschetizky and inculcates the principles taught by that master, with this difference, that he adapts his instruction to the physique and mentality of the student; whereas the Vorbereiters of Leschetizky prepare all pupils along the same lines, making them go through a similar routine, which may not in every instance be necessary.

