



AMICA International

Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association

Honor Roll

ALEXANDER BRAILOWSKY

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Alexander Brailowsky, 80, who became a leading concert pianist in the years between the two world wars, died Sunday in New York of complications brought on by pneumonia.

A mastery of the complete works of Chopin was the cornerstone of his repertoire. The Russian-born virtuoso programmed all 160 Chopin piano pieces for playing in a series of six concerts.

Mr. Brailowsky played the Chopin cycle in New York in 1938 and also performed the feat in Paris, Brussels, Zurich, Mexico City, Buenos Aires and Montevideo.



ALEXANDER BRAILOWSKY

BY EMMETT M. FORD - Appeared in the AMICA June 1978



Alexander Brailowsky, pianist and Ampico piano roll artist, was born in Kiev, Russia, February 16, 1896. At the age of eight he became a student in the Conservatory of Kiev. Later, in 1911, he went to Vienna to study with the famous teacher, Leschetizky but the beginning of World War I caused him to reside in Switzerland. After the war, Mr. Brailowsky made his Paris debut in 1924, playing a complete cycle of the works of Chopin. This series included two sonatas, eleven polonaises, four scherzo, three impromptus, nineteen nocturnes, twenty-five preludes, twentyseven etudes and fifty-one mazurkas. This performance was repeated three times in Brussels, Zurich, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and other principal cities. A successful tour of all the principal cities of the world was then made.

On November 19, 1924, he made his American debut in Aeolian Hall in New York City. Mr. Brailowsky received an excellent review by the noted Olin Downes, music critic of the New York Times.

A United States coast-to-coast tour was made in 1936 and during the season of 1937-1938 he gave the entire Chopin cycle in six recitals.

Due to his extensive traveling, he became an expert on railroad timetables, collecting them as others collect coins or stamps and he could work out a better itinerary

On October 31, 1938, he was soloist with the Padeloup Orchestra of Paris where he played the Chopin "Concerto in E Minor" and the Mendlessohn "Concerto in G Minor" and he received a stupendous applause for his interpretation of the two concertos.

Appearances as soloist were made with major symphony orchestras and his interpretations of the works of Chopin brought him world-wide acclaim. Mr. Brailowsky was noted for his large repertory and he recorded for Victor the works of Chopin, Beethoven, Mendlessohn, Scarlatti, Schumann, and others. His recordings for Victor were numerous and used by students as examples of performances of the Chopin works. During a series of nineteen recitals in Buenos Aires, he never repeated a single work. When he was to appear in Colombia and he appeared before the packed house he was given a big hand and, bowing his acknowledgment, he turned to find there was no piano. This could be a shock to any performer and the situation grew worse as there was no piano available and the recital was called off.

During World War II he gave recitals for the U. S. O. His death was at the Lenox Hospital, April 24, 1976 at the age of 80. He was survived by his wife, Felicia Karczmar Brailowsky.



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ALEXANDER BRAILOWSKY

"PLAYING IN THE GRAND MANNER"
"SENSATIONAL" "GIGANTIC"
"HEROIC" "BRILLIANT" "POETIC"

These were some of the words used by the
critics after Brailowsky's Chicago
recital, February 2, 1936.

EUGENE STINSON, Chicago Daily News

"Terrific in its brilliance. . . . Playing on a superb scale, I was fascinated. His style is ordered with the finest logic and governed by a sense of structure as flawless as his execution. A master."

EDWARD BARRY, Chicago Daily Tribune

"Chicago heard piano playing in the grand manner when the astonishing Alexander Brailowsky made Schumann's Symphonic Studies and Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition his principal bids for attention in an Orchestra Hall recital. The sheer excitement of his virtuosity suffices to mark him off from all but a tiny handful of living pianists. How does the man get such force out of the instrument, force that reaches the very limit of sonority without a suggestion of harshness or harshness?"

HERMAN DEVIRES, Chicago American

"His playing of the Scarlatti could not possibly have been surpassed for delicacy and finesse, but it was in the Schumann that Brailowsky's heroic strength manifested itself. He was a heroic conception of the Etude. Equipped with astonishing technique and poetic imagination, we add Brailowsky to the list of the great piano virtuosos of the day."

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