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Honor Roll

Rudolph Ganz Swiss pianist, conductor and composer

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RUDOLPH GANZ
BY EMMETT M. FORD

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Rudolph Ganz, distinguished pianist, composer, conductor, Duo-Art, Welte-Mignon and Ampico recording artist and phonograph recording artist was born in Zurich, Switzerland, February 24, 1877.

His early studies were at the Zurich Conservatory with Robert Freund in piano and cello with John Hegar. Later he went to Lausanne to receive piano instruction from his uncle, Carl Eschmann-Dumur, and composition with Charles Blanchet. At the Conservatory in Strasburg, Alsatia, he was the pupil of Fritz Blumer. Going to Berlin, he studied piano with Ferruccio Busoni and composition with Heinrich Urban.

At the age of ten he appeared in public for the first time as a cellist in his home town. He turned to the piano as a future choice in instruments and at the age of twelve made his pianistic debut in 1889 in Zurich. Many concerts were made after his Zurich debut. At his Berlin debut he performed the Beethoven Concerto in E Flat and the Chopin E Minor Concerto.

His first appearance as an orchestral conductor was in May of 1900 conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in the performance of his first symphony. It was in this year when he composed a piano and orchestra composition entitled "Konzertstück." In July, 1900 he married an American concert singer, Mary Forrest. The couple came to the United States where Mr. Ganz became head of the piano department of the Chicago Musical College, the post vacated by A. Friedheim. Mr. Ganz held this position for five years.



Successful tours were made in the United States and Canada. Returning to Europe in 1908, he gave concerts for three years, performing sixteen different concertos. Again in 1912, tours were made in Europe and the United States. It was at this time in Berlin where he demonstrated the Clutsam curved piano keyboard.

In 1920 he recorded for the Pathe phonograph company. One outstanding example of his ability is the recording of Chopin's "Etude in A Flat" and Mozart's "Rondo Alla Turca." The compositions are examples of two distinct styles and the playing is a valuable record of the pianist's ability. Other Pathe recordings were made in 1921.

Mr. Ganz became conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in 1921, a position he held for five years. He also conducted the London Symphony Orchestra and from 1921 to 1937 was guest conductor for various orchestras.

It was from 1938 to 1949 that he conducted the New York Philharmonic in the series of Young People's Concerts, a post formerly held by Ernst (Poppa) Schelling. During this time Mr. Ganz was also guest conductor at Lewishon Stadium and the Hollywood Bowl.

In 1929, Mr. Ganz became artistic director of the Chicago Musical College and its President in 1933, a post in which he remained until 1954, when the college became a part of Roosevelt University.

Mr. Ganz was one of the twelve famous pianists chosen by Ernst Schelling, Harold Bauer and Ossip Gabrilowitsch to give a benefit concert for the ill and destitute composer, Moszkowski. The pianists performed "La Gazza Ladra" by Rossini. The concert netted over six thousand dollars and the success of the performance rated a repeat in Philadelphia.

In his solo recitals, Mr. Ganz performed many modern compositions often playing for the first time the works of Busoni, Ravel, Bartok, Debussy, Dohnanyi, d'Inday, Loeffler, Korngold and other composers of his time. He also searched for older neglected works to revive them and return the compositions to the public to hear. In his introduction of new composers, he urged his audience to complain if they felt so inclined. He said, "Some hissing is downright flattering."

Once in 1930, When Dr. Ganz (over the years he received four honorary degrees) was asked what he most desired for a Christmas present, he replied, "I'd like to have an hour or two added to the day. I'd like to have more good hours on the radio and I wish Schonberg would write something melodious."

Dr. Ganz composed many works, a Symphony in E and a suite of pieces for piano. He also orchestrated and entitled "Animal Pictures" which premiered in Detroit, January 19, 1933, with the composer conducting. His piano concerto was performed February 20, 1941 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with the composer as soloist. "Variations on a Theme by Brahms" for piano, several chorus for male voices, piano pieces and songs were also among his compositions.

After the death of his first wife in 1956, he married Esther La Berge, a voice professor, in 1959 Dr. Ganz's death was August 2, 1972. He is survived by his wife and a son, Anton Roy Ganz, a retired Swiss diplomat.

Dr. Ganz recorded on piano rolls the works of every major composer as well as his own compositions. He made arrangements for the piano of operas, symphonies and operettas which were also recorded on piano rolls. Accompaniment rolls were made by Dr. Ganz for his songs. He recorded with Ernest Hutcheson, the overture to Mozart's "Magic Flute," Sibelius' "Finlandia," and the superb Duo-Art roll of Mendelssohn's "Fingal's Cave Overture."

The writer suggests two rolls that are favorites, his "Melodic Op. 10 No. 2" (Duo-Art #6381), and Liszt's "Mignon's Song" (Duo-Art #6255-5). Dr. Ganz also gives an excellent performance of his Duo-Art recordings of MacDowell's "Sonata Eroica, Op. 50." The two Duo-Art rolls of the "Liebestod" from Wagner's opera

"Tristan und Isolde," recorded by I. J. Paderewski and Dr. Ganz have different tempo markings. Comparison of the two rolls leaves the listener knowing Dr. Ganz's performance is the more interesting and closer to the manner in which the great aria has been sung and recorded by Kirsten Flagstad. The Paderewski roll is excellent.

(My appreciation and Thanks to Dean Felix Ganz of the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University for reading and correcting the article. e.m.f.)

(For more information as to the teaching and personality of Dr. Ganz, refer to his students, Dorothy

Packard and Olga Kuehl's articles, "Remembering

Rudolph Ganz", Clavier, Vol. XI No. 7, October, 1972)

From the AMICA Bulletin, V8, September 1971, No. 9:

Since 1900, Rudolph Ganz has had a respected place in the American music world. For many of these years, he has lived in Chicago, and occupies a special place in the hearts of music lovers of that city. But indeed, Rudolph Ganz deserves a special place in the hearts of ALL music lovers, for his great contributions to the growth of classical music during this century.

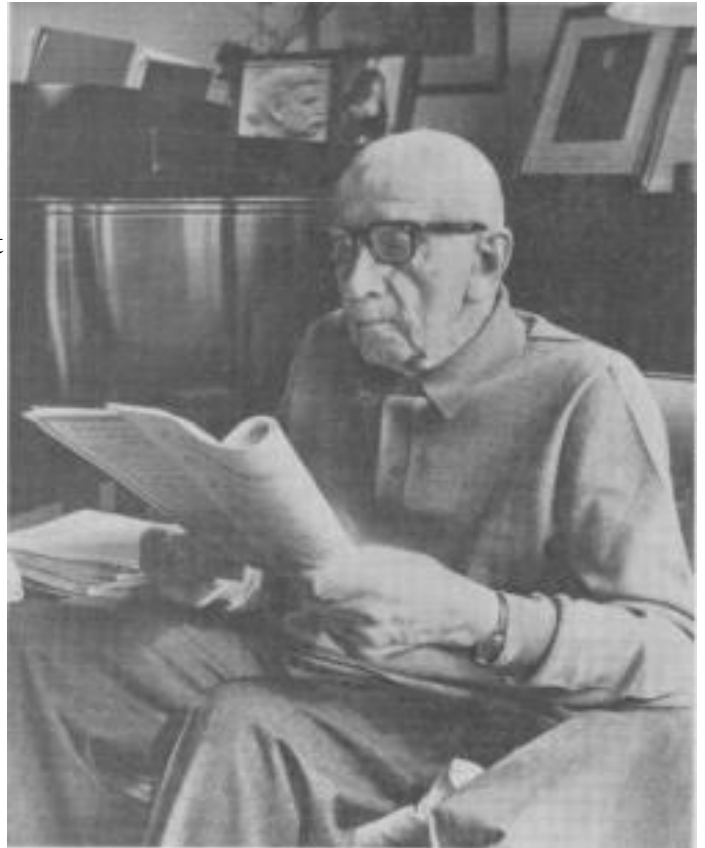
On Welte, and later on Duo-Art recordings, Rudolph Ganz' artistry is richly represented by a roster of superb recordings ...each one embodying the fine good taste and musicianship that has always been a Ganz characteristic. Everyone who owns his rolls has a special favorite, I'm sure. My own must be Duo-Art 7417-3, Ippolitow Iwanow's "Procession of the Sardar." It's a late recording (1930) which employs perhaps a bit more poetic license than most, for Mr. Ganz unpredictably (but impressively) sprouts one or two extra hands as the occasion demands. Fun to play to see if relatively uninitiated listeners notice anything unusual.

Pianist, conductor, teacher -- Rudolph Ganz is all of these and more. He made his professional debut as a pianist aged 22, in December, 1899, although he made his first public appearance as a 'cellist at the age of 12. In September, 1900, Ganz began his career in the United States when he became head of the piano department of Chicago Musical College. In 1903, Rudolph Ganz appeared as Guest Pianist with the Chicago Symphony

Orchestra... in February of 1906 he made his New York debut under conductor Felix Weingartner with the New York Symphony Orchestra. From 1906 to 1909, Rudolph Ganz made extensive concert tours of the United States; from 1909 to 1911 he toured Europe, everywhere garnering more and more praise for his superlative performances. He continued to tour, appearing throughout the United States, in Canada and Cuba, during the 'teens. From 1921 to 1927 he was conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

1925 was a special year for Rudolph Ganz. He became a United States Citizen, and he received the French Legion of Honor for his introduction and championing of Ravel and Debussy works in the U.S. In 1928 he was made artistic director of Chicago Musical College; in 1933 he attained its presidency.

From 1939 to 1949 he was Conductor of Young People's Concerts of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Society and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. In 1954 he was named President Emeritus, of Chicago Musical College.



In 1957, in honor of his eightieth birthday, Ganz Hall, Roosevelt University was dedicated; in 1961 he appeared at the 100th anniversary of the Municipal Conservatory of Music, Lausanne, Switzerland, playing the same concerto he had played upon his graduation in 1895. An impressive list of attainments, but only a few of the landmarks in this truly full life. The sixties were busy years for Rudolph Ganz as well; he appeared many times in Concert with his wife, Esther La Berge, Mezzo Soprano

In 1965, Rudolph Ganz was honored by the Lincoln Academy of Illinois with the presentation of The Order of Lincoln. The following citation was given:

Rich in years and in honors, he continues to delight a large public with mellow artistry that has taken him to the top of his profession. Born and trained in Europe, he came to Chicago six decades ago ornament our city's artistic life as Switzerland's most famous pianist. He became a pioneer recording pianist, eminent composer, conductor, and music teacher. Extending a charm of manner and personality that he has never lost, he has been to his colleague friends, and students at Chicago Musical College Roosevelt University a beloved Maestro, witty, erudite, inexhaustible in talent and musicianship. To music lovers everywhere, his compositions and his concert appearances have brought delight and enrichment.

A special Testimonial Dinner was given honoring Rudolph Ganz on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday ...February 24, 1967. In the Chicago Sun-Times, shortly before this event, Robert C. Marsh wrote of Rudolph Ganz: "On Friday this week Chicago will mark the 90th Birthday of a man who has symbolized music in this city since 1900. He is Rudolph Ganz, and to say we love and respect him is hardly a beginning of any adequate expression of what his contribution has meant to every serious musician in the community." Mr. Marsh continued his article with a summation of Mr. Ganz' long career, and concluded,

But the pleasure of his company--great as it is--had to come second to an admiration of his principle-. He remains a perfect example of European humanistic culture, a gentleman and artist never in doubt about the relative importance of things, true in his respect for the past, but alert for significant change and eager to support every positive and constructive

tendency in the art.

He could easily have lived in the past, but he chose the modern world, and the future he saw with hope and abundant faith in mankind.

In fact, if he lived anywhere, it was in the mainstream of music, and knowing him you were immersed in those torrents. Not many live like that, or experience the blessing that such a way of life can provide. Rudolph Ganz is one of those master builders whose contribution to Chicago is as substantial as the stone and brick of its building, and few have moved through this city surrounded by more universal feelings of respect and love.

More frequent illnesses have restricted the activities of Rudolph Ganz, but he remains one of the great men of music of our time, loved and respected by the legion of his pupils, each of whom has been given the unique opportunity to work with one who has known the best that both Europe and the United States has to offer in musical achievement. And now he is 94. A man who has given a virtually limitless gift to the music world of his time, and a man whose gift of music will remain with us in his music rolls for all time: Rudolph Ganz.

Other data ...

Ganz showed remarkable talents as a very young boy appearing on the concert stage as cellist at the age of ten and as pianist at the age of twelve and when he was admitted to the Zurich Conservatory is was in both capacities, But the piano came to dominate and he continued his studies in Lausanne, Strasbourg and finally Berlin where he became one of Busoni's pupils. His formal début was in 1899 in three concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and four months later he returned to conduct the same orchestra in his first symphony op. 1.

In 1901 he was appointed head of the piano department at the Chicago Musical College at the same time as he began touring the USA, Canada and Europe in many places introducing many 20th century works. From 1921 to 1927 he was conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra after which he returned to Chicago eventually to become director of the Musical College there - a post he held for many years.

Harold C. Schoenberg (*The Great Pianists*) calls him *Switzerland's most famous pianist - until Edwin Fischer replaced him as the country's favorite pianistic son*. He had a very long and distinguished career - still giving concerts at the age of eighty-five.

By the way Rudolf Ganz is probably the pianist who can trace his family further back than anyone other - that is to the Roman Emperor *Charles the Great*. 02.04.747 - 28.01.815. No wonder that Ganz lived to be 95 years - probably outliving his wife Maria Josefa Weinberg whom he married 12th July 1900. He was then 23 and she was 43.



Rudolph Ganz's Hands