



• THE •  
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### **The aims of the Institute**

A small number of pianola owners and musicians have been concerned for some time at the unnatural break between the world of music rolls and the world of music. Few members of the musical public know much about player pianos, and the Institute aims to bring about a better understanding and appreciation of the instrument in a number of ways.

The Institute publishes a regular journal, presents public concerts, and occasionally stages a travelling exhibition. It has an informal roll and information archive, with a small collection of player pianos for listening and study purposes. From time to time it publishes accurate editions of both new and re-copied music rolls.

The Pianola Institute will endeavour to preserve, research and document the pianola's history, to improve the instrument's present standing, and by the commissioning of new compositions, to ensure that it remains an important musical force for the future.

### **The Directors of the Institute are:**

Francis Bowdery, Keith Daniels, Mike Davies, Denis Hall, Eileen Law, Rex Lawson, Claire L'Enfant and Clive Williamson.

It is possible to support the work of the Institute by joining the Friends of the Pianola Institute. The Friends' subscription includes a copy of the Journal and regular newsletters. Membership enquiries may be made by post, to Adrian Church, 168 St Anne's Hill, London SW18 2RS, England, or via the Friends' section of the Institute's website at:

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## Editorial

We are delighted to welcome Clive Williamson to the Institute's Board. As a result of our website, and through his encounters with Rex Lawson in concert, Clive contacted us in the summer of 2014, and right from our first meeting, it was obvious that he was someone with whom we should enjoy working, and who would have a great deal to contribute to our aims. Clive, until recently, was Director of Performance at the University of Surrey Music Department, and this combination of an academic background and his enthusiasm, in particular, for the piano and pianists of all ages, makes him a very significant addition to our team. Welcome!

We are greatly saddened to report the death of Peggy Smith, the Friends' Membership Secretary, and a much loved and active Member of the Institute. I first became aware of Peggy in the days when Rex Lawson ran a pianola shop from the ground floor of his home in Honor Oak Park in south-east London. Peggy lived very close by, and would pay the occasional visit as a curious and friendly neighbour. In the course of conversation, we discovered that she owned a Blüthner Carola player piano which needed a certain amount of repair, and it was through attending to it that we got to know her. When, in 2007, the position of Friends' Membership Secretary became vacant, Peggy very willingly took on the job, and with the invaluable help of her good friend, Dorreen Walker, cheerfully and efficiently maintained the Friends' records. Rex writes a personal appreciation of our friendship with this very special lady.

In the last *Pianola Journal*, I commented that, while there is some continued interest in the reproducing piano, there is not a similar revival in the fortunes of the foot-operated pianola. I wrote too soon! Back in 2001, the score of a work for player piano and orchestra by Darius Milhaud, thought to have been lost, turned up in a university library in Evanston, Illinois. And what is even more exciting, the work has now been performed in a series of concerts in Paris, with Rex Lawson as soloist. Rex writes about the history of this very attractive ballet score.

The Institute has achieved another first - the presentation of a concert in the main auditorium of the Royal Festival Hall. In February 2015, the London Philharmonic Orchestra promoted a Rachmaninoff Festival, and we were invited to arrange a personal appearance of the great man - even though he had died in 1943. Our good friend, Roger Buckley, reviews the concert, with all the background you will need to understand how this remarkable event happened. I should like to note here that the cellist, Johannes Moser, very generously came and played, and would not accept a fee. We were, indeed, fortunate and very grateful.

We had planned to publish a *Pianola Journal* in 2015, the centenary of the death of the Russian pianist and composer, Alexander Scriabin. However, time

has slipped by, and here we are in 2016 - 101 years since he died! However, he is too important a musician to overlook, and so we include two articles about him, one on his recordings, and the other considering the background to the Russian pianistic scene in the early twentieth century.

We have enjoyed a busy time since the publication of the last *Pianola Journal*, and, since our player and reproducing pianos are all of a respectably venerable age, they require more and more careful attention to keep them in good order. However, all the time we are being introduced to musicians who have no previous appreciation of the value of our activities, and so are intrigued and fascinated by being able to look back so vividly to an earlier age than is accessible from other forms of recording. All this really does make our efforts worthwhile!

Denis Hall

## Darius Milhaud - *La Bien Aimée*, op 101 - Ballet Music with Pianola and Symphony Orchestra

Rex Lawson

### Preamble

In the forty years that this writer has spent engaged with the pianola, the classical musical world has largely ignored this wonderful instrument. This has been especially true in England, alas, and it is a depressing statistic that, in the last century, only twice has music written for the player piano been performed at the BBC Proms, on both occasions in arrangements for other instruments. We are therefore dependent on foreign concert promoters and broadcasting organisations for the public re-discovery of the pianola's repertoire. Milhaud's wonderful ballet score is no exception, and it is thanks to the open-mindedness of Enrique Mazzola and the Orchestre National d'Île de France that the work has now returned to the concert platform, with seven performances in Paris last April, and a CD just recorded, as this edition of the Pianola Journal goes to press. It is therefore a particularly appropriate time to consider the history and development of this unusual ballet.

In discussing player instruments, I am adhering to my usual practice of referring to the generic foot-pedalled player piano as a pianola, printed in lower case, with any specific brands (Pleyelas, Pianolas) with an initial capital.

At the end of this article I have tried to thank various people and institutions for their help towards this fascinating project, but at the outset I should like to mention Northwestern University Music Library, which very generously provided new, archival copies of the manuscript score.

### Introduction

On 22 November 1928, at 9 o'clock in the evening, the Palais Garnier in Paris (the Paris Opera) was filled with an excited and adventurous audience, waiting to enjoy a whole programme of newly commissioned dance premières, presented by the Russian ballerina, Ida Rubinstein, leading the company that she had founded seventeen years before. Mme Rubinstein had danced for a while with the Ballets Russes, including appearances as prima ballerina in such works as *Cléopâtre* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Schéhérazade*.

The poster for the evening's performance can be seen overleaf, and one can only sympathize with Milhaud that his delightful orchestration shared its world première with that of Ravel's *Boléro*! Indeed, it even shared its second Paris performance, in May 1929, with Ravel's *La Valse*, conducted by the composer himself, so it is hardly surprising that contemporary reviews gave only a few sentences to Milhaud's work. Let us hope that this article, written eighty-eight years later (how appropriate for the range of the pianola!), can contribute to the world's appreciation of this long-lost work.

**THEATRE NATIONAL  
OPÉRA**

**JEUDI 22 NOVEMBRE 1928**

à 21 heures

**Les Ballets de M<sup>me</sup> Ida RUBINSTEIN**

**LES NOCES DE PSYCHÉ ET DE L'AMOUR**

Musique de J.-S. BACH, orchestrée par M. ARTHUR HONEGGER (1<sup>re</sup> Représentation).  
Argument de M. A. RENOIS

Psyché, M<sup>me</sup> Ida RUBINSTEIN  
L'Amour, M. Anatole VILTZAK

M<sup>me</sup> CHOLLAR, NICOLAÏVA, LUDMILOVA, BERRY — MM. BOUSSIGNY, LAFFITEY, ENGERS

**LA BIEN-AIMÉE**

Musique de SCHUBERT et de LISZT, orchestrée par M. DARIUS MILHAUD (1<sup>re</sup> Représentation).  
Argument de M. A. RENOIS

La Bien-Aimée, M<sup>me</sup> Ida RUBINSTEIN  
Le Poète, M. Anatole VILTZAK

M<sup>me</sup> CHOLLAR, NICOLAÏVA, LUDMILOVA, BERRY — MM. BOUSSIGNY, LAFFITEY, ENGERS

**BOLÉRO**

Ballet de M. Maurice RAVEL (1<sup>re</sup> Représentation).  
La Danseuse, M<sup>me</sup> Ida RUBINSTEIN  
Les Hommes : M. Anatole VILTZAK  
MM. BOUSSIGNY, LAFFITEY, ENGERS

Scènes et Costumes de M. Alexandre BENNET — Décora dessinés par R.H. DREYER — Paul ALLELUIE et M<sup>me</sup> BRASLOVSKAYA  
Choregraphie de M<sup>me</sup> NIJINSKA

**L'Orchestre sera dirigé par M. Walther STRARAM**

Vendredi 23 Novembre <b>LE COQ D'OR - La Tragedie de Salomé</b>	Samedi 24 Novembre <b>LA VALKYRIE</b>	
Dimanche 25 Novembre, en Matinée <b>FAUST</b>	Dimanche 25 Novembre, en Soirée <b>THAÏS</b>	
Lundi 30 Novembre <b>LOHENGRIN</b>	Mardi 27 Novembre <b>Les Ballets de M<sup>me</sup> Ida RUBINSTEIN</b>	Mercredi 28 Novembre <b>LA TOUR DE PEU</b>

Bureau de Location de 11 h. à 17 h. 30, dans le monument de l'Opéra, rue André

La Bien-Aimée: Poster for the First Performance, Paris Opera, 22 November 1928  
([www.straram.fr](http://www.straram.fr) - Jean-Yves Bras)



### Ida Rubinstein and her Ballet Company

Born in Kharkov in the Ukraine, in 1883, Ida Rubinstein was the second daughter of one of the richest families in Russia, which owned several banks and other businesses. By the time she was eight years old, both her parents had died, and so she inherited a very substantial fortune from her father, which allowed her some considerable freedom in her chosen course in life. Although not a born dancer, she studied assiduously and finally made her début in Paris in 1908, in a single, private performance of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, in which she stripped naked during the *Dance of the Seven Veils*.

Not surprisingly, she became the talk of Paris, and Serge Diaghilev engaged her to perform with the Ballets Russes, in which she danced from 1909 until 1911. Leaving Diaghilev's empire at that point, she formed her own ballet company, and, being wealthy enough to sponsor the arts, she commissioned many ballets, of which the best known are Debussy's *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien*, Ravel's *Boléro* and *La Valse*, and Stravinsky's *Le Baiser de la Fée*. These dance-related activities continued until the mid-1930s, at which time she became a member of the Légion d'Honneur and an honorary French citizen.

Being Jewish, Rubinstein left France and settled in England during the Second World War, where she helped with the nursing of wounded Free French soldiers. Returning to France afterwards, she lived for her remaining years in relative obscurity, dying in 1960 at Vence, on the Côte d'Azur.

The years 1928 and 1929 were especially fruitful for Ida Rubinstein, and she worked with Alexandre Benois and Bronislava Nijinska to create and produce a surprising number of new ballets, of which *La Bien-Aimée* is but one. Although her creations sometimes involved new musical compositions, she also enlisted composers to orchestrate existing music, perhaps with a desire not to alienate audiences with the provision of too much contemporary fare. The full list of her commissions for the 1928/29 season is as follows, in order of premières:

<i>Les Noces de Psyché et de l'Amour</i>	Bach, arr. Honegger	22 Nov 1928
<i>La Bien-Aimée</i>	Schubert/Liszt, arr. Milhaud	22 Nov 1928
<i>Boléro</i>	Maurice Ravel	22 Nov 1928
<i>Nocturne</i>	Borodin, arr. Tcherepnin	27 Nov 1928
<i>Le Baiser de la Fée</i>	Tchaikowsky, arr. Stravinsky	27 Nov 1928
<i>David</i>	Henri Sauguet	29 Nov 1928
<i>La Princesse Cygne</i>	Rimsky-Korsakov	29 Nov 1928
<i>Les Enchantements de la Fée Alcine</i>	Georges Auric	4 Dec 1928
<i>La Valse</i>	Maurice Ravel	4 Dec 1928

To launch nine new ballets within the space of two weeks is certainly remarkable! Not least the organisation involved must have been prodigious, simply to ensure that the music, the choreography, the set designs, the costumes and the theatre administration all came together at the same time, leaving aside the training of the dancers or the rehearsing of the musicians. As we know, there was also the question of the perforation of music rolls, although this takes its place as an almost minor consideration in the face of nine successive premières.

The ballet music by Auric, Ravel and Sauguet was all newly composed, the Rimsky-Korsakov was based on his opera, *Tsar Saltan*, and the remaining four ballets used music by earlier composers, orchestrated and embellished by younger talents, along the lines of Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*.

### **The Birth of *La Bien-Aimée***

It happened that the centenary of Schubert's death occurred on 19 November 1928, so a ballet using his music in some way was clearly a sensible project, and there were many other Schubert celebrations from which it could derive useful shared publicity. Ida Rubinstein chose her long-term collaborator, Alexandre Benois, to create the plot and the set design for a romantic ballet around Schubert's waltzes, and Benois' diary points to May 1927 as the beginning of the process:

*Tuesday, 17 May 1927 - In the evening, at Ida's home. Mlle Atoche plays some of the Schubert-Liszt Soirées de Vienne for us, and I note the numbers with might be suitable for a romantic ballet.*

*Thursday, 19 May 1927 - Ida's house. More Schubert-Liszt.*

*Sunday, 22 May 1927 - Ida's house. The choice of the waltzes is almost done. But I need something more for Ida's solo. Valse inachevée. And then something for an infernal dance at the end.*

Mlle Atoche, who played for Benois, is presumably the same Mlle Marcelle Atoch who studied at the Paris Conservatoire under Marmontel and Pugno, and won a first prize there in 1903, and she is certainly the Mme. Atoche, accompanist for Ida Rubinstein, whose arm was injured as a result of a projector accidentally falling some ten metres on to the stage of the Paris Opera in 1931. She appears in Paris directories from the period before the First War as a piano teacher, as do other lady pianists of considerable repute, such as Wanda Landowska, and no doubt she acted as the rehearsal pianist for Ida Rubinstein's company.

Alexandre Benois himself was a highly influential Russian artist who designed for the Ballets Russes and was a good friend of Stravinsky. Interestingly, Benois' sister, Marie, married the composer and conductor,

Nikolai Tcherepnin, the arranger of the collage of Borodin works that became the ballet, *Nocturne*, and who had moved to Paris in the early 1920s.

Benois' argument for the scenario of *La Bien-Aimée* was conveniently set down in English in the printed programmes of the ballet, when it was taken up by the Markova-Dolin company in Great Britain in 1937, so we shall reproduce it here:

*'The poet evokes his memories in the language of music. Their purport is that the muse has revealed herself to him, only to escape and seek refuge in inaccessible regions. He sees in memory the village lovers of his youth, then the gay young beauties of his student days, and the fatal woman whom he curses. He finds consolation, not without melancholy, in the contemplation of the Muse, who returns to him for a moment, only to efface herself once more.'*

The set design featured a huge, cavernous hall in a large palace or mansion, with an unnaturally large grand piano in the foreground, at which the hero sat and apparently improvised unplayably complex music from time to time, emphasizing the supernatural quality of the entire ballet. The open space of the hall beyond the piano provided the opportunity and the area for various dream-like groups of former friends and lovers to re-appear in the poet's imagination. For the initial production, Alexandre Benois designed both the set and the costumes.

Not much else happened until early 1928, when Bronislava Nijinska joined the company as ballet mistress and chief choreographer. It is known that Nijinska set down her period of preparation as six months, from 1 March to 1 June, and from 15 August to 15 November, at a fee of 10,000 French francs per month, during which time she assumed responsibility for five of the nine ballets, including *La Bien-Aimée*. Perhaps the first period was for the creative design of the choreography and the contact with potential dancers, and the second for training and rehearsal. The well-known British choreographer, Frederick Ashton, danced with the company during this season, and in a letter to Marie Rambert commented on the gruelling régime that Nijinska imposed.

### **Preparation of Music Rolls**

La Nijinska had begun work on *La Bien-Aimée* by mid-August of 1928, so presumably the music was already written at that point. In any case there were music rolls to be produced, and we know from the poster for the performance in March 1929 at La Scala that the arrangement was carried out by Jacques Brillouin. The poster appears overleaf, and it will be seen that an Ibach-Aeolian grand Pianola Piano was used, as opposed to a Pleyela, which one might have expected.



At roughly the same time as the rolls of *La Bien-Aimée* were prepared, Brillouin had set up a small musical co-operative for the production of music rolls, entitled *Les Compositeurs Associés*, whose members included Honegger, Milhaud, Ibert and Marcel Delannoy, and a series of over sixty specially arranged rolls was produced by *La Perforation Musicale*, the manufacturers of Pleyela music rolls, at 22, Rue Delambre, on the Left Bank of the Seine. Doubtless the original rolls for *La Bien-Aimée* were perforated in the same workshop, but they seem to have been lost, unless they form part of the Brillouin collection that was acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in the early 1990s, which has lain uncatalogued, unviewable, unplayable and unacknowledged for the last twenty-five years. The complete listing of the *Compositeurs Associés* rolls was published in two sections, in November 1927 and October 1929, and in view of the strong connections with Milhaud and Honegger, both of whom worked for Ida Rubinstein at that time, it is well worth studying, so it forms an appendix at the end of this article.

In view of Jacques Brillouin's importance in the production of *La Bien-Aimée*, and his relative obscurity, compared to the other protagonists, it seems sensible to consider his career, as far as it is known. Jacques Georges Brillouin was born in 1892 and educated at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, a music academy run by Alexandre Guilmant and Vincent d'Indy, and for a while in the early 1920s he worked as a music roll arranger at Pleyel, along with Pierre-Octave Ferroud, Jacques Larmanjat and others. When Ferroud left Pleyel around 1925, Brillouin arranged for him to be replaced by another young French composer, Maurice Jaubert, and then Brillouin himself left soon afterwards, and he seems to have concentrated on acoustics and what we might nowadays call music technology. He was responsible for the acoustic design of the Salle Pleyel in Paris, and through his friendship with the film-maker, Jean Grémillon, whose early silent film, *Tour au Large*, used a mammoth and very complex piano roll as the musical accompaniment, he moved into the world of films, as both a composer and film editor. The conductor, Ernest Ansermet, included Brillouin's film-music suite, *Olivier Maldone*, in one of the Paris Symphony Orchestra's concerts in 1929, and it was favourably received by the French press.

During the 1930s, Brillouin also wrote a number of technical books on acoustics, partly for the use of architects and interior designers, and by the outbreak of the Second World War he seems to have been working for the French government, because he travelled in 1940 to the USA, on a diplomatic passport. He died in Paris in 1971.

It seems extremely likely, though unproven, that Jacques Brillouin himself played the player piano for the Paris performances of *La Bien-Aimée*. He was, after all, a friend of Darius Milhaud. And Milhaud's score is written in such a way that the player has on occasions to remain in exact synchronisation

with the accompanying orchestra, a much more demanding task than, for example, playing the Concerto for Pianola and Orchestra by the Dutch composer, Jan van Dijk, where the solo part is carefully contrived to enter mostly at times when the orchestra is either silent or holding a simple, fixed chord. As we shall see, the Ida Rubinstein Company also toured through other European countries, and it is not clear whether Brillouin went with them, though as we have noted, he was credited as the roll arranger on the poster for La Scala in Milan.

**Les ballets  
de Mme Ida Rubinstein**

Nous sommes en mesure d'annoncer  
dès à présent le programme de ballets  
que Mme Ida Rubinstein doit donner à



**Mme Ida Rubinstein**  
*dans le rôle de Cléopâtre.*  
(Photo Henri Nazeul)

l'Opéra à la fin de novembre, avant  
son départ pour l'étranger :

- Boléro*, ballet inédit de Maurice Ravel ;
- Le Baiser de la Fée*, ballet inédit d'Igor Stravinsky ;
- Les Noces de Psyché et de l'Amour*, musique de Bach, orchestrée par Arthur Honegger ;
- La Bien-Aimée*, musique de Schubert et de Liszt, orchestrée par Darius Milhaud ;
- Les Enchantements de la Fée Alcine*, ballet inédit de Georges Auric ;
- David*, ballet inédit d'Henri Sauguet ;
- La Princesse Cygne*, d'après le Tsar Sallan, de Rimsky-Korsakoff ;
- Nocturne*, musique de Borodine, orchestrée par Nicolas Tcherepnine ;
- Et, enfin, le poème chorégraphique de Maurice Ravel : *La Valse*.

*Ida Rubinstein Ballets: 1928 Paris Season Announcement  
(Comœdia, 25 October 1928)*

### Ida Rubinstein's Performances of *La Bien-Aimée*

After the main rehearsal period ended on 15 November 1928, the premières of most of the ballets followed in quick succession. An announcement had been made in the press in late October, as shown opposite.

*La Bien-Aimée* received its première at the first of four ballet evenings, on 22 November 1928, at 9.00 pm at the Paris Opera, with Ida Rubinstein as the Muse and Anton Wiltzak as the poet hero, receiving mixed but generally favourable reviews from the press, though it seems to have been the twentieth-century orchestration of Schubert, rather than the inclusion of the player piano, that drew criticism. *Le Figaro* was especially unpleasant, citing its 'acrobatics without romanticism,' and suggesting that 'this music, which should remain simple, danceable, above all clear, became bogged down with a notionally modern complexity; it unleashed sadness rather than melancholy, and a coldness that has nothing to do with the spring-like freshness and the tenderness of Schubert.' On the other hand, the critic in *Le Temps* rather liked it, and especially the Pleyela: '(Milhaud) has included a player piano, which made a profound impression. The many pages of piano music, all conceived for the Pleyela, gave an indefinable allure of the supernatural to the spectres who appeared before the hero.'

Performances of the other ballets continued until early December, but it was undoubtedly Ravel's *Boléro* that was the hit of the season.

### The European Tour and Repeat Paris Performances

After the final initial Paris performance, on 4 December 1928, the Ida Rubinstein Ballet Company took to the road, or perhaps to the railway, giving performances at the Théâtre La Monnaie in Brussels, the Théâtre de Monté-Carlo in that principality, the Staatsoper in Vienna and La Scala in Milan, before returning to Paris for a second set of performances in May 1929. Interestingly, in view of the *Soirées de Vienne* on which *La Bien Aimée* is centered, it did not form part of the repertoire in Vienna. Allowing for the more leisurely travel methods of the 1920s, the visits to foreign capitals took place at the rate of one per month, Brussels in December 1928, Monté-Carlo in January 1929, Vienna in February and Milan in March.

Following the tour there were a further four performances in Paris in the second half of May, with *La Bien-Aimée* taking its place on 23rd of that month, and after that there remained one further performance, at the Royal Opera House in London on 13 July 1931, as part of a ten-performance season that included all nine ballets written in 1928, plus others by Debussy and Honegger.

Ida Rubinstein's company was revived once more, in 1934, and then she closed it in 1935 and gave her final performance in Artur Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher* in 1939. Allowing for all the criticism that was levelled against

her as she continued dancing in public longer than her technique really allowed, Ida Rubinstein was a most remarkable patron of the arts. How much better to give a whole raft of ballets to the world, than to spend one's fortune in the casinos of the 1920s!

### **The Markova-Dolin Tour - Great Britain in 1937**

The performance of *La Bien-Aimée* in London in 1931 was roughly reviewed, with the pianola being described as being hardly in time with the orchestra. Who might have played it, or which type of instrument might have been used, is not known. But the 1930s saw a considerable decline in the fortunes of the player piano, so it must have been clear to anyone proposing a new performance of the work, that an alternative solution had to be found for the super-virtuosic piano writing.

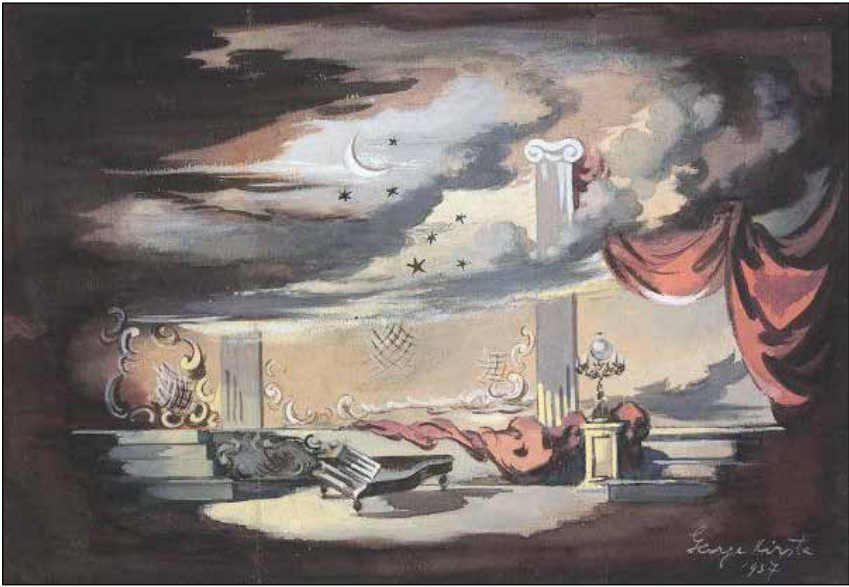
The practical answer came in 1937, when the ballet was taken up by Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin, for a tour round the British Isles, with the translated title of *The Beloved One*. Bronislava Nijinska's choreography was retained, but Benois' stage and set designs were updated by George Kirsta, and the pianola part was re-arranged for two pianos, presumably by Leighton Lucas, who was the Markova-Dolin Ballet's director of music. Lucas was especially well suited to conducting ballet, having been a dancer himself, before transferring to the conductor's podium.

Since George Kirsta's set and costume designs have been preserved at London's Victoria and Albert Museum, it is much easier to gain a visual idea of the production. We are very grateful to the Museum for its enlightened policy with regard to the use of its resources for non-profit academic purposes. As can be seen, Alexandre Benois' original conception of an elderly grand piano has been retained, set in the ruins of some dream-like Grecian temple.

In practice, given the constraints of a production touring a number of provincial theatres in the 1930s, it can be seen from the following photograph that the original design had become simplified, and that the grand piano, already somewhat smaller than the enormous and supernatural creature that had featured in Paris, was by now down to boudoir grand size!

Many cities were included in the year-long tour, including Nottingham and Glasgow in April, and Bradford and Birmingham in the late autumn. The cast list, found in a programme from the Bradford Alhambra, might not mean so much to pianola enthusiasts, but it is worth reproducing here, in case future dance historians come across this article in some university library. They should also be aware that Alicia Markova's papers are housed at the Gotlieb Research Center at Boston University, no doubt a rich resource for future research.





*Set Design for The Beloved One, George Kirsta, 1937*  
(© Victoria and Albert Museum, London)



*Performance of The Beloved One, Markova-Dolin Ballet Company, 1937*  
(Unknown photographer)

SATURDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 30th.

## THE BELOVED ONE

A Ballet in One Act. Music by Schubert and Liszt. Orchestrated by Darius Milhaud  
 Scenario by A. Benois. Choreography by La Nijaska. Décor and Costumes by George Kirsta

<b>The Beloved One</b> .....	<b>MARKOVA</b>
<b>The Poet</b> .....	<b>ANTON DOLIN</b>
<b>Shades</b> .....	<b>ELLA BENNETT, ANNA MARITA, BERYL RIGBY, LYDIA VERNON, BRENDA SETH, GLADYS GILL</b>
<b>Peasants</b> .....	<b>MAUDE LLOYD, DAPHNE CHARLTON, VERA LAVROVA, JOAN INNES, JOAN KENT, ROBERT DORNING, JAMES MORRIS, DAVID McLEOD, FREDERICK HARGREAVES, ANTHONY KELLY</b>
<b>Grisettes</b> .....	<b>PRUDENCE HYMAN, HELEN FORBES</b>
<b>Students</b> .....	<b>FREDERIC FRANKLIN, GUY MASSEY</b>
<b>The Lioness</b> .....	<b>MOLLY LAKE</b>
<b>Her Admirers</b> .....	<b>TRAVIS KEMP, TEDDY HASKELL, NORMAN WALLER, MICHAEL BAYSTONE, TONI REPETTO</b>
<b>Carnival</b> .....	<b>FREDERIC FRANKLIN, MAUDE LLOYD, BEATRICE APPELYARD, JOAN BURNETT, PRUDENCE HYMAN, HELEN FORBES, VERA LAVROVA, JOAN INNES, JOAN KENT, DAPHNE CHARLTON, DOROTHY HUTCHISON, GUY MASSEY, TRAVIS KEMP, ROBERT DORNING, TEDDY HASKELL, FREDERICK HARGREAVES, ANTHONY KELLY, NORMAN WALLER, MICHAEL BAYSTONE, DAVID McLEOD, JAMES MORRIS</b>

Décor executed by Heratio Taylor

Costumes executed by Kariaska, Ltd

### ARGUMENT.

The poet invokes his memories in the language of music. Their purport is that the Muse has revealed herself to him, only to escape and seek refuge in inaccessible regions. He sees in memory the village lovers of his youth, then the gay young beauties of his student days, and the fatal woman whom he curses. He finds consolation, not without melancholy, in the contemplation of the Muse, who returns to him for a moment, only to retire herself once more.

### INTERVAL

## THE HOUSE PARTY

A Ballet in One Act. Music by Francis Poulenc. Décor and Costumes by Marie Laurencin

<b>Rondeau</b> .....	<b>HELEN FORBES, JOAN INNES, JOAN BURNETT, DAPHNE CHARLTON, ELLA BENNETT, GLADYS GILL, ANNA MARITA, BRENDA SETH, BERYL KAY, LYDIA VERNON, VERA LAVROVA, JOAN KENT, BERYL RIGBY</b>
<b>Chanson Dansee</b> .....	<b>ANTON DOLIN, GUY MASSEY, TRAVIS KEMP</b>
<b>Adagietto</b> .....	<b>MARKOVA</b>
<b>Jeu</b> .....	<b>ENSEMBLE</b>
<b>Rag-Mazurka</b> .....	<b>BEATRICE APPELYARD, GUY MASSEY, TRAVIS KEMP</b>
<b>Andantino</b> .....	<b>MARKOVA and ANTON DOLIN</b>
<b>Chanson Dansee</b> .....	<b>PRUDENCE HYMAN and MAUDE LLOYD</b>
<b>Finale</b> .....	<b>ENSEMBLE</b>

Décor executed by Heratio Taylor

Costumes executed by Kariaska, Ltd.

### ARGUMENT.

Jean Cocteau spoke as follows of "The House Party." "The sublime—said Strindhal—the exalted emotion results from calculation, not from an inexistent subject, from just an ordinary sofa, which is perambulated, from a little person who walks in long strides on the tips of her toes, from three young men in bathing costume and garlands of feminine figures populating and disappearing again from the view as in the pictures of Watteau." From "The Figaro" we quote: "The House Party" is a modern pastiche without sleep and sheep-hook, without excessive and artificial splendour. Young girls laugh, run after each other, call and escape from the young men in a joyous festive spirit."

### INTERVAL

*Cast List from The Beloved One, Bradford Alhambra, 30 October 1927  
 (Author's Collection)*

### **The American Ballet Theatre Production - 1941 Onwards**

During the Second World War, Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin travelled to the United States, and they took *The Beloved One* with them, taking the principal roles in a series of performances with the newly founded American Ballet Theatre. The title of the work was changed once more, becoming quite simply, *The Beloved*, and it received its first performance at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City on 24 October 1941. Costumes and set were designed by Nicholas de Molas. Milhaud's catalogue notes that the ballet was revised in 1941, implying that Milhaud himself had somehow altered it, but if the pianola part had already been arranged for piano duet in 1937, it is not clear why any further changes would have been necessary, at least on musical grounds.

### **Modern Re-Discovery and Performance**

As we draw nearer to the present day, this narrative inevitably becomes more personal, since the search for *La Bien-Aimée* has been something that has exercised this writer for several decades. The listing of op. 101 in Milhaud's complete catalogue lacked any information regarding the whereabouts of the music, and the work's publishers, Universal Edition in Vienna, claimed to have lost all trace of it. Clearly the pianola has a small enough repertoire of special compositions, and a concerted work accompanied by a large orchestra is not one to be abandoned without a fight, though that leaves for another day any discussion about the ill-informed notion that the pianola is only suited to music for eighty-eight fingers and one dynamic level. *La Bien-Aimée* is in any case quite expressively written, so it is not a precursor of the rigidly mechanical compositions that have begun to proliferate around computer pianos in the twenty-first century.

In the end, the re-discovery of *La Bien-Aimée* came about through the Internet. Discovery is an inadequate term, when all that it really means is that an artefact held by someone who is unaware of its true significance comes to the notice of someone who understands that significance, but who is unaware of its location, or indeed its existence.

On a visit to New York in 2001, I stayed with my dear friends, John and Kathy Shepard. I've known John for nearly thirty years, and shared the floor of his apartment in New York with two friendly cats, in the days when my more youthful back would take it, including the occasion in 1988, when Denis Hall and I gave the first American performances of the *Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka*, in Stravinsky's Pleyela versions, at Alice Tully Hall, with the very generous sponsorship of Robert Lawson Craft. Nowadays, John Shepard is Head of the Hargrove Music Library at the University of California in Berkeley, having been head-hunted for that august position, but in the early 2000s he was still Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts in the Music Division of the New York Public Library, and I found myself one day in his office.

In October 2001 the Internet was not as well developed as it is today. There was still no trace of *La Bien-Aimée*, and I mentioned it in passing to John, as we were talking about many other musical matters. He thought for a moment, and then told me that the American music librarians had a private 'intranet', which allowed them access to many catalogues that were not yet available online to the general public. He typed in 'Bien-Aimée', and in a moment the existence and location of the full score came on to the screen, together with a thumbnail of the opening page of music. After an intermittent search of some twenty years, the final solution came, rather like the end of the world, not with a bang but a whimper!



*La Bien-Aimée: Milhaud's Manuscript Score*  
 (Northwestern University Music Library, Evanston, Illinois)

The full manuscript score of Darius Milhaud's *La Bien-Aimée* turned out to be owned by the Music Library at Northwestern University, in Evanston, Illinois, about as far from the centre of Chicago as Croydon is from central London, to put it into perspective for the majority of our mainly British readership. John and I were, however, in New York, and I was about to return home to London, so the project had to be approached gently. But we did at least shake hands!

It took a couple of years before I travelled again to the USA, and finally in November 2003 I found myself taking the local train from Chicago to Evanston, where I met with Jeanette Casey, Acting Head of the Northwestern University Music Library, who kindly showed me the full score of *La Bien-Aimée*, and discussed in a preliminary way the possibility of making a copy. On my return home, another delay elapsed, until I was able to travel to Vienna, to visit Aygün Lausch at Universal Edition, to explain my plans, and to ask for a letter of permission to be sent to Northwestern. I was told that Universal had been searching for the missing score since 1953, so there was great enthusiasm for copies to be made.

More delays ensued, as a new Head of the Northwestern Music Library was appointed, and a new copying process agreed, until in July 2005 the business of photographing began. By September both Universal and I had hard-bound volumes, with gold titles, containing full colour photographs of the whole score, printed on archival paper, and shipped by courier from Evanston. The cost was \$185, all in, and in the package that arrived was a small printed note, stating that Northwestern University wished to emphasize that it had made no profit on the transaction. It certainly hadn't!

Possession of a score is one thing, but the search for an orchestra and a conductor who would be sufficiently adventurous and trusting is quite another matter. During thirty-five years of sporadic international music roll concerts, not many conductors have been open-minded enough to have placed their faith in the pianola and this performer, but those who have include Pierre Boulez, Sir Andrew Davis and David Zinman, and even Sir Simon Rattle was prepared to share a concert with them, albeit as a pianist, rather than a conductor on that particular occasion. By a stroke of luck, as many of our readers know, my wife, Rona Eastwood, manages orchestral conductors for the London firm of Askonas Holt. Her flock includes a whole host of first-class musicians, many of whom are in musical charge of some of the world's finest orchestras and opera houses. Denis Hall's music room has played host to a goodly number of these, so in that small way a knowledge of the pianola has been imparted to some of those who control the world of Western classical music. That is certainly not to say that the pianola has suddenly filled all the important concert halls, but it has at least featured at the Royal Festival Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, it has opened the Lucerne Festival, it has had three new concertos written for it,

and the BBC, which had resolutely ignored it for over thirty years, has at last commissioned an utterly wonderful choral work from Gabriel Jackson.

In 2008, Rona Eastwood took on the management of an Italian conductor, Enrique Mazzola, arguably the finest bel canto specialist in the world, who has become a regular at Glyndebourne, has conducted at La Scala and the Met, and who for several years has been Artistic and Music Director of the Orchestre National d'Île de France. This orchestra is based in Paris, where it is a regular contributor to the season at the new Philharmonie, but it also has a particular responsibility for presenting concerts throughout the area of the Île de France, somewhat akin to the Home Counties in England, or to the Tri-State Area around New York. Not long after he joined Askonas Holt, Enrique Mazzola came to visit us, a trip that included a journey to Denis Hall's four-piano listening room, and also to our music studio at Hither Green. After the tour round the perforating machine and the roll library, the colourful score of *La Bien-Aimée* inevitably became something to share with him and his wife, Olga.

The music of *La Bien-Aimée* having been premiered in Paris and eventually lost for about seventy-five years, it caught Enrique Mazzola's imagination, and he determined there and then to work for its restoration to the Parisian musical world. His appointment to Ondif, as his orchestra is commonly known, took effect from the 2012/13 concert season, and at that point he set in motion the planning and further research necessary to turn the dream into a reality.

David Stieltjes, the orchestral librarian, contacted Universal Edition, who somewhat miraculously laid their hands on a set of orchestral parts, which they had previously thought not to exist, and they also photocopied their newly-acquired full score. Rolls had to be prepared, at Hither Green on Rex Lawson's vintage Apple computer, and the resulting data files were then transferred to the larger, modern PC which runs the Medcraft perforating machine, thanks to the programming expertise of Anthony Robinson.

Milhaud's detailed orchestral score fails in one regard, in that it carries no dynamic or metronome markings for the carefully written pianola part. The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that there must have been an initial pianola score, used for the preparation of rolls (now lost) in the 1920s, and that Milhaud himself copied that part across to the full score, when he came to orchestrate the whole work. A very similar procedure was used by George Antheil for his *Ballet Mécanique*. Dynamic indications were therefore chosen in consultation with Enrique Mazzola, and by reference to the orchestral dynamics in the full score, and the original Schubert and Liszt works, and speeds were arrived at during rehearsals, keeping in mind that the music was designed for fairly large auditoriums.





*Enrique Mazzola, Music Director of the Orchestre National d'Île de France  
(Askonas Holt Ltd)*

Since the end result of this musical preparation was the arrangement of a concert suite from Milhaud's ballet music, the relative positions on stage of the orchestra and pianola soloist had to be taken into account. During the original ballet performances, all the instrumental performers were hidden in an orchestral pit, and so it was an easy and practical decision to restrict the pianola to movements three, five and seven, out of an effective total of eight, no doubt in part to allow for the changing of music rolls. In a concert suite, where the orchestral performers become the main focus of attention, and without the visual narrative of the dancers and the scenery, it was necessary to choose a different order for the music, to accommodate the drama of the concert hall, rather than that of the ballet theatre. Enrique Mazzola chose six movements, beginning with the original Overture, ending with the original Finale, and including all three of those which featured the pianola.

In addition he asked Rex Lawson to create a pianola part for the Finale, which Milhaud had based on the Grand Galop Chromatique of Liszt. On a concert platform it would have appeared rather strange for the solo pianola to have remained resolutely silent in the last movement. Luckily it proved a relatively easy matter to write some suitably effervescent entries, because Milhaud had omitted several of Liszt's repeated passages, and so these were reinstated, with the pianola echoing the orchestra from time to time, in ways that human pianists would find impossible to play. In addition Rex composed a cadenza, consisting of a mini-fugue, using the main theme of the Grand Galop as its subject, with brief appearances of the American and French national anthems, alluding to the countries in which the full score had spent most of its existence.

Seven performances were arranged for April 2016, and two push-up Pianolas, belonging to Denis Hall and Rex Lawson, were initially taken to the Ondif rehearsal studio at Alfortville, to the south-east of Paris. Thanks to the kindness of Malcolm Greenhalgh, London's main supplier of concert harpsichords and chamber organs, Rex Lawson's Pianola travelled in advance in its flight case, in Malcolm's van. Denis Hall's push-up followed a week later, along with all the other concert paraphernalia. This arrangement meant that, after each performance, the main Pianola could be returned to its flight case, allowing the orchestral transporters to move it to the following day's location. Such a luxury, along with the provision of a chauffeur-driven car after every concert, is not one often accorded to pianola players!

After three days of rehearsals at Alfortville, the premiere of the revised concert suite took place at the new Philharmonie, to the east of Paris, on the evening of 8 April 2016. Six further performances ensued in a variety of concert halls around the Île de France, at Massy, Villeparisis, Lieusaint, Le Perreux-sur-Marne, Puteaux, and Provins. For the last concert of the series, a small but dedicated band of Pianola Institute members travelled out from





*La Bien-Aimée Re-Created: Enrique Mazzola, Rex Lawson and the Orchestre National d'Île de France, Opéra de Massy, 9 April 2016  
(Opéra de Massy)*

England, augmented by two French members who had joined that very day online, namely the principal trombone and one of the viola players from the Orchestra, both of whom had become pianola enthusiasts as a result of this musical adventure.

The first concert was due to be broadcast on Radio France, but a lightning strike by engineering staff prevented its transmission, though a recording for broadcast was made and may yet appear in the schedules. At the same time a live film was made by LGM Television, for broadcast at an unspecified date. In addition, a CD recording was planned, taking place in Alfortville in early September 2016, just before this issue of the Pianola Journal went to press. This is likely to be published between the end of 2017 and the summer of 2018, by the French recording company, NoMadMusic.

### **A Vote of Thanks**

Such a musical project involves very many people, and it would be good to thank some of them. John Shepard of the New York Public Library facilitated the initial discovery of the full score, and, as Acting Head of the Northwestern

University Music Library, Jeanette Casey kindly made it available for viewing. D.J. Hoek, the subsequent Head of that library, made arrangements for the score to be copied, and Greg MacAyeal, now the Library's Curator, has continued that fine tradition of academic hospitality.

Aygün Lausch and Bettina Tiefenbrunner, of Universal Edition in Vienna, have responded with great kindness over a period of so many years that Bettina Tiefenbrunner has now become Bettina Tiefenbrunner-Horak.

The administrative and technical staff of the Orchestre National d'Île de France have also been involved for several years, becoming not just business acquaintances, but true friends. They include Fabienne Voisin, the General Director, Anne-Marie Clech, the Artistic Adviser, Xavier Bastin, the Production Manager, and David Stieltjes, the Orchestral Librarian. During the concert performances, the muscular prowess of the instrument moving team was a real joy to behold, especially since it meant that the pianolist merely had to watch and direct. François Véga, Jérémy Petit and Bernard Chapelle all rallied round, as Didier Theeten repeatedly attempted to break the world speed record for moving Aeolian Pianolas.

The home team at the Pianola Institute have all been their usual affectionate selves, especially Anthony and Bruce Robinson, whose combination of electronic and machine shop skills have kept the Medcraft perforating machine in tip-top order, and of course Denis Hall, who lent his Aeolian Pianola and put up with various trial rolls being tested at ungodly hours on his fine Steck grand Pianola Piano.

Malcolm Greenhalgh, a friend for several decades, gave up two weekends to drive to Paris and back with my own Pianola and flight case, sharing not only the driving, but also some very agreeable French cuisine en route. And Rona Eastwood, as well as doing all those unseen things that spouses do, had the wit and good sense to undertake Enrique Mazzola's management, thus providing *La Bien-Aimée* with a redoubtable champion in the classical music world.

Finally, I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to Enrique himself, for his limitless enthusiasm and very natural kindness, over many years. Very few conductors would have gambled on the combination of Milhaud and the pianola, and his determination and consistent advocacy of this project have been invaluable and unforgettable.

Apart from all these twenty-first century friends and acquaintances, there remains one further musical giant to thank, and that is most certainly Darius Milhaud himself! His musical invention is by turns delightful, witty, colourful and expressive, and he contrives to create a work in which the novelty of the pianola is treated affectionately: respected and not mocked. Thank you, Monsieur Milhaud, and we hope your long-lost composition will find a new life as a concert suite of the future.



*Darius Milhaud in 1923*  
(Bibliothèque National, Paris)

### **Postscript**

Although *La Bien-Aimée* has now been well and truly re-established, there remain many problems for the pianola, in a musical world that generally continues to ignore it. Music for pianola does not play itself, despite what the mass of humanity might imagine, and pianolists need to follow conductors to the micro-second. It simply will not do for a conductor to follow some automatic machine, as George Antheil's conductors found to their cost. Certainly it is possible for modern composers to write deliberately easy concerted music, with pianola entries beginning as orchestral tuttis come

to an end, avoiding the need for any too close synchronisation. But an approximate synchronisation will not do for Stravinsky's *Les Noces* or Antheil's *Ballet Mécanique*, and nor should it for normal chamber music. There remain far too few pianola players who can watch a roll and follow a conductor's beat at the same time. It is a great pity that not one college of music in the entire world has been prepared to instigate the study of the pianola as a performing instrument.

Similarly, pianolas are by and large very poorly served by museums and national libraries. I cannot think of one public museum in the world where the player pianos function really well. And the roll collections in national libraries have been dealt with very poorly. The fine collection housed at the Bibliothèque National in Paris remains uncatalogued and unavailable for study or even inspection, nearly thirty years after it was acquired from its previous owner. The Spanish National Library also has a fine collection, decently catalogued, but now scanned and transferred to MIDI, and available online at rigidly fixed speeds and a single dynamic level, completely at odds with what was intended by the musicians and manufacturers who made the rolls. It is very disappointing that such national centres of excellence should misunderstand and misrepresent important musical artefacts in such a blatant way.

Pianolas have on the whole not attracted young people, in contrast to the other areas of classical music. One has to hope that such projects as Milhaud's *La Bien-Aimée* will play a part in restoring the pianola's fortunes, and, to be optimistic for just one tiny moment, it is heartening that at least a small corner of the Parisian musical world has taken the pianola to its heart. Darius would be very pleasantly surprised!

## Appendix

There follows a compilation of two successive catalogues of music rolls published by the composers' co-operative known as *Les Compositeurs Associés*. It is clear enough from the introduction that Igor Stravinsky was the inspiration for much of this activity, although his own arrangements, and the master rolls for their manufacture, had been purchased by the Aeolian Company as early as 1924. This combined catalogue dates from November 1927 and October 1929, and it contains some quite remarkable music. For example, the idea that the whole of Honegger's oratorio, *King David*, might be performed on a player piano certainly acts as a counterbalance to the notion that ragtime is the staple diet of the pianola!

Intriguingly, out of the complete listing of 61 rolls, two are missing, nos. 30 and 31, exactly half-way through the numerical list. With a premiere in late October 1928, the date of *La Bien-Aimée* falls similarly half-way between the publication of the two halves of the roll catalogue. If one could but examine the rolls at the BN in Paris, all might become clear, but it is interesting that our new rolls for *La Bien-Aimée* were also two in number.

# Nouvelle Collection de musique perforée

publiée sous le patronage de la Société

## Les Compositeurs Associés

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**Jacques Brillouin**, *président.*  
**Marcel Delannoy**,  
**Arthur Honegger**,  
**Jacques Ibert**,  
**Darius Milhaud**, *membres fondateurs.*

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## ROULEAUX PARUS

le 1<sup>er</sup> Novembre 1927

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### Arthur HONEGGER

- C. A. 1 **Le Roi David**, I. Introduction - Cantique du Berger -  
Psaume (*Loué soit le Seigneur*).  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 2 — II. Cortège - Psaume (*Ne crains rien*) -  
Psaume (*Ah, si j'avais des ailes de colombe*).  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 3 — III. Cantique des Prophètes - Psaume (*Pitié de moi*) - Psaume (*L'Éternel est ma lumière*).  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 4 — IV. Le camp de Saül - Incantation - Marche des  
Philistins.  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 5 — V. Lamentations de Guilboa.  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 6 — VI. La danse devant l'Arche.  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 7 — VII. Cantique de Fête - Chant de la servante :  
Cantique (*De mon cœur jaillit un cantique*).  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 8 — VIII. Psaume (*Je fus conçu dans le péché*).  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 9 — IX. Psaume de pénitence - Psaume (*Je T'aimerais Seigneur*).  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 10 — X. Psaume (*Je lève mes regards vers la montagne*)  
Chanson d'Ephraïm - Marche des Hébreux.  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 11 — XI. Couronnement de Salomon - Mort de David.  
par l'Auteur
- C. A. 12 **Pacific - (231)**.  
par l'Auteur

- C. A. 13 **Chant de Joie.** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 14 **Prélude pour la Tempête, de Shakespeare.** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 15 **Judith, I. Acte I. Lamentations.** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 16 — **II. Acte I. La trompe d'alarme - Invocation.** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 17 — **III. Acte II. Incantation - Musique de fête.** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 18 — **IV. Acte III. Nocturne - Cantique de la bataille.** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 19 — **V. Acte III. Cantique des Vierges.** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 20 — **VI. Acte III. Cantique de Victoire.** par l'Auteur

### Marcel DELANNOY

- C. A. 21 **Le Marchand de Lunettes, I. Ouverture.** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 22 — — **II. Intermezzo.** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 23 — — **III. Nocturne,** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 24 — — **IV. Divertissement.** par l'Auteur

### Jacques IBERT

- C. A. 25 **Angélique, I. Introduction et scène I.** par l'Auteur
- C. A. 27 — **III. L'Anglais.** par l'Auteur

## A PARAÎTRE PROCHAINEMENT

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Jacques IBERT

**Angélique, L'Italien — Le Nègre — Final.**

J.-S. BACH

**Fugue pour orgue, en sol mineur.**

**Toccatà et Fugue pour orgue, en ré mineur.**

**Prélude et Fugue pour orgue, en ré majeur.**

BEETHOVEN

**Coriolan, Ouverture.**

**Egmont, Ouverture.**

Darius MILHAUD

**Le Carnaval d'Aix.**

Arthur HONEGGER

**Pastorale d'Été.**

**Horace Victorieux.**

HAENDEL

**Le Messie (Fragments).**

POULENC

**Sonate pour piano à 4 mains.**



## Collection des "COMPOSITEURS-ASSOCIÉS"

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### J.-S. BACH

- C. A. 60 **Canzona**, pour orgue. par M. Jacques Brillouin
- C. A. 61 **Prélude et Fugue**, en *la mineur*, pour orgue. d°

### BEETHOVEN (L. Van)

- C. A. 32 **Coriolan**, Overture. par M. Jacques Brillouin

### Arthur HONEGGER

#### Horace Victorieux.

- C. A. 41 I. Camille et Curiace. par l'Auteur
- C. A. 42 II. Entrée des Horaces. Entrée de la foule. Annonce et préparatifs  
du combat. par l'Auteur
- C. A. 43 III. Le Combat. d°
- C. A. 44 IV. Triomphe d'Horace. Lamentations et Imprécations de Camille.  
Meurtre de Camille. par l'Auteur

#### Antigone.

- C. A. 46 I. Scène II. Premier interlude. d°
- C. A. 47 II. Deux fragments des Scènes V et VI. d°
- C. A. 48 III. Marche au supplice. d°
- C. A. 49 IV. Deuxième interlude (chœur de Bacchus).
- C. A. 50 V. Scène finale.
- C. A. 51 **Pastorale d'été.**

## Jacques IBERT

### Angélique.

C. A. 26	II. L'Italien.	par l'Auteur
C. A. 28	IV. Le Nègre.	d°
C. A. 29	V. Finsl.	d°

## Darius MILHAUD

### Le Carnaval d'Aix.

C. A. 33	I. Le Corso, Tartaglia, Isabelle, Rosetta, Le bon et le mauvais tuteur.	par l'Auteur
C. A. 34	II. Coviello, le Capitaine Cartuccia, Polichinelle.	d°
C. A. 35	III. Polka, Cinzio, Souvenir de Rio, Final.	d°

### Le Pauvre Matelot.

C. A. 36	I. Acte I. Début.	d°
C. A. 37	II. Acte I. Suite.	d°
C. A. 38	III. Acte I. Entrée du Matelot et Fin.	d°
C. A. 39	IV. Acte II. Début.	d°
C. A. 40	V. Acte II. Fin.	d°
C. A. 45	VI. Acte III.	d°

### Saudades do Brazil (réalisé d'après la version orchestrale).

C. A. 52	I. Introduction. Sorocaba. Botafogo.	par l'Auteur
C. A. 53	II. Leme. Copacabana.	d°
C. A. 54	III. Ipanema. Gavea. Corcovado.	d°
C. A. 55	IV. Tijuca. Sumaré.	d°
C. A. 56	V. Paincras. Larenjeiras. Paysandú.	d°

### Sérénade pour orchestre.

C. A. 57	I. Vif.	par l'Auteur
C. A. 58	II. Tranquille.	d°
C. A. 59	III. Vif.	d°

## The Russians, The Welte-Mignon and the Duo-Art **Denis Hall**

From the programme for a South Bank concert dated 3 December 2006.

Commercial recording as we know it was getting under way around the turn of the twentieth century. However, the primitive recording equipment to produce disc and phonograph records could only cope to any degree of success with the human voice, but as opera stars at that time were fêted in much the same way as pop stars today, this was not such a disadvantage. Although any recordings at that time had to be listened to with a good deal of imagination, and the gramophone itself was looked on by many as little more than a toy, recording impresarios and engineers had high ambitions, and hounded the famous to try and persuade them to commit their art to the new machine. As early as 1900, Fred Gaisberg of the Gramophone Company (HMV) and his team were despatched to Russia with a view to capturing on wax the leading singers of the Moscow and St Petersburg opera companies, and while they met with little success on that visit, a year later they made records of the tenor Nikolai Figner and his soprano wife, Medea Mei-Figner, the top performers at the Imperial Maryinski Theatre in St Petersburg.

The Gramophone Company in Paris was rather more adventurous when it came to non-vocal recording, and in 1903 it enticed a number of important pianists to make their first records. Again, these records are extremely primitive, and, except to the committed 78 rpm record buff, give little audible pleasure. However, it is through these discs that we can first hear such artists as Edvard Grieg, Camille Saint-Saens, Alfred Grunfeld and Raoul Pugno<sup>1</sup>.

The situation was to change dramatically as far as piano recording was concerned when, in 1905, M. Welte & Soehne of Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, publicly announced the first 'reproducing' piano, the Welte-Mignon. Suddenly it was possible to listen to a fine reproduction of a piano performance 'live' on a piano in one's own home. The Welte-Mignon could easily have been just the latest novelty, but through the good offices of Hugo Popper, owner of a company manufacturing musical instruments in Leipzig, it happily blossomed into something artistically very significant. Popper allowed Welte to set up a recording studio in his music salon in Leipzig, a city far enough east to be accessible to both Western European artists as well as those from Russia and other Eastern European countries. Thanks to Popper's standing within the musical community, he was able to entice many of the great pianists of the day to visit the Welte studio and record piano rolls. During the sixteen months between January 1905 and April 1906, more than 100 pianists recorded some 1100 titles there, a remarkable achievement.

Among those pianists who made the first Welte-Mignon rolls, there

are at least nine Russian-born artists. Senior among these stands Vladimir de Pachmann (born 1848), the celebrated Chopin player who, in later life, became as famous for his eccentricities as for his playing. Then there was Annette Essipoff, a Leschetizky pupil (and one of his several wives!). She was a piano professor at the St Petersburg Conservatoire, but alongside her teaching duties, between 1870 and 1885, she found time to give no fewer than 700 recitals! George Bernard Shaw, who at that time was earning a living writing musical criticisms, described one of her performances as displaying nothing "so weak as tenderness"! Her recording of the Chopin Barcarolle hardly supports this opinion. One of her pupils was the young firebrand, Serge Prokofiev, of whom she apparently disapproved.

Another important pianist to record at that time was Arthur Friedheim, one of Liszt's most celebrated pupils and, for a time, his secretary. Friedheim made rolls of four of his master's works. An outstanding pianist in the true Russian tradition was Vassily Sapellnikoff, who played Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto under the composer's baton, and who later recorded the work for the gramophone. His rolls of Liszt's *Rhapsodie Espagnole* and the *William Tell* Overture (in Liszt's arrangement) display an outstanding artist by any standard. A young Ossip Gabrilowitsch made his first recordings at that time. Like so many Russians, he later settled in America, and in 1918 became the conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, a post he held until his death in 1936. His reputation of 'Poet of the Piano' is well founded. Anatol von Roessel, for his sins, must surely be the one to have made the first recording of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C sharp minor on 20 January 1905.

Not content with capturing on roll that talent which visited Leipzig and Freiburg, Edwin Welte and his brother in law, Karl Bockisch, took their recording piano to Russia in 1910, setting up studios in St Petersburg and Moscow. During the months they were there, no fewer than 34 pianists were recorded, the majority of them not even being names today, although no doubt they were established artists at that time. If a musician is not a composer or teacher, and even more particularly, has not made recordings, his name is very soon forgotten. Among those whose Welte roll recordings are the only documents of their playing, the name which stands out is surely that of Alexander Scriabin. The few short pieces he chose confirm a superb artist. Konstantin Igumnoff and Alexander Goldenweiser, both remembered as teachers of later generations of Russian pianists, also made rolls. Glazounov recorded a number of his own compositions, including his Sonata op. 74. Among those completely forgotten artists, it is worth noting that Gavriil Romanowsky recorded the complete Mussorgsky *Pictures at an Exhibition*, and Ida Michelsohn, Balakirev's *Islamey*, remarkable productions.

By the time the Duo-Art piano had established itself in America, towards the end of the First World War, many fine pianists had fled Russia, finding life impossible after the 1917 revolution. We therefore find the names of quite a

few Russian-born artists appearing in the catalogue of the American Duo-Art. At a rough count, 20 such pianists made rolls for that system. With only one or two exceptions, these were of a later generation, and many of them also made fine disc recordings. The Aeolian Company, manufacturers of the Duo-Art piano, were much more commercially orientated than Welte, and so, regrettably, many of the titles recorded were of the encore variety, and often of not more than the four minute duration, a restriction of the 78 rpm disc, even though a piano roll could be made to play for up to fifteen minutes. This is not to say that all Duo-Art rolls are froth; by the demise of the reproducing piano at the end of the 1920s, they had recorded nearly all the Beethoven sonatas, and there are many performances which did not appear in any other format.



*Josef Hofmann with a group of his students, including the Russians,  
Master Shura Cherkassky and Josef Lhevinne*

Top of the list of artists comes Alexander Siloti, a cousin, and for a time, teacher of Rachmaninoff. Siloti was born in 1863, and had a major career both as a pianist and conductor in Russia before going to the United States in 1922. His reputation never really established itself in the West, and he lived out the rest of his life teaching and giving the occasional recital. Although he did not die until 1944, he refused to make any commercial disc recordings. We therefore have to rely on a very few Duo-Art rolls to hear this major Liszt pupil. A fascinating entry in the Duo-Art catalogue lists six rolls by 'Master Shura Cherkassky, aged 12'. Remarkably, the boy's playing is quite recognisably that of the same mature, adult artist we could hear playing until the 1980s. Vladimir Horowitz, Nikolai Medtner and Serge Prokofiev all started

their recording careers by cutting rolls, several years before their first discs. Even Stravinsky was enticed into the Duo-Art studio, although he made a much bigger roll contribution with Pleyel in Paris.

The story of Russian pianists who made roll recordings for the Welte-Mignon and the Duo-Art is full of interest. It is a 25 year period of history almost forgotten by present day musicians, and an important library, as well as a source of hours of wonderful listening.

**Note**

<sup>1</sup> These extremely rare records have been transferred very successfully by Martson onto CD - *Legendary Piano Recordings*, Marston 52052-2

## Alexander Scriabin (1872 - 1915) and his Piano Rolls

**Denis Hall**

2015 is the centenary of the death of the Russian composer and pianist, Alexander Scriabin, one of the handful of famous virtuosi who lived well into the era of gramophone recording, but who chose rather to entrust the art of his playing to the piano roll. But, before considering his legacy, it will not be out of place to rehearse if only briefly the background to the use of the paper roll as a carrier of both musical notation as well as actual recorded performance. In writing this article, I am greatly indebted to Mark Reinhart<sup>1</sup> and Rex Lawson<sup>2</sup> for their respective contributions to the artistic and technical research of the life and playing of Scriabin.

### **Historical Background**

Long before the appearance of the music roll, the concept of using cards with holes punched in them as a 'program' was invented in the nineteenth century by Joseph Marie Jacquard (1752 - 1834). His invention, the Jacquard Loom, was used to enable complicated patterns to be woven by machines into fabrics. The application, of using cards rather than rolls of paper, continued alongside music rolls, appearing in 'books' of music used in Dutch street and dance hall organs, and, much later, by Herman Hollerith, whose punched cards continued to be used in industry right up to the 1960s, until the appearance of modern computers. But this is something of a diversion.

It was not such a big step to transfer the punched hole principle to other applications - for example, to play a musical instrument. Music rolls as we know them were first introduced by American inventors in the late 1870s, who used the paper roll to operate small hand-cranked reed organs. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the burgeoning of these instruments, which played metrically arranged tunes, rather than recorded performances. From the small organs which sat on a table came much larger, floor standing instruments, and ultimately devices to play the piano. By far the most successful of these was the Aeolian Company's 'Pianola', a cabinet which was wheeled up to the keyboard of a standard piano, and initially played 58 of the 88 notes of the standard keyboard. This was soon extended to 65 notes, and then to the full compass. The separate cabinet format was all very well, but it precluded playing the piano by hand without major furniture moving, and by the early years of the twentieth century, the player action was being built into the case of an upright or grand piano, to produce the player piano we know today.

Running parallel to the activity in America, the German instrument makers, Michael Welte und Soehne, developed rolls in the 1880s to operate their orchestrions, which until that time had used pinned barrels, bulky

and heavy, expensive to produce, and, of course, extremely restricted as to repertoire. The introduction of the paper music roll immediately opened the door to the potential of a large library of music in a convenient form, and at a lower cost to the owner of the orchestrion.

Also during the second half of the nineteenth century, there were numerous attempts to record the playing of a live performer at a piano, as witnessed by the numerous patents granted at that time.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting that not all of them included the facility to play back the recording, something we take for granted today.

The first complete and successful recording and play-back reproducing piano was Michael Welte und Soehne's 'Welte-Mignon', which was introduced at the Leipzig trade fair in 1904. At that time, the only specially recorded rolls for the instrument were played by a Belgian music teacher, Eugénie Adam-Benard, which makes one wonder in 2015 whether Welte's goal was to produce a self-playing piano which would render pleasing human sounding music, rather than the interpretations of the great virtuosi of the day.

In considering the development of the Welte-Mignon, it should be borne in mind that the ability to record the key timings and pitches had been known for quite a number of years, and indeed, it seems likely that Welte themselves had been using that facility to lessen the cost of manufacturing their orchestrion rolls. A basic version of a piece of music could be quickly produced, much more easily than painstakingly marking out a blank music roll from a score. In order to manufacture a fully automatic self-playing music 'carrier' (in modern parlance) all that had to be added was the ability to reproduce the dynamics, i.e., the loud and soft playing, of the performer.

The Welte-Mignon reproducing piano was the brainchild of Edwin Welte, grandson of Michael Welte, founder of the firm, and his brother-in-law, Karl Bockisch. It must have taken a certain length of time to develop, and we know, from a letter<sup>4</sup> written by Carl Welte, one of the American branch of the family, and a cousin of Edwin, in 1950, that Edwin was working on the Mignon when he visited Freiburg in 1901. By 1904, then, a functioning piano was shown to the public, not by Michael Welte und Soehne, who, presumably were not exhibiting at the Leipzig Fair, but on the stand of the firm, Popper & Co. GmbH. By a remarkable stroke of fortune, the proprietor, Hugo Popper, was a well-known figure in Leipzig musical circles, and we probably have him to thank for enticing the famous virtuosi pianists visiting Leipzig to try their hand at making recordings for the Mignon. As a result, the first important series of some 1109 reproducing rolls was made between January 1905 and April 1906.

The main business of Popper & Co. was in orchestrions, exactly the same market as Welte. Whether there was a falling out between the two companies, or, perhaps, because Popper was working on his own reproducing piano, the



Stella, we do not know, but for whatever reasons, Welte's recording piano was taken back to Freiberg in the spring of 1906, and most of the subsequent recordings were made there at the Welte factory. Later, there were three significant forays from Freiburg - to England in 1909, France in 1912/13, and, what is important to us here, to Russia in 1910.

Ludwig Hupfeld A.G. of Leipzig was also an important manufacturer of orchestrions, and therefore one of Welte's competitors, but significantly also of mechanical pianos. Their Phonola, a cabinet instrument, could play 72 notes of the piano's 88, and, in the earliest years of the twentieth century, its rolls were mechanically arranged, rather than recorded performances. Hupfeld also had a stand at the Leipzig trade fair, and it seems too much of a coincidence that they showed their first automatic piano, the Phonoliszt, the same occasion on which the Welte-Mignon appeared. Word must surely have got round in the trade of Welte's invention, and the thought of a competitor stealing a march on them would have been too much to bear! But the Phonoliszt was very much a poor second best. It had three dynamic levels, and its rolls were mechanically arranged, rather than recorded performances.

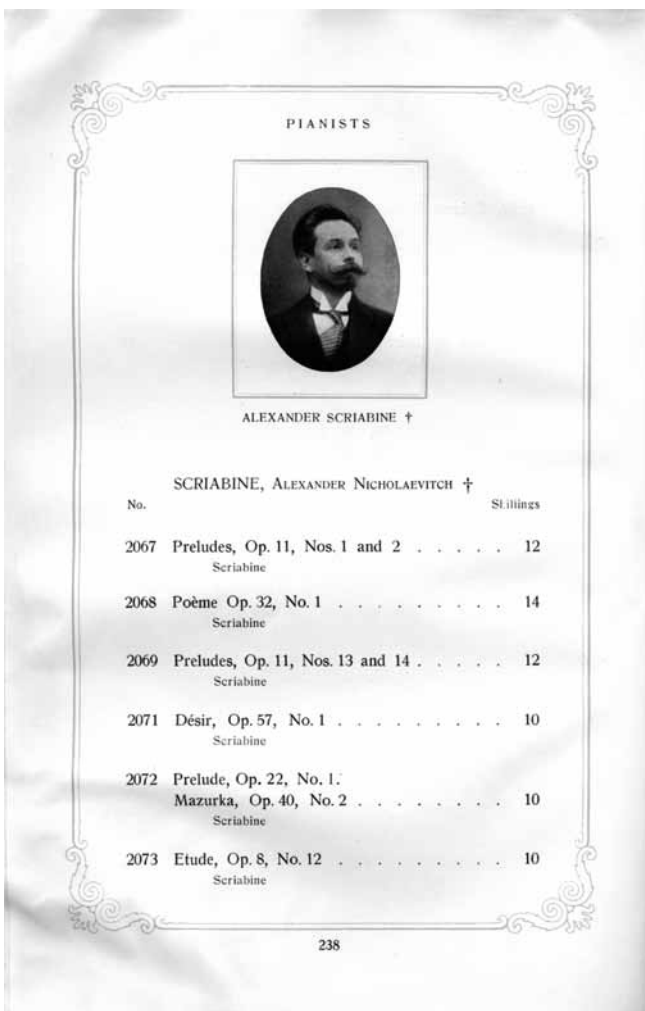
In the light of the remarkable success of the Mignon, Hupfeld had to produce a complete recording and playback reproducing piano to save face. The result was its Dea piano, introduced in 1907. The Welte-Mignon played rolls  $12 \frac{7}{8}$  inches wide, larger than what was becoming the industry standard of  $11 \frac{1}{4}$  inches. Hupfeld decided on an even wider roll for the Dea - 16 inches - but this gave the superior note scale of a full seven octave, A to A, as against Welte's 80 note, bottom C to top G. The cumbersome very wide rolls for the Dea, and the fact that it was number two on the market must, to some degree, account for the rarity of Dea pianos today.

Hupfeld, for whatever reason, throughout its existence, favoured foot-operated player pianos, but using recorded 'hand-played' rolls rather than those metrically cut and issued by Aeolian and the majority of other major roll companies. It was not long before Hupfeld fell in line with the general piano roll market, and issued its 'Animatic' rolls in the standard  $11 \frac{1}{4}$  88-note format. It is this type of Hupfeld roll one usually finds today - certainly in the U.K. In the early 1920s, Hupfeld finally introduced a reproducing piano which played standard scale  $11 \frac{1}{4}$  inch rolls, the Triphonola. Rolls for that system seem to derive from three sources. (1) 'Hand-played' rolls to which has been added rudimentary expression coding. (2) Rolls converted from Dea originals. (3) New recordings for the Triphonola. Rolls in category (3) are therefore new recordings made in the 1920s.

A description of how Hupfeld recorded their rolls in 1908 has come down to us in a description of the recording process of Edvard Grieg's session on 11 April 1906.<sup>5</sup> The author was Ludwig Riemann, an educationalist, but not a player piano technician. Nevertheless, in analysing the Grieg rolls, and also

having had access himself to Hupfeld's recording piano (something that no-one has been able to do for Welte), he was able to describe the means to differentiate between *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f* and *ff*. This would have been adequate to produce rolls for the Phonoliszt expression piano, but hardly for the Dea. But accurately recording note placings plus limited dynamic levels would have enable Hupfeld to construct both Phonoliszt as well as Dea rolls. Whatever limitations one might want to impose on these rolls, it should be borne in mind that both the note positions as well as rudimentary dynamic coding were captured in 1908, and not, hopefully, added at the whim of a roll editor at a later date.

This brief run-down sets the scene for the only recordings we have of the playing of Alexander Scriabin.



*1927 Welte-Mignon catalogue, listing Scriabin's rolls*

### **Scriabin's Piano Rolls**

Scriabin's first roll recording sessions were for Hupfeld in January 1908. By that time, full scale 88-note rolls were being issued, and the Dea reproducing piano had been introduced. These Hupfeld rolls are by far the most important in that they include two large scale works - the Sonatas nos. 2 (op. 19) and 3 (op. 23), as well as a group of smaller pieces. Among these are two rolls which duplicate titles he also made for Welte, giving us the opportunity to verify - or otherwise - the accuracy of the different roll systems.

Scriabin, it would seem, was not only a fine composer. He was also an astute business man, and asked Hupfeld for 2,000 francs to record six pieces. This considerably exceeded the fees which Hupfeld was accustomed to pay, even for its most prestigious artists. After negotiation, a sum of 1,500 francs for 10 to 12 pieces was agreed between the parties. The rolls were initially published in the 73-note format, later being transferred to the 88-note scale. In addition, I have been able to trace three examples which were issued as full reproducing Dea rolls, using a 1913/14 catalogue.<sup>6</sup> It is possible that other titles may also have been issued in Dea form.

We are fortunate that a complete set of Scriabin's Hupfeld rolls have survived in their 88-note Animatic version. In spite of the limitations of these 'hand-played' rolls, I think that the personality of Scriabin's playing is clearly evident. This is the most important legacy of the interpretations of this unique pianist/composer.

It was in 1910 that Scriabin made his only other recordings, for the Welte-Mignon, when its recording apparatus was taken to Russia. During that trip, 233 rolls in total were recorded, including some legendary artists such as Konstantin Igumnov, Lev Pouishnov and Alexander Goldenweiser.<sup>7</sup> Sadly, Welte did not capture the young Rachmaninoff - he was touring in America at that time. Scriabin made six quite short rolls (nine pieces), and these are full reproducing rolls, which ought to give us the truest representation of his playing. Regrettably, he did not record any major works for Welte. One wonders if his experience with Hupfeld had made him cautious about attempting anything very ambitious - or was it more a question of his canny business sense which enabled him to get away with just a few trifles? For whatever reason, these rolls do confirm his reputation as being a master in interpreting his own works, and are quite remarkable in the freedom and beauty of his playing.

The only sonic evidence of Scriabin as a pianist, therefore, exists in the fourteen Hupfeld and six Welte-Mignon rolls, a meagre legacy for such a major figure who lived well into the gramophone era. Of particular value are the Hupfeld rolls of the two sonatas. Even if Scriabin had consented to make disc records, it is most unlikely that he would have been allowed to record these two major works.

This article does not consider Scriabin's style of playing. This is another subject altogether which has been analysed in detail by musicians and friends of the composer, as well as by academics in our own time. Two interesting sources currently available are by Anatole Leiken and Mark Reinhart.

Leiken's book, *The Performing Style of Alexander Scriabin* (Ashgate Publishing, 2011) is valuable in that it discusses nineteenth century piano playing, and sets Scriabin's playing within this context. There is a novel, lengthy section in which an attempt has been made to analyse Scriabin's rubato as it appears in the Hupfeld and Welte piano rolls, and illustrate it visually by means of a line above the staff notation score. Some readers may find this more useful than others! The big weakness of this book is the section on piano rolls. Leiken does not have hands-on knowledge of player and reproducing pianos and, unfortunately, quotes unreliable sources, which results in him coming to some incorrect conclusions. But this does not detract from the overall value of the book.

Mark Reinhart, in contrast, writes as an owner of a Welte-Mignon piano, and with many years' experience of the characteristics of reproducing pianos. This gives his contribution 'Scriabin and the Welte-Mignon - A Different Perspective' (Pianola Journal no. 16, 2005) an authority and background familiarity with Scriabin's rolls and of some of his contemporaries, allied to the writings of a selection of those who actually heard the composer play.

### **The Hupfeld Rolls**

The rolls are listed in their 'Animatic' hand-played catalogue. Those also issued as Dea or Triphonola rolls are annotated. It is assumed that all the rolls were also available in 73-note versions.

- 51236 Poeme op. 32, no. 1 (Dea 28193) Also Triphonola
- 51237 Prelude op. 11, no. 10
- 52029 Feuillet d'album op. 45, no. 1
- 52093 Sonata-Fantasia op. 19 - Part 1
- 52094 Sonata-Fantasia op. 19 - Part 2
- 54026 Mazurka op. 25, no. 3 (Dea 28194)
- 54029 Etude op. 8, no. 8 (Dea 28162)
- 54032 Mazurka op. 25, no. 1
- 54033 Mazurka op. 40, no. 2 (Probably issued as a Dea roll) Also Triphonola
- 54035 Poeme op. 32, no. 2 (Probably issued as a Dea) Also Triphonola
- 54037 Sonata op. 23 - Part 1
- 54038 Sonata op. 23 - Part 2
- 55630 Preludes op. 11, no. 13 & no. 14
- 55631 Preludes op. 17, no. 3 & no. 4

### The Welte-Mignon Rolls

- 2067 Preludes op. 11, no. 1 & no. 2
- 2068 Poeme op. 32, no. 1
- 2069 Preludes op. 11, no. 13 & no. 14
- 2071 Desir op. 57, no. 1
- 2072 Prelude op. 22, no. 1 & Mazurka op. 40, no. 2
- 2073 Etude op. 8, no. 12

### Notes

1. 'The Welte-Mignon Recording Process in Germany', Mark Reinhart, in *The Pianola Journal*, no. 16, 2005.
2. 'On The Right Track - Dynamic Recording For The Reproducing Piano', parts 1 and 2, Rex Lawson, in *The Pianola Journal*, nos. 20 and 21, 2009/10.
3. 'Dynamic Recording Patents', Mark Reinhart, in *The Pianola Journal*, no. 16 2005.
4. Letter from Carl Welte to Richard Simonton dated 29 April 1950, in *Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments*, Q. David Bowers, Vestal Press 1972.
5. *Das Wesen des Klavierklanges und seine Beziehungen zum Anschlag*, Leipzig, 1911.
6. Hupfeld Dea music roll catalogue c. 1909.
7. *The Welte-Mignon, Its Music and Musicians*, Charles Davis Smith and Richard James Howe, AMICA, 1994.

## Peggy Smith (1920 - 2015) - A Fond Reminiscence

**Rex Lawson**

It must have been about thirty years ago that I first encountered Peggy Smith, Miss Smith to her many friends and colleagues. Peggy lived round the corner from me in South-East London, at a time when I briefly rented the shop below my maisonnette, in order to sell player pianos and music rolls. She had not long retired from her position as a Senior Hospital Administrator, and, with a fine upright Blüthner Carola in her parlour, she was a natural and almost instantaneous addition to my embryonic customer base. And that meant warm friendship as well, with a committed and lively Christian, whose good sense and affection was imparted to believer and atheist alike. Many of us knew and loved Peggy, but the history of her long life may not be so well known, so it seems sensible to paraphrase some of the obituary that was read out at her funeral last December.

Ivy Lilian Smith was a Londoner through and through, brought up just off the Old Kent Road, and named after her two maternal aunts. However, her mother didn't much care for either name and so Ivy Lilian became Peggy almost as soon as she was born. Peggy's father died when she was very young, and in the days before the founding of the Welfare State, her mother had to cope on her own, setting the scene for a hugely strong bond between mother and daughter.

In our present age, Peggy would undoubtedly have gone to university, but as the Second World War approached, she went out to work at the age of sixteen, joining the future National Health Service as an administrative clerk. Later on she took the Civil Service Examination and for a while joined the General Post Office, at that time a Government department. But that was not where her heart really lay and so she returned to health service administration, initially at New Cross Hospital, then for some years at Elton and Mottingham Cottage Hospital, and finally at the Memorial Hospital on Shooter's Hill, as a Senior Hospital Administrator.

During the Second World War, Peggy volunteered with the Red Cross and also served as an Air Raid Warden, with responsibilities that included dealing with incendiary bombs. During the War she also began an association with St Mary's in Peckham, remaining a member of that Church for around seventy-five years, a member of the Parish Council for over forty, and the Secretary of the PCC from 1949 to 1977.

However, the Friends of the Pianola Institute will mainly remember Peggy as an enthusiastic friend and supporter, and for the last nine years of her life, our efficient, courteous, warm-hearted Membership Secretary, ably assisted by her dear friend, Dorreen Walker. Peggy's love of formality in letter-writing belied an engaging sense of humour and a lively



*Peggy Smith and Friends, at the AGM and House Concert of the Friends of the Pianola Institute, Hither Green, 2005*  
(Robert Wilson)

imagination, together with an ability to get things done, however difficult the circumstances.

The photograph above comes from a house concert for the Friends of the Pianola Institute, held during the summer of 2005 in our music studio at Hither Green, and it gives a characteristic flavour of such occasions. Peggy is sitting at the extreme right, a wine glass in her hand, already in her mid-eighties, and clearly enjoying the conviviality and informal nature of the occasion. In our essentially academic journal, we do not often publish such photographs, so it is worth remarking that a number of friends who have contributed to the well-being of the pianola over the years are also to be seen, including one or two who are no longer with us. Looking from left to right, the audience includes the late Dan Wilson, our former Secretary, Paul Banks, of the Royal College of Music, the late Malcolm Smith, of Boosey and Hawkes, Paul Usher, composer of *Nancararrow Concerto*, Mike Davies, our former Chairman, and the late Yvonne Hinde-Smith, daughter of Reginald Reynolds, the London Duo-Art roll producer. Other friends and spouses complete the picture, and it would perhaps be churlish not to mention Rona Eastwood, in the foreground, whose culinary skills created the good-natured atmosphere that clearly complemented the music-making.

A recent webpage on Google Maps delineates the original Greenwich

Meridian, as it passes across the world from north to south, and it has become clear that our music studio at Hither Green is exactly bisected by this notional line. Peggy, therefore, and most of the visible audience, are sitting in the eastern hemisphere, looking towards the west. Perhaps Dan Wilson just has a foot in each half of the world, a conceit that would have pleased Peggy, who lived in the western hemisphere but now lies, with her mother, in the east.

In 1995, when Denis Hall and I organised the first overseas convention or AMICA, the Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association, an elderly and infirm visitor tripped over at Kings College, Cambridge, ending up at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Within a couple of hours Peggy had sourced a wheelchair from the Lewisham Red Cross, ready to await the return of the delegates to their London hotel, so that no-one should be prevented from enjoying the rest of the Convention.

Peggy's musical pride and joy was her Blüthner Carola player piano, with about 200 mostly classical rolls and a sizeable collection of roll catalogues. Only in her nineties did she retire from playing it energetically, after a good twenty-five years of pacemaker-assisted pedalling!

Peggy left her Blüthner to me in her will, perhaps with the idea that it would somehow reach a good, music-loving home. With all my pianos and rolls, I have no space left for more, but at just the right moment, Fate (or perhaps God, as Peggy would say) provided the perfect solution. As a result of Milhaud's *La Bien-Aimée*, mentioned elsewhere in this Journal, two members of the Orchestre National d'Île de France, the principal trombone and one of the violas, were inspired to join the Friends of the Pianola Institute.

### **Membership Renewal**

Laurent Madeuf, the trombonist, lives in a fine 1890s house in the suburbs of Paris, and I am pleased to say that Peggy's Blüthner now takes pride of place in Laurent's dining room. I'm sure Peggy would have been delighted, and just maybe she is looking down on the Blüthner from time to time and smiling. It is very pleasing that the Friends of the Pianola Institute can help towards a renewal of the love of pianola music in such a practical way.

The photograph opposite was taken in suburban Paris in June 2016, during the removal process for Peggy's Blüthner, which has thereby renewed its membership of the player piano world in a way far beyond that of mere subscription. Those heaving are enthusiasts, not removal men, and our musicological friends who read these lines might like to reflect that the player piano will not survive by study alone; it needs practical work as well, both muscular and craftsman-like. You have to get your own hands dirty, or the study of performance practice on roll will not have a secure foundation.

We bid you a fine farewell, Peggy. We miss you, and we remember you with much love.





*Peggy's Blüthner Carola En Route to its New Parisian Abode, June 2016  
(Laurent Madeuf)*

Review:

**Sergei Rachmaninoff LIVE in Concert, Royal Festival Hall, 7 February 2015**  
**Roger Buckley**

Transcribed Pianola Rolls:

Rachmaninoff *The Isle of the Dead*, op. 29

Rachmaninoff Cello Sonata, op. 19, Third and Fourth Movements

Johannes Moser, cello

Rex Lawson, pianola

Rolls recorded by Rachmaninoff:

Rachmaninoff *Polka de W.R.*, TN ii/18

Rachmaninoff Prelude in C sharp minor, op. 3, no. 2

Rachmaninoff Etude-Tableau in B minor, op. 39, no. 4

Rachmaninoff *Lilacs*, op. 21, no. 5

Kreisler *Liebesfreud* (arr Rachmaninoff)

Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No 2, op. 18, Second Movement

Serge Rachmaninoff, piano

Denis Hall, Presenter and Duo-Art Editor

This was a truly extraordinary event. The entire Royal Festival Hall was given up to a celebration of the pianola, the reproducing piano and Sergei Rachmaninoff, and moreover there was no charge for admission. How on earth was this achieved? On the stage were two concert grands and two vorsetzers: an Aeolian 88-note piano player and the Pianola Institute's Duo-Art player.

The Swiss artist Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901) is best known for a picture that has become a defining icon of late romanticism. Entitled - but not by the artist - *Die Toteninsel* (*The Isle of the Dead*), it depicts a tiny rocky island whose steep cliffs enclose a clump of tall cypress trees. Approaching the sea gates is a small boat with a single oarsman. Across the prow of the boat rests a draped coffin. A standing figure in white may represent the widow of the deceased.

The picture captivated Rachmaninoff when he first saw it and before long his orchestral tone poem of the same name was completed. He conducted the first performance in 1909 at a Chicago Symphony Orchestra concert (which also included the composer as pianist in his Second Piano Concerto). It later transpired that what he had seen was a black and white photograph of the painting; he maintained that had he seen the colour original, he probably would not have written the music. Rachmaninoff had, as it were, conceived the piece in black and white, which seems a well-nigh perfect justification for Otto Taubmann (1859-1929) having published, just a year later, his transcription for piano duet.

This transcription of *Die Toteninsel*, notated for player piano, opened the Royal Festival Hall concert and received an unerringly musical interpretation in the hands and feet of Rex Lawson. He treated the opening and closing 5/8 rhythm - just one beat short of a barcarole's 6/8, producing a slightly disturbing, limping effect - with great sensitivity and was able to give the Model 'D' Steinway its head, when necessary, in the central 3/4 section and its 4/4 conclusion in that well-known obsession of Rachmaninoff's, the *Dies Irae* theme. A return to the not-quite barcarole rhythm of 5/8 heralds the piece's quiet resolution with many long-sustained chords which need, and duly received on this occasion, impeccable handling.

Johannes Moser is a German-Canadian cellist in his mid-thirties. He joined Rex for a performance of two movements of Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata, which should rightly be called his Cello and Piano Sonata, so prominent is the piano part. The two played as a distinguished duo, with perfectly engaged rubato, and the machinery interposed between the music roll and the piano could be completely ignored, as the musical performance was in no way compromised. The third movement, resembling a love duet with its soaring melodies, was a highlight of the programme.

In the first half, we heard only music. In the second, we contemplated its mechanical reproduction, via the Pianola Institute's Duo-Art vorsetzer. But didn't Rachmaninoff record for the Ampico, and aren't the two systems fundamentally different? Of course the answer to both questions is yes. What had happened here was that the Ampico recordings had been scanned, transferred to a computerized simulation of the Duo-Art programme, and new rolls cut. The intricacy of the process is quite mind-bending, bearing in mind that the Ampico system depends on fast and slow crescendo valves, intensity pneumatics and lock and cancel valves, while the Duo-Art is simply a Themodist piano with sixteen degrees of vacuum bolted-on either side. Stop an Ampico roll and it is impossible to tell, from a look at the perforations over the tracker bar, anything much about the expression at that point. The opposite is true of the Duo-Art, for whilst it is also a dynamic system, in that the speed of the paper influences the way the expression unfolds, a lot can be interpreted from a glance at the roll stopped at any point. But the challenge had been taken up, much extremely clever work had been done, and the programme note recorded special thanks to Nigel Epsom, Anthony Robinson, Wayne Stahnke, Robert Taylor and Timothy Walker.

What of the result? It is difficult to remain objective when the ear is seduced by the glorious sound of a Model 'D' Steinway in excellent repair and in a good acoustic environment. Yet there were some differences between the performances we heard and the best recordings of the original Ampico rolls. Following in the path of John Farmer's pioneering achievements on the Argo label, two of these are the Decca recording of Norman Evans's Estonia

grand, prepared in part by Denis Hall and recorded at the Kingsway Hall in 1978-9, and the Telarc recordings of Wayne Stahnke's Bösendorfer 290SE reproducing piano, recorded in California in 1996. In the first of these, actual Ampico rolls were played, while the second used electronic representations of those rolls. It was against the memory of these recordings that the afternoon's Duo-Art recreations had to be judged. In every case the pianism was spellbinding; the perfection of Rachmaninoff's articulation and his exquisite phrasing shone through. Yet the clarity of the texture was not always perfect and some countermelodies were slightly obscured. The difference was slight, and could have resulted from, or been enhanced by, any number of factors, including the voicing of the piano itself and the acoustic of the hall. Nevertheless a very slight confusion had been introduced.

One of the most historically valuable rolls played was that of Rachmaninoff's Etude-Tableau in B minor, op. 39, no. 4, an item recorded for the Ampico in 1928 but never recorded acoustically by the composer. It is a wonderful piece in which Rachmaninoff's gourmet appreciation of piano sound is always apparent. How he must have enjoyed that final downward run to the lowest B, note 3 of the standard 88, and its wonderful sonority on a concert grand. Unfortunately that note is not accessible to the Duo-Art, and so must normally be put up an octave, inevitably spoiling the effect that Rachmaninoff intended. Yet thanks to Rex's ingenious modification of the Pianola Institute's Duo-Art vorsetzer, we were treated to the composition as written - including that lowest B. This also allowed us to hear the lowest Cs in the Kreisler *Liebesfreud* transcription.

The Prelude in C sharp minor, op. 3, no. 2, is a pretty grim affair when one is thoroughly familiar with it, but it did give Rex a perfect opportunity to declaim his witty rhyme. We have come to expect the professionalism of Rex and Denis, but it really should be recorded that both were the perfect masters of ceremony throughout. Stage management and announcements were perfectly handled.

Rex's most daunting task, one imagines, was to play the orchestral accompaniment at the pianola to Rachmaninoff's Ampico recording of the slow movement of the Second Piano Concerto. He passed this fearsome test with aplomb.

It was an exhilarating occasion for any enthusiast of piano sound, pianism, and the seemingly boundless potential of the piano roll. Finally, here's an idea: a solenoid-operated vorsetzer, capable of playing any roll (Ampico, Duo-Art, Welte, plus any other system that could be electronically stored), on any piano anywhere. Who will be the first to build one?

*The London Duo-Art Pianists*, Patrick Handscombe and Terry Broadbent, The Player Piano Group, 2014.

**Denis Hall**

We have waited a long time for the publication of this splendid book, but the wait has been very worthwhile. Any criticisms I may have pale into insignificance compared to the value of the unique set of photographs which form the major portion of the book.



The Aeolian Company, makers of the world-famous Pianola pianos, had headquarters in New York and London which, between them, controlled all the company's activities world-wide. In spite of the great financial and artistic success of the Pianola foot-operated pianos, pressure from competing player piano companies which introduced their own reproducing pianos forced Aeolian to develop its own version, the Duo-Art, while circumventing those patents which protected their competitors' products. Aeolian already held a number of valuable patents which applied to their foot-operated models, and these proved surprisingly adaptable and formed the basis of their own reproducing system, launched in 1914.

Right from the earliest days of Duo-Art recording in the States, it was the practice to arrange staged photographs of the pianists sitting at the recording pianos, with the American recording producer, W. Creary Woods, alongside at the controls of a recording console. An early example was of Teresa Carreno, the great Venezuelan pianist, captured in 1914.

By the time the Duo-Art Pianola was established in America, after the Great War was over in 1918, there was an obvious market for it to make its way in Britain and Europe. Although the roster of recording artists was impressive, there were gaps in the list of names - those pianists whose careers were on this side of the Atlantic. Once this was acknowledged, Aeolian set about providing a recording studio in London to make its own roll recordings specifically for this market. For this to happen, there had to be a producer in London, and the choice fell on Reginald Reynolds, Aeolian's professional Pianola demonstrator in this country. He was sent to New York to learn the ropes, and from 1919, Duo-Art recording began at Aeolian Hall in London. Following the pattern established in New York, photographs of the recording pianists were taken, and it is these which form the core of this book.

As was the custom in earlier times, professional photographers used large glass plate negatives in their cameras, which gave magnificent detail to the final print. The negatives for these Duo-Art pictures have long since disappeared, but one or two sets of prints have survived, and it is these which appear here, in splendid quality reproductions. How good it is to see some of one's pianistic heroes (and heroines) - Erich Korngold, whose reputation rests on his composing career rather than as a pianist, the young Leff Pouishnoff, remembered by some of us older folk from his beautiful playing on television broadcasts in the 1950s. And Katharine Goodson, teacher of Clifford Curzon, with wild hair and a stunningly elaborate dress, surely worn specially for the photo opportunity. Notes both biographic and recording (both roll and disc) have been meticulously researched by Terry Broadbent. This must have entailed considerable labour in respect of some of the more obscure artists. There is enough information here to whet the appetite for further research.

The text comes from the pen of Patrick Handscombe, the driving force behind the publication of this book, and we owe him a great vote of thanks for having pursued this project, even when at times it faltered. The first section covers the history of the reproducing piano, and specifically Aeolian's activities in Britain. My only (very small) criticism of this section is in his quoting 1920s prices without comparing them to those of today. In giving us the cost of the various models of Duo-Art/Pianola pianos, for example, he states a figure of 1000 guineas (£1050) for the Steinway Duo-Art; he might have noted that a 6-foot Steinway (without any player mechanism) today would set you back at least £50,000. But perhaps I am being unfair. The descriptions are concise and accurate, which is what is needed here.

Towards the end of the book, Handscombe tackles describing the technicalities of how the Duo-Art mechanism works, how the recordings were made, and the roll editing process. For a person with prior knowledge of the subject, it is easy to follow the text, but I rather doubt if a general music lover

with no knowledge of player pianos would be able to make a lot of sense of it, which is a pity. But I also doubt if I could have done any better!

Also included is a section on Reginald Reynolds' little toy piano. In a book in which Reynolds plays such an important role, it is absolutely right that this should appear. At the time when Reynolds was working at Aeolian Hall, he had the charming idea of asking visitors to play a few notes on that piano, and then asking them to autograph it. Thus it has become a unique record of the signatures of some of the greatest artists of the day who visited the London Duo-Art studio. The piano was inherited by Yvonne Hinde Smith, one of Reynolds' daughters, and she in turn has given it to the Player Piano Group for safe keeping.

This book offers a wonderful account of Aeolian's Duo-Art recording activities in London, and makes them come alive in a way which could not have been achieved without the invaluable set of artists' photographs. There is a bonus in the form of a CD of recordings of twenty-two of the rolls made by the pianists covered by the text of the book. Congratulations to all concerned. I hope that the information contained can spread the knowledge of the reproducing piano beyond the small circle of specialist enthusiasts in the twenty-first century, and help to promote its value to music lovers and students alike.

## Contributors

**Roger Buckley** Roger Buckley's first encounter with a pianola occurred at the age of seven. He did not own one until 1971, and then only a 'half' Duo-Art upright, but this was sufficient to found an interest in the reproducing piano. He joined the Player Piano Group the following year, edited its *Bulletin* for three years, became the Group's Chairman for a term, and in 2010 was appointed Vice-President. In the same year he became a Friend of the Pianola Institute. Roger began to play the piano at the age of five and has played and accompanied as a semi-professional. He might possibly have preferred the life of a professional musician, but instead followed a medical career. A recently retired eye surgeon, he continues to work in eye and vision research as a Professor of Ocular Medicine at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. He is currently engaged in writing a doctoral thesis on the subject of a notebook left by the composer, Frederick Delius.

**Denis Hall** has been interested in recordings of pianists since his school days, when he could buy new 78 rpm records of his keyboard heroes. He first became aware of reproducing pianos in the early 1960s, and bought his first Duo-Art in 1965 (for the princely sum of £20!). These days he spends much of his time in retirement maintaining his own reproducing pianos in a condition which he hopes does justice to the virtuosi of 100 and more years ago who entrusted their art to the piano roll medium.

**Rex Lawson** is a concert pianist who has been involved in research and music making with these instruments since 1974. He has travelled with his pianola to the USA, Canada and many European countries, transporting it by plane, ship, car and even, in 1986, by gondola in Venice. He has made a special study of music written for the pianola, by the hundred or so composers who have been interested in its possibilities during the course of the twentieth century. In 2004, he gave the world premiere of *Nancarrow Concerto* for Pianola by Paul Usher. With his colleague, Denis Hall, he founded the Pianola Institute in 1985, and he is joint editor of the *Pianola Journal*.





## Notes



