



Great Harpsichordists • Landowska

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ADD



Treasury of Harpsichord Music

J. S. BACH

D. SCARLATTI

MOZART

Dances of Ancient Poland

CHOPIN

LANDOWSKA

RAMEAU

F. COUPERIN

Wanda Landowska

1946 and 1951 Recordings

Wanda Landowska (1879-1959)

Treasury of Harpsichord Music Dances of Ancient Poland

Wanda Landowska's father was an amateur musician and lawyer in Warsaw. Her mother spoke six languages and was the first person to translate the works of Mark Twain into Polish. She also founded the first Berlitz Language School in Warsaw. Their daughter Wanda was born in Warsaw in 1879 and began to play the piano at the age of four. Her first teacher was Jan Kleczyński and she continued her tuition at the Warsaw Conservatory with Aleksander Michałowski. At seventeen Landowska went to Berlin to complete her studies in piano with Moritz Moszkowski and took lessons in composition from Heinrich Urban.

In 1900 Landowska moved to Paris, where she married Henri Lew. It was Lew, whom she had met in Berlin, who encouraged her to explore music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Landowska was introduced to Vincent d'Indy, Charles Bordes and Alexandre Guilmant, who founded the Schola Cantorum in order to promote ancient music, as well as Albert Schweitzer. Between 1905 and 1909 she wrote a number of scholarly articles which were published in book form as *Musique Ancienne* in 1909. From 1903 she began to appear in public as a harpsichordist, and it is with this instrument that her name is usually connected, although she did continue to play the piano in public.

In 1907 Landowska visited Russia with her harpsichord, and on the second visit two years later played for Leo Tolstoy. She toured throughout Europe as a harpsichordist and just before the First World War taught at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. Landowska and her husband remained in Berlin, but as civil prisoners on parole, because they were French citizens. After the War, Landowska taught harpsichord at the Conservatory in Basel for a short period and then returned to Paris, teaching at the Sorbonne and Ecole

Normale de Musique.

Landowska's husband had been killed in a road accident in 1919. She founded the Ecole de Musique Ancienne near Paris at Saint-Leu-la-Fôret where she had settled in 1925. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s she continued to tour and perform on both the harpsichord and piano, often playing works specially written for her and her harpsichord such as the *Concert Champêtre* by Poulenc and the *Concerto for Harpsichord* by Manuel de Falla.

At the Nazi invasion of Paris, Landowska and her pupil and companion Denise Restout escaped, first to a town on the Spanish boarder, then to New York. In 1947 Landowska settled in Lakeville Connecticut with Restout, whom she had met in 1933, and remained there for the rest of her life. She continued to perform into the 1950s and became renowned as the most eminent harpsichordist of the first half of the twentieth century, and the individual responsible for resurrecting the instrument and a scholarly approach to the performance of music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Not long after her arrival in New York and just after the end of the Second World War, Landowska recorded a group of short pieces for Victor between January and November 1946 at the Lotos Club in New York City. Issued as a *Treasury of Harpsichord Music*, it is an enjoyable collection of works by many of the greatest keyboard writers including, Bach, Scarlatti, Rameau, Couperin, Handel and Mozart, the last of whose works would have been played on harpsichords still extant in many people's homes at the end of the eighteenth century.

In old age Landowska was recorded at her home in Connecticut. Between 1950 and 1954 she recorded Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier* and made her last

recordings at the age of eighty in the spring of 1959. In May 1951, whilst in her early seventies, she recorded a selection of short pieces of Polish music. When originally issued, the LP was titled *Landowska plays for Paderewski*, because, as she wrote herself, 'The pieces included in this recording are those Paderewski loved most. I often played them for him and – at his request – repeated them.'

All the music is by Polish composers with the exception of Cato who was Venetian (though he lived in Poland from an early age) and François Couperin and Rameau who were, of course, French, although both works have Polish connections. Jacob le Polonais was a Polish lutenist and composer born around 1550. He went to France in 1574 working as a musician for Henri III and it is now known that he is one and the same person as Jakub Reys. Diomedes Cato was an Italian lutenist and composer employed at the court of King Sigismund III of Poland from 1588 to 1602 whilst Michael Cleophas Ogiński, nephew of the musician and poet Prince Michał Kazimierz Ogiński, was born near Warsaw in 1765 and died in Florence in 1833. He wrote some twenty Polonaises for the piano which were published in Warsaw in 1803. Much of this music has been adapted or arranged by Landowska while some of the other pieces are her own arrangements of folk-tunes such as *The Hop*, which is a reference to the plant where

in Poland it is a symbol of marriage.

The Polish dance form is typified by Chopin's *Mazurkas*. Landowska wrote that 'it is important to be aware of the character of the *mazur* to avoid turning it into an elegant salon piece, accented like a Viennese waltz'. Chopin's music played on the harpsichord may be thought of as incongruous, yet Landowska in her inimitable way wrote, 'Yes, on the harpsichord! Do not be angry with me, my pianist friends! And now, let me tell you why I do this: The harpsichord, reservoir of sharp colours, flute, strings, nasal oboes, bagpipes, contrabass, is the ideal instrument to render folk-music. You will hear it in *The Hop*, the most authentic, the most striking mazurka that ever existed.'

Nearly sixty years after these recordings were made Landowska's style and choice of harpsichord may upset some listeners who vie for 'historical accuracy' in performance style and instrument. Not only did Landowska believe her music-making to be historically accurate, she played this music with such a conviction as to silence any future detractors. She was such a great artist that when she played these works she could communicate her love, joy and wonderment in these compositions: she loved this music and wanted her audience to share in the enjoyment of her revelations with her.

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TREASURY OF HARPSICHORD MUSIC

- 1 J. S. BACH: Fantasia in C minor, BWV 919** **1:31**
 Recorded 2nd May, 1946 in the Lotos Club, New York City
 Matrix: D6-RC-5291-2 [part]
 First issued on RCA Victor 11-9997 in album M-1181
- 2 D. SCARLATTI: Sonata in D major, L. 418** **5:35**
 Recorded 3rd May, 1946 in the Lotos Club, New York City
 Matrix: D6-RC-5819-1A [part]
 First issued on RCA Victor 11-9997 in album M-1181
- 3 D. SCARLATTI: Sonata in D minor, L. 423** **2:09**
 Recorded 3rd May, 1946 in the Lotos Club, New York City
 Matrix: D6-RC-5819-1A [part]
 First issued on RCA Victor 11-9997 in album M-1181
- 4 CHAMBONNIÈRES: Sarabande in D minor** **1:54**
 Recorded 2nd July, 1946 in the Lotos Club, New York City
 Matrix: D6-RC-5030-5A [part]
 First issued on RCA Victor 11-9998 in album M-1181
- 5 RAMEAU: La Dauphine** **3:24**
 Recorded 2nd July, 1946 in the Lotos Club, New York City
 Matrix: D6-RC-5030-5A [part]
 First issued on RCA Victor 11-9998 in album M-1181
- 6 F. COUPERIN: Les barricades mystérieuses** **2:28**
 Recorded 21st January, 1946 in the Lotos Club, New York City
 Matrix: D6-RC-5031-2 [part]
 First issued on RCA Victor 11-9998 in album M-1181
- 7 F. COUPERIN: L'arlequine** **1:43**
 Recorded 21st January, 1946 in the Lotos Club, New York City
 Matrix: D6-RC-5031-2 [part]
 First issued on RCA Victor 11-9998 in album M-1181
- 8 CROFT (attrib. PURCELL): Ground in C minor** **2:39**
 Recorded 21st January, 1946 in the Lotos Club, New York City
 Matrix: D6-RC-5032-1A [part]
 First issued on RCA Victor 11-9999 in album M-1181
- 9 ANONYMOUS: The Nightingale** **2:01**
 Recorded 21st January, 1946 in the Lotos Club, New York City
 Matrix: D6-RC-5032-1A [part]
 First issued on RCA Victor 11-9999 in album M-1181
- 10 HANDEL: Air and Doubles from Suite No. 5 in E major 'The Harmonious Blacksmith'** **4:22**
 Recorded 3rd July, 1946 in the Lotos Club, New York City
 Matrix: D6-RC-5836-2A
 First issued on RCA Victor 11-9999 in album M-1181

- 11 MOZART: Rondo in D major, K. 485 6:07**
Recorded 20th November, 1946 in the Lotos Club,
New York City
Matrix: D6-RC-5096-5A
First issued on RCA Victor 12-0000
in album M-1181
- 12 MOZART:
Rondo alla Turca from Sonata in A major, 2:20
K. 331 'Turkish March'**
Recorded 22nd January, 1946 in the Lotos Club,
New York City
Matrix: D6-RC-5033-2 [part]
First issued on RCA Victor 12-0000
in album M-1181
- 13 MOZART: Minuet in D major, K. 355 2:04**
Recorded 22nd January, 1946 in the Lotos Club,
New York City
Matrix: D6-RC-5033-2 [part]
First issued on RCA Victor 12-0000
in album M-1181
- VIVALDI (trans. J. S. BACH):
Concerto No. 1 in D major 8:52**
- 14 Allegro 2:24**
- 15 Larghetto 3:40**
- 16 Allegrissimo 2:48**
Recorded 2nd July, 1946 in the Lotos Club,
New York City
Matrix: D6-RC-5817-3A and 5818-3
First issued on RCA Victor 12-0001
in album M-1181
- DANCES OF ANCIENT POLAND**
- 17 OGIŃSKI (trans. LANDOWSKA):
Polonaise in A minor 5:21**
Recorded 12th-13th May, 1951 in Lakeville,
Connecticut
Matrix: E1-RC-3464
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1186 (LP)
- 18 POLONAIS (trans. LANDOWSKA):
Gagliarda 2:35**
Recorded 12th-13th May, 1951 in Lakeville,
Connecticut
Matrix: E1-RC-3460 [part]
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1186 (LP)
- 19 LANDOWSKA: Bourrée d'Auvergne 2:56**
Recorded 12th-13th May, 1951 in Lakeville,
Connecticut
Matrix: E1-RC-3460 [part]
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1186 (LP)
- 20 CATO (trans. LANDOWSKA):
Chorea Polonica 2:16**
Recorded 25th May, 1951 in Lakeville,
Connecticut
Matrix: E1-RC-3463 [part]
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1186 (LP)
- 21 OGIŃSKI (trans. LANDOWSKA):
Polonaise in G major 2:22**
Recorded 12th-13th May, 1951 in Lakeville,
Connecticut
Matrix: E1-RC-3463 [part]
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1186 (LP)

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| <p>22 RAMEAU: Air grave pour deux polonais from 'Les Indes Galantes' 3:03
Recorded 12th-13th May, 1951 in Lakeville, Connecticut
Matrix: E1-RC-3462 [part]
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1186 (LP)</p> | <p>27 LANDOWSKA: The Hop (Wedding Folk Song) 3:44
Recorded 25th May, 1951 in Lakeville, Connecticut
Matrix: E1-RC-3461 [part]
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1186 (LP)</p> |
| <p>23 F. COUPERIN: Air dans le goût polonais 1:52
Recorded 12th-13th May, 1951 in Lakeville, Connecticut
Matrix: E1-RC-3462 [part]
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1186 (LP)</p> | <p>28 CHOPIN: Mazurka No. 34 in C major, Op. 56, No. 2 2:10
Recorded 25th May, 1951 in Lakeville, Connecticut
Matrix: E1-RC-3461 [part]
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1186 (LP)</p> |
- Three Polish Dances of the 17th Century (trans. LANDOWSKA)**
- | | |
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| <p>24 No. 1: POLONAIS: Courante 0:54</p> | <p>25 No. 2: ANONYMOUS 1:41</p> |
| <p>26 No. 3: ANONYMOUS 1:36
Recorded 27th May, 1951 in Lakeville, Connecticut
Matrix: E1-RC-3465
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1186 (LP)</p> | |

Producer's Note

Landowska's *Treasury of Harpsichord Music* set was originally recorded directly to 78 rpm wax matrices and simultaneously to lacquer backup master discs. The lacquers were used for the first LP edition (LM-1217) in 1952. Because of their wider frequency range and relatively quieter surfaces, an LP transferred from the lacquers was chosen as the source for the current restoration. Some noise from the lacquers (not the LP) will be noticeable on a few tracks, as well as some end-of-side pitch fluctuation due to imprecise centering of the lacquers during the preparation of the LP master tapes.

The *Dances of Ancient Poland* collection (originally released in 1951 as *Landowska Plays for Paderewski* and reissued under the current title in 1965) was recorded on magnetic tape at Landowska's home in Connecticut. All of the selections from that album appear here, while one track from the *Treasury* collection (Bach's *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E-flat*) has been omitted here due to CD timing limitations. It will appear on a forthcoming release in Naxos's Landowska series.

Playing
Time
77:39

Treasury of Harpsichord Music
Dances of Ancient Poland
Wanda Landowska (1879-1959)

8.111055

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24-26	Trans. LANDOWSKA: Three Polish Dances of the 17th Century 4:11
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Wanda Landowska, who continued to perform and record up to her death in 1959, was renowned as the greatest harpsichordist of the first half of the twentieth century, resurrecting the instrument and taking a scholarly approach to the performance of music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This Naxos collection brings together 78rpm recordings first issued as a *Treasury of Harpsichord Music*, and an LP originally titled *Landowska plays for Paderewski*, about which Landowska herself wrote, 'The pieces included in this recording are those Paderewski loved most. I often played them for him and - at his request - repeated them.'

MADE IN
THE EU



Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn
Special thanks to Maynard F. Bertolet for providing source material.



www.naxos.com

Cover Photograph: Wanda Landowska (The Tully Potter Collection)

