



**Great Pianists • Emil Gilels**

ADD

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**EARLY RECORDINGS • 3**  
**1935-1955**

**SCARLATTI • LISZT • CHOPIN**

**Emil Gilels**



GREAT PIANISTS • EMIL GILELS

<b>Domenico SCARLATTI (1685-1757):</b>		<b>Hungarian Rhapsodies, S. 244:</b>	
1	<b>Sonata in A, K. 533 (L. 395)</b> first issued on 78 rpm; CCCP 029420	3:06	11 <b>No. 6 in D flat major</b> 6:12 first issued on 78 rpm; CCCP 17053-54 Recorded on 11th June 1949
2	<b>Sonata in D minor, K. 141 (L. 422)</b> first issued on 78 rpm; CCCP 029421	4:18	12 <b>No. 9 in E flat major 'Pesther Carneval'</b> 10:24 first issued on 78 rpm; CCCP 19969-72 Recorded on 9th May 1951
3	<b>Sonata in C, K. 159 (L. 104)</b>	1:58	
4	<b>Sonata in B minor, K. 27 (L. 449)</b>	4:18	
5	<b>Sonata in G, K. 125 (L. 487)</b>	2:11	
6	<b>Sonata in E, K. 380 (L. 23)</b>	5:07	<b>Fryderyk CHOPIN (1810-1849):</b>
7	<b>Sonata in A, K. 113 (L. 345)</b> first issued on 33 rpm; Melodiya LP D02829 All recorded on 5th September 1955	3:46	13 <b>Polonaise in A, Op. 40, No. 1</b> 3:04 first issued on 78 rpm; CCCP 13298 Recorded in 1945
	<b>Franz LISZT (1811-1886):</b>		14 <b>Polonaise in A flat, Op. 53</b> 6:36 first issued on 78 rpm; CCCP 5806-07 Recorded in 1937
8	<b>Fantasia on themes from Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro (arr. Busoni)</b> first issued on 78 rpm; CCCP 0774-77 Recorded in 1935	13:15	15 <b>Ballade No. 1 in G minor Op. 23</b> 8:31 first issued on 33 rpm; CCCP D 199 Recorded on 15th October 1946 <i>(Note: this is a different performance from the one from 1949 issued on CCCP 78rpm 016270-71)</i>
	<b>Grandes études de Paganini, S. 141:</b>		<b>Producer: Jonathan Summers</b>
9	<b>No. 3 in G sharp minor, 'La Campanella'</b> first issued on 78 rpm; CCCP 13232-33 Recorded in 1945	4:25	<b>Audio Restoration Engineer: Ward Marston</b>
10	<b>No. 5 in E, 'La Chasse'</b> first issued on 78 rpm; CCCP 10606 Recorded in 1940	2:35	<b>Special thanks to Donald Manildi</b>

Great Pianists: Emil Gilels (1916-1985)

Early Recordings 3 • 1935-1955

One of the greatest Russian pianists of the twentieth century, Emil Gilels was born in Odessa in 1916. Although his parents were not musicians by profession, his father was an amateur musician with an excellent singing voice. All the children played instruments and were often taken to concerts and the opera by their father. At the age of six Emil was taken by his half-sister to begin piano lessons with Yakov Tkach, a pupil of Raoul Pugno. In 1929 Bertha Reingbald, a teacher from the Institute of Music and Drama in Odessa, heard the twelve-year old Gilels's début and was greatly impressed with the young boy. She became his teacher and, although he was too young to enter the National Competition of the Ukraine in Kharkov, Gilels's playing at the time of that competition resulted in a scholarship in 1931 from the Ukrainian government. Reingbald then prepared Gilels for the All-Union Competition for Performing Musicians which he won in 1933 at the age of sixteen and immediately took on many concert engagements for which he was not adequately prepared as he had not had time to develop his repertoire. He returned to Odessa and Reingbald, staying with her until the summer of 1935. It can be said that Tkach provided a purely technical training whilst Reingbald instilled the musical attributes; Gilels said of her, 'At that time, in fact, she was my musical mother.' In 1935 after graduating in Odessa, Gilels moved to Moscow to study with Heinrich Neuhaus at the Moscow Conservatory.

In 1936 Gilels came second to Yakov Flier in the International Piano Competition in Vienna, and two years later won the prestigious Ysaye Competition in Brussels. The outbreak of World War II prevented his American début in 1939, and the first time he played outside the Soviet Union after the War was in Hungary in 1946. He then performed in Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1948, and he first played in the West in 1951 in Italy.

The recordings on this compact disc were made in the USSR and it should be noted that it is difficult to date recordings made from this period with any accuracy as access to recording session logs and

discographical material is limited. Discographers in previous decades have made educated guesses at the year of recording for many of these discs, but very recently a notebook belonging to Gilels has been discovered and this details some of his recording sessions. It should also be noted that Gilels recorded identical repertoire for the state radio and sometimes these recordings were issued on commercial disc.

Gilels played a sonata in A major by Scarlatti at his first public concert in 1929 at the age of twelve. When he took part in the 1938 Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels, a group of these sonatas was on his programme for the first round and by the early 1950s Gilels included two sonatas in his programmes for his first visit to the West, when he played in Italy. By 1953 he added a third (*B minor K. 27, E major K. 380, and C major K. 159*) and this group featured regularly throughout the year. A busy touring schedule in 1955 took Gilels to Europe and the United States, where he made studio recordings in Paris with André Cluytens in June, and in the autumn recorded in Chicago and New York. During the summer he was in Russia where, on 5th September, he recorded a group of seven Scarlatti Sonatas for the State record label – the three that he had been playing in concert and four others. It is a splendid group of contrasting moods chosen from Scarlatti's vast and varied output. Gilels does not try to imitate the harpsichord and we are aware in the lyrical works that quality of tone and expression are of great importance to his interpretation as are contrasts of dynamic. Gilels played five of the sonatas (he often dropped *K. 159*) for the BBC in 1957 and then included them on his tour of the United States the following year.

When it came to Liszt, Gilels was a true virtuoso in the Lisztian tradition. He had the technique to accommodate easily the demands of a work such as the *Figaro Fantasy* or *Rapsodie espagnole* but also the musical integrity to make these works sound like pieces of music and when he played one of the masterpieces such as the *Piano Sonata in B minor*, Gilels had few equals in this respect. Ferruccio Busoni's revision and

completion of Liszt's *Fantasia on themes from Mozart's Marriage of Figaro* was an impressive calling card for the young Gilels and it no doubt helped him gain the first prize at the First Soviet All-Union Competition in 1933 leading to a studio recording a year or so later. Equally impressive are the two Paganini *Etudes* recorded in the 1940s with *La Chasse* being notable for its lightness and grace. Gilels brought an authentic style of grandeur to Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* – a sort of noble rhythmic swagger coupled with an excitement that never becomes frenetic or loses control. Previously thought to have been recorded in 1940, the notebooks now reveal that the *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6* was recorded on 11th June 1949. With his performance of the *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 9*, which Gilels noted he recorded on 9th May 1951, it is the beguiling lyrical sections that are as impressive as the virtuoso passages, giving a reading brimming with character and personality. He brings similar traits to Chopin's national dances, if perhaps a little less extrovert than the Liszt *Rhapsodies* – it is a more chaste approach but still

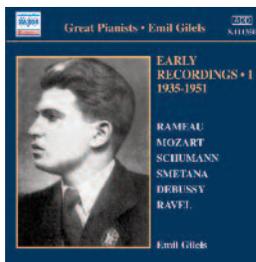
retains a rigorous rhythmic control.

The recording of the *Ballade in G minor, Op. 23*, presents another discographical problem. When preparing this compact disc it was discovered that there are two recordings of the work from this period. The familiar performance that has been re-issued many times on LP and CD first appeared on a two-sided disc in 1949 (USSR 016270-71) and, according to Gilels's notebook, was recorded in September 1948. A CCCP microgroove 78rpm disc of the work was issued in 1952 (covering one side only) and although previously thought to be the same recording, it is, in fact, different. This 1952 release was actually recorded on 15th October 1946 according to the notebook and runs twenty seconds longer. This, and one or two technical slips, further differentiates the two recordings.

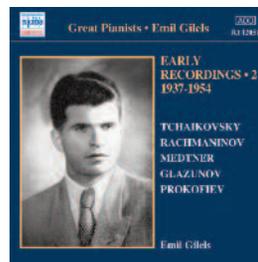
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*Thanks to Judith Raynor for providing important biographical information.*

## Also Available



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## EMIL GILELS (1916-1985) Early Recordings • 3 (1935-1955)

Playing  
Time  
79:46

<b>Domenico SCARLATTI (1685-1757):</b>		
1	Sonata in A, K. 533 (L. 395)	3:06
2	Sonata in D minor, K. 141 (L. 422)	4:18
3	Sonata in C, K. 159 (L. 104)	1:58
4	Sonata in B minor, K. 27 (L. 449)	4:18
5	Sonata in G, K. 125 (L. 487)	2:11
6	Sonata in E, K. 380 (L. 23)	5:07
7	Sonata in A, K. 113 (L. 345)	3:46
<b>Franz LISZT (1811-1886):</b>		
8	<i>Fantasia on themes from Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro</i> (arr. Busoni)	13:15
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9	No. 3 in G sharp minor, 'La Campanella'	4:25
10	No. 5 in E, 'La Chasse'	2:35
<b>Hungarian Rhapsodies, S. 244:</b>		
11	No. 6 in D flat major	6:12
12	No. 9 in E flat major 'Pesther Carneval'	10:24
<b>Fryderyk CHOPIN (1810-1849):</b>		
13	Polonaise in A, Op. 40, No. 1	3:04
14	Polonaise in A flat, Op. 53	6:36
15	Ballade No. 1 in G minor Op. 23	8:31

All tracks recorded in the USSR, 1935-1955

Emil Gilels played a sonata by Scarlatti at his first public concert in 1929 and included them in his tours to the West in the 1950s. These recordings present a splendid group of the composer's widely contrasting moods. Gilels was a true virtuoso in the Lisztian tradition, combining musical integrity with rarely equalled technique. The *Fantasia* was one of the works with which he won the First Soviet All-Union Competition in 1933, while his recordings of the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and three works by Chopin are full of character and personality. A recently discovered notebook in which Gilels logged some of his recording sessions has made the dating of these recordings more accurate in this edition.

A detailed track list can be found in the booklet.

Producer: Jonathan Summers

Audio Restoration Engineer: Ward Marston

Special thanks: Donald Manildi

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