

SYMPOSIUM RECORDS CD 1145

Ferruccio Busoni – Percy Grainger – Egon Petri

Ferruccio Busoni came from a musical background. His father was a querulous, but competent clarinetist; his mother a pianist who often travelled with her husband as his accompanist. In view of his unpleasant disposition Busoni père could not retain any job for long, and, as a result, the family endured frequent financial problems.

Ferruccio was born at Empoli on 1 April, 1866, but his early years were passed in Trieste and Austria. His mother, who was his first teacher, referred to him playing scales and "glisses", and was enchanted with his progress. He appeared in Vienna at the age of nine and was noticed by Hanslick. He was appearing with his parents very early on and gained much experience in this fashion. This does not account, of course for his musical taste, philosophy and flamboyance although he may well have inherited the last from his father. At all events he had studied the piano from the age of four and, very early on, the father had sensed the possibility of a good income from exploiting his son. He therefore took Ferruccio's studies in hand and was both cruel and pedantic. Whenever possible he supervised the son's studies for four hours a day; but he knew little of the piano so made up for this by giving vent to his violent temper instead. The one virtue of this course was the use of the works of J. S. Bach, for which Ferruccio thanked his father as can be seen in the epilogue to Busoni's edition.

By 1875 considerable progress had been made and Ferruccio played the Mozart Concerto in C minor K491 at Trieste, conducted by his father, together with a Bach Prelude and Fugue, a work of Hummel, a Presto in E minor (Scherzo?) of Mendelssohn, a Fugue of Porpora and a Scarlatti Prelude in G major. 1878 saw him performing Bach's Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue at Baden, and 1879 produced the Beethoven "Waldstein" Sonata at Bozen; quite an achievement for a child of thirteen at the most. By now he was composing, and played his five pieces Op.3 at Baden and Vienna in 1878. He must have been working hard at composition since he played a Gavotte Op.25 at Voslau in 1878 which was published in 1889 at the latest.

During the time he was in Vienna he attended the Conservatoire, but was unhappy with the lax teaching of his professor. He was much more enthusiastic about the concerts and operas he attended and was thus self-taught to a very considerable extent at this stage. Despite his father's harsh training régime it seems he had taught him how to work for which the son was always grateful; he also said that, though he was an Italian, his father had trained him as a German musician due to his use of Bach and others. One can see from this how it was that Busoni had some flamboyant Italianate traits in his playing of the German repertoire; he was very conscious of his nationality.

By the age of thirteen Busoni had, through the composer Wilhelm Kienzl, been introduced to Dr. Wilhelm Mayer at Graz. Mayer put Ferruccio through a two-year

course in fifteen months. At the end of this the student had taken down a 430 page treatise on composition. Mayer was what was needed; no dry pedant, he did for Busoni what Gedalge did for Debussy and, as we shall see, Karl Klimesch did for Percy Grainger. For Ferruccio despite the extreme poverty, it was a happy time; he made friends with Mayer's wife, and daughter Melanie, the former becoming a second mother to him.

By now Ferruccio was expected to keep his family, whilst he was struggling to ensure he had an adequate general education; he could already see that he was the only member of the family with a sense of responsibility. It was this, probably, coupled with his father's zeal, that made Busoni the dedicated hard worker he always remained; one values, after all, the things for which one strives. It also probably accounts for Busoni's cynicism; he was already writing letters to his mother concerning Vienna in derisory terms. Later he became notorious for his comments on music, and more particularly musicians and life in general, the following in a letter to Egon Petri in 1912, being a classic example: "The great man Toscanini, spends his winters in the north and his summers in the south - of America. If he did his damned duty and stayed at home, people would put every difficulty in his way; that is unfortunately in the blood of all Italians, owing to their little narrow towns - it is the inheritance of a past that is all too rich in tales of treachery." There is irony here of course; he spent much of his time in Berlin. But this is to anticipate.

At the end of the course in Graz Busoni played the Schumann Concerto and the Beethoven Sonata Op.111 together with a group of his own compositions, now past Op.50; he was fifteen. At this age he also made a successful concert tour of Italy, became a member of the Philharmonic Academy of Bologna, and had a gold medal struck in his honour at Firenze. Now some of his father's demands for money could only be met indirectly by making arrangements for him for the clarinet. These constant pleas must have been very depressing, and dogged Busoni for many years - in 1905 it took him three hours before he could bring himself to go and visit his parents, as he wrote and told his wife afterwards: "There is nothing worse than looking back"; in the circumstances this is understandable. His pianistic success is all the more remarkable since the only remotely specialist training he appears to have received had come from his mother - he had, incidentally, performed the Schumann Andante and Variations with her at Graz in 1878 - this position does not seem to have altered later; he was an original to a very great extent and, since no crises seem to have occurred, he must have thought through the problems of piano playing for himself to a great degree. On the other hand like many pianists, such as Edwin Fischer - a dedicatee, by the way, of one of Busoni's works - who were influenced by his playing, so he, in turn, would have learnt from the performances of others in his formative years. This would have gone far beyond the piano; particularly opera of course. Although this note considers Busoni in relation to his piano playing, it must be remembered his interpretations were both orchestral and dramatic in conception, hence these influences were significant. However, as we shall see, his playing was due to acquire a further and, at the time, unique dimension.

In 1886 Busoni went to Leipzig for more composition study, where he had the benefit of counterpoint lessons with Dr. Max Abraham. He also renewed his friendship with the Petri family, details of whom may be found in the section concerning their son Egon. He was devoted to Egon, then aged five. It was Kathi Petri who suggested that Ferruccio should arrange the Bach Prelude and Fugue in D after they had heard it played on the organ of the Thomaskirche. This was published in 1888, and was followed by others over the course of the next ten years or so. It is significant because it added, as Prof. Dent pointed out, an additional dimension of touch and technique that was entirely the creation of Busoni. So it was that the often vilified organ transcriptions were responsible in no small measure for the vast influence Busoni had, with one or two others such as d' Albert, on twentieth century piano playing; an influence passed down by such mentors as Edwin Fischer to the present; they revere their teachers who had in turn revered Busoni.

In 1889 Busoni was appointed a piano professor at Helsingfors. It was here that he met Gerda Sjøstrand, was engaged to her within a week, and married her in 1890. This provided an invaluable stability that never deserted him; even if she did appreciate his true worth, she must still have been saintly. 1890 proved to be a good year for Busoni since he also won the Rubinstein prize for composition at St. Petersburg and taught at the Conservatory. 1891 brought a move to the United States of America when Busoni went to teach at Boston, giving concerts throughout America in the process. This only lasted to 1894 and produced another Busoni quote: "In America, the average is better than elsewhere, but along with that there is much more average than elsewhere, and as far as I can see, it will soon be all average". One wonders what he would have made of 1993, world-wide. He was not yet thirty. It has to be admitted that the New England Conservatory had some pretty untalented material, and Busoni hated having to work strictly to the clock with lessons of a mere fifteen minutes each.

Returning to Europe, Busoni settled in Berlin, leaving very soon for a tour taking in Leipzig, Liège and St. Petersburg. A performance of Chopin's *Bb* minor Sonata in Berlin early in 1895 had critics fuming; Prof. Dent quoted Busoni in his biography concerning the Trio of the Funeral March as saying, "If you honestly believe that the melody is beautiful, you must sing it with all the fullness of your voice". Dent, rightly, called this "Severe logic" - one might be forgiven for thinking many Italian tenors are of Busoni's opinion. By now Busoni was having great success as a virtuoso, but travelling produced predictable complaints of no time to think, risky train connection, rehearsals in haste (often before food) - all put into witty verse.

Busoni's performances of Beethoven were particularly impressive, and, from all accounts, the Sonatas Opp.106, 110 and 111 must have been outstanding. His playing of Liszt was also in a class of its own, and it would seem that many who normally did not care for Liszt felt differently when listening to him. Busoni had heard and played to Liszt as a child, but it was Martin Wegelius, the director of the Helsingfors Conservatoire, who had converted him to Liszt some while later; Liszt became one of his great enthusiasms. In 1911 he celebrated the centenary of Liszt's

birth with a series of recitals. As time went on, however, Busoni came to hate the role of virtuoso more and more, and, as will be seen with Grainger, preferred composition and teaching.

At this point, Busoni was becoming decidedly difficult, and in the depths of despair. The outbreak of war in 1914 caused him to leave Berlin, and, on coming back from a tour of America, he settled in Zürich where he stayed until 1920, when he returned to Berlin. Here he was given the chair of composition at the Academy of Arts, and the new generation accepted his compositions as well as his piano playing, but frustration, over-work, and a neglect of his health caused the last to decline. Despite all his attempts, he did not quite succeed in completing his opera, *Doktor Faust* before he died in Berlin on 27 July 1924.

The Columbia recordings of Busoni were made during two recital visits to London, one in 1919 and the other in 1922. The limitations of the contemporary recording process caused Busoni to dislike it intensely and he regarded the whole industry as absurd, though this did not stop him proposing to Columbia that he should record all 48 Preludes and Fugues of Bach. Not surprisingly Columbia declined, although they did make two abortive attempts starting some five years after Busoni's death. It was Edwin Fischer who finally did it for HMV starting about a decade later. In view of Fischer's admiration for Busoni, this was slightly ironic; although the Busoni influence can be heard in his performances.

Looking at the discography, the often mentioned and much abridged Faust Waltz (about which Busoni protested to his wife in a letter) has come to light, but far more tantalising are the other Liszt items. Whilst it is good that we have the eight sides transferred here, it is unfortunate that no Beethoven Sonata movement was recorded, and that none of the metals has survived. Even more tantalising is the omission of the accepted Weber item in favour of two versions of the Chopin Black-key Etude both recorded at the same session. It is also unfortunate that there is only one of Busoni's Bach arrangements; however this one shows his keyboard mastery to perfection. The rapid running passages do not cause the marvellously "sung" chorale to sound breathless; there is no snatching as is so often the case, particularly at the speed used here. From the foregoing the Chopin items are rather as one might expect, and, for some reason, he plays the A major Prelude twice. The effect is idiosyncratic in places, but Busoni's attention to form allied to his intellectual approach is much in evidence. The paradox is, the innovator Busoni is apt to sound dated to our ears, due to changes of speed, and pauses, which are again noticeable in the Bach Fugues. But this is of little import, and in the Liszt Rhapsody Busoni is shown in a very convincing Hungarian style, whilst the latter part provides playing of extraordinary virtuosity which never loses its clarity. Overall the voicing (of parts) in the Bach Fugue and the Chopin is memorable; as A. M. Henderson said, "I cannot recall piano-playing which combined greater splendour with a more wonderful clarity. His performances of Bach and Liszt especially were unforgettable."

Due to the kindnesses of Ruth Edge, of the EMI Archive, and Frank Andrews to both of whom I am extremely grateful, it has been possible to compile a Busoni discography of all the waxes he cut for the Columbia Co. as far as is known. No

recordings for The Gramophone Co. or any other concern have come to light, although, of course, he did cut some pianola rolls. I am also indebted to Patrick Saul for his article "Busoniana" which included letters to his wife concerning the recordings; these proved invaluable in tracing the unpublished items.

Percy Grainger was born at Melbourne, Australia on July 8th, 1882. He was taught the piano initially by his mother, proceeding to studies with Louis Pabst, a pupil of Anton Rubinstein, at the age of ten; Pabst laid the solid foundations of the piano technique heard here. He also studied harmony with Pabst from his tenth year, and made his *début* as a recitalist in 1894. It is interesting to note that it was Pabst who taught him Grieg's Norwegian Bridal Procession and Chopin's seventeenth Prelude - works he was to record many years later - in an effort to broaden his musical interest; at this stage his only motivation appeared to be Bach.

After several appearances including a benefit concert at Melbourne Town Hall, Grainger, accompanied by his mother, left for Frankfurt. At the Hoch Conservatorium he studied the piano under James Kwast, but was not really happy with the instruction; neither was he happy with his composition lessons with Ivan Knorr. He praised the help he got in composition from Karl Klimesch who was in fact an amateur. The truth is Grainger was anti-establishment; he hated Beethoven which was bound to create difficulties in Germany of all places. An interesting forewarning might have been that he considered Sir Charles Hallé 'soullessly pedantic'. Grainger was then eight.

It was at this point that he formed his friendships with Balfour Gardiner, Cyril Scott and Roger Quilter, all people after his own heart. They may have been the only real talent at Frankfurt in his opinion - he thought the Germans sissies and untalented, but it must be admitted that, despite Clara Schumann products, it was really Berlin that was the centre of German musical training, with other cities such as Leipzig also making valuable contributions. Even so it is arguable whether Grainger would have been happier at any of these. In any case his outstanding, but in some ways uneven, piano technique was already formed, and it was the influence of his new friends and the benefit of hearing artists such as d'Albert that were of greater import. His apathy concerning Kwast notwithstanding, Grainger had built up quite a sizeable repertoire with him, including concertos, and, as a consequence was able to set about earning a living as a concert pianist when his mother had to give up teaching English as a result of a breakdown. He spent one successful year doing this and, his mother having recovered, in 1901 they moved to England, which was to be the base for the next thirteen years; Grainger was then just around nineteen.

The initial reason for coming to England was an invitation from another Australian student, Lilian Devlin whom Percy had known at Frankfurt, to play solos at her St. James's Hall concert. Grainger's appearance was a real success. Another taking part was Ada Crossley, a famous Australian contralto, and, as a result of their meeting, she and Grainger, with one or two others undertook a tour of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Prior to this, partly it seems with Melba's help, Grainger had become established in London playing at many soirées;

he did not like it but he was on his way.

Before this tour Grainger met Busoni at a London house, and, on hearing some of his arrangements and the Debussy Toccata, Busoni was sufficiently impressed that he offered to teach Grainger free of charge if he would go to Berlin. Grainger accepted, but all did not go smoothly, the point being that they were in many ways incompatible, and again Beethoven proved to be a stumbling block. The one thing they did have in common was a deep love for the music of Bach which Grainger, like Busoni, played in the original form for the purely clavier works, and also arrangements of the organ works. It was Busoni's strict intellectuality that seems to have been the problem; Grainger was much more the instinctive musician and was not able to conceal his dislike of Busoni's original compositions. Busoni liked Grainger's composition, but very soon became contemptuous of his piano playing and could be very cruel; on one occasion he announced to the class to the effect, "We will now hear Mr. Grainger who does not care to practice his octaves". Grainger also disliked Busoni's somewhat grandiose behaviour and the fact that he expected to be treated in an almost Godlike way. Busoni, in his turn, disliked what he regarded as Grainger's sentimentality in performance. However, Grainger's playing of Busoni's Bach arrangements pleased the master, and as long as he gave recitals Grainger frequently included these in his programmes; particularly the Organ Prelude in D and the Chorale Preludes. Much as Grainger admired Busoni's playing, he was quick to point out that his own always pleased the audience, whereas Busoni was admired, but was not by any means as popular. Notwithstanding all this, in one respect Grainger was a true Busoni disciple; he was the only pupil to master completely the use of the Sostenuuto (i.e. middle) pedal and incorporate it in his music.

Grainger's repertoire was wider than those of either Busoni or Petri, including as it did much Bach, Chopin, Schumann, Brahms and Liszt, together with, starting in the east, Balakirev, working west to Albeniz, and on to the USA for such as Guion or Cowell. As might be expected there was virtually no Beethoven, nor Haydn or Mozart for that matter. Having become friendly with Grieg shortly before the latter's death he often played that composer's Concerto, Ballade op. 24 and some of the smaller pieces as long as he performed at all, and, of course his own works. But Grainger's career as a recitalist was virtually over by 1930; he had come to hate performing on the circuit, so turned to composition and teaching, more and more, although not exclusively. He died in White Plains Hospital on 20th February, 1961, aged 78.

Egon Petri was of Dutch descent, the son of Henri and Kathi Petri who were both extremely musical each in their own right. Kathi sang, and as already stated, was instrumental in the broadening of Busoni's piano style. Henri, a violin pupil of Joachim, was Konzertmeister at the Royal Theatre, Hanover at the time of Egon's birth, moving to Leipzig to become leader at the theatre and Gewandhaus in 1883. He knew many of the leading musicians of the day including Clara Schumann, Brahms and as already stated, Busoni. In 1889 he moved to Dresden to the position of first Konzertmeister at the Royal Chapel. Henri had formed a string quartet

which toured Germany, France, Switzerland and the low countries as well as giving winter subscription concerts in Dresden each year. In addition he published solos for his instrument, as well as songs, and edited violin concertos of Bach, Mozart and Spohr.

In view of the foregoing it is hardly strange that it was the violin that Egon learnt first, commencing at the age of five under his parents guidance. The study of piano came two years later, and eventually he learnt the organ and horn as well, together with composition. Although he made good progress with the piano under such teachers as Buchmayer and Teresa Carreño, it was the violin that gained the ascendant in Egon's youth. After graduating from the Dresden Kreuzschule in 1899, he spent two years as a member of the Dresden Royal Orchestra also playing the second violin in his father's quartet. At this point the Busoni influence seems to have won the day and Egon finally decided to make the piano his vocation. As a result he became Busoni's pupil in Berlin, studying philosophy there as well, also taking lessons with Busoni in Weimar and Dresden; from now on the Busoni influence was paramount.

Petri soon showed a dazzling pianism and great intellect; both these qualities are shown in abundance in his recorded performances. Some however felt he was a little cold and one of his fellow Busoni students at Weimar, Vladimir Cernikoff, went so far as to say, "If only he had a little more heart, what a marvellous artist he would be." In fairness, Cernikoff also described his playing of Busoni's Concerto in the thirties as, "Plays it magnificently at the present time." Anyone who has heard Petri's recording of the Schubert-Liszt "Liebesbotschaft" however will know Petri did have heart - the recording is an object lesson to many lieder singers - he did not wear it on his sleeve. This apart Petri did not always have an easy career and at times had earnestly to seek engagements. At some points he seems to have had doubts concerning Busoni's influence and also to have wondered whether he quite understood his own identity. In any event, with his parental background and its associations it was unlikely that he would ever be a pianist for any other than the cognoscenti; certainly recitals in England were in his time attended by audiences heavily biased by the fair sex who were happier with the shorter pieces of Chopin rather than the more profound works of Beethoven and Brahms. Petri's programmes were, frankly, fairly uncompromising for which we should be grateful; he left a legacy of recorded repertoire which few others cared to touch, superbly executed.

Whatever doubts he may have had concerning his association with Busoni the fact remains that he was the most significant Busoni disciple by far. As we have seen Busoni's devotion to Petri went back to the latter's childhood from around the age of five onwards; he wrote the Six Bagatelles for violin for him in 1888. In 1901 he was writing to Henri Petri concerning Egon's education, regretting his having matriculated at a German university which he thought too traditional and 'respectable', and also was critical of the provincialism and musically bourgeois atmosphere of Egon's upbringing. There is an element of paradox here which may in part explain Egon's suggested identity question, although it would seem more likely that he felt weighed down by Busoni's forceful character and presence. By

1905 Busoni was writing to Egon asking whether the Germans were musical at all. This probably meant conservative; their liking for the same Beethoven Symphonies time after time. It must be remembered that Kathi Petri had been horrified to find Busoni lecturing a party of workmen on the doctrines of Karl Marx, and his musical views were equally radical. Busoni was later to say concerning a Bach Invention, that "The trill of a minor second as given here is, in a Bach sense, entirely right and in proper style even though the cross relation with the upper voice may shock some prudish ears". Again it should be remembered that he made programmes that were, from the audience standpoint, completely uncompromising. The interesting thing is a comparison of a representative collection of Busoni's and Petri's recital programmes, which shows them to be near enough interchangeable even to the end of Petri's life. The indications are, however, that Petri was not as radical as his friend and mentor in practice. One wonders quite how smoothly their collaboration in the Breitkopf edition of Bach may have been at times. Petri's arrangement of three Minuets from the Friedemann Bach Notebook is a work of great charm with a somewhat impressionistic coda, somehow there is grace and finesse that one might not expect Busoni to approve, but there it is in Volume XXV of the Bach-Busoni edition. Petri made a superb recording of this in the thirties showing typical Busoni slowings when he is underlining a point. By comparison Busoni had made a Concert Interpretation of Schönberg's Piano Piece Op.11 No.2 in 1909, first having met Schönberg in 1903; it must be said that Busoni was broadminded particularly where composers were breaking new ground. A further insight into Petri's relationship with Busoni, however, is given by the latter's visit to Egon and his wife in Manchester in 1907 during the time Petri was a professor at the Manchester Royal College of Music. Their home was always "an oasis in the desert", but as Dent says, "In spite of their kindness he could never adapt himself to what he called the Cottage-Stimmung - the domesticity of a small suburban house."

Petri made his début in Holland and Germany soon after his studies with Busoni and moved to Manchester in 1905, where he took the aforementioned professorship, which he retained until 1911. He had also played frequently with the Hallé under Richter, but decided eventually that he was becoming too provincial so he left for the continent to put his career on a more European basis. Before this he had made an appearance in 1910 at the Festival of Newcastle where he played the Busoni Concerto with the composer conducting. One just wonders what Busoni's influence was in the decision to return to Europe; in any event it was a wise one, although obviously a great loss to Manchester.

Back on the continent Petri became inextricably involved in Busoni's work, for example in 1909 he arranged a two-piano version of the latter's Concerto (the first of many such arrangements) and in 1910 undertook the preparation of the vocal score of Busoni's opera, *Die Brautwahl*; Petri was truly one of Busoni's closest friends and assistants. Busoni also sought his advice on proposed projects: "Would it, in your opinion, be promising to re-shape the Variations on Bach's Chorale-song into a concert piece for two pianos?" Probably Petri's best known collaboration was the Bach-Busoni edition for Breitkopf, which involved much correspondence between the two, starting in the summer of 1914. On 21 November, 1921 Petri and

Busoni gave the first performance of the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* for two pianos at the Beethovensaal in Berlin and the following year they played together in London. The reason for the latter recital is rather revealing; it seems Busoni was keen to ensure a performing career for Petri and in this respect he was also using his influence with Isador Philipp to get Petri an engagement in Paris. Petri it seems was a little lacking in ambition for a virtuoso career; Busoni was afraid he was becoming too much the scholar so hoped to draw the public's attention to him by having him appear with the benefit of the Busoni name as a front.

In November 1923 Petri paid his first of many visits to the USSR, being the first foreign artist to do so. This was a great success; over a period of forty days he played thirty-one times. At this time he also started to establish himself in Poland, and eventually in 1927 moved to Zakopane where he stayed until 1939 when he moved to the USA. By now he was playing throughout Europe, but his *début* in America had not occurred until 1932; from then on he made coast to coast tours until, in 1946, he suffered a heart attack.

Like Busoni, Petri was an eminent teacher having taught at Basel and the Berlin Hochschule before his move to Zakopane where he set up and gave master classes. He also gave master classes at various other centres until his move to America. Once there he was initially pianist in residence at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, moving on to Mills College, Oakland, California in 1947. His first recordings had been four memorable discs for Electrola in 1929, moving to the English Columbia Co. in the mid-thirties. Once resident in America he recorded for the American Columbia concern, the Beethoven-Liszt "Adelaide" being issued right at the end of the 78 era. Long-playing discs followed, latterly for Westminster including extraordinarily virile performances of the Beethoven "Hammerklavier" and some of the larger Bach-Busoni organ works including the "St. Anne" Prelude and Fugue. Petri was upholding the Busoni tradition right until the end; it is said that he considered himself a better musician than Busoni. This could be true, the innovator is after all rarely the greater artist. Petri had a finesse that the radical Busoni would not in any case have wanted; Busoni far preferred to be making his point, often in the case of the later Beethoven Sonatas it would seem, with the utmost profundity. In this respect the two undoubtedly remained different. Petri died on 27th May, 1962, at Berkeley, California, aged eight-one.

Two of Alkan's few friendships had been with Liszt and Chopin, the latter particularly, right from the early 1830s until Chopin's death in 1849, and eventually in 1842 they became next door neighbours. Alkan had, by the later stages, become a virtual recluse, and Chopin was one of the very few he was willing to see. It is appropriate therefore that Grainger is represented on this disc by the Chopin B minor Sonata composed in 1844. The performance shows great contrast of tempo at times, in a work that has been criticised for not being in strict Sonata form, but as Sidney Harrison said, "Alright, but it is marvellous music". In the same vein Grainger's is a superbly athletic yet sensitive rendering of great verve; a rendering to be enjoyed even if the time beaters do wring their hands in dismay.

In 1857, no less an authority than Hans von Bülow had extolled the virtues of Alkan's Studies in the Major Keys, Op.35 in the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung*. Busoni came to admire Alkan's works and introduced them to his pupils as well as performing them himself; programmes of Busoni pupils Edward Weiss and Michael von Zadora, for example, reveal items by Alkan, but again it was Petri who kept works of Alkan and Busoni in his repertoire throughout his career. Although others played in recital an occasional item of Alkan and some, such as Harold Bauer, Louis Closson and Michael von Zadora cut a few piano rolls, it was Petri who kept Alkan alive until Raymond Lewenthal and Ronald Smith researched the long neglected composer. In 1938 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Alkan's death, in the opinion of Ronald Smith, as a result of the written advocacy of Sorabji (*Around Music* - 1932) and Bernard van Dieren (*Down among the Dead Men*), the BBC honoured the composer with three programmes, including both the Symphony and the Concerto; the latter being made up of numbers 8 to 10 of the *Études Mineurs* Op.39. It says much for Petri that he was the one chosen for these performances and it seems that in 1977, "Petri's recitals [were] still vividly remembered as a landmark in pre-war music broadcasts". All things considered, hardly surprising.

The Symphony of Alkan is four consecutive works from the *Études Mineurs* Op. 39, namely numbers 4 to 7. The opus forms an enormous collection of 277 pages of the greatest difficulty. Petri's playing is of an outstanding order, the writing as Ronald Smith says, is uncompromising; evidence of a piano technique that caused even Liszt to feel uneasy when playing in Alkan's presence. If the idea of a Symphony for piano seems strange, it should be borne in mind that Alkan had been unable to bring about a performance of his orchestral symphony of 1844, so taking into account his "Orchestral" piano style the move is not so surprising. At all events the writing somehow is apt to suggest a piano reduction of an orchestral work, rather than a sonata. The dividing line is in any case fine when one remembers Weingartner's orchestration of the Beethoven "Hammerklavier" Sonata. As Smith has pointed out, the connection between the movements is subtle, but it needs to be said that the work is more of a piece than many more conventional works; paradoxically because of the independence of the movements. It is also a bizarre work in its shocking humour (particularly the second movement - a funeral march) and must have sounded very modern indeed in 1857, a mere eight years after Chopin's death. Petri takes the last movement very fast despite this structure, and phrasing and detail are always crystal clear. We must be glad that someone had the presence of mind to make the recording at an afternoon dress-rehearsal at Mills College in 1952 or 1953, by which time Petri was over seventy.

Alan Vicat

Symposium Records is extremely grateful to Alan Vicat for the above article and acknowledges the help of Paul Lewis with this production.

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Recordings made by Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd., London.

Matrix No.	Catal. No.	Record. Date		
76706-1		18/19 Nov 19	Sonetto del Petrarca in Ab	Liszt.
-2		18/19 Nov 19		
-3		27 Feb 22		
-4		27 Feb 22		
76707-1		18/19 Nov 19	Valse Oubliée	Liszt.
-2		18/19 Nov 19		
76708-1		18/19 Nov 19	Paganini Etude in E	Liszt.
-2		18/19 Nov 19		
76709-1		18/19 Nov 19	Etude in E minor op25 no.5	Chopin.
-2		18/19 Nov 19		
-3		27 Feb 22		
-4	L1445	27 Feb 22		
76710-1		18/19 Nov 19	Perpetuum Mobile	Weber.
-2		18/19 Nov 19	(From Sonata op24)	
-3		18/19 Nov 19		
-4	Accepted	27 Feb 22		
-5	Hold	27 Feb 22		
75058-1		27 Feb 22	[a) Scotch Step (Eccossaises) b) Prelude to Chorale	Beethoven-Busoni. Bach-Busoni.
-1A		27 Feb 22		
75059-1	L1432	27 Feb 22	Etude in Gb op10 no.5	Chopin.
-2		27 Feb 22		
75060-1	∅	27 Feb 22	[a) Prelude in A op28 no.7 b) Etude in Gb op10 no.5	Chopin. Chopin.
-2	L1470	27 Feb 22		

FERRUCCIO BUSONI.

All the following were recorded in London by Arthur Henry Brookes.

Matrix No.	Catal. No.	Record. Date		
76699-1		18/19 Nov 19	Prelude & Fugue in C Bk1 No.1	Bach.
-2		18/19 Nov 19		
-3		27 Feb 22		
-4	L1445	27 Feb 22		
76700-1		18/19 Nov 19	Andantino- Concerto Eb K271	Mozart- Busoni.
-2		18/19 Nov 19	(arr. piano solo)	
76701-1		18/19 Nov 19	Faust Waltz	Gounod-Liszt.
-2		18/19 Nov 19		
76702-1		18/19 Nov 19	[a)Prelude to Chorale (Nun freut euch) b)Eccossaises	Bach-Busoni.
-2		18/19 Nov 19		
-3	L1470	27 Feb 22		
-4		27 Feb 22		Beethoven-Busoni.
76703-1		18/19 Nov 19	Nocturne in F sharp op15 no.2	Chopin.
-2		18/19 Nov 19		
-3	L1432	27 Feb 22		
-4		27 Feb 22		
76704-1		18/19 Nov 19	Hungarian Rhapsody no.13 Pt1	Liszt.
-2		18/19 Nov 19		
-3		27 Feb 22		
-4	L1456	27 Feb 22		
76705-1		18/19 Nov 19	Hungarian Rhapsody no.13 Pt2	Liszt.
-2		18/19 Nov 19		
-3	L1456	27 Feb 22		
-4		27 Feb 22		

Note ∅ This take was initially accepted, but take 2 was eventually used.