



# Moritz MOSZKOWSKI

## COMPLETE MUSIC FOR SOLO PIANO, VOLUME ONE

FANTAISIE (HOMMAGE À SCHUMANN), OP. 5

SKIZZEN, VIER KLEINE STÜCKE, OP. 10

CONSERVATORISTEN-POLKA, OP. ½

TROIS MOMENTS MUSICAUX, OP. 7

FANTAISIE-IMPROMPTU, OP. 6

HUMORESKE, OP. 14

ALBUMBLATT, OP. 2

SCHERZO, OP. 1

CAPRICE, OP. 4

Ian Hobson

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

# MORITZ MOSZKOWSKI: PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE

by Martin Eastick

'After Chopin, Moszkowski best understands how to write for the piano, and his writing embraces the whole gamut of piano technique'.<sup>1</sup> Paderewski's oft-repeated endorsement of his fellow countryman's reputation offers an idea of the high esteem in which Moszkowski was once held – certainly at the pinnacle of his achievement during the closing years of the nineteenth century. The more sober artistic climate of the early 21st seems to have less time for music now regarded as the frivolity of a more innocent age. Moszkowski's piano music had indeed been very popular, but a gradual decline set in after the cultural and social changes brought about by the Great War. Just occasionally, during the past hundred or so years since his death in 1925, the odd Moszkowski bon-bon – perhaps his 'Étincelles' (the sixth of his *Huit Morceaux Caractéristiques*, Op. 36), or the *Caprice espagnole*, Op. 37 – has provided a recital encore by some enterprising pianist.

Moszkowski came from a wealthy Polish-Jewish family which had settled in Breslau (now the Polish city of Wrocław, but then the capital of Silesia in East Prussia) in 1854, the year of his birth. Having displayed a natural talent for music from an early age, and with some basic home tuition, he began his formal musical education in 1865, after his family's relocation to Dresden. A further family move, to Berlin, in 1869, enabled Moszkowski to continue his musical education – first at Julius Stern's Conservatorium (which still exists, as part of the Faculty of Music of the Berlin University of the Arts), where he studied piano with the composer-pianist Eduard Franck (1817–93) and composition with the famous theoretician and composer Friedrich Kiel (1821–85). He then went on to complete his musical studies at Theodor Kullak's renowned Neue Akademie der Tonkunst, with Richard

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in William Armstrong, *The Romantic World of Music*, E. P. Dutton, New York, 1922, p. 116.

Wüerst (1824–81), a former pupil of Mendelssohn, for composition, and, for piano, with Kullak himself, who had studied with Carl Czerny. In addition, he had instruction in orchestration from Heinrich Dorn (1804–92), a long-forgotten German operatic composer.

Founded in 1855, Kullak's Akademie had quickly established itself in the vanguard of German academic musical institutions, and soon became the largest and one of the most respected music schools in Germany, accepting students from all over the world. Among his fellow students here were the Scharwenka brothers, Philipp (1847–1917) and Xaver (1850–1924), both of whom Moszkowski counted close friends. His earliest attempts at composition – all unpublished to date – include a piano quintet (the manuscript of which survives, although lacking a final movement), which was probably composed in his thirteenth year, an Overture (1871–72) and a Symphony in D minor (1873); and he had almost certainly begun work on his enormous Piano Concerto in B minor, Op. 3, during 1873.

In 1871, still only seventeen, he accepted Kullak's invitation to join his teaching staff, and in 1873 made his successful debut as pianist; that in turn led to a number of concert tours, while he continued to fulfil his professional duties in Berlin. In the same year, 1873, Moszkowski's first published work appeared, seemingly with some assistance from his father, who had various business contacts in Berlin. This was a rather modest Mazurka in G major for piano solo, which was included in the June edition of the popular Berlin ladies' magazine *Der Bazar*. Nevertheless, Moszkowski thought enough of it to include it as the third of his four *Skizzen*, Op. 10, in 1876. By the end of 1874, the Berlin music publisher Carl Simon had accepted Moszkowski's Scherzo, Op. 1, and from then on, his music began to appear in print with increasing frequency as his reputation gathered momentum, no doubt soon aided considerably by the immense success of his first set of *Spanish Dances*, Op. 12 (1876), for piano duet.

In 1884 Moszkowski married Henriette, the youngest sister of the well-known French pianist and prolific salon composer Cécile Chaminade. Soon after, however, he began to suffer from neuropathy in his arms, which caused him severely to restrict his performing activities as a pianist. This setback in turn, though, gave him the opportunity

to devote more time to composition and teaching. He also began to achieve recognition and success as a conductor, and it was in this capacity that he made the first of several visits to England in 1885, at the invitation of the Philharmonic Society, which in 1887 granted him an honorary life membership. It was on this first visit that, on 20 May, he conducted the first performance in England of his symphonic poem *Johanna d'Arc*,<sup>2</sup> at St James's Hall.

In 1897, at the height of his fame and by now considerably wealthy, he moved permanently to Paris. He was highly sought-after as a teacher, with such illustrious names as Vlado Perlemuter, Josef Hofmann and Wanda Landowska numbering amongst his many piano pupils; and it was not only for piano that he was in demand. In 1904, it was none other than a young Thomas Beecham who came to him for lessons in orchestration, on the recommendation of André Messager.

Gradually, though, with the major cultural sea-change taking place with the dawning of the new century, Moszkowski found his once-considerable popularity fading. He ceased taking students in composition, bemoaning the fact that they were interested only in following the latest avant-garde trends, which did not sit well with his conservative ideals, firmly entrenched in the traditions of the nineteenth century but now, in the twilight of Romanticism, under threat from the emerging new order. By 1908, at the age of only 54, he had become a recluse, having been separated from his wife in 1890 (a divorce was finalised in 1892), as well as losing his daughter Sylvie in 1906 at only seventeen years of age; he now suffered continually from the poor health which dogged him right up until his death, from cancer of the stomach, in 1925. To make matters worse, he had unwisely invested the larger part of his considerable fortune in German and Russian securities, which were rendered valueless at the outbreak of the First World War, not to mention the ensuing revolution in Russia in 1917, and so his last years were spent in desperate poverty. He did, however, receive some financial assistance, including some royalties, procured at the instigation of two of his former pupils – the pianist Josef Hofmann and Professor Bernhard Pollack, the latter famous

<sup>2</sup> Recorded by Ian Hobson and Sinfonia Varsovia on Toccata Classics TOCC 0523.

also as a pioneer in ophthalmology and neurohistology, as well as a pianist of note. Finally, on 21 December 1924, a grand testimonial concert was arranged on his behalf, at Carnegie Hall, New York, by a number of his former friends and colleagues, and a considerable sum raised, but unfortunately he died on 4 March the following year, before he could benefit from the proceeds.

A quick survey of Moszkowski's 97 opus numbers (also taking into account his works, both original and transcriptions, etc., without opus number) reveals that over two-thirds of his total output is for piano solo, which in turn numbers well in excess of 250 separate pieces – more if one also includes the various individual arrangements and transcriptions. Although many of his original piano works were published in sets of anything between two and ten pieces with a variety of collective titles, there are also several stand-alone works, particularly among the early opus numbers. From the outset, Moszkowski proved to be capable of tackling larger musical forms – one need look no further than his Op. 3 Piano Concerto of 1874 – but in his music for piano solo he was content to restrict himself exclusively to composing in smaller forms, thus fulfilling a steadily growing demand from an enthusiastic public, as well as giving his no-doubt expectant publishers their due reward. Waltzes, polonaises, mazurkas and numerous other dance forms sit side-by-side with impromptus, caprices, romances, studies and so on, as well as a myriad of other descriptively entitled character-pieces, evoking a variety of contrasting moods and emotions, but all displaying an intimate and idiomatic understanding of the piano and its capabilities.

This first-ever complete recorded survey of Moszkowski's piano music will generally adhere to the numerical order of his assigned opus numbers, which usually represent the chronological order of composition, as in most instances Moszkowski's music was published as soon as it was written. The works without opus numbers will appear together, but obviously out of chronological sequence.

Moszkowski was always noted for his ready wit and humour, and the circumstances surrounding the creation of his *Conservatoristen-Polka* provides a typical example.

His older brother, Alexander (1851–1934), a noted satirist, writer and philosopher, made his literary debut in 1875 with *Anton Notenquetscher: ein satirisches Gedicht in vier Gesängen* ('Anton Note-Squeezer: A Satirical Poem in Four Sections'), a parody, in the style of Goethe and Schiller, concerning a rather untalented provincial boy who comes to study music at the Berlin Conservatoire. The woodcut illustrations were done by Philipp Scharwenka, and Moritz provided the template for the main character, echoing his own daily life and experiences at the Conservatoire, as well as helping his brother with any corrections. *Anton Notenquetscher* was an instant success, and was favourably received by the critics. It was reprinted many times, and went on to spawn a number of equally successful sequels by the same author; it even reportedly caused Richard Wagner some amusement. Moritz further entered into the spirit of things, perhaps also hoping to capitalise on the success of his brother's work, by composing a *Conservatoristen-Polka*, Op. ½ [1], published separately by the rather obscure and short-lived Ludwig Troll of Cassel, who was also the dedicatee. The work itself is not to be taken too seriously. A rather grand title page indicates the composer as 'Anton Notenquetscher' himself, with no reference, perhaps unsurprisingly, to Moszkowski; it includes a reproduction of probably the best known of Philipp Scharwenka's humorous caricatures from the original book. The music itself consists of a rather deliberately naive polka and short trio, framed by a brief introduction and equally brief coda, very much in the style of popular dance music of the time.

Moszkowski's first five 'serious' piano works were all allocated their own separate opus numbers: a Scherzo, Op. 1 (1874); *Albumblatt*, Op. 2 (1875); *Caprice*, Op. 4 (1875); *Fantaisie (Hommage à Schumann)*, Op. 5 (1875); and *Fantaisie-Improptu*, Op. 6 (1875). The designation Op. 3 was intended for his B minor Piano Concerto, but at the time he was unable to gain any publisher's interest in such an extensive work; he lost interest in it, and though he later had an opportunity to have it published, he eventually declined, and the work was put aside and forgotten. It was then presumed lost until its recent rediscovery and subsequent revival. This lack of interest in the B minor Concerto by the publishing industry in the later 1870s may well have played some part in mapping out Moszkowski's future career as a composer. He had derived at least some income

from his early piano works, and although his relatively few multi-movement works of larger proportion – all including orchestra – were also to bring him some success, it was smaller forms which seemed to promise more.

The piano-writing of these early works, with the exception of the *Albumblatt*, has similarities in texture and idiom with that of the early concerto, as one might expect, and although more muted, they are nevertheless technically demanding. The Scherzo, Op. 1 [2], was composed towards the end of 1874 and so pre-dates the *Anton Notenquetscher* episode. It received its first performance at a concert in the autumn of that year, given by Moszkowski's friend and fellow student, the Russian-born pianist and composer Constantin von Sternberg (1852–1924). Moszkowski rejects the more commonplace triple-time in the Scherzo, opting instead for a steady  $\frac{2}{4}$  metre (which, by coincidence, he also uses in the scherzo movement of the Op. 3 Concerto). In the key of B flat major and marked *Allegro moderato e grazioso*, the opening section is soon characterised by some rather atypical contrapuntal writing and, initially, the overall mood and texture may possibly bring into question the composer's choice of title. But the following section – in G minor – soon provides more animation with some quite demanding passagework, calling for the use of continued repeated-note configurations. As this section reaches its climax, a contrasting third idea is introduced, marked *pp*, with the left-hand accompaniment murmuring beneath a melody of light *staccato* chords. Almost immediately, though, the tension starts to build again, steadily but relentlessly, and, after the re-appearance of the opening motif, the pressure is slowly released with a gradual *diminuendo*, leading to the restatement of the opening section, which proceeds directly to an appropriately virtuosic coda.

Soon thereafter, the *Albumblatt*, Op. 2, and *Caprice*, Op. 4, were completed and published, Moszkowski this time having secured the services of the well-known publisher Julius Hainauer of Breslau, with whom he was to maintain a long-lasting and successful business relationship. The *Albumblatt* [3], in the key of A flat major, and marked *Moderato e grazioso*, is an uncomplicated work, charming in its relative simplicity, and gives an early glimpse of the type of music that was to make Moszkowski so successful

in the years to come. The perceived influence here would have to be Schumann, and the piece conforms to a basic ABA format, with a brief introduction and coda.

By contrast, the *Caprice* [4] looks more towards Chopin in its passagework and pianistic configurations. Composed for and dedicated to Helene von Schack (1842–1904), a close friend and one of his private students, it is a challenging showpiece of no mean difficulty – such that Moszkowski himself declared that he was ‘nervous about the piece’<sup>3</sup> and omitted it at the last moment from the programme of a concert he gave in March 1875.

The *Fantaisie (Hommage à Schumann)*, Op. 5 [5], was finished in April 1875 and soon added to his list of publications. It is ready confirmation of Schumann’s influence on Moszkowski’s early development in his writing for the piano. Marked *Allegro con brio*, and in the key of E flat major, the bold *fortissimo* opening in strident chords, requiring awkward large stretches at times, sets the initial mood of confidence. The contrasting following section, *più tranquillo*, introduces a broad but simple melody with arpeggiated accompaniment which Moszkowski soon restates – this time adding an extra dimension to the accompaniment in the right hand, which also takes the melodic line, perhaps momentarily recalling the ‘three-handed effect’ made famous by Sigismond Thalberg some forty or so years earlier. Two further brief episodes precede a return of the opening idea which this time leads to a further development – *veloce assai* – dominated by scurrying triplets in the right hand, and followed by further snippets of previous material before the final *più presto* coda.

Moszkowski’s *Fantaisie-Improromptu*, Op. 6 [6], appeared in the autumn of 1875, and was dedicated to a talented pianist by the name of Johanna Wenzel (1857?–1928), a pupil of Kullak and Liszt; in 1878 she married the tragically short-lived Polish composer-pianist Juliusz Zarębski (1854–85). The title may have been derived from Chopin’s famous predecessor, but Moszkowski here is now beginning to gain confidence in his own abilities, and thus relies less on influences from his precursors. In the key of F major, with a tempo indication of *Allegretto grazioso*, the piece begins with

<sup>3</sup> Moszkowski, Tagebuch (Moszwv350), p. 60, as quoted in Bojan Assenov, *Moritz Moszkowski: Eine Werkmonographie*, doctoral thesis, Technische Universität, Berlin, 2009, p. 124 (online at <https://depositonce.tu-berlin.de/handle/11303/2418>).



a busy, genial opening melody, reinforced by a relentless semiquaver accompaniment which continues apace, even when the melodic line becomes briefly more relaxed and spacious, before again returning to the opening. This sequence is then repeated with some modulatory variety before a short sixteen-bar *tranquillo* bridge-passage breaks the momentum. A more lyrical central section, *Molto cantabile*, now follows, retaining the same tempo but now in  $\frac{6}{8}$  time. Gradually the work builds up to a soaring climax, with the main secondary theme now presented *fortissimo* in octaves, marked *grandioso*, before receding and re-introducing the opening melody, which proceeds directly to the conclusion.

The three *Moments Musicaux*, Op. 7, were completed towards the end of 1875, appearing in print early the following year. The set, dedicated to Constantin von Sternberg, was the first of his opus numbers to consist of more than one piece. The opening item, in B major [7], is marked *Allegromente*, meaning joyfully, rather than a more direct indication of speed. It is the slightest of the three, and Schumann's presence is never far away.

The more expansive second piece, *Con moto* [8], in ABA form, initially has more of a Slavic flavour, with certain inflections at times suggesting Moszkowski's Jewish heritage, particularly in the opening melody in C sharp minor. A secondary idea – *brillante* – provides an appropriate contrast before the return of the opening, which gradually dies away, leaving only the dominant G sharp in the bass to continue with its *pianissimo* but steady rhythmic repetition. That now cues in the change of key – enharmonically, to D flat major – and the introduction of the middle section. Of a more tranquil nature at first, a further melody is presented twice but then builds up to a *fortissimo* climax – the focal point of the work, before receding again, and eventually returning to the C sharp minor of the opening. The work finally fades away with a brief *coda* momentarily recalling the D flat major motif.

The third piece in the set, *Tranquillo e semplice*, in the key of F sharp major [9], opens with a genial flowing theme, more relaxed in mood than its predecessor, with Schumann's influence once again in evidence. The contrasting middle section is announced by a rather abrupt change from common time to a more animated and skittish  $\frac{6}{8}$  (as well as

a key change to D major), its capricious character reinforced with accentuated *staccato* interjections. This scurry of lively activity then abates, and returns to the relative calm of the beginning before the *pianissimo* conclusion.

The librettist and poet Wilhelm Sachs was for a time one of Moszkowski's pupils, as well as numbering amongst his circle of close friends, and provided him with the texts of his *Zwei Lieder*, Op. 9; Moszkowski responded with the dedication of his four *Skizzen*, Op. 10. These 'Sketches' are technically less demanding than his earlier works – at the request of his publisher, or was Sachs a pianist of only moderate ability and they were intended for him to play?

The first, an amiable 'Melodie' in G flat major [10] (there was also a separate version in the easier-to-read key of G major), was another of Moszkowski's early pieces to gain some extended popularity, turning up in published anthologies well into the twentieth century. Although straightforward and uncomplicatedly lyrical, Moszkowski's accomplished counterpoint and use of canon gives subtle harmonic colour in this otherwise innocent salon *morceau*. The second piece, 'Thema' [11], is one of his shortest: it is only twenty bars in length. In E major, *tranquillo ed espressivo*, it is in the style of an album-leaf. The third piece is the Mazurka in G major [12] that had appeared in *Der Bazar* and was thus Moszkowski's earliest published composition. Last comes a brief, Schumannesque 'Impromptu über "Sachs"' [13], in which the composer uses the spelling of his friend's name as a cryptogram for the main motif (the note names in German being S = E flat, A = A, C = C, H = B natural, and so on).

The *Humoreske*, Op. 14, of 1877 [14], makes a fitting and rousing conclusion to the first volume of this recorded edition. The work was '*freundschaftlichst gewidmet*' ('dedicated in sincerest friendship') to Xaver Scharwenka. A bold opening statement, in a brisk  $\frac{3}{8}$  time and marked *Allegro fastoso* (*fastoso* translates as magnificent or lavish), immediately sets a tone of assertiveness and confidence, with its prominent and frequent dotted-rhythm motif. The momentum continues with a secondary idea, lighter in texture, before a reprise of the opening completes the first section. A short middle section, in  $\frac{6}{8}$  time, now projects a calmer mood which alternates with brief playful *scherzando* episodes, before an extended bridging passage, first in  $\frac{2}{4}$ , then another,

in  $\frac{3}{8}$  which leads back to the opening subject. It is repeated again before a lull in momentum brings in a *vivace* conclusion.

Harold C. Schonberg states of Moszkowski's piano output that 'no better salon music has ever been composed, or any so gratefully conceived for the piano'.<sup>4</sup> This sentiment can now be re-affirmed, with the added benefit of being able to hear Moszkowski's piano music first-hand, in many instances for the first time since his own lifetime. Moszkowski's important contribution to his own particular genre of piano music is in perfect accord with its own historic and social context. For a century, received opinion looked down its nose at such music, but now it can be enjoyed for what it is, as its appreciative first audiences already understood.

*Martin Eastick was born in Croydon in 1957 and studied piano from age six. Although continuing with his studies, he decided against a musical career, instead devoting his spare time to researching neglected nineteenth-century music and collecting scores, mainly of piano music by forgotten composers of the Romantic era. He has presented many lecture-recitals introducing forgotten repertoire, as well as, more recently, assisting on a number of recordings, often providing performing material from his now substantial private collection.*

**Ian Hobson**, pianist and conductor, enjoys an international reputation, both for his performances of the Romantic repertoire and of neglected piano music old and new, and for his assured conducting from both the piano and the podium, renewing interest in the music of such lesser-known masters as Ignaz Moscheles and Johann Hummel. He is also an effective advocate of works written expressly for him by contemporary composers, among them John Gardner, Benjamin Lees, David Liptak, Alan Ridout and Roberto Sierra.

As guest soloist, Ian Hobson has appeared with the world's major orchestras; those in the United States include the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra, the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Florida, Houston, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and St Louis, the American Symphony Orchestra and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico. Elsewhere, he has been heard with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra,

<sup>4</sup> *The Great Pianists*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1963/Victor Gollancz, London, 1964, p. 324.

Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Hallé Orchestra in the UK, and the ORF-Vienna, Orchester der Beethovenhalle, Moscow Chopin Orchestra, Israeli Sinfonietta and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Wolverhampton in 1952 and one of the youngest-ever graduates of the Royal Academy of Music, Ian Hobson subsequently pursued advanced studies at both Cambridge University and Yale University. He began his international career in 1981 when he won First Prize at the Leeds International Piano Competition, having previously earned silver medals at both the Arthur Rubinstein and Vienna Beethoven competitions. A professor in the Center for Advanced Study at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), Ian Hobson received the endowed chair of Swanlund Professor of Music in 2000 and is now the Swanlund Emeritus Professor. He is also professor of music at Florida State University



He is also in much demand as a conductor, particularly for performances in which he doubles as a pianist. He made his debut in this capacity in 1996 with the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, and has since appeared with the English Chamber Orchestra, the Fort Worth Chamber Orchestra, the Sinfonia Varsovia (at Carnegie Hall), the Pomeranian Philharmonic and the Kibbutz Chamber Orchestra of Israel, among others. He also performs extensively as pianist-conductor with Sinfonia da Camera, a group he formed in 1984 and which quickly gained international recognition through its recordings.

To date he has amassed a discography of some sixty releases, mostly on the Zephyr label, including the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven and Schumann, a complete edition of Brahms' piano variations and the complete piano works by Chopin. With the violinist Sherban Lupu he is recording, as pianist and conductor, the complete works of Ernst for Toccata Classics, for which label he has also recorded piano music by Edward and Kate Loder (TOCC 0322 and 0321) and Harold Truscott (TOCC 0252). He has released three albums in a pioneering series of recordings of the early orchestral works by Martinů, also for Toccata Classics (TOCC 0156, 0249 and 0414), and in the first two albums in his series of the orchestral music of Moritz

Moszkowski, he conducts the Sinfonia Varsovia in Moszkowski's monumental symphonic poem *Johanna d'Arc* (TOCC 0523), its first-ever recording, received with astonished superlatives around the world, and in the Suites Nos. 2 and 3 (TOCC 0557).  
[www.ianhobson.net](http://www.ianhobson.net)

## Ian Hobson conducts Moszkowski on Toccata Classics

TOCC 0523



‘The performance is stunning. Orchestra and conductor sound completely engrossed by the music and the recording is splendid. There is an excellent booklet note by Martin Eastick [...]. Enthusiastically recommended.’

—customer review, Amazon UK

TOCC 0557



‘Toccata Classics has a distinct house style in the production of its booklets, which are consistently outstanding. We are treated to a fascinating biographical section on the composer, and then a full analysis (not too technical) on each of the movements, all written by expert Martin Eastick. Sinfonia Varsovia led by Ian Hobson, a tremendously versatile pianist and composer, capture the music with élan. The recording is clear and vibrant. As far as I can tell, the performances are ideal.’

—Gary Higginson, MusicWeb International



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## MORITZ MOSZKOWSKI Complete Music for Solo Piano, Volume One

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[1]	<i>Conservatoristen-Polka, Op. ½</i> (1875)*	3:37
[2]	<i>Scherzo, Op. 1</i> (1874)*	6:49
[3]	<i>Albumblatt, Op. 2</i> (1875)	4:46
[4]	<i>Caprice, Op. 4</i> (1875)*	5:01
[5]	<i>Fantaisie (Hommage à Schumann), Op. 5</i> (1875)	9:37
[6]	<i>Fantaisie-Impromptu, Op. 6</i> (1875)	9:38
	<i>Trois Moments Musicaux, Op. 7</i> (1875)*	17:23
[7]	No. 1 <i>Allegro moderato</i>	3:39
[8]	No. 2 <i>Con moto</i>	8:15
[9]	No. 3 <i>Tranquillo e semplice</i>	5:29
	<i>Skizzen, Vier kleine Stücke, Op. 10</i> (1876)*	9:56
[10]	No. 1 <i>Melodie</i>	3:37
[11]	No. 2 <i>Thema</i>	1:32
[12]	No. 3 <i>Mazurka in G major</i>	2:43
[12]	No. 4 <i>Impromptu über 'Sachs'</i>	2:44
[14]	<i>Humoreske, Op. 14</i> (1877)*	9:45

Ian Hobson, piano

TT 76:32

\* FIRST RECORDINGS