

Luboshutz & Nemenoff

PIANO-DUO EXTRAORDINAIRE

by Thomas Wolf

Right: Pierre Luboshutz and Genia Nemenoff in the 1950s.



Pierre Luboshutz (1890–1971) and Genia Nemenoff (1905–1989) were, in many ways, very similar—musicians from Russian-Jewish backgrounds who had found success in America. But their differences were significant.

Antecedents

For two generations, Pierre Luboshutz's forebears had made a living—albeit a modest one—in the music business. Grandfather Luboshutz (actually Luboshitz in Russian) was a professional opera singer, Pierre's father a violin pedagogue. The family lived in Odessa where their main source of income was a modest business, run by Pierre's mother, buying and selling pianos.

By way of contrast, though Genia Nemenoff's parents were accomplished musicians—her father a singer, her mother a pianist—neither was a professional. And unlike the Luboshutz family, the Nemenoffs were well off financially. Their affluence came from the retail fur trade, through a business begun by Genia's mother's family, the Jacobs, who had emigrated from Russia to Germany before Genia was born. In time, when Genia's father Aaron Nemenoff married into Marie's family, he gave up any thought of a musical career and was given the sinecure of the Paris branch of the family fur business. Thus, while Pierre Luboshutz grew up poor in Odessa far from the international musical capitals of Rus-

sia (Moscow and Saint Petersburg), Genia Nemenoff's childhood was spent in an affluent milieu in one of the great cultural cities in the world.

For both families, anti-Semitism had significant consequences that shaped their lives. Russian laws established by Tsaritsa Catherine the Great (1729–1796) required that Jews live in what was called the “Pale of Settlement” (a large strip of land of which Odessa was a part). The only exceptions that allowed Jews to live in the great cities of Moscow and Saint Petersburg were either acquiring great wealth or displaying exceptional talent. Thus, for the Luboshutz family, raising superstar musical children who might become rich and successful and reside anywhere in the Empire became a singular obsession. Pierre's two older sisters fulfilled their parents' dreams. Lea, the oldest, a violinist, and middle sister Anna, a cellist, paved the way for Pierre, the third child.

Both girls were prodigies who had brilliant careers at the Moscow Conservatory, where each won a coveted gold medal and where both were selected for the international touring circuit even before graduation, appearing with the likes of Chaliapin, Scriabin, Koussevitzky, and others. By the time Pierre Luboshutz arrived in Moscow to attend the Conservatory, he was considered part of a distinguished musical family.

For Genia's family too, anti-Semitism shaped their lives. While as wealthy merchants they were permitted to live in Saint Petersburg where Genia's mother was born, constant harassment eventually drove them out of Russia and, in the case of Genia's parents, on to France via Germany, both countries offering far more opportunities (and safety) for Jews. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, Pierre Luboshutz would follow that same path—first from Moscow to Berlin and then to Paris—where he would encounter Genia Nemenoff, teaching her in a masterclass at the Paris Conservatory.

Early Careers, Marriage, and Creating a Duo

Pierre's path to that fateful masterclass where he met Genia had been circuitous at best and not nearly as distinguished as that of his sisters. He had never been one to enjoy long hours of practice and the life of a bon vivant in Moscow cut into his musical studies.



Above: 24-year-old Pierre Luboshutz, 10 years before he would leave his native Russia, never to return.

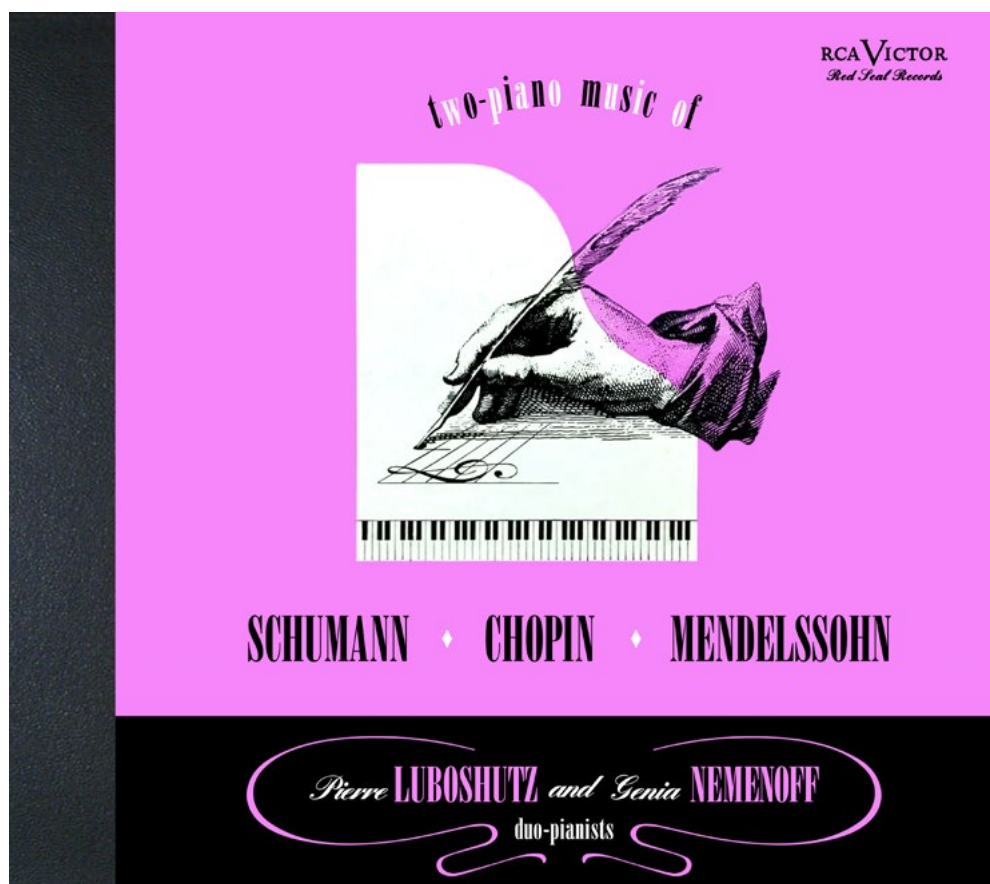


Above: The Luboshutz Trio—Lea, Pierre, and Anna—from a Russian newspaper advertisement.

When he received only a silver medal upon graduation from the Moscow Conservatory, his parents were displeased. And his career as a soloist proved short-lived. Rather, he became known primarily as an accompanist not only for distinguished musicians like his sisters, Serge Koussevitzky, Efrem Zimbalist, Gregor Piatigorsky, and Paweł Kochański (Paul Kochanski) among many others, but also for the American dancer, Isadora Duncan. Her free-form dances to masterpieces of classical repertoire were so popular with Russian audiences that she was encouraged to establish a dance school in Moscow where Pierre also worked as an accompanist.

But perhaps his most important musical opportunity was provided by his more famous sisters through the eponymous Luboshutz Trio, a chamber group comprised of the three siblings that was among the most successful in Russia in the early teens of the twentieth century. On one tour alone, for example, the group played fifty cities during the winter months of 1913–1914 ending up with an important concert in the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory.

But if these professional experiences did not live up to the aspirations of Pierre's parents, the nature of the intimate playing with one or two other musicians of superior gifts was perhaps the most valuable preparation Pierre received for



Left: RCA Victor  DM-1047. Luboshutz & Nemenoff in a mixed program, recorded in New York City on 12 June 1945.

Spread across eight 78rpm sides, the album took in the following works: Schumann's Andante & Variations in B-flat major Op. 46, Chopin's Rondo in C major Op. 73, and Mendelssohn's Allegro Brillant in A major Op. 92, the latter in an arrangement by Pierre Luboshutz. The attractive cover art was not credited.

The pair would re-make the Chopin and Mendelssohn for Everest and Vanguard, respectively, but these earlier accounts are to be preferred; all 3 RCA recordings form part of Marston Record's 4CD set © 54010-2.

what became his greatest later success as a musician—the duo-piano collaboration with his wife.

The piano duo of Luboshutz & Nemenoff, which would become among the most sought after in the world, was created almost by accident. Pierre and Genia continued to see one another in Paris where she was trying to make a career as a soloist. But Pierre was often away, touring in the United States in the 1920s, a land of great opportunity and lucrative fees. True, he was only an accompanist, but he was making a decent living and saving money when in Paris by living in an apartment with his sister Lea's family. When Genia got her first big break—a tour in the United States in 1931—the two met up in New York, married three days after her arrival, and decided to make the United States their home. It made sense from many points of view. Pierre's sister Lea had recently decided to move her family (including their mother) to Philadelphia where she was now a faculty member at the Curtis Institute of Music (her son and Pierre's nephew, Boris Goldovsky, was a student there as well). It certainly looked as though the United States would be the new home for most of the members of the family who had left Russia (some, like Pierre's cellist sister Anna Luboshutz, had chosen to

stay in the Soviet Union). But more important, it seemed like America was the land of limitless possibilities. Pierre and Genia took an apartment in New York and began looking for work.

Unfortunately, the United States in the 1930s was not what it had been in the 1920s. The world-wide Depression was taking its toll on the music business. Happily for Pierre, the superstars with whom he was performing continued to secure bookings and provide him with a reasonable income. But for Genia, a little-known Parisian female pianist, her few opportunities were limited to some occasional teaching of mostly untalented pupils. After a full life with family in Paris and concerts throughout France, a New York apartment with long weeks without Pierre or anyone else close to her was lonely.

Genia's letters to Pierre when he was on the road are heartbreaking to read and it was clear that America was not for her. In a letter of 4 March 1932, she writes of her horror about the kidnapping of the baby of the aviator Charles Lindbergh and his wife Anne that had occurred three days earlier – it was front page news and impossible to miss. "It's incredible," she wrote, adding tellingly, "Such a thing could only happen in America." Genia had lived through a tumultuous era in



Above: Pierre Luboshutz & Genia Nemenoff in 1937, the year of their New York debut. *New York Times* Music Critic Noel Strauss wrote that he had “never before known two-piano artistry comparable to this”

Europe but she had been surrounded by a loving family and doting parents who protected her. She often found America hard to understand and downright scary at times and she had always been emotionally fragile. Pierre, with his outsize personality, optimism, and good humor was her new protector...when he was around. But being alone in the United States was not working for Genia. Obviously, something had to be done if the two of them were to stay.

And it was Pierre who came up with the idea. Initially, it was simply that the two of them should make music together when Pierre was home. They explored the four-hand and two-piano literature and Pierre even tried his hand at transcribing some favorite pieces. As their musical circle grew, they would invite friends for dinner with Genia's superb cooking and perform together afterwards. At one of these gatherings, the impresario Sol Hurok, who had been sister Lea's

manager and had become a friend of the family, was in attendance. Pierre talked about how sad it was that there was so little opportunity for music lovers to hear performances of the wonderful musical literature that existed for two pianos—compositions by Bach (if you counted the harpsichord music) as well as by Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, and many others. As they discussed it, Hurok mused that if Pierre and Genia were the ones performing this music, it could be an “attraction” that a good manager could sell. Here were two pianists with authentic Russian names—a handsome married couple—playing repertoire that was rarely heard, and it could be supplemented by Pierre's arrangements—popular works like De Falla's “Ritual Fire Dance,” Glinka's “The Lark,” and melodies from Johann Strauss's opera, *Die Fledermaus*. It was a relatively open niche. Why shouldn't Pierre and Genia fill it?

It wouldn't hurt that Pierre's sister Lea had already scored many successes in America as a solo artist with orchestras and as a recital partner with the great pianist, Josef Hofmann. Many of those who presented her might take a chance on Pierre and Genia. Then there was Koussevitzky, Pierre's old recital partner. Once a double bass virtuoso, he was now Music Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He could certainly put in a good word with important presenters and even hire Pierre and Genia to solo with his orchestra in the future. Hurok thought they had a chance at a career and offered to get them started with a few concerts and a New York debut recital.

The Duo-Piano Team of Luboshutz & Nemenoff

The duo-piano team of Luboshutz & Nemenoff was an instant success. Hurok's imprimatur was helpful, of course, as were Lea's many contacts. And though in time they did have quite a bit of competition as more pianists toured and recorded as piano duos, many of these duos were part-time, made up of pianists who had careers as soloists, while in Pierre and Genia's case, they devoted themselves full time to playing together. As solo pianists they would have been overwhelmed by big names, but as a duo-piano team, they had more of a chance to shine. Good reviews became standard fare and the bookings increased exponentially.

LUBOSHUTZ AND NEMENOFF

"That delightful duo piano team"
Samuel Chotzinoff, NEW YORK POST

WITH THE BOSTON SYMPHONY

October 24, 1938

"A remarkably matched pair. A presentation that was almost perfect in its blending of sensibility, aristocracy and virtuosity."—BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT

"Phenomenally well matched. An admirable performance."—BOSTON GLOBE

"Admirable teamplay. Altogether it was a most satisfying performance and was cordially applauded by the audience."—BOSTON HERALD

"They achieve unanimity of thought and utterance."—BOSTON POST

Management

NBC ARTISTS SERVICE

RCA Building, New York

George Engles, Director



LATEST NEW YORK RECITAL

November 25, 1938

"Duo art of high order. Remarkable finesse—infectious vim."—NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM

"The talented couple have acquired a facile command of the duo-pianists' art. Their playing was well coordinated and filled with life and rhythmic urge."—NEW YORK TIMES

"One of the most satisfying experiences of the musical season to date. Unusual virtuosity—the finest taste."—NEW YORK POST

"The two pianists, who have won a notable reputation in their present field, were in very good form. A high degree of momentum and elan."—NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE

"Admirable balance — expert — delightful."—NEW YORK SUN

STEINWAY PIANOS

Above: A touring circular from the late 1930s. Author Thomas Wolf: "It is rather astonishing to realize just how many concerts they played each year—two hundred concerts in the first three seasons and upwards of a hundred a year thereafter. This was a large number in an age before air travel was common and when summer festival bookings were few."

Pierre, Genia, and their management team agreed that their first concert together should be out of the limelight in a place where a program could be tested with a live audience without prominent critics around. Thus, on 15 October 1936, a concert was arranged in South Bend, Indiana. It was a resounding success. Their New York debut was three months later on 18 January 1937, and they received the desired quote from the *New York Times* that could land directly in their publicity material (“Duo art of a high order”). A subsequent *New York Times* review by Noel Strauss read, “This reviewer has never before known two-piano artistry comparable to this.” And so it replaced the 1937 review in their publicity materials.

Hurok’s promise of concert dates was no idle prediction. During that first season (an abbreviated one of less than three months), they played twenty-four concerts and the *Musical Courier* captured them returning after the tour.

During the next three seasons Pierre and Genia appeared 198 times, including their promised prestigious first appearance with Serge Koussevitzky and his Boston Symphony Orchestra. It seemed appropriate that the man who had giv-

en Pierre his first solo concerto appearance in 1915 should provide Luboshutz & Nemenoff one of their first big breaks in America. Other major orchestras liked the novelty of exotic duo-piano soloists and began to book Pierre and Genia regularly. They were especially popular with the Philadelphia Orchestra, with which they played a remarkable number of concerts, given the limited repertoire. In time, they were playing as many as 100 concerts a year, including tours of Europe, Central and South America, and South Africa.

The Piano Challenge

One of Pierre and Genia’s challenges was finding venues on the road that could easily provide two grand pianos. The Baldwin Piano Company was willing to guarantee two grands at any venue that booked Luboshutz & Nemenoff in the United States so long as the team would become exclusive Baldwin artists. In time, the company would also provide six pianos for their personal use, instruments that were replaced every five years. Three pianos went to their large New York apartment and another three went to Pierre and Genia’s summer residence (“Twin Keys”) in Rockport, Maine. This would allow Pierre and Genia to practice separately in the morning in different locations and then rehearse together on two pianos later in the day without having to leave home. Some of those pianos still reside in the homes of Pierre and Genia’s grand nephews and nieces.

Beautiful Playing, Wonderful Reviews

Besides the quality of their playing, another reason for the success of Luboshutz & Nemenoff was that they received consistently positive press and excellent reviews, which they knew to be important to establishing a career. The gold standard in the United States was an enthusiastic review from the *New York Times*, and Pierre and Genia considered themselves fortunate in getting several strong ones. After a while, it seems they were getting ecstatic reviews everywhere, like this one after a concert in Atlanta on 22 January 1941 that was quoted in their promotional material: “It is a rare occasion when an entire audience almost goes wild with enthusiastic appreciation of a concert, but that is what happened last night. There seemed to be not a single soul that did not enjoy every minute of a concert that was packed with artistic thrills.”



Left: RCA Camden ● CAL-206 “A 2 Piano Recital”, one of three 1950s LP re-issues of Luboshutz and Nemenoff’s 78rpm Victor recordings.

Luboshutz and Nemenoff

DUO-PIANISTS

PROGRAM

I

*Passacaglia -----Handel
(Arranged by Pierre Luboshutz)

Allegro Brilliant -----Mendelssohn
(Originally for one piano, four hands)
(Adapted for two pianos by Pierre Luboshutz)

II

*Variations on a Theme of Beethoven -----Saint-Saens

INTERMISSION

III

Rondo -----Chopin

IV

Tambourin Chinois -----Kreisler
(Arranged for two pianos by Pierre Luboshutz with
Mr. Kreisler's approval)

*Polka -----Schostakowitch
(Arranged by Pierre Luboshutz)

*The Lark -----Glinka
(Arranged by Pierre Luboshutz)

*Ritual Fire Dance -----De Falla
(Arranged by Pierre Luboshutz)

*R.C.A. Victor Records

Philips Memorial Auditorium

STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

West Chester, Pennsylvania

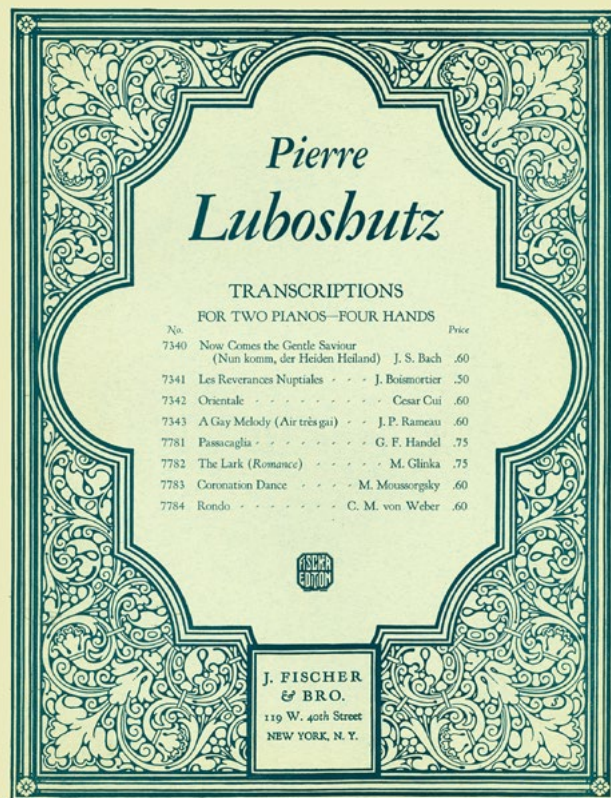
Monday Evening, November 9, 1942

8:15 o'clock

The Baldwin Pianos used for this concert are available thru the
courtesy of Strawbridge and Clothier, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Management: Concert Division, National Concert and Artists Corpora-
tion, Marks Levine, Managing Director, 711 Fifth Ave.,
New York City.

ALL STAR EVENTS TO FOLLOW—Eve Curie December 14
Gladys Swarthout January 26
Helen Howe February 15
Cleveland Orchestra .. March 19



Above: Eight transcriptions for two pianos, 4 hands, by Pierre Luboshutz – published by J. Fischer & Bro., New York. **Left:** A 1942 concert program – note the scrupulous Kreisler citation. **Below:** Pierre and Genia in their New York apartment.



Pierre and the management team were also careful in the early days of the Luboshutz & Nemenoff career to garner quoted comments from distinguished musicians, which were placed prominently in their publicity materials. “Perfection in Two Piano Playing,” Serge Koussevitzky was quoted as saying at a time when he was considered one of the reigning maestros.

Arrangements and New Work

There was no way that Pierre and Genia could go back repeatedly to communities unless they had fresh repertoire and there were simply not enough original pieces for two pianos to do so. Ever resourceful, Pierre worked hard on musical arrangements (many of which are heard in these recordings) and wrote a few original compositions as well like the song “In Springtime” based on a poem by Aleksey Tolstoy. These not only gave the team more music to play but it enhanced the Pierre Luboshutz brand among the large group of amateur musicians who made up the concert ticket-buying public. The works that Pierre transcribed were chosen carefully based on popular tastes and many were not that difficult to play and were aimed at the amateur market (some were transcriptions of violin, cello or flute pieces as for example the Sicilienne from J.S. Bach’s



Above: Luboshutz & Nemenoff in rehearsal at the Academy of Music with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy, with whom they have the 1943 world premiere of Martinů’s Concerto for Two Pianos. Photo by Adrian Siegel.

Eb major flute sonata and the Scene from the Opera “Orpheus” by Gluck that had previously been arranged for flute and piano by Georges Barrère). Pierre was not above lifting arrangements that had been made famous by other instrumentalists like violinist Fritz Kreisler and rearranging them for two pianos (though in the case of Kreisler, he secured permission first¹). Another such “re-transcription” was the Rondo by Carl Maria von Weber found in their collection of recordings. It was originally a movement from one of Weber’s violin sonatas that was first transcribed for cello and piano by Pierre’s recital partner from earlier days, Gregor Piatigorsky. Pierre dedicated this later arrangement to Piatigorsky who had previously recorded his version for RCA Victor.

But the pressure kept increasing for Pierre and Genia to augment their list of musical offerings. When Pierre ran out of his own arrangements, and a punishing performance schedule prevented him from making a sufficient number of new ones, he asked his nephew Boris Goldovsky to help out. I found two of Boris’s arrangements in a program from Pierre and Genia’s 1940–1941 season – the Overture to Mozart’s Marriage of Figaro and Bach’s Chorale Prelude “Ach wie flüchtig.”² A generation later, as purists began to dominate taste-making in classical music, it would have been unusual to find major artists adapting the masterworks in this way and performing them in important venues. But at the time Pierre and Genia were touring, it was the norm, allowing them to always offer something new.

Other composers also arranged and wrote pieces for Luboshutz & Nemenoff, including a suite from the ballet “On Stage” by Norman Dello Joio, and new concertos for two pianos and orchestra, one by the Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů, and another by Vittorio Giannini. The premiere of the Martinů by Pierre and Genia with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra on 5 November 1943 was considered important enough to be mentioned in the 8 November 1943 issue of *Time* magazine. Unusual for a new composition, it was so well received (reviewer Linton Martin called the premiere “a super event of the symphony season”³) that Ormandy invited them back to Philadelphia to play it again with the orchestra five years later.



Above: The artists in repose – piano duo Pierre Luboshutz & Genia Nemenoff enjoying some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

Not every premiere was well received. Initially less successful was a work dedicated to them, the “Tzigane Waltz” by Mischa Levitzki (played in Carnegie Hall on 4 January 1938). Despite a mediocre New York review, Pierre and Genia decided to keep the piece in their repertoire—a wise decision given that audiences seemed to love the piece (a recording of it can be found in a recent reissue from Marston Records).

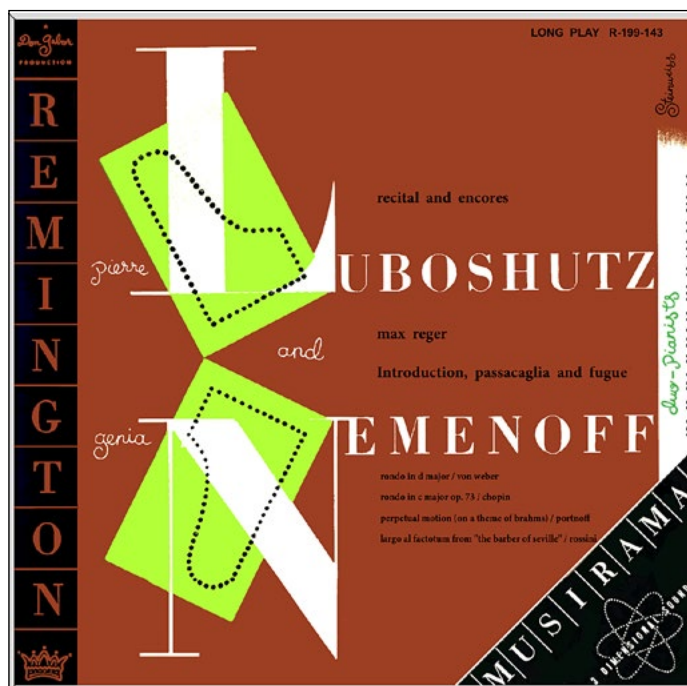
Another work that received a mediocre reception was a concerto by “Claude Arrieu”, the *non de plume* of a young French composer named Louise-Marie Simon (1903-1990), which Pierre and Genia performed later in 1938, also in New York. They had known Simon at the Paris Conservatory and they agreed to play the first public performance of her concerto in New York’s Town Hall on 25 November 1938. The *New York Times* critic (Noel Straus) called it “a shallow concoction.” Another critic, Samuel Chotzinoff, wrote that “when original music is forthcoming, as it was last night with Mr. [sic] Arrieu’s Concerto, one is forced to conclude that arrangements of old stuff are the better part of valor.” Though the music was reviewed poorly, Luboshutz & Nemenoff were praised. To the best of my knowledge, after an initial performance of the Arrieu concerto, it was dropped from Pierre and Genia’s

repertoire as they continued to refine their selections to meet the tastes of audiences and critics.

Hard Work

Of all the factors contributing to their success, I think the most important was that Pierre and Genia were willing to work very, very hard and Genia probably deserved most of the credit. Pierre had never been a hard worker and without Genia, he probably would have been satisfied with a career that depended on others for the heavy lifting, those whose fame was already established. Though Pierre still didn’t practice long hours, both he and Genia rehearsed constantly, learning new repertoire and refining their ensemble playing. Pierre also spent considerable time on his arrangements while Genia wrote thank you notes and shopped for gifts to send to presenters large and small.

One can also see evidence of their work ethic in the touring itineraries that they maintained for years. Touring was not easy in those days but Pierre and Genia seemed willing to go anywhere at any time. They had no children, which helped, but it is rather astonishing to realize just how many concerts they played each year—two hundred concerts in the first three seasons and upwards of a hundred a year thereafter. This



Left: ● Remington R-199-143. This intriguing album includes a magnificent performance of what was then, and now, remains a keyboard rarity: Max Reger's Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue Op. 96. A fascinating work that deserves to be far better known, this was its world premiere recording.

was a large number in an age before air travel was common and when summer festival bookings were few. At the same time, they were constantly learning and memorizing new repertoire (unlike other piano duos, they played everything by memory). As an example, while other major soloists might carry a single new concerto in their repertoire in a season, Pierre and Genia carried two. Just two days after they premiered the Martinů concerto in Philadelphia, they again appeared with the orchestra playing another relatively new piece, a concerto by Harl McDonald composed in 1937 (a recording of a later performance is included in the Marston Records set).

High profile events were frequent. There was the annual recital in New York and regular appearances with the top orchestras in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia (including an incredible nine appearances with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra in the 1943–1944 season alone). But the bread and butter of their income came from concerts in countless smaller communities. They seemed to live on trains.

Only in the summer would Pierre and Genia relax in Maine where they and other members of the family owned property. Except for the oc-

casional concert at Tanglewood with the Boston Symphony or at the Robin Hood Dell with the Philadelphia Orchestra, they rested in summer.

Retirement

In 1960, Pierre turned seventy and already there was some slippage in his playing and a few signs of memory problems. Most likely it was the early stages of the Parkinson's disease that eventually led to his death just over a decade later. The grueling concertizing would have to be moderated. But what to do? Like so many musicians, Pierre and Genia had not planned for retirement. Though they had earned a good deal of money during their career, they had led a more-than-comfortable life with a summer estate, lavish entertaining, gift giving, and many other luxuries. Consulting with their nephew, Boris Goldovsky, who was well connected in the music business, Pierre and Genia agreed to head the piano department at Michigan State University in East Lansing while reducing the concert load. The five-year appointment at the university lasted from the fall of 1962 through the spring of 1968 and it was not a happy one. For one thing, it was not as prestigious as a possible conservatory position might have been (they had taught briefly at the New England Conservatory), but this was not about prestige, it was about income and conservatories paid far less. University jobs like this one compensated their professors reasonably well and there was the possibility of vesting in a state pension plan if they stayed long enough. Predictably, Pierre and Genia, who had lived in cities like Paris and New York and had a wide circle of European friends, were not happy there—Pierre quipped that winters were colder than Siberia. Their students, for the most part, were not especially gifted and being far away from family for the first time was disorienting. After the initial appointment, they returned to New York, in part because Pierre's illness had become worse. His death came in 1971.

Genia, who was almost fifteen years younger than Pierre, lived on for almost two decades alone in New York. She had lived, loved, and worked with one man for most of her adult life and now he was gone. They had had no children. Genia had lost both her parents in the Holocaust in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, something that continued to haunt her into old age as

she often wondered if she could have done more to save them. There were few living relatives on the Jacob-Nemenoff side of the family and in any case, they lived abroad. Being financially dependent on Pierre's relatives only exacerbated her unhappiness. In time she sold the house in Maine and became quite aloof and isolated. It was a sad end for someone who had been beloved by so many people for her great gifts and her generosity of spirit. Upon her death in 1989, she was buried next to Pierre in the Seaview Cemetery in Rockport, Maine.

Recordings and a Legacy

Composers leave behind a body of work that contributes to their legacy. But performers create work in the moment and then it is gone. Except for recordings and perhaps their students, they leave little in the way of a tangible legacy. Thus, imperfect as they may be as a substitute for live performances, recordings are what we rely on in order to connect to those performers who are no longer with us. As the passion for historical recordings has increased and the technology to produce them has improved, we can get a little closer to those whose work was so treasured during their lifetimes.

Early on, Pierre recognized the importance of recordings in enhancing careers. Today, given the complete collapse of the classical recording business, it is sometimes difficult to remember that recordings were not only hugely important in popularizing classical performers but also produced substantial income for those artists who made them. Pierre and Genia recorded frequently under various labels. By 1943, they were recording for RCA Victor, which often took out large ads for their records in programs and magazines. A double-page RCA spread in a 13 and 15 July 1947, Tanglewood program features photos of Pierre and Genia along with Koussevitzky as RCA recording artists. These ads were still appearing more than a decade later. Another full-page ad in a Philadelphia Orchestra program from 25 and 26 March 1949, featured their photo and a list of four of their RCA Victor records above a photo of Eugene Ormandy with a list of some of his recordings with the Philadelphia Orchestra. They and their recordings were keeping good company.

But there was an important reason why their

records were so popular. RCA Victor got it right: for the first time, you could hear great artists like Luboshutz & Nemenoff at your leisure in your own home. This new opportunity, that today we take for granted, introduced many new fans to classical music and changed the listening habits of those who were already experienced concertgoers.

All this Pierre and Genia knew. But one thing that they probably did not think much about at the time was that their recordings would be their single most enduring memorial for subsequent generations. Today, few people know the names Pierre Luboshutz and Genia Nemenoff and even fewer have heard the recordings. How fortunate that Marston Records recently chose to reissue the Luboshutz & Nemenoff discography and contribute to their wonderful musical legacy.

— Thomas Wolf

This article was adapted from liner notes for a four-CD set of Luboshutz & Nemenoff recordings from Marston Records. It was written by Thomas Wolf, grandnephew of Pierre Luboshutz and Genia Nemenoff. Some of the material comes from his book, The Nightingale's Sonata: The Musical Odyssey of Lea Luboshutz. Many thanks to Gregor Benko who gave general advice and provided material for these notes and to Scott Kessler who assisted in other aspects of the project.

¹ Program from the Civic Music Association (Chicago).

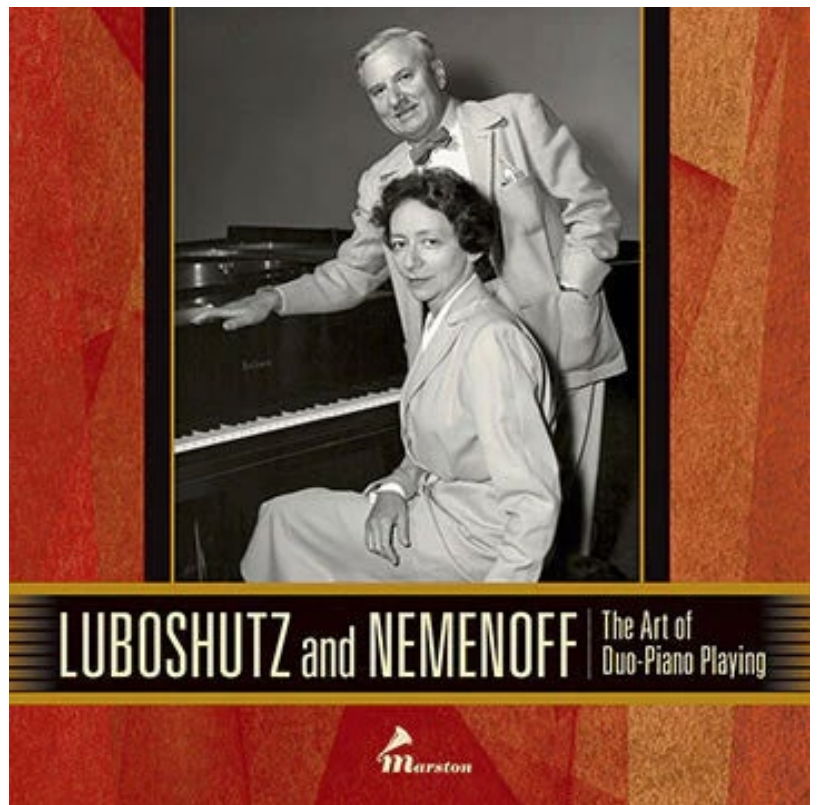
² A program from 9 November 1942 at Westchester State Teachers College includes Pierre's arrangement of Kreisler's "Tambourin Chinois" and the program indicates that it was "with Mr. Kreisler's permission."

³ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 November 1943.

Luboshutz & Nemenoff - Known Repertoire

The below is a listing of their known concert and recorded repertoire, based on a review of their programs and reviews. Undoubtedly, their actual repertoire was somewhat larger and took in works that, for any number of reasons, they chose not to perform in public. Thankfully, much – though not all – of their repertoire was set down in recordings made for RCA Victor, Remington, and Everest. Not preserved for posterity are a number of intriguing works including the Sonatina by Boris Koutzen, the Valse Tragique by Felix Fox, and Alice DeCeeve Mitchell's Holland Tunnel, all three dedicated to Luboshutz and Nemenoff.

Marston Records' outstanding 4CD set © 54010-2 is shown at right. In the repertoire list that follows, those works featured in this set are marked with a red asterisk *.



Claude Arrieu (nom de plume of **Louise-Marie Simon**, 1903-1990)
Concerto for Two Pianos

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)
Chorale Prelude "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland" ("Now Comes the Gentle Savior") BWV 659*
Sicilienne, from the Sonata for Flute and Klavier in E-flat major BWV 1031*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) (arr. **Isidor Phillipp**, 1863-1958)
Organ Concerto after Vivaldi in A minor BWV 593*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) (arr. **Boris Goldovsky**, 1908-2001)
"Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig" ("Ah, how fleeting, Ah how insignificant") BWV 644

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Concerto for Two Pianos in C minor BWV 1060
Concerto for Two Pianos in C major BWV 1061*

Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782)
Sonata in G Major (Allegro, Tempo di Menuette)

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1689-1755) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)
Les Révérences Nuptiales, from the Deux sérénade ou symphonies françoises en trois parties, Op. 39

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Liebeslieder Waltzes Op. 52a*
Variations on a Theme by Haydn for Two Pianos Op. 56b*

Alice DeCeeve Mitchell (sometimes credited by her married name: Mrs. Ehrman B. Mitchell) (1899-1976)
Holland Tunnel

A pupil of Ernest Hutcheson, she also wrote a piano suite (Toccata, Waltz, Nocturne & Rondo), first performed in 1941. In addition she helped found the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra in Pennsylvania's capital.

Abram Chasins (1903-1987)

Carmen Fantasy on Themes by Georges Bizet for Two Pianos

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Rondo for Two Piano in C major Op. posth. 73*

César Cui (1835-1918) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)

Orientale, No. 9 from Kaleidoscope Op. 50 (24 Miniatures for Violin and Piano)*

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Lindaraja for Two Pianos

Norman Dello Joio (1913-2008)

On Stage (Overture, Pas de deux and Polka) from the Ballet Suite (1946)

Jean Roger-Ducasse (1873-1954)

Claironnerie (Fanfare), No. 3 from the Petite Suite

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)

Ritual Fire Dance, from El amor brujo*

Felix Fox (1876-1947)

Valse Tragique

Born in Breslau, Fox studied with Carl Reinecke in Leipzig and with Isidor Philipp in Paris before settling in Boston. This piece was said to be inspired by Oscar Wilde.

César Franck (1822-1890) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)

Prélude, from the Prélude, Fugue et Variation Op. 18

Vittorio Giannini (1903-1966)

Concerto for Two Pianos

Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)

The Lark, No. 10 from A Farewell to St. Petersburg*

Alexander Gretchaninoff (1864-1956) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)

Berceuse, No. 5 from 5 Songs Op. 1

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)

Passacaglia, from the Suite No. 7 in G minor HWV 432*

Manuel Infante (1883-1958)

Ritmo, No. 2 from 3 Andalusian Dances

Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978)

Suite for Two Pianos (Ostinato, Romance and Fantastic Waltz)

Boris Koutzen (1901-1966)

Sonatina for Two Pianos

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)

Tamborin Chinois Op. 3*

Mischa Levitzki (1898-1941)

Valse Tzigane Op. 7*



Pierre Luboshutz (1891-1972)

The Bat – A Fantasy from Johann Strauss' Die Fledermaus*

Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959)

Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra

Harl McDonald (1899-1955)

Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) (arr. **Isidor Phillipp**, 1863-1958)

Scherzo, from a Midsummer Night's Dream Op. 61*

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)

Allegro Brillante in A Major Op. 92*

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Concerto for Two Pianos & Orchestra in E Major

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)

Scaramouch Op. 165b*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major K. 448*

Concerto for Three Pianos and Orchestra in F major K. 242

Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra in E-flat major K. 365*

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791) (arr. **Ferruccio Busoni**, 1866-1924)

Overture to The Magic Flute K. 620

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791) (arr. **Leo Conus**, 1871-1944)

Overture to The Marriage of Figaro K. 492* †

Conus (more properly Lev Konus) is said to have assisted Tchaikovsky in 1893 with the two-piano arrangement of his Symphony No. 6 in B minor Op. 74 "Pathetique".

† Luboshutz and Nemenoff also played an arrangement of the Overture to Mozart's Marriage of Figaro K. 492 by **Boris Goldovsky**, 1908-2001.

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)

Coronation Scene from Boris Godunov*

Mischa Portnoff (1901-1979)

March of the Pixies (or Imps)

Perpetuum Mobile (based on Brahms's "Vergebliches Ständchen", No. 4 from his 5 Romanzen und Gesänge Op. 84)*

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Valses (after Schubert)

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

March Op. 99

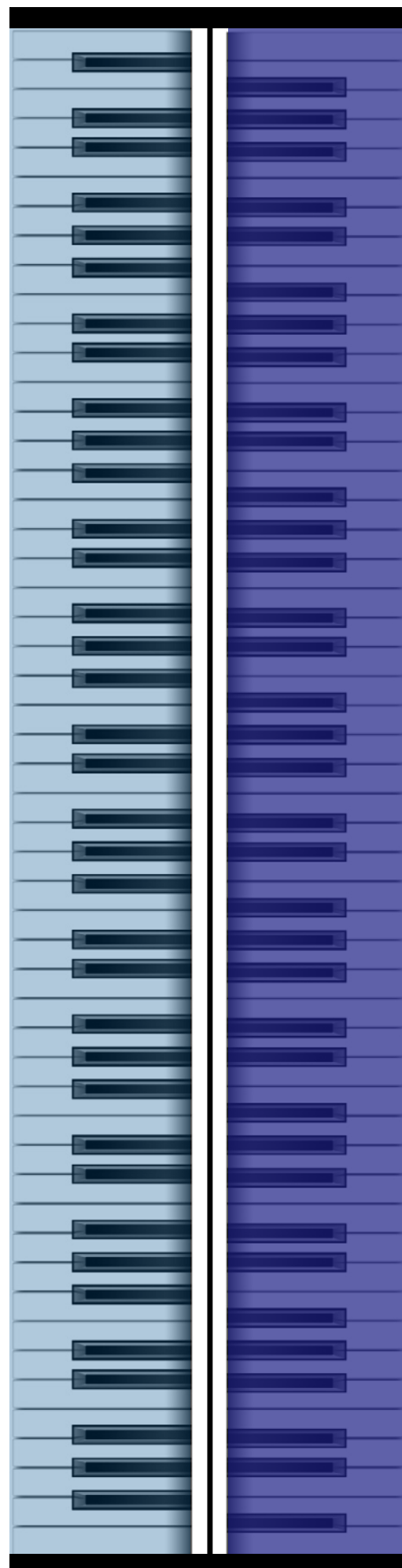
Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

La Nuit L'Amour, No. 2 from the Suite No. 1 for Two Pianos Op. 5

Suite No. 2 for Two Pianos Op. 17

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)

Air Très Gay, from Les Paladins



Max Reger (1873-1916)
Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue Op. 96

Wallingford Riegger (1885-1961)
Finale, from New Dance*

Vittorio Rieti (1898-1994)
Suite Champêtre

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)
Capriccio Espagnol Op. 34
Flight of the Bumblebee, from The Tale of Tsar Saltan

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) (arr. **Stephen Kovacs**, 1907-1964)
"Largo al factotum", from Il barbiere di Siviglia*

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)
Variations on a Theme of Beethoven Op. 35
Danse Macabre Op. 40

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)
Polka, from the Age of Gold Suite Op. 22*
Waltz, from the Golden Mountains Op. 30*

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Andante and Variations in B-flat major Op. 46*

Wilhelm Carl Ernst Seeboeck (1859-1907) (arr. **Louis Victor Saar**, 1868-1937)
Minuet a l'antico

John Philip Sousa (1854-1932) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)
The Stars & Stripes Forever

Richard Strauss (1864-1949) (arr. **Victor Babin**, 1908-1972)
Waltzes from Der Rosenkavalier Op. 56*

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)
Pastorale

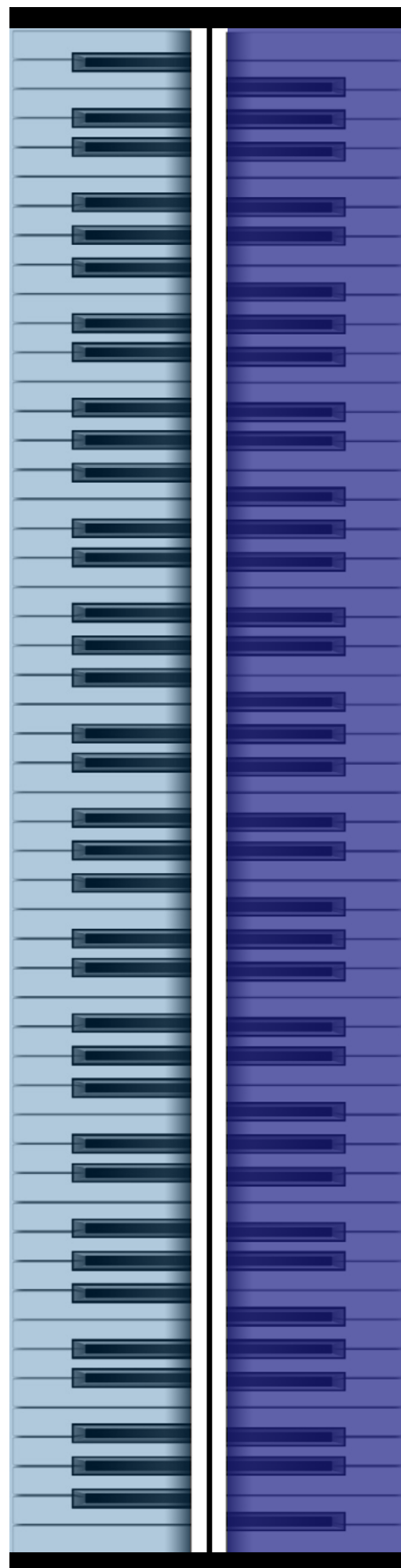
Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)
Danse russe, from Petrouchka*

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1926) (arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)
Rondo, from the Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor Op. 10*

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1926) (arr. **Felix Weingartner**, 1863-1942)
Invitation to the Dance Op. 65

Arkansas Traveler (Traditional)
(arr. **Lee Pattison**, 1890-1966)

Song of the Volga Boatmen (Traditional)
(arr. **Pierre Luboshutz**, 1891-1972)



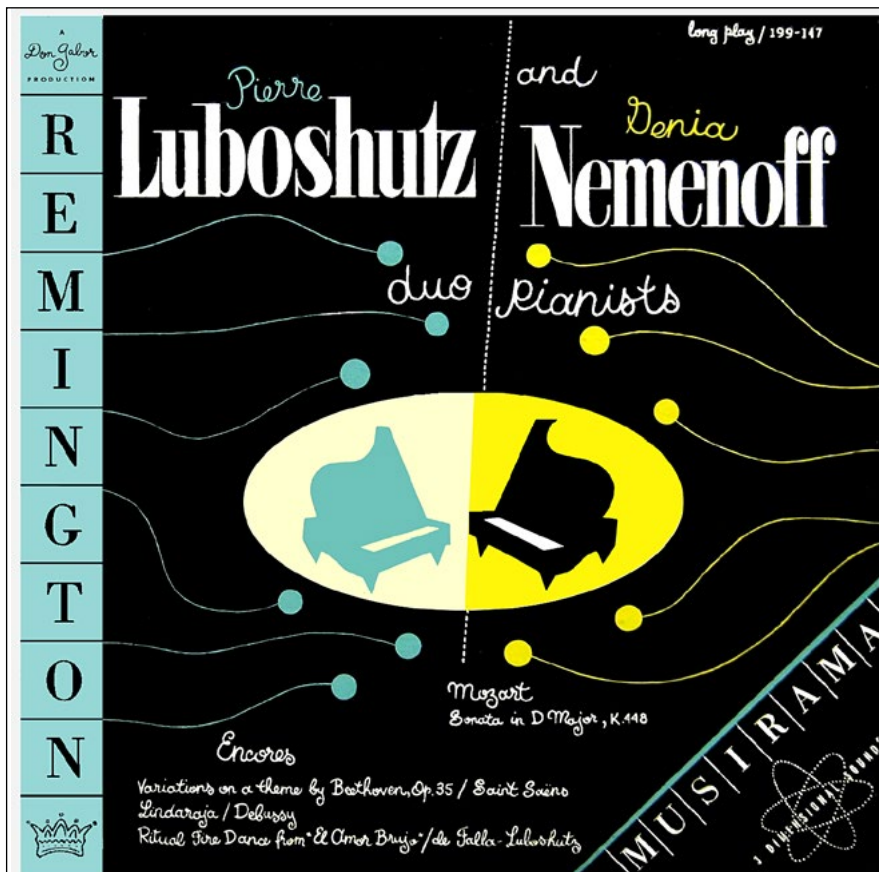
Luboshutz & Nemenoff • Selections from their Discography



Left: RCA Camden ● CAL-286 “Two-Piano Classics”, one of three 1950s LP re-issues of Luboshutz and Nemenoff’s 78rpm recordings. These would constitute the last commercial release of this material for over 60 years, until Marston Records finally restored them to the catalog.

Launched in 1953, RCA Camden was used by Victor to re-issue their 78rpm back catalog. The series was more affordably priced and generally – though not always – more drab in appearance to mitigate its competitiveness with newer, full-priced releases.

Sometimes RCA went so far as to utilize pseudonyms for the orchestras involved, omitting the conductor’s name entirely. Thus, the Boston Symphony Orchestra became the “Centennial Symphony Orchestra”, with only that and the repertoire listed on the jacket front.



Left: ● Remington 199-147, one of two albums Luboshutz & Nemenoff recorded for Don Gabor’s Remington label during the early 1950s.

Quite elusive today, these albums are doubly valuable in that they preserved key repertoire that the duo had not been able to record previously, including Debussy’s Lindaraja. Also included is their second of three recordings of Mozart’s Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major K. 448.

Though not credited on the album, the artwork and typography certainly appears to be that of the great Alex Steinweiss.

Luboshutz & Nemenoff • Selections from their Discography



Left: Everest ● SDBR 3076. A late album by Luboshutz and Nemenoff and only 1 of 2 recorded in stereo circa 1959. It features their final account of Mozart's Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major K. 448. More importantly, it preserves Pierre's near 10-minute "The Bat · A Fantasy from Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*", an inspired creation and worth the price of entry. It is included in the Marston Records set.

These recordings can also be found on an attractive World Record Club LP ● PE-756.



Left: ● Vanguard VRS-1096. Like the Everest album above, this LP documents Luboshutz & Nemenoff in two other works otherwise not present in their discography: Khachaturian's Suite for Two Pianos and Pierre's transcription of the Waltz from Shostakovich's "The Golden Mountains" Op. 30. As one can see in the cover photo, the Vanguard sessions came late in their career, but their playing remains inspired.