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# News

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## VALEDICTORY RECORDING BY 'A MOSCOW PIANIST'

### Dmitry Paperno Celebrates 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Dmitry Paperno, a major Soviet-era pianist and one of the “last living musical giants” (*Bloomsbury Review*) of a golden age of Russian concert artists, is heard on a valedictory recording released in honor of his seventy-fifth birthday.

*Through the Years*, Paperno’s seventh CD for Cedille Records, is a 2001 studio recording comprising 17 familiar and less-familiar pieces from the Baroque era to the mid-twentieth century (Cedille CDR 90000 074).

Works include Bach’s Sinfonia No. 2 in C minor and Sarabande from French Suite No. 5 in G major; Rameau’s “Le rappel des oiseaux” (Bird Calls) and an “Elegy” derived from two fast *Gigues en rondeaux* by Rameau — a masterful “transcription” by Leopold Godowsky; Scarlatti’s Sonata in C minor; Beethoven’s Andante Favori; Schumann’s Intermezzo in D minor, Op. 4, No. 5; Chopin’s “Moja pieuszczotka” (My Darling), Op. 74, No. 12, transcribed by Liszt; and Liszt’s Sonetto del Petrarca No. 104.

Also: Grieg’s Lyric Piece, Op. 65, No. 1; Debussy’s “Hommage à Rameau” from *Images*; Gottlieb Muffat’s Fugue in G minor, transcribed by Bartok; Albéniz’s Tango from *Suite Española*, Op. 165, No. 2, transcribed by Godowsky; Borodin’s “In a Monastery,” No. 1 from *Petite Suite*; Tchaikovsky’s “Dialogue,” Op. 72, No. 8; Scriabin’s *Two Poems*, Op. 32; and Shchedrin’s Humoresque.

In concept, *Through the Years* is similar to Paperno's *Uncommon Encores* CD of 1992 (CDR 90000 007). Denver's *Rocky Mountain News* called the earlier disc a "pleasing combination of tasteful choices and even tastier playing." The *Chicago Tribune* called it a program "full of delectable discoveries," played with "a panache and understanding that elevates these pieces well beyond the glittery-showpiece category."

*Through the Years* refers not only to the broad swath of music history represented on the program but also to the timeline of Paperno's career. Paperno, who emigrated to the U.S. in 1976, says he had been playing the Scarlatti, Beethoven, and Scriabin pieces since his days in the Soviet Union. Many pieces on the new CD entered his repertoire late in his career, during the decade leading up to the recording.

Paperno says he is particularly pleased to share the lesser-known works on the CD, such as the Grieg and Rameau, and the piano transcriptions, which he calls "pearls and gems."

Not surprisingly, Paperno includes a set of Russian music. The "Little Suite," Borodin's only significant composition for piano, is rarely performed outside Russia. Tchaikovsky's late "Dialogue" is representative of the salon music performed at home by nineteenth-century Russian gentry. The piece suggests an intimate and innocent conversation between a couple in love. Scriabin's *Two Poems* demonstrate contrasting sides of the composer's musical personality — a fragile, pure lyricism and impetuous drama. The 1962 "Humoresque" by Paperno's friend Rodion Shchedin actually lives up to its name by evoking laughs — or at least a smile. Its humor targets a Soviet middle-class stereotype: the inebriated lout who fancies himself civilized and cultured.

Scriabin's multi-voiced, contrapuntal first *Poem* and Bartok's version of Gottlieb Muffat's eighteenth-century Fugue in G minor point up Paperno's exceptional ability to clarify every melodic strand in even the most texturally complex passages.

Another of Paperno's characteristics, an aversion to bombast, is evident in his approach to Bartok's version of Austrian composer Gottlieb Muffat's eighteenth-century fugue. Bartok turned it

into a more open concert piece with organ-like textures and wide-ranging dynamics, reaching a thunderous triple-forte near the end. Paperno departs from Bartok's conception in the final few bars, however, choosing to conclude the piece as it begins, by returning to Muffat's simpler textures and more serene dynamics.

An emeritus professor at Chicago's DePaul University, Paperno (born Feb. 18, 1929, in Kiev) retired from concert and recording activities because of a hand ailment.

In addition to his music-making, Paperno authored a memoir, *Notes of a Moscow Pianist* (Amadeus Press, 1998) that was praised for its rare and intimate view into Soviet-era musical life. Paperno's colleagues at the elite Moscow Conservatory and on the Soviet concert circuit included illustrious names such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Emil Gilels, and Mstislav Rostropovich, among others. (Ashkenazy wrote the forward to Paperno's book, Rostropovich wrote the afterword.)

Paperno is Cedille Records' inaugural artist; his 1989 disc of Russian piano music was the label's first release.

Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE) is dedicated to showcasing the most noteworthy classical artists in and from Chicago in programs of attractive yet neglected repertoire. The label is an arm of the nonprofit Chicago Classical Recording Foundation.

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**THROUGH THE YEARS**  
**Dmitry Paperno, piano**

**Works by Bach, Rameau, Scarlatti, Beethoven  
Schumann, Chopin/Liszt, Liszt, Grieg, Debussy,  
Muffat/Bartok, Rameau/Godowsky, Albéniz/Godowsky,  
Borodin, Tchaikovsky, Scriabin, Shchedrin**

**Cedille Records CDR 90000 074**