



Vladimir de Pachmann: A Piano Virtuoso's Life and Art.

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'Piano virtuoso Vladimir de Pachmann (1848-1933) is remembered today more often than not for the comic and sometimes bizarre on-stage behavior that earned him the epithet "Chopinzee." Yet during his years as a performer, Pachmann was regarded as one of the four or five greatest pianists in the world, and as the outstanding exponent of Chopin. Mark Mitchell's richly detailed biography -- the first to be published -- reconciles the personality with the playing by offering a thorough account of the pianist's life as well as a complete reappraisal of his musicianship. Beginning with Pachmann's childhood in Odessa, Mitchell follows the process by which the youngest of 13 children evolved into one of the finest -- and most colorful -- artists in the history of the piano, one who was able to fill London's Albert Hall for a recital. Particular emphasis is laid on the two principal relationships of Pachmann's life: with the pianist Marguerite Okey, to whom he was married for a decade, and with Francesco Pallottelli, the waiter-turned-impresario under whose influence he eventually settled in Fascist-era Italy. Tracing an arc from Beethoven -- an acquaintance of Pachmann's father -- to Pierre Boulez -- a pupil of Pachmann's son -- Mitchell's biography urges a reassessment of a musician whose life and legacy have been too long in eclipse.'

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