FORGOTTEN ARTISTS
An occasional series by Christopher Howell

22. CARLO VIDUSSO (1911-1978)

1. Introductory

It is just as well this article won't be making its first appearance on April 1st.

Carlo Vidusso was a pianist, but he was also a man of numbers. He left nothing numerical to chance. Fingering first and foremost. In his scores, he fingered every single note, even the individual notes in trills. Only for a long tremolo, would he relent and put a sign indicating that the same fingers were to continue. Vidusso wrote his fingering with a thick ball-point pen, in figures as large as the space in the score would allow. Not content with numbering the fingers 1 to 5 like everybody else, he added 6 for the thumb and third finger together, 7 for the ring and little fingers together and 8 for the thumb across two keys. He expected his pupils to do likewise and would infallibly detect any deviation (1).

Not content with this, he counted the number of notes in each line of music and summed them up, so he could tell you how many notes there are in *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* – with and without the ornaments, which he wrote out in his own manuscript copy – and how many there are in the Chopin *Etudes*.

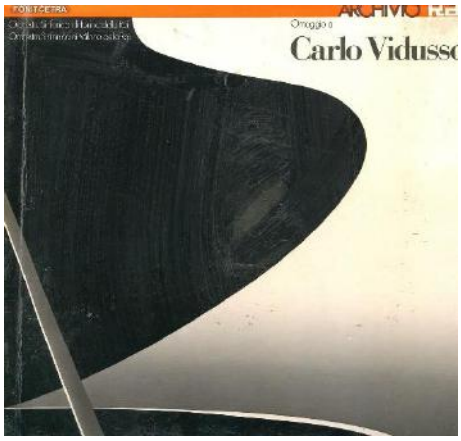
His system of memorization was number-based. The music was to be memorized from the score before taking it to the piano – not a unique system and very good if you have the time to do it. The Vidusso variant, though, was to learn, say, the entire Bach 48 or the entire Clementi "Gradus ad Parnassum" by learning the first lines of every piece, then the second lines of every piece, putting it all together at the end. And "line" meant literally that, stopping where the publisher had started a new line, regardless of musical logic.

The metronome, obviously, was a life-long source of numerical company for such a man. Indeed, he was an avid collector of them, as well as of musical editions. Maybe hoarder is a better word, though, for he would buy a metronome or a Bach or Beethoven edition that took his fancy, then set it aside and forget about it. He had around 95 metronomes, and must have drawn mighty comfort from the thought that he was provided for if 94 of them broke down on the same day. Unlike the real collector, however, he didn't catalogue them, and unlike the historian he didn't study their development over the years. Seemingly, he didn't even notice that he had several duplicates. The same went for his fifty-odd editions of the Beethoven sonatas and ninety-plus of the Bach 48. It appears that he had them only to have them, not to study their differences, or even to see what lay under the cover. On hearing that a colleague was visiting the Soviet Union, he begged him to seek out a Russian edition of the 48 of which he had only volume one. The colleague duly obliged and, on opening it, found that it was just a Russian print of an edition by Mugellini that was then standard in Italy.

Programme-planning had a special meaning for this man of numbers. When Vidusso gave a complete cycle of the Beethoven sonatas, he began the first evening with op.2/2 (the first) and op. 111 (the last). On the second evening he gave op.2/2 and op.110, followed by op.2/3 and op. 109 and so on (2). Doubtless he thanked his lucky stars, as he concluded the by meeting himself in the middle (op. 31/1-2 if I've calculated right), that Beethoven had published an even number of sonatas. The recital consisting of op.14/1 and op.78 would have been awfully short measure, by the way.

Oh dear, I'm telling this all wrong. Not because it *is* wrong, it's all true according to the unimpeachable sources I list below. What's wrong is that I'm telling it as a joke, when I should be saying it with my most bated of breaths, with the sort of awe and reverence due to a great national figure. Italy, it has often been noted, is something of a specialist in pianists whose reputation has grown exponentially by not playing. Agosti, Zecchi, Scarpini, Fiorentino, even – dare I say it – Michelangeli. And Carlo Vidusso has an honoured place among them.

So let me tell what I know about Carlo Vidusso. First a word or two about my sources. Basically there are two – the current Wikipedia does not disclose its sources and I'm disregarding it.



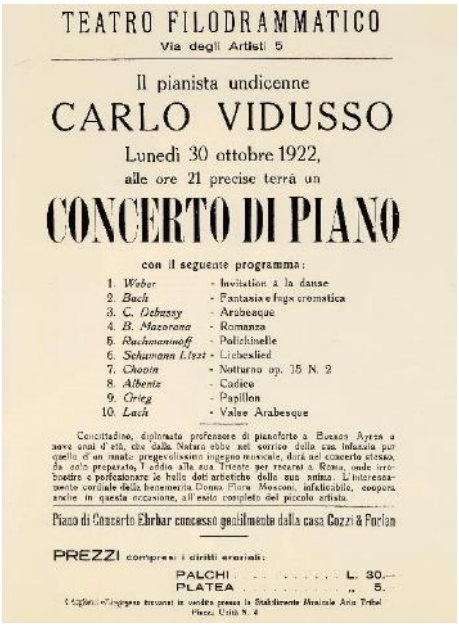
The first is a 3-LP set issued by Fonit Cetra (LAR 24) in 1982. It brings together recordings made for Italian Radio between 1950 and 1952. The set has never been transferred to CD, but practically all of its content has found its way onto YouTube. The transfers there do not sound notably different from the LPs. You will, however, be missing a treat if you don't have the very rare LPs, since the booklet was exceptionally well done. It begins with a substantial essay-memoir by Piero Rattalino. Rattalino has for many years been one of Italy's most influential – and outspoken – commentators on all things piano. When dealing with the big names, he can sometimes be more controversialist than critic. Here he provides a balanced and perceptive assessment of Vidusso, with whom he had studied and alongside whom he taught for many years at Milan Conservatoire. Other contributions, more memoirs than studies but full of interest, are by the pianist Alberto Mozzati, by Giorgio Vidusso, chiefly remembered as a Superintendent and Artistic Director but originally a pianist and pupil of Carlo Vidusso, and Marcello Abbado, brother of Claudio. Laconic as ever, Maurizio Pollini, Vidusso's most famous pupil, provides a 7-line tribute. All this is also translated into unusually good English – unattributed but I think I know the late-lamented American musician and actor who did it. If these recordings are ever issued again officially, I hope the booklet essays will not be forgotten.

The second source is a research paper – *Carlo Vidusso: l'attività didattica e artistica* – presented at Messina Conservatoire in 2001 by Riccardo Motta, who studied with Vidusso in the latter's last years. This is a more scientific-didactic affair, but the writing is fluid and readable. It can be found on Internet (3) and is worth seeking if you know Italian. Motta includes several examples of music fingered in Vidusso's hand. If you are interested in the mechanics of piano playing, these will speak for themselves, even if you cannot read Motta's often illuminating comments. Motta gives considerable biographical detail, based in part on Vidusso's own reminiscences. The biographical sketch below mainly takes Motta as its source. The numerical oddities related above are not wholly neglected by Motta, but mainly derive from Rattalino and the other writers in the Cetra booklet.

So who was Carlo Vidusso and what are his claims to our attention?

2. Early years

Carlo Vidusso was born in Talcahuano, Chile, on 10 February 1911, the son of migrant Italian workers from Trieste. When he showed musical inclinations, they sent him to study with Ernesto Drangosch at Buenos Aires Conservatoire, where he obtained a diploma at the age of nine. Of more lasting significance than his lessons with Drangosch, probably, was a recital he attended by Wilhelm Backhaus. In those years, Backhaus was a brazen virtuoso with a very different repertoire than that of the staunch guide to the Austro-German classics we remember post-war. Backhaus became a particular idol of Vidusso – he heard him again in an "unforgettable concert" at the Società del Quartetto of Milan in 1927.



TEATRO FILODRAMMATICO

Via degli Artisti 5

Il pianista undicenne

CARLO VIDUSSO

Lunedì 30 ottobre 1922,

alle ore 21 precise terrà un

CONCERTO DI PIANO

con il seguente programma:

1. *Weber* - Invitation à la danse
2. *Bach* - Fantasia e fuga cromatica
3. *C. Debussy* - Arabesque
4. *B. Mazzorana* - Romanza
5. *Rachmaninoff* - Polichinelle
6. *Schumann Liszt* - Liebeslied
7. *Chopin* - Notturno op. 15 N. 2
8. *Albeniz* - Cadice
9. *Grieg* - Papillon
10. *Lack* - Valse Arabesque

Concittadino, diplomato professore di pianoforte a Buenos Ayres a nove anni d'età, che dalla Natura ebbe nel sorriso della sua infanzia pur quello d'un innato pregevolissimo ingegno musicale, darà nel concerto stesso, da solo preparato, l'addio alla sua Trieste per recarsi a Roma, onde ivi perfezionare le belle doti artistiche della sua anima. L'interessamento cordiale della benemerita Donna Flora Mosconi, infaticabile, cooperò anche in questa occasione, all'esito completo del piccolo artista.

Piano di Concerto Ehrbar concesso gentilmente dalla casa Cozzi & Forlan

PREZZI compresi i diritti erariali:

PALCHI . . . . . L. 30.—
PLATEA . . . . . „ 5.

I biglietti d'ingresso trovansi in vendita presso la Stabilimento Musicale Aris Tribel Piazz. Unità N. 4

Vidusso's parents evidently felt this was as far as he was going to get in the New World, so they returned home to Trieste. As the illustration shows, on 30 October 1922, at the age of eleven, he gave a recital there. A note on the foot of the playbill states that he would shortly be continuing his studies in Rome.

The plan was to study with Alfredo Casella, but Casella seemingly took exception to the boy's over-confidence and did not accept him. Better luck was had with Giovanni Anfossi (1864-1946), a professor at Milan Conservatoire who also taught Michelangeli. Vidusso therefore went to study in Milan. Rattalino also mentions Carlo Lonati (1890-1955) among his piano teachers. As well as piano, Vidusso studied composition with Renzo Bossi and Giulio Cesare Paribene.

He also attracted the attention of a wealthy patron, whose name has not reached us. This gentleman paid Vidusso, from the age of twelve, to provide a weekly piano recital in his aristocratic home, before an audience of friends and music-lovers. He stipulated that each programme should be different. Young Vidusso therefore covered a vast repertoire in a very short time and it was probably this experience that formed his renowned capacity to produce brilliant and finished performances while practically sight-reading. Rattalino has related – quoted by Motta – that Vidusso's father purposely emphasized the child-prodigy aspect by having him play in short trousers even when he was in his teens, and shaving his legs to conceal tell-tale evidence of growing maturity. Despite these distractions, in 1931 Vidusso added an Italian piano diploma to the one obtained so precociously in Buenos Aires.

No further teachers are named. Vidusso had some sort of contact with Moritz Rosenthal (4) and, at an undefined date, approached Artur Schnabel – Schnabel gave master classes at Tremezzo, Lake Como, from 1933 to 1939. Logically, Schnabel would seem the antithesis of the type of pianism Vidusso had exhibited so far. Possibly, therefore, Vidusso was already moving towards a rather different musical philosophy. In the event, Schnabel accepted him but named a fee that Vidusso was unable to pay, so nothing came of it.

3. Pre-war career

Before this, however, in 1929, Vidusso had already entered the recording studios as accompanist to the up-and-coming violinist Aldo Ferraresi, then in his late twenties. Appendix 1 lists the recordings, in some of which they were joined by the soprano Enrica Alberti, as given in the catalogue of Alan Kelly (5). It will be seen that many of the takes were rejected. At least two were issued by La Voce del Padrone (Italian HMV), a curious coupling of the Meditation from Massenet's "Thaïs" and the Bach-Gounod "Ave Maria" (with Alberti). These two items are included in Rhine Classics' massive 18-CD set dedicated to Ferraresi.

Remarkably, considering that he was still a Conservatoire student, Vidusso set down a solo disc for Fonotopia on 18 March 1930. This coupled two Chopin Studies – in A minor and B major according to Gray's catalogue (6), op.25 nos. 1 and 6 according to Rattalino – with Liszt's "La Campanella". Of uncertain date, but listed in Gray, are pieces by Moszkowski and Pick-Mangiagalli, and a Brasilian Fantasy by Mignone with the Italian Radio Orchestra conducted by the composer. Rattalino also mentions a pre-war recording of Raff's "La Fileuse". According to Rattalino, these pre-war recordings "are stylistically reminiscent of Joseph Lhevinne and especially Grigory Ginburg", in contrast with his more analytical and "modern" post-war manner. When Giorgio Vidusso describes his "La Campanella" as "the most exciting I have ever heard, both live and recorded" (7), I imagine he refers to this recording, which I have not been able to hear, rather than the post-war version in the Cetra set.

Now in his early twenties, Vidusso's career proceeded with a mixture of successes, semi-successes and setbacks, some of his own making. A big success came when Pizzetti entrusted him with the first performance of "Canti della Stagione Alta". This took place on 2 April 1933 at the Teatro Augusteo of Rome, conducted by Bernardino Molinari. A performance at La Scala, Milan, soon followed, conducted by Pizzetti himself.

A semi-success – taking a generous view – was his attendance at the second Warsaw Chopin Competition in 1932, where he received a mention but no prize (8). The setback came when, having grown bored with the too-easy writing of "Canti della Stagione Alta", he outraged the composer by proposing to thicken up parts of the finale with double thirds and sixths (9). He thereby lost the support of one of Italy's leading musicians. Perhaps there was a rapprochement, though, since he played the work again under Pizzetti's direction with the Turin RAI Symphony Orchestra on 6 January 1939 and on 11 October 1946.

Nevertheless, a certain career was taking shape, at least in Italy. He made his debut at the Società del Quartetto of Milan in 1934 in a programme that included Brahms's Paganini Variations and the Prokofief Toccata, as well as plenty of Chopin and Liszt. With the Italian Radio Orchestra in Turin he played Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto under Hans Weisbach on 12 February 1937,

Mozart K491 and Mario Pilati's once quite popular Suite in Four Movements for Piano and Strings under Gianandrea Gavazzeni on 30 October 1937, the repeat performances of "Canti della Stagione Alta" and the "Emperor" again with Eugen Jochum on 1 December 1939. On 2 May 1942 he gave the first performance of the piano concerto by Armando La Rosa Parodi. Parodi is remembered today as a conductor, but this performance was directed by Angelo Questa (10). Motta also tells us that Vidusso played abroad quite often, but gives no details.

In parallel with this concert work, Vidusso developed a career as a teacher that was to continue unbroken till nearly the end of his life. In 1933 he obtained a post at the Liceo Musicale di Padova, moving to the Liceo Musicale di Verona in 1937. In 1939 he moved a step up to become professor at a Conservatoire, first Bologna, then Parma. In 1951 he moved to Milan Conservatoire, where he remained till 1977.

4. Post-war career

Rattalino relates several instances of Vidusso's incredible facility in absorbing new scores. At a few hour's notice, he agreed to substitute an indisposed pianist in Falla's "Nights in the Gardens of Spain", although he had never played it before. He read the score through in the conductor's dressing-room with the latter, Arrigo Pedrollo, beating time and singing orchestral cues. On the night, he played as if he had known it all his life.

It is probably to this extreme facility that we owe two 78 sides issued in 1948 of music by the Sicilian composer **Francesco Paolo Neglia** (1874-1932): **Nostalgia** and **L'Arpa fantastica** (La Voce del Padrone S 10519), though he makes it sound as if they are favourite encores he has been carting around the world for years.

Neglia enjoyed brief success as composer and conductor in Germany between 1901 and 1914. On returning to Italy his career made little headway. He seems to have enjoyed posthumous admirers, for most of his compositions that were published came out after his death. There is today a website dedicated to him (11) and some historical recordings have been put on YouTube, including those by Vidusso.

On this showing, Neglia wrote the sort of fashionable virtuoso music loved more by past performers and audiences than those of today. If it is difficult – and maybe unfair – to judge Neglia on the strength of these, I should have no hesitation in declaring Vidusso, on these alone, one of the great virtuosos. There's the sort of freedom and expressive nuance, as well as spellbinding legerdemain, we associate with the likes of the early Horowitz. I should rate *Nostalgia* alongside Friedman's performance of Rubinstein's Romance in E flat as an example of how an apparently undistinguished piece can be made to sound almost sublime. In *L'Arpa Fantastica* the impression is strongly that of listening to one of the great virtuosos playing the sort of dazzling trinkets – by Moszkowski, for example – such pianists loved. Neglia was really very unlucky if no one like Pachmann or Rosenthal took this up. Perhaps a modern pianist like Yuja Wang, who rather specializes in dazzling encores, might look at *L'Arpa Fantastica.*

Despite occasional exploits of this kind, Vidusso was by now losing interest in a repertoire based on virtuoso warhorses. In particular, he had no wish ever to play again the First Concerto by Tchaikovsky. Faced with a society that insisted on that and that only, he named a fee so exorbitant as to ensure, so he imagined, their hasty retreat. To his dismay, they accepted it and left him no option but to pull a long face and take it up again (12).

Inspired, perhaps, by a desire for numerical integrity, Vidusso's interest now lay in complete cycles – the entire "Wohltemperiete Klavier", the entire "Gradus ad Parnassum", both sets of Chopin Studies in a single programme, all the Liszt Transcendental Studies and all the Concert Studies, "Goyescas" complete, "Iberia" complete. Nothing to raise eyebrows today, but back in the 1940s this was unheard of. Apart from a run of provincial concert societies and – up to a point – Italian Radio, there were no great takers. A decade or so later might have seen Vidusso, with his combination of swift learning skills and desire for completeness, enter the studios to record all and more of the repertoire set down by the likes of Felicja Blumental and Michael Ponti – and probably do it all much better.

It is to Italian Radio (RAI), and more specifically to the Fonit-Cetra LP set drawn from the RAI archives, that we must turn for some sort of assessment of Vidusso's achievement. It would be interesting to know how much other material, if any, they still retain. The LP set has Liszt's Paganini Studies, 2 Concert Studies, 3 Concert Studies and "Ab Irato". According to Rattalino, he played Liszt's Studies complete, so that would include the Transcendental Studies. Similarly, the set has Books 3-4 of Albeniz' "Iberia" and the first four of Granados' "Goyescas". Again, Rattalino tells us that he gave the cycles complete. So let us hope that one day we will be able to replace the three LPs, none too generously filled, with, at the very least, three well-filled CDs.

However, back to what we have.

Though I have not heard Vidusso's pre-war 78s, I have no difficulty in believing Rattalino's claim that the **Weber-Tausig "Invitation to the Dance"** (Milan, 27 December 1950) is the one post-war recording which matches the "fluidity, detachment and magic" of Vidusso's earlier virtuosity. What could be an unduly cluttered amplification by Tausig of Weber's straightforward original is elevated to pure music. The outer sections are warmly sung, with the cadenza-like transition to the main section offering miracles of even, filigree light finger-work. The waltz proper goes at an upbeat tempo that would challenge many of us just playing Weber's original notes. Instead, the numerous countermelodies are thrown off with a deft nonchalance and a clarity of voicing that is simply mind-bending.

All the same, **Liszt's Piano Concerto no.1**, with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Torino della RAI conducted by **Mario Rossi** (Turin, 4 December 1952) is an enthralling performance, encompassing awesome power, singing passion and some incredibly brilliant light finger-work. At its heart is the slow section, in which Vidusso shows a rare understanding of the role of the pauses in Liszt's rhetoric. The orchestra is with him all the way.

Liszt's Paganini Studies (Milan, 8 June 1951) show, unfortunately, that not all is gold in Vidusso's output – indeed, they simply don't glisten enough. They are well played – no mean feat in itself, obviously – but curiously casual. One gets the impression that Vidusso would prefer something more challenging, not musically – which would be a plausible aspiration for someone who has no difficulty with the notes – but technically. The phrases are hardly breathed and one misses that sheer relish of the pianist's own virtuosity, that impish delight, which is surely a necessary ingredient.

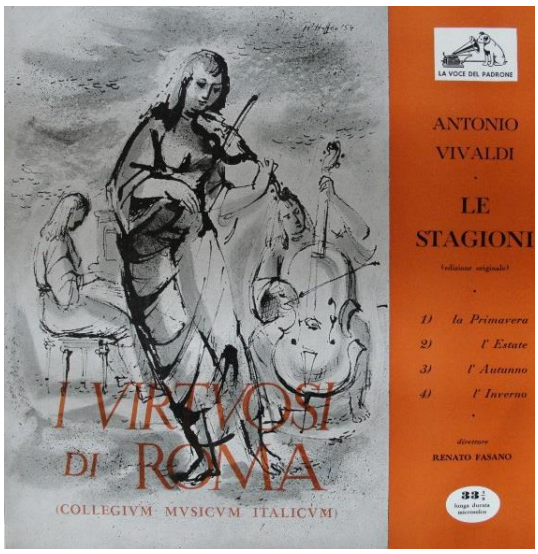
Of the **Two Concert Studies** (Milan, 11 March 1951), "Walderauschen" is rattled off with little atmosphere but "Gnomenreigen" is much better. Then, inexplicably considering they were played the same day, he is great in the **Three Concert Studies**. "Il Lamento" is expansive and passionate, with much speaking phrasing. In "La leggierezza" and "Un sospiro" he finds the magic that transcends the notes – and what fantastically even light playing in the first of these! "**Ab Irato**" (also 11 March 1951) is perhaps a less interesting piece, but he brings it off well.

The rather close recording of **Granados' Goyescas nos. 1-4** (Milan, 22 August 1951) is best heard with a fairly low volume setting, as though one were seated well back. Having sorted that out, one can hear a magic commensurate with his better-recorded competitors. Vidusso's control of the teeming textures is masterly and his passionate approach is closest to that of Eduard Del Pueyo, avoiding the somewhat dry classicism of Larrocha or the long-drawn romanticism of Achucarro. This latter, very free but infinitely expressive, would probably be my favourite, but Vidusso certainly shows that a more impetuous approach has its attractions.

Volumes 3 and 4 of **Albeniz' Iberia** were set down in Milan, 7 January 1951. Fine as Vidusso is in Granados, I'd say he's great in Albeniz. In his hands, the dance accompaniments take on an independent life of their own, the melodies seemingly free to sing passionately, sadly or proudly as they will. Excellent as Larrocha and Orozco are – the former more drily classical, the latter more romantic – they do not quite display this extreme independence of voices, with the result that the music emerges from the pages a little more freely in Vidusso's performances.

From **Milhaud's Saudades do Brasil**, the LPs give us *Sorocaba, Leme, Copacabana, Ipanema,* and *Tijuca.* (Milan, 27 December 1950). Since this selection of five pieces does not follow the published sequence I presume they are not drawn from a complete cycle of the twelve – but one can always hope. Vidusso's ability to voice the different parts independently means that Milhaud's bitonality makes sense at last – it sounds like different things happening at once rather than an ill-coagulated collection of wrong harmonies. Vidusso is also tighter rhythmically than most pianists who have played this – to the music's benefit. He evokes the streets and villages of Brasil where others place it in a smoke-filled bar of Montmartre.
All these RAI recordings except the Concerto seem to have been made in the studio, without an audience.

5. Withdrawal
Listening to these RAI recordings, you would suppose that Vidusso's career was going full steam ahead. However, memory problems began to emerge and the *coup de grâce* came when the middle finger of his right hand developed a tendency to lock. Both Rattalino and Motta take the view that this was a minor neurological problem that could have been cured quite easily. But Vidusso, disenchanted with the world of public playing, was happy to make it his official excuse for withdrawal. His work as a recording artist ended almost as it had begun – in an accompanying role. For another decade or so, he acted as harpsichord continuo player in Renato Fasano's I Virtuosi di Roma. Not all notices of this group trouble even to mention the continuo player and I am not sure how safe it is to make the default assumption that he is playing on all their records through the 1950s. Certainly, he was named in the Radio Times when the group gave a concert a Glyndebourne in 1954, which was broadcast. And he was named when they travelled to England again in 1959 to set down Vivaldi's Four Seasons in the EMI studios. Even in this role, numerical eccentricities could emerge. In order to make things a little more interesting for himself, he would decide on the spur of the moment that, this evening he would play the whole programme without using his third finger, or his fourth finger. Presumably, he was on best behaviour when the group went into the recording studios.



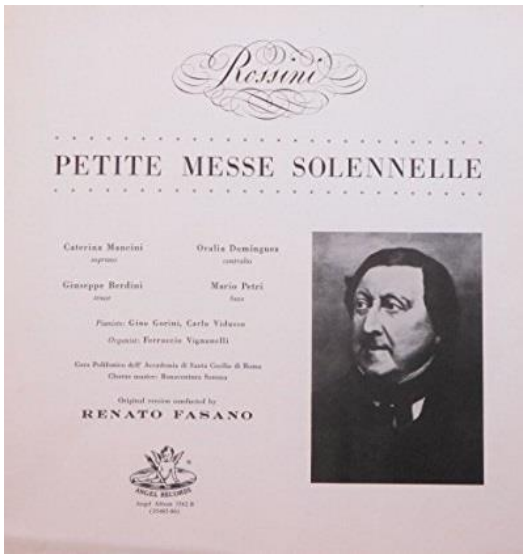
The baroque discs by Renato Fasano's I Virtuosi di Roma seem to have fallen further from view than those of I Musici or Claudio Scimone's with I Solisti Veneti. The sheer fact that their recording of **Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons"** was set down in Abbey Road during a visit to London shows that they got around in their day. The performance is often very imaginative, but the imagination concerned – despite small, albeit modern instrument, forces and harpsichord continuo – seems closer to the aesthetic of a cycle of character pieces by Schumann. Some of the tempi sound oddly wrong, more so than in some of the magnificently wrong performances by great conductors determined to impose their personality on Vivaldi. Unusually, the violin solos are divided between two artists, Luigi Ferro ("Spring" and "Autumn") and Guido Mozzato ("Summer" and "Winter").

All this has little to do with Vidusso himself, who for the most part plonks away obligingly in the middle distance. The central movement of "Autumn" claims our attention, however, since Vidusso has greater presence here.

I don't know what edition is being used, but Malipiero's idea of realizing the harpsichord continuo as a sort of Alberti bass, with the solo violin silent, seems to have entered the collective consciousness of many earlier interpreters. It can be heard in Bernardino Molinari's 1942 recording – Malipiero's edition is dated 1950, but he was a ubiquitous figure and Italy's leading Vivaldi expert, so he may well have been brought in to advise. In standard form, it can be seen and heard on a 1991 RAI TV film conducted in Naples by Franco Caracciolo. The orchestral strings play softly and reverently, the harpsichord plinks its quavers audibly but not invasively and the soloist, Felix Ayo, tucks his instrument under his armpit and waits for them to finish. It crossed the Atlantic to Philadelphia where, under Eugene Ormandy, the massed strings swoon voluptuously around the harpsichord. Even the modernist Hermann Scherchen stayed followed the Malipiero line, though with an "interesting" variant – if you want to know what happens when you try to play Debussy on the harpsichord, go here.

Perhaps I should explain that Vivaldi simply wrote a figured bass line (bass plus chords) with the instruction "il cembalo arpeggia" – "the harpsichord plays arpeggios". This could be realized in numerous ways. On another earlier recording, the Kaufman/Swoboda (1948), the harpsichord brushes guitar-like chords with its lute stop. The soloist is not silent but rather bares his violinistic soul – no one told him this wasn't a gypsy band. Actually, Vivaldi didn't ask the soloist to stay silent, but on the other hand, he had him put on his mute and play the same music as the rest of the first violins. Small wonder, then, if any true soloist takes umbrage, downs his instrument and leaves them to get on with it.

While basically offering the Malipiero solution, the Fasano/Vidusso performance offers a striking slant on it. The harpsichord is brought well to the fore, as if he were the soloist, and plays his quavers with a mechanical regularity such as only a man with 95 metronomes could achieve. The strings play with a shimmering pianissimo so you scarcely realize they are playing a melody at all. The result has a magical fascination all of its own. The seeds of much Philip Glass are here. What it has to do with Vivaldi is anyone's guess, though they are not actually doing anything that couldn't have been done with the resources available to Vivaldi. Vidusso doesn't exactly play Malipiero's harpsichord part, he distributes the notes within the chord slightly differently, but the principle is the same. This is a variant that anyone who can play at all could devise on the spot.



In one recording directed by Fasano, Vidusso is actually billed as a pianist, though there is some doubt as to what he really does. This **is Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle**, sung by **Caterina Mancini** (soprano), **Oralia Dominguez** (contralto), **Amedeo Berdini** (tenor), **Mario Petri** (bass) and the **Coro Polifonico dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia di Roma**. The pianists are **Gino Gorini** and **Carlo Vidusso**, the harmonium is played by **Ferruccio Vignanelli** (HMV ALP 1278/9, Angel 3562 B). This was reviewed as a new issue by Billboard on 31 March 1958, where they remarked "Performance is well-conceived, in proper spirit and style. Competition is negligible". Perhaps the recording had taken some time to cross the Atlantic, for the recording is listed in WERM Supplement III, which had a cut-off date of March 1956. I do not know if this was the first recording of the work, but previous supplements to WERM had not listed any. It now entered the lists together with a Nixa recording of the orchestral version, also recorded in Rome under Vitalini. Was this the negligible competition referred to by Billboard?

It had better be said at once that the performance has several vicious cuts – and one modern reissue has further cut the "Christe eleison" and the second "Kyrie" in order to squeeze the rest onto a single CD. Despite the cuts, the real length is 82:24. LP sides back in the early 1950s rarely ventured beyond 20 minutes, so it is difficult to know whether Fasano thought he was taming a sprawling monster, or whether HMV told him there was no way the recording could extend to five sides, which it surely would have if it had been complete. Either way, the cuts are an insult to Rossini's aesthetic and vision. Another drawback is that the harmonium is not only granted a niggardly presence when it plays, there are entire movements where Rossini has given it a part and it does not play at all. This is particularly unfortunate at one point where it holds the bass line, which is therefore lacking from the harmony. Its absence means, in any case, that we are not hearing the colours Rossini wanted us to hear.

Despite this, for about half the way I quite enjoyed it. The soloists are good to excellent and the choir is a fine body, producing a sweet, well-blended tone. You have to take the Italian habit, in religious music, of mumbled, mushy consonants in the interests of legato and gentle attack, but it's a superior example of its kind. Tempi are well chosen, but the suspicion arises that Fasano is not a good choral conductor. Words like "Gloria" and "Credo" have their consonants on the beat, with the result that the actual sung note arrives late – the "Gl" and the "Cr" should anticipate the beat. A proper choral conductor would have put this right.

However – about half way, I said. Then some odd things, apart from the cuts, started to happen. The "Preludio religioso" is played entirely on the harmonium, even the opening bars where Rossini specifically asks for the piano – for the fugal section he allows either. The player makes a massive rallentando at the end of each section. The "Sanctus", shorn of its introduction, is sung so slowly you can hardly believe it. "O salutaris hostia" is transposed a third down and sung by the contralto. It is furthermore practically hooked onto the "Agnus Dei", since the final bars are lopped off and the "Agnus" goes straight into the chugging accompaniment, without a trace of the introduction. This means that about the last fifteen minutes are in the same key and sung by the same singer. Poor Rossini.

But what about Vidusso? In truth, I don't know. Rossini's idea seems to have been that both pianists played together – there is not an independent second piano part. Two pianos make a characteristic clumpy sound, and I'm as sure as eggs is eggs that only one plays here, except just possibly under the heavier choruses where it's difficult to hear what's going on. Furthermore, given the percussive nature of the piano's attack, and its tuning idiosyncrasies, it is utterly impossible for two pianists to play the same music on two instruments for 80 minutes and sound like just one. Some split attacks, particularly in dotted rhythms, are inevitable, the more so under a conductor who can't always bring two soloists in together. Presumably, then, they alternate in some sort of way. Since Vidusso's name comes second, maybe he doesn't play very much at all. Gino Gorini, by the way, was an excellent pianist who later formed a longstanding piano duo with Sergio Lorenzi.

I hope, therefore, that no one will go here for their Petite Messe Solennelle. Admirers of specific singers, some of whose arias are left intact, might find something of interest here. Not so much Dominguez, who was a fairly constant presence on the 1950s recording scene, or Mancini, who is robbed of her "O salutaris hostia". But Berdini and Petri are fine singers whose legacy is mainly confined to the RAI archives. The former, in particular, turns in a very fine "Domine Deus".

6. Conservatorio, Pollini and fingering

Apart from a spot of continuo playing, then, Vidusso's concert career ended in the early 1950s. He remained a well-regarded teacher at the Milan Conservatoire until his retirement in 1977. He died in Milan on 7 August 1978. No doubt Pollini's success at the 1960 Warsaw competition, fully consolidated on the international stage after a few years' sabbatical, led to a goodly number of would-be Pollinis knocking on Vidusso's door. Various lists of Vidusso's pupils can be found. In truth, and without wishing to disparage any pianist who may have deserved a wider career than they achieved, the remarkable thing is, not that Pollini was among Vidusso's pupils, but that 38 years of teaching in one conservatoire or another produced no other pupil of remotely comparable international status. As Rattalino observed, such strict digital methods were likely to inspire either blind obeisance or rebellion. Pollini's brief contribution to the Fonit-Cetra booklet dodges the issue of what he actually learnt:

> *Having studied with Carlo Vidusso in the years of my musical training, I am delighted at the publication of some of his interpretations as records, which may contribute to a knowledge of this musician who played an irreplaceable role as concert pianist and as teacher in recent decades* (13).

According to Motta, Pollini's relation with Vidusso was not an easy one.

> *The relationship between the two … was not, I believe, of the most idyllic. Various anecdotes have been told, but I would like to relate one, which must surely be true, since I was told it directly by the Maestro in 1974. … During a lesson on this Etude [op.10/4], Vidusso insisted on his own fingering at bar 32, in line with what is usually advised: a justifiable change of fingers on the repeated C sharp in the left hand.*
> *Pollini did not take kindly to this suggestion and continued to play the repeated C sharp with the same finger (something that he did very easily). His teacher … posed an ultimatum: "change fingering or I'll show you the door". As a result of Pollini's obstinacy, Vidusso really did show him the quickest way out of the house. Nevertheless … he repented of his rigidity and regretted losing the best pupil he had ever had.*
> *By good fortune, young Maurizio also repented and knocked on his teacher's door, submitting himself once more to his "loving" care* (14).

Pollini himself, however, in a 1992 interview with Umberto Masini, was not to be drawn.

> UM: *Is it true that your teacher, the pianist Carlo Vidusso, was very precise over fingering and fingered every note?*
> MP: *Yes, it's true, he fingered everything.*
> UM: *Do you do this, too?*
> MP: *No, not at all (laughs). If you looked at my scores, you wouldn't find the smallest mark, I write very few fingerings.*
> *Fingering is certainly important. You don't need to write it, but in many passages it's essential for it to be done well, not least for the style and the sound.*
> UM: *Was Vidusso a difficult teacher?*
> MP: *No, not at all. He left me very free* (15).

Motta gives numerous examples of Vidusso's personal copies of various scores, duly fingered in his own hand. It is a pity – but perhaps the material available dictated this – that none of the pieces illustrated and discussed are among those of which a recording is currently accessible, in the event that one exists at all.

Exceptional cases were Bach's "Das Wohlemperierte Klavier" and a few other works with strongly contrapuntal content, where Vidusso wrote the fugues out in manuscript, one stave to a part, prior to fingering them. They amount, therefore, to unpublished "didactic" editions, but with at least one healthy aspect. In an age before "Urtext" was all the rage, Vidusso did not add any expression marks of his own, in the manner of the Casella and Mugellini editions then in standard use in Italy. The score was left bare of all but fingering and marking out of the fugal entries. In works from a later epoch, Vidusso had an equally rigorous method of noting the pedalling, down to half, quarter and even eighth pedals. This seems curious, since he must have known that the same pedalling sounds different on different pianos and in different acoustics.

After duly reading Motta's analyses, my impression is that he "doth protest too much". Many of Vidusso's principles – particularly his insistence on making legato with the fingers and not with the pedal – are proper principles on which any teacher would insist, certainly in music up to and including Chopin, and most later music of classical inspiration, such as Brahms. The curious thing is his obsessive manner of writing down to the last detail things that should come naturally. However Rattalino notes – Motta does not entirely agree with this analysis – that Vidusso at times seems to have chosen a deliberately perverse fingering, or modified his fingering, as a means of providing a sort of parallel interest and challenge to the purely musical one. Certainly, Motta provides instances where a similar or identical passage is fingered differently each time, when normally it would be taken for granted that the fingering would remain the same for such passages.

What all this seems to amount to, is that Vidusso set up a sort of parallel, independent techno-mechanical basis for his study. The fingering, the pedalling, and the curious system of memorizing line by line whatever the musical sense, seem devised to provide an independent backup, a safety net to the musical performance that emerged in the end.

Was it necessary? Personally, I find that difficulties of fingering, technique and even memorization diminish when they are all aligned towards a musical result. On the other hand, while I usually manage to play the music I want to play, I could not approach the sort of virtuoso prestidigitation Vidusso achieved in his finest period. Vidusso would doubtless have told me this was because I do not adopt his study methods. For all I know he may have been right except that, while his methods got him where he wanted for a time, I wonder if they sowed the seed of his post-war decline.

7. Fakes

One way to increase the discography of an artist who made few discs is to fake a few more. Not that Eli Oberstein, who issued a number of "Vidusso" recordings on Royale, Allegro and others of his bargain basement labels, seems to have had Vidusso's cause particularly at heart. Indeed, the mystery remains why he mixed blatant pseudonyms with the names of genuine artists who nevertheless did not play on the records attributed to them. What has been established, by Ernst Lumpe (16) and others, is that Oberstein did a roaring trade in circulating recordings "obtained" – not to say pilfered – from various German radio stations, and possibly also from RAI. "Vidusso" recordings issued by Oberstein include – this list may not be complete – Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto no. 1 (with Rome Symphony Orchestra/Felix Guenther, Royale 1221), Chopin's Piano Concerto no. 1 (Rome SO/Angelo Questa), Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto no. 2 (Rome SO/Questa, Royale 1273), Schumann's Piano Concerto (Rome SO/Guenther, Royale 1358) and Mozart's 2-Piano Concerto K.365 (with Arthur Sanford, Rome SO/Guenther, Royale 1379). A real curiosity was "The Piano Melodies of Chopin" – Etudes op.10/3, 5 & 12, Etude op. 25/9, Polonaises op.26/2 & op.53, Preludes op.28/1, 15. 18 & 20, Valses op. 18, 64/1-2, op.70/1 (the selections, listed in WERM II, vary slightly between Royale 1214, 1215 and 6713), played as piano duets with Arthur Sanford.

Regarding the authenticity of these recordings, Lumpe wrote "Research in Italy resulted in a note from a former pupil of Vidusso, Piero Rattalino, in which he states that the pianist knew about the illegal use of his name on certain records of Oberstein. Vidusso had been in the US with an orchestra and P. R. thought this might have prompted Oberstein to use his name. The pianist denied his authorship for all those recordings which Royale released under his name, yet he did not take any legal action against Oberstein". Vidusso's denial of all responsibility would seem 100% conclusive. Rattalino also informed Lumpe that he had heard the recordings and excluded them as the work of Vidusso on stylistic grounds. Since nobody knew Vidusso's style better than Rattalino, this would seem to add another 90% at the very least. For what my own 10% is worth, I have heard two of the recordings in question and I do not think I have been listening to the same pianist as in the Fonit-Cetra set, and I doubt is a single pianist played on the two discs in question.

Moreover, Lumpe has succeeded in showing that some of these recordings match other recordings that are more convincingly attributed. The Schumann was issued on Mercury MG 15020 as the work of Rosl Schmid and the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra under Joseph Keilberth. The Mozart was also issued on Mercury (MG 10007), naming the performers as Hans Altmann (who also conducted) and Heinz Schröter with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. Both the Royale and the Mercury issues were coupled with the same performance of Mozart's Concerto K.414. The Royale claimed Arthur Sanford with the Rome SO/Guenther, the Mercury gave Margret Knittel with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra/Rudolf Albert. Lumpe was able to contact Knittel, who confirmed that she had performed this concerto in Munich with Albert in the early 1950s.

It will be seen that all the "Vidusso" concerto recordings are allegedly accompanied by the "Rome Symphony Orchestra" under conductors who actually existed. The Rome Symphony Orchestra itself is the least of the problems, since the Rome RAI Symphony Orchestra has appeared under this guise on several labels, some of them pretty well official. Italian orchestras in those days still used plentiful string portamenti, were not invariably disciplined and had somewhat raw, if characterful, wind players.

I hear none of these characteristics in the recordings I've heard. Guenther is a little remembered figure but opera buffs know Questa as the reliable conductor of several Cetra sets.

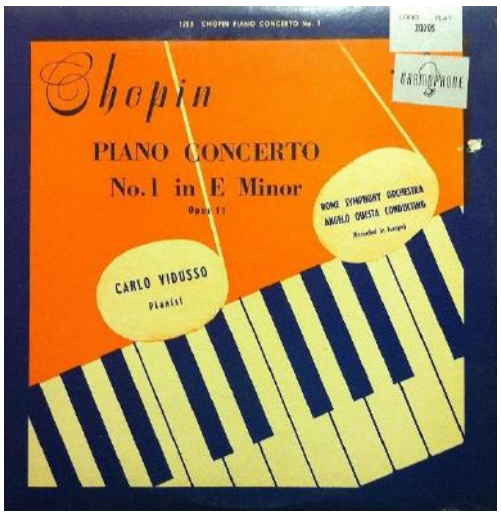
Yet there are some curious coincidences, if that is what they are. As noted above, Vidusso and Questa really did appear together at least once, giving the première of Armando La Rosa Parodi's Piano Concerto with the Turin RAI Symphony orchestra on 2nd May 1942. Interestingly, the concert began with Borodin's Second Symphony. A recording of this work purporting to be by Questa and the "Rome Symphony Orchestra" on Royale 1237. So just possibly, Oberstein got hold of a recording of this concert and one of the discs attributed to Questa is genuinely his work. The Parodi Concerto would hardly have been Oberstein's repertoire, but maybe he thought Carlo Vidusso was a good-sounding name. However, this same Borodin performance also appeared on Allegro ALG 3048, where it was said to be played by the Hastings Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Bath – more of these in a minute.

The persistent association of Vidusso with "Arthur Sanford" – sometimes "Sandford" – is another curiosity. A search for this "Arthur Sanford" was fruitless, but a British pianist called Arthur Sandford was certainly active from the 1930s through to the 1950s. An assiduous collaborator with Billy Cotton, Charles Williams, the BBC Variety orchestra, Melachrino, Mantovani and Camerata, he made a goodly number of recordings of works such as the "Warsaw Concerto" and the "Cornish Rhapsody", as well as "famous themes" from concertos by Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov et al. No one except Royale-Allegro ever claimed that he played a more classically inclined repertoire, though since he had a solid Royal Academy training, he would presumably have been competent to do so. He seems an unlikely pianist to transport to Rome to perform with one of Italy's leading virtuosos.

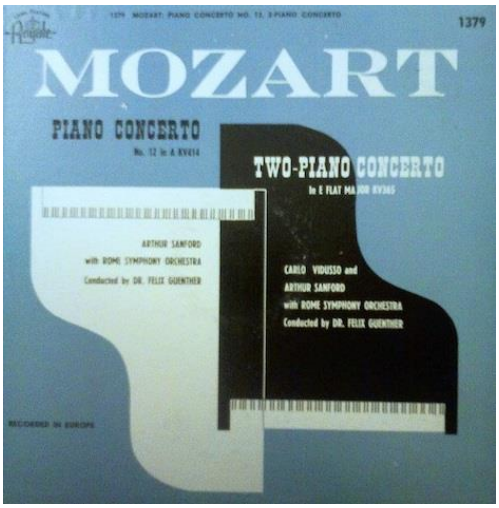
The "Hastings Symphony Orchestra" is another mystery, though John Bath (1915-2004) originally operated in South-East England (17). The son of Hubert Bath of "Cornish Rhapsody" fame, he was appointed conductor of the newly-constituted BBC West of England Light Orchestra in 1950, but marched out after a few weeks following "differences with the BBC" (18). He crossed the Atlantic and did film work in Canada during the 1950s, moving to Hollywood in the 1960s. In the last year of his life he moved back to Hastings, UK.

Hastings, like many British seaside towns, had a Municipal orchestra before the Second World War. Its conductor, Julius Harrison, was a well-regarded musician and they made a few recordings together. Post-war, only the orchestra of Bournemouth rose phoenix-like from the ashes. Yet in or around 1951, a "Hastings Symphony Orchestra" set down four movements of the ballet music from Saint-Saëns' "Henri VIII" on Oriole S.A. 503/4. Oriole was a perfectly respectable label, though it dealt mainly with light and popular repertoire. The well-informed Damian Rogan has taken this recording as genuine (19). So this, at least, is probably a real John Bath recording. But what was the orchestra? A band of moonlighting BBC players in a Hastings venue? A genuine attempt, aborted by Bath's transfer to Canada, to reconstitute a Hastings orchestra on Bournemouth lines?

The plot now thickens, for the "Henri VIII" recording was taken up by Oberstein, who used it as a coupling for the Allegro issue of Saint-Saëns' Second Piano Concerto in which Bath and the "Hastings Symphony Orchestra" were supposedly joined by Arthur Sanford. Evidently, Oberstein liked the name, for a goodly number of "Hastings Symphony Orchestra" LPs followed over the next few years. Enough have been identified by Lumpe (20) to leave no doubt that there is not a genuine one among them. Most named John Bath as the conducter, but a few, including Bruckner's Fourth Symphony, were led by one Jan Tubbs. This at least shows that Oberstein, or one of his entourage, had a fund of schoolboy humour (bathtubs, gettit?) (21).



All this has taken us rather far from Carlo Vidusso, but I wished to illustrate the quagmire into which the Royale/Allegro issues lead us. Quite recently, an enthusiastic YouTuber has put a couple of these recordings on his channel (22). While we may be surprised that the Youtuber was seemingly unaware of the truth surrounding this recording – it shows up easily enough on Internet – there need be no complaint about his ears, for the Chopin First Piano Concerto, in particular, is a remarkable performance. It is much freer and more improvisatory than Vidusso was wont to be, if his Liszt First Concerto is anything to go by, with a fast, impetuous finale. It would be very interesting to know who really is playing. The idiosyncrasies at the start of the finale should make identification easy if the original tape should ever turn up. Just fishing around casually, I found certain similarities with the 1949 live performance by Alexander Brailowky and the Concertgebouw under Van Beinum – enough to raise the possibility that Oberstein might have got hold of another Brailowsky performance from about the same time.



The Mozart double concerto is less remarkable, but gets a brisk, nifty performance.

8. Final thoughts

Before taking leave of Vidusso, it seems right to mention that he published at least three compositions for piano – *Fantasia cinese* (Zanibon, Padua, 1935), *Intermezzo e studio di fuga* (1937) and *Danza cilena* (Edizioni Metron, Milan, 1945). Motta reproduces the first nine bars of the latter – sufficient to show that he adopted a vaguely post-impressionist manner, but hardly enough to show whether Vidusso the composer has any claims on us.

Regarding Vidusso the teacher teacher, I have already noted the strange lack of any major international name except Pollini in so many years. Apart from a rigorous system of fingering, what did his pupils learn? Pollini recollected that he was left very free, but Pollini was doubtless brimful of ideas from the start. What of a pianist who needed guidance over the styles of the different composers, and the colours and touches these imply? Motta's recollections over Bach do not reassure me:

> *From my personal recollections Vidusso, in the Preludes that were not obviously slow in tempo, tended towards a brilliant, pianistic interpretation. In the fugues, he suggested a moderate pace, excepting those where brilliance was an intrinsic part of the composition. In these, he proposed to differentiate the episodes in timbre and expected the subject always to be brought out clearly* (23).

So far, so good, but is it enough for ninety-six pieces, each with its own character? The unknown factor here is Motta himself. If he, too, was brimful of ideas it could have been a wise decision by the teacher to offer only general guidelines. It would be interesting to hear a few of Vidusso pupils' memories. I would gladly append them – translating them into English where necessary – to this study.

In the end, though, Vidusso's claim to our attention, however little material we have to go on, is as a pianist.

Vidusso has one thing in common – perhaps two – with another pianist who has been discussed in this series – Maryla Jonas. They both entered the 1932 Warsaw Chopin Competition, and neither did very well, though Jonas did a little better. She was placed thirteenth, Vidusso just got a mention. It would be difficult to find two artists less alike in their general approach to music and to the piano. Yet there is one other feature they share. While neither was exactly a "great pianist" as this is usually understood, both of them touched greatness for a brief period.

With Jonas, we are lucky. We don't have many records, but at least they document her moment of greatness. Above all, we have her Chopin Mazurkas. Vidusso's moment of greatness may actually have lasted a little longer, but we have only vague hints in the few pre-war records and, post-war, the Neglia pieces and the Weber-Tausig "Invitation to the Dance".

Jonas was certainly highly unlucky in her personal history and in her health, but I also argued that certain aspects of her personality conspired to pull her down from her hard-won pedestal. In the case of Vidusso, it seems that his very great natural gifts were undermined by a facility that left him disinclined to deepen beyond his first approach to a piece. Above all, his obsession with numbers took an increasing toll. Self-renewal is essential if an artist is to maintain a long career. For Vidusso, self-renewal meant guarding against boredom by covering an ever wider repertoire. The pre-war old-school virtuoso was levelling out to become a highly efficient, even magnificently efficient, modern-style completist.

Where this would have led, we cannot know. Ostensibly, he was stopped by a neural finger problem. If he really just had enough, no doubt some other excuse would have presented itself. But never mind, what he did achieve was real enough. It would be good if one of the small companies specializing in the piano repertoire – maybe Arbiter, which has announced a major Pietro Scarpini project – could assemble what survives: the few pre-war records, the Neglia pairing and whatever the RAI vaults still contain.

Forgotten Artists index page

Appendix: Recordings with Aldo Ferraresi (violin)

This information comes from the CHARM site. The ultimate source is the catalogue by Kelly. All recordings were made in Milan, Italy.

27 June 1929

Sérénade espagnole (composer not named): CM 989-1

Massenet: Thaïs: Meditation: CM 990-1; CM 990-2

27 October 1929

Bazzini: La ronde des lutins: CM1271-1 (with harmonica). Rejected.

29 October 1929

Mascagni: Amico Fritz: Violinato: BM1184-1, rejected; BM1184-2, rejected; BM1184-3

Souvenir (composer not named): BM1185-1, rejected; BM1185-2, rejected

Sarasate: Zapateado: BM1186-1, rejected, BM1186-2

30 October 1929

Sérénade espagnole (composer not named): CM 989-3

Massenet: Thaïs: Meditation: CM 990-3

Serenata (composer not named): BM1189-1, rejected; BM1189-2, rejected

Bach-Gounod: Ave Maria: BM1190-1, rejected; BM1190-2, rejected; BM1190-3, rejected; CM1191-1, rejected; CM1191-2

27 November 1929

Bach-Gounod: Ave Maria (with **Enrica Alberti**, soprano): BM1269-1; BM1269-2, rejected; (without vocal?) CM1270-1; (without vocal?) CM1270-2, rejected

28 November 1929

Bellini: La Somnambula: Prendi, l'anel ti dono: CM1275-1; CM1275-2

Paganini-Kreisler: Le Streghe: 1st movement: CM1276-1; CM1276-2, rejected

Paganini-Kreisler: Le Streghe: 2nd movement: CM1277-1, rejected; CM1277-2, rejected

9 December 1929

Pinsuti: Il libro santo (with **Enrica Alberti**, soprano): BM1314-1, rejected; BM1314-2, rejected

Braga: Serenata (Leggenda valacca) (with **Enrica Alberti**, soprano): BM1315-1, rejected; BM1315-2, rejected.

Notes

(1) As described by Piero Rattalino in his essay for the LP Set "Omaggio a Carlo Vidusso" (Fonit-Cetra LAR 24). Other accounts vary slightly over the numbers from 6 upwards but agree in principle.

(2) Related by Marcello Abbado in "Omaggio a Carlo Vidusso" (Fonit-Cetra LAR 24). The other information in this introductory section is as given by Rattalino, ibid.

(3) https://it.scribd.com/doc/56715694/Vidusso.

(4) According to Motta, Rosenthal wrote an enthusiastic letter of recommendation which was kept by Vidusso's mother and has subsequently been lost. According to Rattalino, Vidusso persuaded Rosenthal to hear him, but was disappointed by what Rosenthal said.

(5) This can be consulted at CHARM.

(6) This, too, can be consulted at CHARM.

(7) Essay by Giorgio Vidusso in "Omaggio a Carlo Vidusso" (Fonit-Cetra LAR 24).

(8) According to Motta, Vidusso was a jury member of the Warsaw Competition following the success of his pupil Pollini in 1960, but none of the lists of jury members I have seen corroborates this.

(9) Related by Rattalino, ibid.

(10) This information comes from the RAI's site http://www.osn.teche.rai.it/. This site is gradually making available details of all programmes given by RAI orchestras since their inception. It is already an invaluable resource, though it is clearly work in progress. For the moment it is limited to the Turin

orchestra and is not yet complete – Vidusso's 1952 Liszt Concerto performance with Mario Rossi, included in the Fonit-Cetra set, is not listed, for example.
(11) http://www.francescopaoloneglia.it/
(12) Related by Rattalino, ibid.
(13) Ibid. This is Pollini's complete tribute.
(14) Motta, ibid. My translation.
(15) MUSICA 73, April-May 1992. My translation.
(16) PSEUDONYMOUS PERFORMERS ON EARLY LP RECORDS: RUMOURS, FACTS & FINDS by Ernst A. Lumpe, http://www.soundfountain.com/allegro-royale/lumpeindex.html.
(17) This fairly full biography stresses his local associations: http://ryesown.co.uk/john-bath-composer-and-conductor-1915-2004/
(18) BBC Orchestras in the West of England: http://www.turnipnet.com/mom/bbcwest.htm.
(19) It is included on CRQ CD210-211 – By Spa and Seaside: http://music.damians78s.co.uk/crq-editions/crq-cd210-211-by-spa-and-seaside/.
(20) A performance of the Ravel Left-Hand Concerto, for instance, apparently played by Sanford and the Hastings Symphony Orchestra with an unnamed conductor, is actually a 1952 performance by Géza Anda and the South-West German Radio Orchestra under Hans Rosbaud. The tape is still in the radio archives.
(21) Anyone who wants to hear what this hypothetical orchestra sounded like can hear the "Tubbs" Bruckner at John Berky's Bruckner site - https://www.abruckner.com/downloads/downloadofthemonth/September08/. BNF Collection, one of several labels offering transfers for download of forgotten records, has a coupling of Beethoven's Eighth and Mozart's "Paris" Symphony under "Bath" which can be found in various places: https://www.amazon.it/Hastings-Symphony-Orchestra-John-Bath/s?ie=UTF8&page=1&rh=n%3A1748203031%2Ck%3AHastings%20Symphony%20Orchestra%5Cc%20John%20Bath. These recordings, on Royale, were listed in WERM II. Like many Royale listings, they were shadowed by Allegro issues of the same repertoire by "other" performers. In the case of the Beethoven, the other performers were the Berlin Symphony orchestra under Leopold Ludwig. Ludwig was another real conductor who appeared several times on Oberstein labels – and more than one of "his" recordings have been identified as the work of other conductors.
(22) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71ye_6Ul2jc and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX9p89fmXdU.
(23) Ibid., my translation.