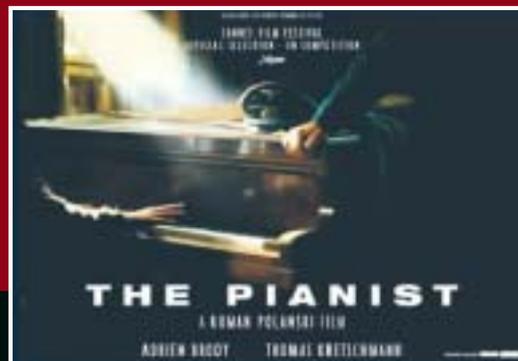


# WŁADYSŁAW SZPILMAN

The Pianist



Concert Works  
and Songs

With a preface by  
Krystian Zimerman

BOOSEY & HAWKES

# WLADYSLAW SZPILMAN (1911–2000)

## “The Pianist”

The “Palme d’Or”, three “Oscars” and various European film prizes were among the awards collected by “The Pianist”, Roman Polanski’s film based upon Wladyslaw Szpilman’s memoirs, dealing with his “miraculous survival” (as he called it) in Warsaw during the German occupation and final destruction between 1938 and 1945. But there is more to Szpilman than being “The Pianist”. He is increasingly being noticed as a composer, both of concert works and of music in a lighter vein.

Wladyslaw Szpilman was born in the Polish town of Sosnowiec on 5 December 1911. After first piano lessons he continued his musical studies in Berlin with Leonid Kreutzer, Arthur Schnabel (piano) and Franz Schreker (composition). A Pole of Jewish descent, he returned to Warsaw after Hitler’s seizure of power and soon won himself renown as a pianist and composer. From 1935 he worked for the Polish Broadcasting Company until his career came to an abrupt end in September 1939 when German troops invaded Poland.



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*“Every graduate ... at the conservatoire is able to compose a Symphony, and maybe it will even receive a performance. But to write a melody which is sung and played by hundreds of interpreters is something one really has to be born to – ideally in America. A good thing for us (not for him, as one has to admit) that Wladyslaw Szpilman, our Cole Porter, Gershwin, McCartney, was born in Poland ...”*

Wojciech Kilar

After the end of war, Szpilman returned to the Polish Broadcasting Company where he directed the music department until 1963.

He was also the chamber music partner of first-rate violinists, such as Henryk Szeryng and Bronislaw Gimpel, with whom he founded the Warsaw Piano Quintet. Szpilman performed as a concert pianist and chamber musician in Poland, as well as throughout Europe, Asia and America.

From his early Berlin years Szpilman never gave up the will to write music, even when living in the Warsaw Ghetto. His compositions include orchestral works, concertos, piano pieces, but also lots of music for radio plays and films, as well as around 500 songs, many of which still are popular in Poland today. His works are now published for the first time in printed editions by Boosey & Hawkes · Bote & Bock.

Wladyslaw Szpilman died on 6 July 2000 in Warsaw.



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*“Today, Szpilman is finally discovered as what he himself felt called to be: a composer – oscillating between musical entertainment and classical concert music, alongside Erwin Schulhoff, Victor Ullmann, Berthold Goldschmidt, Hans Krása, Stefan Wolpe and other exponents of ‘degenerate music’ ... As a ‘serious’ composer, Szpilman is near to neo-classicism. His music does not know of late romantic pathos, but sounds lively and translucent. Szpilman wrote a number of instrumental works in the style of the modernist Thirties. Like Stravinsky, Janáček and Honegger, he wrote a Concertino, a composition in one movement for piano and orchestra, brilliant and voluble in the solo part, sparkingly orchestrated in the accompaniment.”*

Sigfried Schibli, Basler Zeitung, 7 October 2002

## Works

### Suite "The Life of the Machines" (1933)

Piano M-2025-3077-1

"... in the outer movements there are etude-like toccata mechanisms, mostly in semiquavers; in the middle section the tender reflection of a Mazurka. With the use of added seconds one might hear allusions to Prokofiev's Toccata, but the light and playful attitude of the whole more strongly evokes Debussy and Ravel. Which, of course, makes us also think of Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue'."

Gerhard R. Koch, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 28 Oct 2002



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### Three Little Folk Song Suites (1951–55) after own children's songs (ed. John York)

Piano M-2025-3084-9

### My memories of you

Sixteen selected songs by *The Pianist* Wladyslaw Szpilman

Voice and piano M-2025-3085-6

"Szpilman's songs evoke the sound of an era of elegance, of good manners, of gracious women and of jazz music."

Wojciech Karolak



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Photos of Wladyslaw Szpilman:

(1) as a child (2) in 1929 (3) in 1945 (4) with his parents (5–7) during recordings at the Polish Broadcast Company (8) with the Warsaw Piano Quintet (9) with Bronislaw Gimpel in 1958 (10) in 1999

all photos © Andrzej Szpilman

Film poster: © Pathé Distribution

### Waltz in the Olden Style for orchestra (1937/68)

Full score M-2025-3078-8

### Concertino for piano and orchestra (1940)

Edited by Krystian Zimerman

Full score M-2025-3079-5

Reduction for two pianos M-2025-3086-3

"The Concertino for piano and orchestra ... is highly brilliant in its instrumentation, sounds distinctly high-spirited and reminds one a little of Gershwin and the American film music of that time. It is hardly believable that Szpilman completed it in 1940 in the Ghetto."

Gregor Willmes, Fono Forum 11/2002

### Paraphrase on an Original Theme for orchestra (1947)

Full score M-2025-3080-1

### Introduction to a Film for orchestra (1957)

Full score M-2025-3081-8

### Ballett Scene for orchestra (1968)

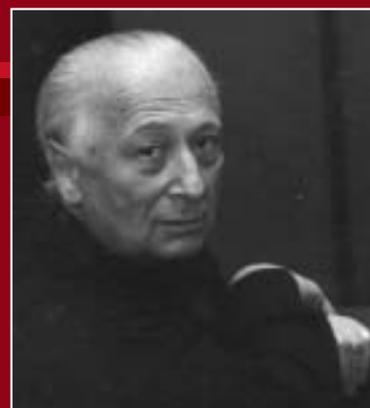
Full score M-2025-3082-5

### Little Overture for orchestra (1968)

Full score M-2025-3083-2

The performance material for the orchestral works is available on hire.

Detailed information and sound samples can be found on our web site [www.boosey.com/szpilman](http://www.boosey.com/szpilman) and at [www.thepianist.info](http://www.thepianist.info)



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## ■ Wladyslaw Szpilman

(1911–2000) was a major star on Polish State Radio in the 1930s. In September 1939, during a live broadcast, he was performing Chopin's "Nocturne in C Sharp Minor" when the studio was bombed. Narrowly escaping deportation and the death camps, he survived with the help of Polish friends and was ultimately spared by a German officer who heard him play the same "Nocturne" in his hiding place.

After the war, Szpilman resumed his career at Polish State Radio, coming back on the air once again with the "Nocturne". Over the following decades he appeared in concert as a soloist as well as with the Warsaw Piano Quintet in Poland, throughout Europe, Asia and in America.

Later, he recounted his experiences in a best-selling book - *The Pianist* - which formed the basis for Roman Polanski's award-winning film. His concert works as well as a selection from about 500 songs are now available for the first time, published by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers.



### Edition of Concert Works and Selected Songs

Suite "The Life of the Machines" for piano (1933)  
M-2025-3077-1

Waltz in the Olden Style (1936)  
M-2025-3078-8

Concertino (1940) for piano and orchestra  
Edited by Krystian Zimerman  
M-2025-3079-5 full score  
M-2025-3086-3 reduction for two pianos

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Three Little Folk Song Suites (1951–55)  
after own children's songs  
Edited for piano by John York  
M-2025-3084-9

The performance material for the orchestral works is available from the hire department.

My Memories of you – Sixteen selected songs by  
*The Pianist* Wladyslaw Szpilman  
M-2025-3085-6

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Trade distribution: SMD - Mainz, Germany

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