TOCCATA CLASSICS

# Moritz MOSZKOWSKI

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME TWO

SUITE NO. 2, OP. 47
SUITE NO. 3, OP. 79

Sinfonia Varsovia
Ian Hobson

FIRST RECORDINGS

# MORITZ MOSZKOWSKI: ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME TWO

by Martin Eastick

History has not served Moszkowski well. Even before his death in 1925, his star had been on the wane for some years as the evolving 'Brave New World' took hold after the Great War in 1918: there was little or no demand for what Moszkowski once had to offer and the musical sensitivities he represented. His name did live on to a limited extent, with the odd bravura piano piece relegated to the status of recital encore, and his piano duets – especially the *Spanish Dances* – continuing to be favoured in the circles of home music-making. But that was about the limit of his renown until, during the late 1960s, there gradually awoke an interest in nineteenth-century music that had disappeared from the repertoire – and from people's awareness – and the composers who had been everyday names during their own lifetime, Moszkowski among them. Initially, this 'Romantic Revival' was centred mainly on the piano, but it gradually diversified to music in all its forms and continues to this day. Only very recently, though, has attention been given to Moszkowski as a serious composer of orchestral music – with the discovery and performance in 2014 of his early but remarkable 'lost' Piano Concerto in B minor, Op. 3, providing an ideal kick-start,[1] and the ensuing realisation that here was a composer worthy of serious consideration who had much to offer to today's listener. In 2019 the status of Moszkowski as an orchestral composer was ramped upwards with the release of the first volume in this Toccata Classics series, featuring his hour-long, four-movement symphonic poem *Johanna d'Arc*, Op. 19, of 1875–76.[2]

[1] It was recorded by Ludmil Angelov and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Vladimir Kiradjiev on Hyperion (CDA68109) in 2015 and released in 2016.

[2] Recorded by Ian Hobson and the Sinfonia Varsovia on Toccata Classics TOCC 0523.

Moszkowski came from a wealthy Polish-Jewish family which had settled in Breslau (now the Polish city of Wrocław, but then the capital of Silesia in East Prussia) in 1854, the year of his birth. Having displayed a natural talent for music from an early age, and after some basic home tuition, he commenced his formal musical education in 1865 following his family's relocation to Dresden. A further family move, to Berlin in 1869, enabled Moszkowski to advance his musical education, first at Julius Stern's Conservatorium (which still exists, as part of the Faculty of Music of the Berlin University of the Arts), where he studied piano with the composer and pianist Eduard Franck (1817–93), and composition with the famous theoretician and composer Friedrich Kiel (1821–85). He then went on to complete his musical studies at the renowned Neue Akademie der Tonkunst, established in 1855 by Theodor Kullak (1818–82); there his mentors were Richard Wüerst (1824–81), a one-time pupil of Mendelssohn, for composition, and Kullak himself, who had studied with Carl Czerny, for piano. In addition, he had further instruction in orchestration from Heinrich Dorn (1804–92), a now-forgotten German operatic composer. Soon after its foundation, Kullak's Akademie had established itself in the vanguard of German academic musical institutions, and before long it had become the largest and one of the most highly respected music schools in Germany, accepting students from all over the world. Among his fellow students here were the Scharwenka brothers, Philipp (1847–1917) and Xaver (1850–1924), both of whom Moszkowski counted amongst his close friends.

In 1871, still only aged seventeen, he accepted Kullak's invitation to join his teaching staff, and in 1873 made his successful debut as pianist; that in turn led to a number of concert tours, while he continued to fulfil his professional duties in Berlin. From 1874 onwards, his music started to appear in print, with his Op. 1 being a scherzo for solo piano – although his earliest attempts at composition (all unpublished even now) pre-date this publication. They include a piano quintet (the manuscript of which survives, albeit lacking a final movement), which was probably composed in his thirteenth year; an overture (1871–72); a Symphony in D minor (1873); and he had certainly begun work on his B minor Piano Concerto, Op. 3, also during 1873.

In 1884 Moszkowski married Henriette, the youngest sister of the well-known French pianist and prolific salon composer Cécile Chaminade. Soon after, however, he began to suffer from neuropathy in his arms which caused him severely to restrict his performing activities as a pianist. This setback in turn, though, gave him the opportunity to devote more time to composition and teaching. He also began to achieve recognition and success as a conductor, and it was in this capacity that he made the first of several visits to England in 1885, at the invitation of the Philharmonic Society, which in 1887 granted him an honorary life membership. It was on this first visit that, on 20 May, he conducted the first performance in England of his symphonic poem *Johanna d'Arc,* at St James's Hall.

In 1897, at the height of his fame and by now considerably wealthy, he moved permanently to Paris. He was now highly sought-after as a teacher, with such illustrious names as Vlado Perlemuter, Josef Hofmann and Wanda Landowska numbering amongst his many piano pupils; and it was not only for piano that he was in demand. It was none other than a young Thomas Beecham who came to him for lessons in orchestration on the recommendation and advice of André Messager in 1904.

Gradually, however, with the major cultural sea-change taking place with the dawning of the new century, Moszkowski found his once-considerable popularity fading. He ceased taking students in composition, bemoaning the fact that they were interested only in following the latest avant-garde trends, which did not sit well with his conservative ideals, firmly entrenched in the traditions of the nineteenth century but now, in the twilight of Romanticism, under threat from the emerging new order. By 1908, at the age of only 54, he had become a recluse, having separated from his wife in 1890 (a divorce was finalised in 1892), as well as losing his daughter Sylvie in 1906 at only seventeen years of age; he now suffered continually from the poor health which dogged him right up until his death, from cancer of the stomach, in 1925. To make matters worse, he had unwisely invested the larger part of his considerable fortune in German and Russian securities, which were rendered valueless at the outbreak of the First World War, not to mention the ensuing revolution in Russia in 1917, and so his last years were spent in desperate poverty. He did, however, receive some financial

assistance, including some royalties, procured at the instigation of two of his former pupils – the pianist Josef Hofmann and Professor Bernhard Pollack, the latter famous also as a pioneer in ophthalmology and neurohistology, as well as a pianist of note. Finally, on 21 December 1924, a grand testimonial concert was arranged on his behalf, at Carnegie Hall, New York, by a number of his former friends and colleagues, and a considerable sum raised, but unfortunately he died on 4 March the following year, before he could benefit from the proceeds.

If one discounts the Violin Concerto, Op. 30 (1883), and the E major Piano Concerto (1897), Moszkowski abandoned the use of a more formal multi-movement symphonic structure after his *Johanna d'Arc* in 1876, preferring instead the Suite and the wider freedom the genre afforded him in the form and make-up of the various movements, without binding him with the rigours of convention. He composed three orchestral suites – between 1885 and 1907 – and also a Suite in G major, Op. 50, for piano solo, and a Suite in G minor, Op. 71, for two violins and piano, which has more recently attracted some attention from performers, perhaps on account of its unusual instrumentation.

The Baroque – or even pre-Baroque – origins of the Suite as a musical form have little relevance here; suffice to say that as the symphony and sonata were evolving during the eighteenth century, the suite was already considered rather antiquated, even by 1750. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the orchestral or instrumental suite – in its new guise as a collection of a number of usually contrasting shorter movements without necessarily any exacting restrictions – gradually became more common, as an alternative to the more academic strictures of symphonic form. In his pioneering study of the orchestral music of Franz Schmidt, the English composer and writer on music Harold Truscott (1914–92) argued that it was Adolf Jensen's *Deutsche Suite* for piano, published in 1869, which injected the spirit of the Baroque into German Romanticism: Jensen's Suite, he wrote, was 'a genuine case of an old bottle yielding quite new contents'.[3] Moszkowski certainly acknowledged the Baroque suite in his four-movement Op. 50 (1892) for piano, although within a late-nineteenth-century pianistic

[3] *The Music of Franz Schmidt*, Vol. 1: The Orchestral Music, Toccata Press, London, 1984, p. 29.

idiom, as did also Eugen d'Albert with his D minor Suite, Op. 1 (1883), and others besides, including the much later contribution to the genre by Arnold Schoenberg in 1921–23, employing the twelve-tone technique.

On 27 February 1890, Moszkowski conducted his *Deuxième Suite d'Orchestre*, Op. 47, from manuscript, at a concert of new works from the catalogue of the well-known music publishers C. F. Peters, in the Gewandhaus, Leipzig. Also present was Edvard Grieg, who conducted fragments from his unfinished opera *Olav Trygvason*, Op. 50, which had been published by Peters. On that occasion Moszkowski's Suite was also listed as 'Op. 50', which was the number of the Suite for piano, also published by Peters, but in 1892 (and never orchestrated). Odder still, Moszkowski's Second Orchestral Suite was published by Julius Hainauer of Breslau, Moszkowski's main publisher up to then, and it is strange that Peters should promote a publication by one of its main rivals. This first performance was followed by another, in Berlin on 12 March, with the composer conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and only some three months later, on 5 June, Moszkowski was in London to conduct the British premiere at a concert of the Royal Philharmonic Society, where he had been welcomed several times before to conduct his earlier orchestral works. *The Musical Times* criticised the work as a failed imitation of Wagnerian pretension; *The Monthly Musical Record* was far more positive, praising it for its skilful orchestration and describing it as both entertaining and having inspiration. This opinion was readily echoed by an enthusiastic public, so much so that Moszkowski wrote to Max Abraham, the proprietor of Peters, from his hotel in London: 'Hatte hier riesigen Erfolg!' ('Had huge success here!').

Moszkowski's Second Suite was dedicated to the pianist, conductor and ardent Wagnerite Hans von Bülow, as follows: 'À Monsieur Hans de Bülow. Témoignage de profonde admiration et de vive sympathie', an inscription that, one can assume, would have brought some pleasure to von Bülow, then in failing mental and physical health (he died in 1894). The Suite is cast in six movements and is scored for large orchestra, including a harp (in the Prelude, *Larghetto* and March) and organ (Prelude and Fugue), although there is alternative scoring for when an organ is not available. The opening *Preludio,* marked *Lento* in the key of G minor [1], begins with an eight-bar chordal

progression from the woodwind; it both serves as a brief introduction and sets the overall mood of heartfelt seriousness, with melancholic undertones conveyed by an orchestral texture rich in chromaticism. The orchestra gradually builds to a climax on the dominant chord of D major before the harp enters with a improvisatory cadenza. The harp is then joined by a solo violin, quickly reinforced by the organ, playing *pianissimo*; the other strings then enter to bring this interlude to a quiet conclusion. A pause ushers in a brief re-appearance of the Prelude before the organ alone solemnly concludes the movement with the opening eight-bar chorale. A final sustained low G on the organ, together with the double basses, acts as a pedal-point link to the opening of the *Fuga – Un pocchino più animato* 2. One might naturally assume that Moszkowski would not be renowned for his fugues: there are only two named examples in his list of compositions – this movement and the much later *Prelude and Fugue for String Orchestra*, Op. 85 (1910), although there is also an example of fugato writing in his E major Piano Concerto. On each occasion he proves beyond any doubt his absolute competence in complex part-writing. The initial statement characterises the whole movement: busy semiquaver passagework interwoven with sweeping melody. A *fortissimo* climax swiftly returns to *molto piano*, signalling an increase in tempo, as the violins and violas play agitated *pizzicato* exchanges with *staccato* woodwind over a cello accompaniment on the dominant, thereby gradually but steadily increasing the excitement, as the music hastens on to another *fortissimo* climax – which is the cue for the dramatic entry of the organ. Now the full orchestra joins in – strings, woodwind and finally brass – for the powerful and triumphant conclusion, where Moszkowski uses the *tierce de Picardie* to resolve in G major on the final chord.

The third movement is a Scherzo (*Molto vivace*) in brisk $\frac{3}{4}$ time, also in G minor 3. It immediately grabs the listener's attention with four descending chords – tonic–dominant–tonic–dominant – each on the bare open fifth, a motif that recurs throughout the movement, which hurries along until a change from triple to duple metre eases the tension somewhat. After a cadence there follows a further episode which, retaining the same metre, features cellos and basses in five-bar chromatic phrases, answered in turn by the violins, in playful *scherzando* triplets, later joined by

the flutes. The triplet motif becomes more persistent, and a *crescendo* leads back to the opening statement, which is repeated before the coda. There the music calms, fading first to a *pianissimo* before a sudden *sforzando*; and then a brief *presto* – fifteen bars – concludes proceedings.

There now follows a *Larghetto*, in the relative major key, B flat [4]. It is the centrepiece of the Suite, and immediately provides the necessary contrast to all that has come before. Surely one of Moszkowski's most inspired creations, its long, arching melodic statements create a mood of sublime calm, alternating with intense passion. If one notes the contemporary review given in *The Musical Times,* it is here, as well as at the beginning of the final movement, that is probably the closest Moszkowski comes in this work to Wagner, but the influence of Joachim Raff, as earlier in *Johanna d'Arc*, must surely be considered of equal importance, especially if one also takes into consideration Raff's considerable popularity at that time (even though his name had now begun to lessen in importance, after his death in 1882).

The fifth movement, an Intermezzo (*Allegretto con moto*), in D major [5], is a minuet and trio in all but name. It opens with the first and second violins playing a sixteen-bar passage together, with identical parts – except that the first violins are bowed and the seconds are marked *pizzicato,* which accentuates the *staccato* effect. The oboe now counters with a secondary passage, and is quickly joined by the other woodwind instruments with *pizzicato* support from the strings, before the cellos take up this theme, now marked *cantando,* which in turn leads back to the opening – played *fortissimo* by the full orchestra. What follows is to all intents and purposes the trio. The strings lead first with a *legato* theme in the tonic minor, before a brightening of mood infused with some gentle syncopation. It is easy to imagine that the Edward German of *Merrie England* might have been acquainted with this music, since it shares a passing affinity with some aspects of his style. With the first violins now playing an accompaniment of repeated triplets, the clarinets are given prominence with the first restatement of the opening of the movement, which is repeated before a short coda recedes to a delicate closing *pianissimo.*

As a fitting finale to the Suite, Moszkowski appropriately opts for a stirring *Marcia* (*Allegro con brio*) 6, set affirmatively in the key of G major. Although Wagner again comes to mind initially as the predominant influence, it is soon evident that Moszkowski once more, as in *Johanna d'Arc*, seems to be uncannily prefiguring the sound of Hollywood film music from the 1930s and '40s. Soon, however, the music takes on an Elgarian twist, complete with hints of *Cockaigne* – still ten years away – before relaxing into a memorable second subject, again suggesting Elgar with its sense of *nobilmente*. After a short development, the arresting opening subject returns and proceeds apace. The excitement subsides to usher in the second subject, this time progressing with some minor-inflected modulations against a contrapuntal background. After the music broadens to a climax, the momentum picks up again for the coda as the movement comes to a rousing conclusion.

Although a subsequent arrangement of the entire suite for piano duet was entrusted to Moszkowski's friend and pupil, Bernhard Pollack, the composer himself made piano-solo transcriptions of the Prelude (without the Fugue) and Intermezzo, hoping no doubt to capitalise on the success of the complete work.

A gap of some seventeen years separates Moszkowski's Second and Third Orchestral Suites. During this time he had moved to Paris, and the change of circumstance was gradually reflected in his music. Although he may have considered himself generally as cosmopolitan, rather than exhibiting any nationalistic traits as a composer, his later compositions do seem, unsurprisingly, to have generally assimilated a little more of 'French' character. In a letter dated 25 August 1907, to Henri Hinrichsen, Max Abraham's nephew and successor at C. F. Peters, Moszkowski reports that he had completed his Third Orchestral Suite, in A flat major, Op. 79, and was intending to rehearse it in Lausanne in September 1907, so as to be able to make a few final alterations.[4] He goes on to say that he thinks the third-movement waltz will probably be played a lot

[4] Letter quoted in Bojan Assenov, *Moritz Moszkowski – Eine Werkmonographie*, D.Phil. dissertation, Technische Universität, Berlin, 2009, p. 354 (online at https://www.scharwenka-stiftung.de/daten/musik/literatur_digital/2009_assenov_bojan_moritz_moszkowski.pdf).

as a separate piece, and might also work as a piano solo – which indeed it did, with Moszkowski himself making the transcription. This Suite was dedicated to the Polish composer and violinist Alexander Zózisław Birnbaum (1878–1921), who was also the conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra at Lausanne. It is of more modest dimensions than Moszkowski's two earlier orchestral suites, consisting of only four movements, but nonetheless requiring a fairly large orchestra, including harp.

The horns, clarinets and bassoons open the *Allegro* first movement [7] confidently with a distinct dotted-rhythm motif, which appears repeatedly throughout the movement in various guises, blending well with constantly moving counter-melodies as the movement progresses. Of equal prominence is a secondary melodic idea, more four-square in character, but repeatedly woven into the symphonic structure to good effect.

The second movement, *Molto moderato*, in the key of F major [8], is subtitled '*La note obstinée*' and refers specifically to the harp – sometimes reinforced by the horn – which plays an almost continuous line of dominant C quavers virtually from the beginning, clashing with various moving tonalities from the rest of the orchestra, which for the most part provides an attractive and steady melodic line.

The third movement, *Tempo di valse, non troppo allegro* [9], is a pure gem – full of the polished *fin-de-siècle* grace and elegance that infuses so much of Moszkowski's piano music. After a short introduction, the first subject, characterised by *staccato* repeated notes, and marked *grazioso,* is initially presented by the strings, which are then joined by the woodwind and harp. The more lyrical second subject features the violins and flutes, with the rest of the orchestra giving support. A change of mood is brought about with the introduction of a new section in F minor, where the cellos and double basses provide a regular tonic anchor before being given more melodic interest, as the woodwind, playing *staccato*, interject with constantly changing harmonies and provide rhythmic interest. Some delicate running passagework from the woodwind, led by the oboes and clarinets, and later augmented by the strings, serves to re-introduce the first subject, now enhanced with thicker texture and counterpoint, which, perhaps all too soon, brings the movement to a close.

A brief fanfare from the trumpets sets the scene for the final movement, *Allegro deciso* 10, which moves along in a spirited and confident manner before a more relaxed second subject is introduced by way of contrast. After a short development the music broadens to a grand restatement of the opening of the first movement, leading to a short coda and a robust *fortissimo* ending.

Throughout this entire work, Moszkowski's sense of irrepressible and infectious *joie de vivre* is ever-present – and at times one could almost categorise the music as 'light classical'. He has certainly cast off any suggestion of Wagnerian pretension evident in some of his earlier orchestral works, and, in spite of the problems that beset him in his private life, as well as a beginning of the decline in his popularity, here he presents himself as a consummate master of orchestration combined with a definite and natural creative ability.

*Martin Eastick was born in Croydon in 1957 and studied piano from age six. Although continuing with his studies, he decided against a musical career, instead devoting his spare time to researching neglected nineteenth-century music and collecting scores, mainly of piano music by forgotten composers of the Romantic era. He has presented many lecture-recitals introducing forgotten repertoire as well as, more recently, assisting on a number of recordings, often providing performing material from his now substantial private collection.*

**Ian Hobson**, pianist and conductor, enjoys an international reputation, both for his performances of the Romantic repertoire, and of neglected piano music old and new, and for his assured conducting from both the piano and the podium, renewing interest in the music of such lesser-known masters as Ignaz Moscheles and Johann Hummel. He is also an effective advocate of works written expressly for him by contemporary composers, among them John Gardner, Benjamin Lees, David Liptak, Alan Ridout and Roberto Sierra.

As guest soloist, Ian Hobson has appeared with the world's major orchestras; those in the United States include the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra, the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Florida, Houston, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and St Louis, the American Symphony Orchestra and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico. Elsewhere, he has been heard with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra,

Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Hallé Orchestra in the UK, and the ORF-Vienna, Orchester der Beethovenhalle, Moscow Chopin Orchestra, Israeli Sinfonietta and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Wolverhampton in 1952 and one of the youngest-ever graduates of the Royal Academy of Music, Ian Hobson subsequently pursued advanced studies at both Cambridge University and Yale University. He began his international career in 1981 when he won First Prize at the Leeds International Piano Competition, having previously earned silver medals at both the Arthur Rubinstein and Vienna Beethoven competitions. A professor in the Center for Advanced Study at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), Ian Hobson received the endowed chair of Swanlund Professor of Music in 2000 and is now the Swanlund Emeritus Professor.

He is also in much demand as a conductor, particularly for performances in which he doubles as a pianist. He made his debut in this capacity in 1996 with the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, and has since appeared with the English Chamber Orchestra, the Fort Worth Chamber Orchestra, the Sinfonia Varsovia (at Carnegie Hall), the Pomeranian Philharmonic and the Kibbutz Chamber Orchestra of Israel, among others. He also performs extensively as pianist-conductor with Sinfonia da Camera, a group he formed in 1984 and which quickly gained international recognition through its recordings.

To date he has amassed a discography of some sixty releases, mostly on the Zephyr label, including the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven and Schumann, a complete edition of Brahms' piano variations and the complete piano works by Chopin. With the violinist Sherban Lupu he is recording, as pianist and conductor, the complete works of Ernst for Toccata Classics, for which label he has also recorded piano music by Edward and Kate Loder (TOCC 0322 and 0321) and Harold Truscott (TOCC 0252). He has released three albums in a pioneering series of recordings of the early orchestral works by Martinů, also for Toccata

Classics (TOCC 0156, 0249 and 0414), and in the first album in this series of the orchestral music of Moritz Moszkowski he conducts the Sinfonia Varsovia in Moszkowski's monumental symphonic poem *Johanna d'Arc* (TOCC 0523), its first-ever recording, received with astonished superlatives around the world.
*www.ianhobson.net*

In 1984, at the invitation of Waldemar Dąbrowski, director of the Stanisław I. Witkiewicz Studio Centre for the Arts in Warsaw, and Franciszek Wybrańczyk, director of the Polish Chamber Orchestra, the violinist Yehudi Menuhin arrived in Poland to perform as a soloist and conductor. So as to meet the exigencies of the repertoire, the orchestra invited renowned Polish musicians from all over Poland to take part in the performances. The first concerts of the ensemble, conducted by Menuhin, were received enthusiastically by audiences and critics, and he accepted the invitation to become the first guest conductor of the newly established orchestra, now named **Sinfonia Varsovia**.

Sinfonia Varsovia performs at the world's most prestigious concert halls and festivals, working with world-renowned conductors and soloists. The orchestra has recorded a wide range of albums and radio and television performances, and boasts a discography of almost 300 albums, many of which have received prestigious prizes. In 1997 the late Krzysztof Penderecki became the musical director, and in 2003 also its artistic director. Sinfonia Varsovia is a municipal cultural institution co-ordinated by the City of Warsaw. In 2015, in the presence of the President of Warsaw, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, the architect Thomas Pucher and Janusz Marynowski, director of Sinfonia Varsovia, signed a contract for the delivery of design documentation for a new concert hall for the orchestra and for the development of the property at 272 Ulica Grochowska.
*www.sinfoniavarsovia.org*

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# MORITZ MOSZKOWSKI Orchestral Music, Volume Two

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|---|---|---|---|
| ***Deuxième Suite d'Orchestre*, Op. 47** (1890)* | | | **41:06** |
| 1 | I | *Preludio*: *Lento –* | 7:00 |
| 2 | II | *Fuga*: *Un pocchino più animato* | 6:06 |
| 3 | III | Scherzo: *Molto vivace* | 5:18 |
| 4 | IV | *Larghetto* | 9:31 |
| 5 | V | Intermezzo: *Allegretto con moto* | 6:39 |
| 6 | VI | *Marcia*: *Allegro con brio* | 6:23 |
| ***Troisième Suite d'Orchestre*, Op. 79** (1908)** | | | **26:54** |
| 7 | I | *Allegro* | 7:55 |
| 8 | II | *Molto moderato* (*La note obstinée*) | 6:05 |
| 9 | III | *Tempo di valse, non troppo allegro* | 5:34 |
| 10 | IV | *Allegro deciso* | 7:20 |

**Sinfonia Varsovia**
Jakub Haufa, violin 1
Zuzanna Elster, harp 1
Damian Skowroński, organ 1 2
**Ian Hobson, conductor**

TT **68:00**

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