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Introduction

Heinrich Neuhaus was born in 1888 in Elizavetgrad (now Kirovograd) into a family of musicians. Both his father and mother were piano teachers. The father, Gustav Neuhaus, born in 1847 in the Rhineland, had studied under Ferdinand Hiller who, in turn, as a young man had known Beethoven. His mother, Olga Blumenfeld, was the sister of Felix Blumenfeld, a distinguished pianist, conductor and teacher, first in Petersburg, and then in Moscow; Horowitz was one of his most famous pupils. Through his maternal grandmother he was related to Karol Szymanowski who became a lifelong friend.

Since his parents could rarely spare the time to teach their son, Heinrich Neuhaus was, strictly speaking, self-taught, playing the piano and improvising passionately since early childhood. The main formative influence on his musical development came from Felix Blumenfeld, on his rare visits to his sister's home.

Heinrich Neuhaus made his first public appearance at the age of eleven, playing some Chopin Waltzes and an Impromptu. In 1902 he accompanied Misha Elman in a recital in Elizavetgrad. His first solo recital took place in Germany in 1904 and from then he gave several concerts in Germany and Italy while studying under Godowsky, first in Berlin and then in Vienna, from where he returned to Russia at the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1922 he began teaching at the Moscow Conservatoire and helped to create in 1932 the famous Moscow Central Music School for specially gifted children. From 1934 to 1937 he was Director of the Moscow Conservatoire, a post he relinquished so as to be able to devote himself entirely to teaching, for the sake of which he had already sacrificed most of his career as a concert pianist.

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Amongst his pupils were Radu Lupu, Emil Gilels and Sviatoslav Richter who called him an artist of unique genius, a great teacher and friend. Seldom have artistic gifts been so closely matched by the qualities of selfless devotion, deep humanity, true culture and a great capacity for bestowing and winning friendship. He died on 10th October 1964. This book bears witness to his achievements as man, musician and teacher.

THE EDITOR