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performances,' affirmed *Gramophone*). 'You know, when I came across Stojowski's First Concerto, I was amazed. I mean, the opening melody for the piano lasts two pages! All the other concertos I had been looking at had the usual four-bar melodies, but this one went on and on. It's a characteristic of much of his music. Then I was sent the Second Concerto and that's even more amazing. Not just because of its unusual structure but the *Theme and Variations* (the final movement) has elements of Dukas and all sorts. I learned both concertos quite quickly. The First is a more straightforward piece but technically much harder – the final movement has some impossible bits! He has this habit of placing an *acciaccatura* before a big bass note and chord. You can be right at the top of the keyboard – it's a mad dash all over the place with octaves left, right and centre – and then suddenly he sends you down to the bottom for an *acciaccatura*. It's quite a challenge! He certainly knew how to handle an orchestra, but Stojowski wasn't limited to this or piano solos, choral works or what have you.

One of his standard pieces is actually a Trombone Sonata. It's often used as an entrance test for music colleges in America.'

Plowright has always been known among piano cognoscenti as a champion of Paderewski and Stojowski. What attracted an English pianist to the Polish Romantic genre? 'When I was young, my parents had one of those "Golden Age of Piano Virtuosi" recordings, and there was some Paderewski on that. They also had some Paderewski recordings of Chopin and other things. And I just loved the style of playing. I know he became slightly mannered towards the end and he fell out of favour, but I actually liked the sound he produced. The quality of his playing takes your breath away. It's so poetic – and it was that side that appealed to me. When you're a kid, you learn the Minuet in G or whatever, but it was Paderewski's Nocturne [*Series de Morceaux*, Op.16 No.4] that was – and still is – my favourite piece of music of all time. I don't think anything will ever supersede it. It may be Haydn or Brahms or anyone else that strikes the same chord in other people. For me,

above  
Jonathan Plowright giving  
a recital at Addo Elephant  
Park, South Africa, 1999  
Photo courtesy of  
Jonathan Plowright