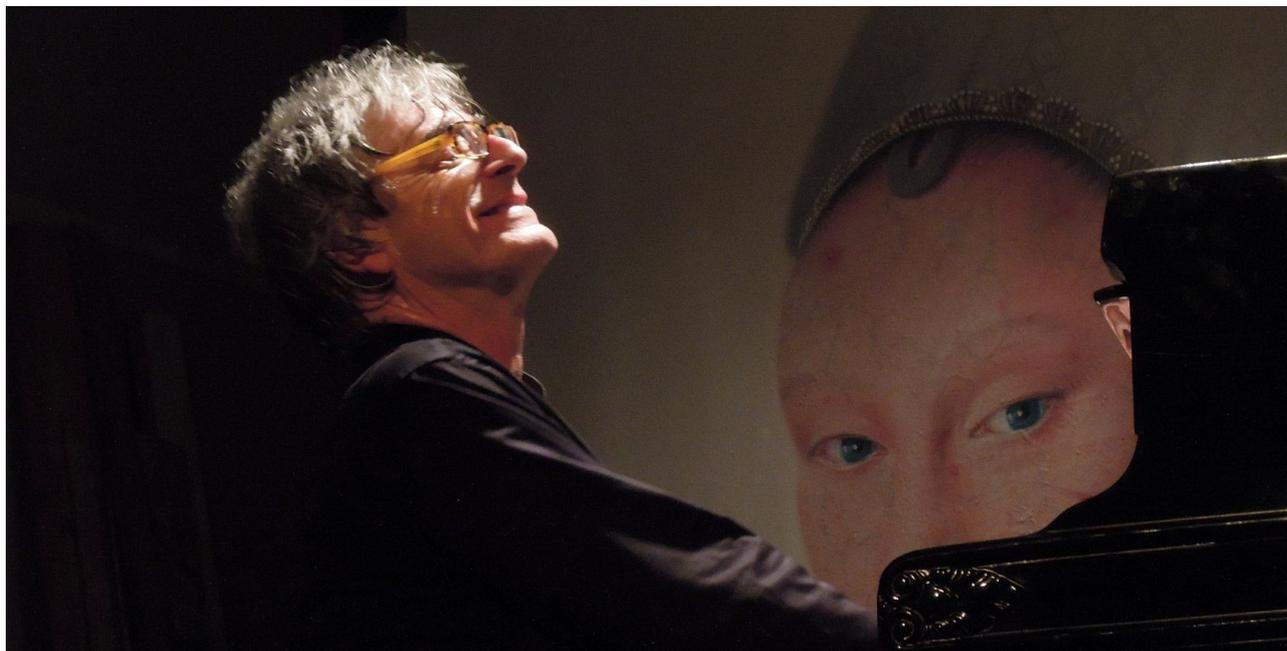


# PIANIST FLAVIO VARANI

Interpreter of Paul Paray's works



## *A man of a triple culture: Brazil, France, USA*

In his native Brazil, the boy reveals an astonishing piano gift. At the age of seven, he is invited to play for Brazilian radio and television, and two years later, he participates as a soloist in a tour of the National Orchestra of Brazil.

He is noticed by the famous Franco-Brazilian pianist Magda Tagliaferro, who becomes his teacher in São Paulo and soon encourages him to join her in Paris. At the age of 13, Flavio obtains a grant from the French Government, which allows him to attend the courses of the great Magda at the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris, founded by Alfred Cortot.

Flavio Varani is recognized as one of her most brilliant pupils. During his six years of study in Paris (as well as Nice and Salzburg in the summer), Magda Tagliaferro introduces him to several of her musical friends, including Heitor Villa-Lobos and the French conductor Paul Paray, who directed her very first Parisian concerts with the Lamoureux orchestra.

The young pianist will continue his training in the USA. First at the Julliard School with Rosina Lhevinne, then with Artur Balsam at the Manhattan School of Music, where he receives the prestigious Harold Bauer Award.

## *An international career*

Flavio Varani has performed in major music centers and festivals throughout the world, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Moscow Conservatory, Munich Gasteig, the Newport Music Festival, Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Meadow Brook

Festival, and the Cotignac Festival in France. Among his numerous orchestral engagements, he makes appearances with conductors Gunther Herbig, Sir Neville Marriner, Semyon Bychkov, Lukas Foss, Eleazar de Carvalho, and Eduardo Rahn.

While “Head of the Piano Department” and Artist in Residence at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, he won many awards: “Musician of the Year” from the Michigan Foundation for the Arts; “Best Soloist of the Year” from the Brazilian Art Critic's Association; and “Outstanding Classical instrumentalist of 2001” from the Detroit Music Foundation. In 2003, Flavio was awarded a *gold medal in honor* of his years performing as a Steinway Artist.

### *The French music and Paul Paray*

Flavio Varani has always considered that he owed a debt to France, and if he is known as one of the best interpreters of his countryman Heitor Villa-Lobos, he never stopped to perform French piano music (Debussy, Ravel, Reynaldo Hahn, Francis Poulenc), both in South America and the USA (where he teaches), in Canada and in Japan.

In Detroit, in 2004, when he is asked to play Paul Paray's *Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra*, he records it with enthusiasm. And his curiosity pushes him to decipher some forty piano scores of the conductor composer, some of which had never been published. Thus was born the first complete CD album of the *Works for solo piano* of Paul Paray, published in Detroit (Grotto label) by Rev. Eduard Perrone, a musician priest passionate about the work of the French composer.

More recently, in the Glenn Gould Studios/Toronto, Flavio recorded all the *Etudes* by Debussy and *Miroirs* by Ravel.

In France finally, the Minister of Culture decided to reward Flavio Varani for his role as an ambassador of French music in the American continent. Invited in October 2012 at the Institute of France, the pianist received the insignia of Chevalier in the *Order of Arts and Letters* from the hands of Maestro Laurent Petitgirard, conductor, composer, and president of the Academy of Fine Arts at the time.

### *A recording project in Toronto*

The year 2019 is the 40th anniversary of the death of Paul Paray (1886-1979), whose memory is still alive in the USA, as he rebuilt the *Detroit Symphony Orchestra* and made it one of the best in the world.



Flavio Varani, now residing in South Carolina, wants to dedicate a new CD to the composer's best solo piano works, recording them in the best technical conditions, at the *Glenn Gould Studio* in Toronto.



The writing of the booklet will be entrusted to the musicologist Damien Top, president of the *Cercle Paul Paray*, who directs a collection of records mainly dedicated to French composers of the twentieth century.

Finally, concerts by the pianist will follow the recording in Toronto, with invitations sent to the partners and donors who supported this production.

### *About Paray's piano music*

Here was new ground to break: various types of piano pieces representing different styles, forms, and compositional techniques. It seemed obvious to me that Paul Paray, as a young composer, was searching for his own voice, utilizing this medium.

Perusing the many descriptive titles, forms and variations, one is made aware of Paray's vast emotional resources. One detects a respect for Fauré but without any direct imitation. Paray's music is very French in character with occasional echoes from the middle ages. At times it reminds me one of the paintings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti or of the angelic rosy cheeks in late-renaissance paintings. He experiments with impressionism (*Sur la mer*), with the tongue-and-cheek humor of Chabrier (*Allegro*), but always retaining a certain purity of thought. To listen to these youthful works is a certain challenge to the listener because there are no exact precedents to them.

My curiosity was soon converted to enthusiasm in discovering an ignored composer of such high quality. Penetrating into Paul Paray's musical world is to believe in the ennobling capacity of a life devoted to the art of music.

**Flavio Varani**, Detroit, 2005

## LINKS

**On Vimeo** : «*Projection*». Interviewed at home in South Carolina, Flavio VARANI talks about his life, his career, the importance of his family, both Italian and Brazilian, and how his grand father in particular, who was a photographer, “projected” his art...

<https://vimeo.com/69519729>

**On Soundcloud** : Paul PARAY «*Impressions*» (3 mvts) by Flavio VARANI (Detroit, 2005)

<https://soundcloud.com/cercle-paul-paray/paul-paray-1886-1979-1>

Paul PARAY «*Scherzetto*» (1903), first piano composition of young Paul, by Flavio VARANI

(Detroit 2005) <https://soundcloud.com/cercle-paul-paray/paul-paray-1886-1979-2>

Heitor VILLA-LOBOS *Ciclo Brasileiro* (2 mvts) by Flavio VARANI (São Paulo, 1997)

<https://soundcloud.com/cercle-paul-paray/flavio-varani-interpreta>



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