

**IMAGES OF CHOPIN IN THE NEW WORLD: PERFORMANCES OF  
CHOPIN'S MUSIC IN NEW YORK CITY, 1839–1876**

by

FRANCISCO JAVIER ALBO

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date

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Professor Antoni Pizà  
Chair of Examining Committee

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Date

---

Professor David Olan  
Executive Officer

---

Professor John M. Graziano

---

Professor William Rothstein

---

Professor Ora F. Saloman

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

## *Abstract*

### **Images of Chopin in the New World: Performances of Chopin's Music in New York City, 1839–1876**

Adviser: Professor John M. Graziano

This dissertation examines the reception history of the music of Fryderyk Chopin (1810–1849) in the city of New York from the first documented performance of his works, in 1839, until 1876, the year of the historic American tour of Hans von Bülow (1830–1894). The dynamics of those responses correspond with the growth of New York, which, during that time, experienced a dramatic transformation from a provincial city into a vibrant cultural metropolis. In addition, I aim to explore the evolution of musical aesthetics and taste within a larger scope that includes social, political, and cultural issues. That evolution is illustrated by the ways the music of Chopin was performed, disseminated, and criticized demonstrating the presence of points of intersection with other important artistic centers in Europe. My broader goal is to contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of the musical life of the city in the thirty-seven years covered in this study. A meticulous work of documentation of hundreds of performances provides a valuable tool for scholars who wish to keep exploring that fascinating period in New York history, and the circumstances that paved the way for the future conditions of the musical life in the city and in the nation.

## *Acknowledgments*

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*A mi padre*

## Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Table of Contents	vii
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Reception: General Issues</b>	<b>6</b>
Preface. Chopin, an Immigrant in New York?	6
1. Musical Life in Antebellum New York	14
2. New York Theaters	18
3. Piano Manufacturers	20
4. Images of New York among European Musicians and Europe in the Imagination of New Yorkers	23
5. European Images of Chopin: from Romantic Vanguard to Classic Paradigm	31
6. Four European Responses to Chopin	37
Poland	37
France	43
<i>The Parisian Salon</i>	47
Germany	49
England	54
7. Feminine Images in Chopin's Music	57
<i>Feminine Genres</i>	64
8. Conclusions	66
<b>Chapter 2. American Responses to Chopin</b>	<b>67</b>
Primary Sources: Advertisements, Announcements, Reviews, and Articles in the Press	67
<i>Dwight's Journal of Music and Other Journals</i>	71
Two Nineteenth-Century American Writers	76
Henry Theophilus Finck	76
James Gibbons Huneker	83
Reception: Some American Views	88
1. Small Forms for Piano	88
2. Extended Forms for Piano	99
3. Works for Piano and Orchestra and Piano and Ensemble	113

### **Chapter 3. Early Performances, 1839–1853** **120**

Instrumental Concerts and Repertories in Antebellum New York:	
The Golden Era of Virtuosity	120
The First Performance: Ludwig Rakemann	124
Some Successors of L. Rakemann:	128
Frederick Rakemann	128
Sophie Gjertz	132
Jules Fontana	132
Henry C. Timm	135
Édouard Boulanger	137
Touring Virtuosos: Leopold de Meyer and Henri Herz	138
Louis Moreau Gottschalk	140
The Boston-New York Rivalry in the Mid-Nineteenth Century	146
Two Champions of Chopin in Boston: Otto Dresel and Alfred Jaëll	151

### **Chapter 4. Performances, 1854–1859** **155**

Richard Hoffman	160
<i>The Classical Soirée</i>	165
William Mason	167
<i>Mason's Matinees</i>	175
Gustave Satter	177
The Return of Gottschalk	178
George W. Morgan	180
Robert Goldbeck	181
Sigismund Thalberg	185
Other pianists: Eugénie de Roode, William Saar, Arturo Napoleão, and Louise Abel	190
Sebastian Bach Mills	194

### **Chapter 5. Performances, 1860–1869** **198**

Satter	202
Abel	203
Chopin in the Mason/Thomas Classical Soirees, 1860–1865	204
Chopin's Music during the Civil War	205
Gottschalk's Last Appearances	212
Chopin in the Historical Concerts of John N. Pattison, Alide Topp, Jerome Hopkins, and Sebastian B. Mills, 1865–69	214
Other pianists, 1865–1869	223

<b>Chapter 6. Performances, 1870–1876</b>	<b>232</b>
Anna Mehlig	234
Marie Krebs	236
Ferdinand von Inten, Jerome Hopkins, Ranieri Vilanova, Teresa Carreño, and Heinrich Bonawitz, and other pianists, 1870–1872	240
Anton Rubinstein	244
Other Pianists, 1873–1875	250
Sophie Heilbron	253
Frederick Boscowitz	257
Hans von Bülow	259
Epilogue: Anna Essipoff	267
<b>Chapter 7. Editions</b>	<b>272</b>
Editions of Chopin’s works in the United States, <i>c.</i> 1839–1875	272
Works by Chopin published 1825–1876	278
American reprints of Chopin’s editions, <i>c.</i> 1839–1876	289
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>294</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>309</b>
Personalia	
<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>334</b>
Performances, 1839–1876: chronological	
<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>358</b>
Performances, 1839–1876: alphabetical	
<b>Appendix 4</b>	<b>383</b>
Performances, 1839–1876: by number	
<b>Illustrations</b>	<b>389</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>396</b>

## Introduction

Contemporary American music scholarship continues to be fascinated with the nineteenth-century reception of European music in the United States. During the years I studied at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), I worked as a researcher in the project *Music in Gotham: The New York Scene, 1863–1875*. There, I had the opportunity to learn a great deal about the ways European music arrived in New York during a period of exceptional historical interest. The thousands of copies of reviews from newspapers and periodicals I collected allowed me to become familiar with the ways nineteenth-century American critics and audiences reacted when they were exposed to new musical works. Those primary sources constituted the pillars upon which I envisioned my project.

Choosing Chopin as the main subject of my study came naturally, since, for years, I have been well acquainted with his works, his life, and most of the biographies and essays devoted to him. In addition, I realized that important studies on reception history of romantic composers (some of whom were Chopin's peers) in the United States were being done at the time, or had been recently published. Some of them were carried out by scholars who happened to be my teachers, such as Ora Frishberg Saloman, who has written on Beethoven and Berlioz, and John Graziano, who has dealt with Verdi and other composers, including some American.

Other scholars have examined the reception history, with an emphasis on New York, of composers closely associated with Chopin, including Robert Schumann (Nancy B. Reich), and Liszt and Wagner (Rena C. Mueller). Except for Sandra Rosenblum, whose article "A Composer Known Here but to a Few" (2004) remains the most thorough

examination of the reception of Chopin's music in the United States, nobody has produced a significant body of work on the issue.<sup>1</sup>

This project should reflect the influence of modern Chopin scholars. They include the British scholar Jim Samson, a current authority on Chopin, and Jeffrey Kallberg, an American musicologist who, in the past decades, has examined the always slippery issues of genre and gender in Chopin's music. Special mention should be given to Rosenblum, whose article effectively ignited my interest in the project and provided some of the initial sources for this study.

Analysts of early "images" of Chopin in Europe include those by Zofia Chechlinska and Irena Poniatowska (Poland), Andreas Ballstaedt (Germany), and Halina Goldberg (United States), to mention just some of the most outstanding current scholars.<sup>2</sup> These have also influenced my ways of handling the subject.

### ***Structure***

The first chapter provides a general overview of issues regarding the early reception of Chopin's works, in an attempt to set the basis of later chapters. It starts with the unauthenticated account of a planned relocation of the composer to America, as told by some of his early biographers. Possible parallelisms between responses in Europe and in the United States are examined, setting the array of "images" that co-existed, or succeeded each other, in the nineteenth century. It also reviews the musical activity and

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<sup>1</sup> Rosenblum, Sandra. "A Composer Known Here but to a Few," *The Age of Chopin*, ed. Halina Goldberg, (Indiana University Press, 2004), 314–45. An earlier version of the article appeared in an online publication under the title "Effusions of a Master Mind: The Reception of Chopin's Music in Nineteenth-Century America," *Polish Music Journal Online*, 3/2 (winter 2001).

<sup>2</sup> An abridged English translation of the two-volume monograph, *Chopin. Człowiek, Dzieło, Rezonans (Chopin: His Person, Work, and Resonance)*, by the Polish scholar Mieczysław Tomaszewski (Poznan: Posiedlik-Raniowski i Spółka, 1999) has been published in 2009, but it is not easily available in the United States yet. I have had access to some extensive reviews of the work, in English and other languages. It is becoming widely recognized as the most significant monograph on the composer written in recent years.

the economic circumstances in New York during the time Chopin's music started to reach the concert halls of the city and the homes of its dwellers.

Chapter 2 offers an examination of the early reception history of Chopin's works in America. Primary sources include contemporary criticism, extracted from newspapers and specialized music journals. The chapter revolves around the figures of the two foremost American Chopin scholars of the nineteenth century, Henry T. Finck (1854–1896) and James G. Huneker (1860–1926). Their interpretations of Chopin are unveiled and compared—emphasizing their conformity and their disagreement—with the responses by their European counterparts, Ferenc Liszt (1811–1886), Maurycy Karasowski (1823–1892), and Frederick Niecks (1845–1924), all of whom wrote highly influential biographies of Chopin in the second half of the nineteenth century. In order to provide a congruent organization of responses to Chopin's music in New York, I have divided the composer's musical production into three large groups: small forms for piano (including nocturnes, mazurkas, waltzes, and other examples of Chopin's so-called “character” or “miniature” pieces), extended forms for piano (ballades, scherzos, polonaises, sonatas...), and works for piano and ensemble and for piano and orchestra. Consequently, the discussion does not necessarily follow the chronological order in which Chopin's works were first revealed to the New York public.

In the following four chapters, the discussion is centered on performances of Chopin's music. I have arranged them chronologically, in an attempt to better demonstrate the evolution of responses and the ways Chopin's music was disseminated. Chapter 3 covers the years 1839–1853, starting with an account of the first documented performance and ending with the first tour of the American pianist and composer Louis

Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869). Chapter 4 examines the presence of Chopin’s music in New York during the remaining antebellum years, especially in the innovative classical concerts organized by William Mason (1829–1908), Richard Hoffman (1831–1908), and other New York-based pianists, proceeding to the end of the decade. Chapter 5 discusses the growing presence of Chopin’s music in the city throughout the Civil War (1861–65) and continues through the end of the decade. Chapter 6 covers the years around the legendary tours of pianists Anton Rubinstein (1829–1894) and Hans von Bülow in the 1872–73 and 1875–76 seasons, respectively, assessing new attitudes toward what was then referred to as “classical music,” and toward new concert formats, specifically the “piano recital.”

The decision to finish this project at that moment is by no means arbitrary. By the end of that year, the vast majority of Chopin’s published works to date had had at least one public performance in New York. In the course of thirty-six years, the shift in repertory from *improvisation* to *interpretation* was complete: programs made of bravura pieces composed by the performer himself were substituted by programs featuring “classical” works—an array of significant works not written by the performer, but by recognized Baroque, Classical, and Romantic composers. Von Bülow, whose programs were designed according to the same principles that pianists apply today, exemplified the standardization of the repertory. With respect to Chopin, between 1839 and 1876 American, European-American, and European visiting pianists managed to give momentum to a communal quest: the establishment of a unified meaning around Chopin’s music—one that aimed at positioning him unequivocally and once and for all

among the great composers of the century (their goal, as we shall see, was only partially achieved).

After a short chapter that surveys early American editions of Chopin's works, a series of appendices provides some data on pianists who played Chopin's music in New York, as well as information about their performances, including number, date, and content. An organized ranking of works according to their incidence in the programs should provide, I hope, valuable information to assess the popularity—or lack thereof—of Chopin's works among the city's concertgoers.

I write these lines in October 2010, exactly two hundred years after Chopin was born in the village of Żelazowa Wola, near Warsaw. As a successor of some of those early New York listeners for whom Chopin's music was an intoxicating revelation, I realize that his music continues to *speak* to us nowadays in ways that are as distinctive, emotionally profound, and enigmatic as they were one hundred and fifty years ago.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Reception: General Issues*

#### *Preface: Chopin, an Immigrant in New York?*

In late September 1831, almost a year after his definitive departure from Warsaw, a twenty-one-year-old Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin arrived in Paris, the city where he would live for the rest of his life.<sup>3</sup> Early in 1832 rumors started to circulate that the composer was contemplating the idea of moving to the United States. According to the story, his friend Paul Émile Johns (c. 1798–1860), a New Orleans resident of Polish birth, tried to convince Chopin that he could find professional and financial success faster and easier in the “New World” than in Paris.<sup>4</sup> In any case, the veracity of the story is questionable at best, and later studies of the composer have referred to it as a mere anecdote.

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<sup>3</sup> Chopin left Warsaw on 1 November 1830. Through his European journey, the composer visited various cities including Breslau (then a German city; now Wrocław, in Poland), Dresden, Vienna (where he spent the entire winter), Linz, Salzburg, Munich, and Stuttgart. After settling in Paris, Chopin would spend extended summer stays in George Sand’s (née Aurore Dudevant, 1804–1876) estate at Nohant, in the central French department of Indre, in the region of Berry, from 1839 to 1846. Relieved from his duties as piano teacher and with no social events to attend, he was most fruitful there. In addition to occasional trips to modern-day Germany (in 1834, 1835, and 1836) and London (two weeks in July 1837), Chopin and Sand spent a famously eventful but productive winter in the isle of Majorca (1838–39). Finally, the composer toured England and Scotland for nearly six months in 1848. Chopin died in Paris on 17 October 1849.

<sup>4</sup> The earliest reference to the story appeared in Maurycy Karasowski’s *Frédéric Chopin: Seine Leben, Briefe, und Werke*, Dresden, 1877 (the first English translation came out in London in 1879; a reprint was published by J. Church in Cincinnati in 1880). Little is known about Johns, other than that he gave some concerts in New Orleans in the 1820s. In or around 1830, Johns opened a stationary store specialized in imported sheet music. In 1831 he traveled to Paris, where he might have made some business-related arrangements with the piano manufacturer Camille Pleyel (1788–1885, son of Ignace, who founded the company in 1807). There, he met Chopin and, soon, they became good friends. The composer dedicated his Four Mazurkas, op. 7 (1830–32) to “Monsieur Johns de la Nouvelle-Orléans.” Henry A. Kmen, *Music in New Orleans: The Formative Years, 1791–1841* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1966), 217. See also Tad Szulc, *Chopin in Paris* (New York: Lisa Drew/Scribner, 1998), 106.

For speculation's sake, we could simply imagine that the course of events had been different, and that Chopin had finally been persuaded by Johns to move to New Orleans. Once there, he might have been frightened by the effects of the Southern city's oppressive summer climate on his already poor health: in the first half of the nineteenth century, New Orleans suffered deadly epidemics of cholera virtually every summer.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps, then, Chopin could have decided to move yet again, this time to New York, the city that, by the 1830s, was becoming the financial center of the United States, and, with it, its cultural capital as well. Thus, Chopin would have led a list of outstanding performers from Europe who settled in the city in the 1840s and 50s: the violinist Theodore Thomas (1835–1905) and the conductor Carl Bergmann (1821–1876), both from modern-day Germany;<sup>6</sup> the pianist Richard Hoffman and the music critic Charles Bailey Seymour (1829–69), from England; and the Moravian opera impresario Max Maretzek (1821–1897), to mention just a few.

What would have been the result of such a correlation of events? How differently would have Chopin's career as a composer and pianist developed, had he moved to New York instead of settling in Paris?

Maurycy Karasowski, one of Chopin's first biographers, argued that the composer might have been motivated to leave the Old World for political reasons. Some Poles living in France migrated to the United States during those politically unstable times, when revolutions swept Europe in 1830. Early in 1831, Poland was occupied by Russian troops in retaliation for an uprising started in November of the previous year, an event

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<sup>5</sup> Yellow fever was also a constant danger: between 1817 and 1860, there were twenty-three lethal outbreaks in the city. See George Augustine, *History of the Yellow Fever* (New Orleans: Searcy and Pfaff, 1909).

<sup>6</sup> Hereafter, Germany.

that had major implications on Chopin's life, including his decision to remain in Paris indefinitely.

Professional aspirations could have also played a role. Chopin was in a rather pessimistic mood after his first international presentations in various German and Austrian cities (Dresden, Stuttgart, Vienna...), where he had enjoyed success as a performer but had not left a strong impression as a composer: "The Germans admired my playing at the rehearsal. 'What a light touch he has,' I heard them whisper; but about the composition I did not catch a syllable. Tytus [Woyciechowski (1808–1879), Chopin's childhood friend, with whom he was traveling] heard a gentleman say 'there is no doubt this young man can play, but he cannot compose.'"<sup>7</sup> His official presentation to the Parisian public, a benefit at the newly built Salle Pleyel, was problematic. It had to be postponed several times due to the illness of the pianist Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785–1849), who was engaged to participate in the event. Moreover, Camille Pleyel, who managed the event, had failed to secure the participation of singers, whose presence was a requisite in any concert in those days. By the time the benefit took place, on 26 February 1832, many of the wealthy residents of Paris had either left the capital, frightened by the threat of a cholera epidemic, or shut themselves away. Some of the remaining potential concertgoers were discouraged by the high price of the tickets. In the end, the hall was half-empty.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Letter to his family from Wrocław, dated 9 November 1830. *Chopin's Letters*, ed. Henryk Opieski, tr. E. L. Voynich (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931; reprint, New York: Dover, 1988), 115. After Wrocław, Chopin traveled to Vienna. Various Viennese newspapers and journals acknowledged Chopin's visit but his concerts were only sporadically reviewed. That was not his first visit to the Austrian capital: on 11 August 1829, he had triumphed there with a performance of his Variations on Mozart's "Là ci darem la mano," op. 2 (1827). The success led to other engagements in the city in the following months.

<sup>8</sup> Jim Samson, *Chopin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 82.

The fact that Chopin disliked to play before large audiences is well known. He once told Liszt that he was not “fit to give concerts, as audiences unnerve me: I feel stifled by their breath, paralyzed by their inquiring gaze.”<sup>9</sup> People who heard him play would have added that his sound was too feeble for large venues. Arguably, his predilection for works ascribed to the genre known as “salon music”—one which Chopin helped create—was more a matter of necessity than preference; if a career as a concert pianist was the natural path to follow for a young performer in the early 1830s, he might have felt overwhelmed by the harsh competition he would have endured in Paris. At the time, the city acted as a magnet to the new generation of pianists and composers who were destined to revolutionize the future of piano performance, including Liszt, Henri Herz (1803–1888), and Sigismund Thalberg (1812–1871). Chopin might have felt unwilling to deal with such potential rivalry.

Despite the encouraging reviews he received after his debut—the critic François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871) celebrated the “young man, who . . . has found, if not a complete renewal of the pianoforte, at least a part of what has been sought in vain for a long time”—Chopin still felt disheartened.<sup>10</sup> In December of 1831 he sent another letter to Tytus, who had interrupted his journey as soon as he heard news about the Polish insurrection against the occupying Russian army and returned to Warsaw. Chopin wrote at the time: “I feel sour, bitter, salty, governed by a hideous mixture of feelings.”<sup>11</sup> The realization that Paris was, despite everything, the indisputable cultural capital of the

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<sup>9</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 147. Chopin gave no more than thirty public concerts after his arrival in Paris. In several of them, he was not the primary performer.

<sup>10</sup> *Revue musicale* 12/5 (3 March 1832): 38–39.

<sup>11</sup> Letter to Tytus Woyciechowski dated 25 December 1831. *Chopin's Letters*, 166.

world only added anxiety to his precarious emotional state. Just a few weeks before, in another letter to Tytus, Chopin had revealed his confused thoughts: “In Paris you find everything. You can amuse yourself; weary yourself; laugh, weep, and above all, do what you want.”<sup>12</sup>

In any event, it seems that by the spring of 1832 Chopin might have almost given up his desire to “create a world for himself” among the Parisian pianists and to have decided to leave the city for good.<sup>13</sup> Karasowski remarked that Chopin communicated his intentions to his parents, “endeavoring to persuade them that he could do nothing better than leave France, and seek his fortunes on the other side of the Western ocean,” but they were thoroughly opposed to his plan.<sup>14</sup> Some of his new friends were also opposed to the idea: according to Karasowski, “Franz Liszt, [Ferdinand] Hiller [1811–1885], and [Wojciech] Sowinski [1805–1880] tried to dissuade him from leaving Paris, but Chopin would not listen to them.”<sup>15</sup> His hesitations notwithstanding, Chopin never moved to the United States—nor returned to Poland.

Were these the causes which made Chopin reconsider his idea? Could also the anticipation of a possible lack of empathy with the people of the “new world”—a common presumption among many Europeans at the time—have played a role? Karasowski thought so. To him, the effects of the move would have been catastrophic: the United States, with its unfamiliar customs, foreign social conventions and rituals, lack

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<sup>12</sup> Letter to the same dated 12 December 1831. *Chopin's Letters*, 154.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to his Warsaw teacher Józef Elsner. *Chopin's Letters*, 161. The expression “a world for himself” to refer to Chopin’s early struggles in Paris has been used by Jim Samson in his monograph on the composer, cited above.

<sup>14</sup> Maurycy Karasowski, *Frédéric Chopin: His Life, Letters, and Works*, tr. Emily Hill (London: William Reeves, 1879), 238.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

of solid artistic traditions, and the unpolished, still semi-rural lifestyle of the majority of its citizens would have made Chopin feel miserable. Karasowski argued: “[W]hat part could be played by Chopin, with his romantic and poetic nature, in a country where coolness and practical ability are of paramount importance? With his life-long horror of charlatanism, his refined taste and aristocratic tendencies, how could he have lived in America, or how could the Americans have appreciated him? Had he settled there merely as a teacher, he would, perhaps, have grown rich; but he could have never shone among the stars of the musical world.”<sup>16</sup>

In 1888 Frederick Niecks published his groundbreaking, monumental biography, *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician*, written in English, and destined to be the main source of several future studies on the composer. Niecks reproduced Karasowski’s account of the event and added a dénouement—an unexpected encounter which reversed the course of events: “One day, or, as some will have it, on the very day when he was preparing for his departure [sometime in the spring of 1832], Chopin met in the street Prince Valentine Radziwiłł, and, in the course of the conversation which the latter opened, informed him of his intention of leaving Paris. The Prince . . . did not attempt to dissuade him, but engaged the artist to go with him in the evening to [banker Baron J. de] Rothschild’s.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Frederick Niecks, *Frédéric Chopin as a Man and Musician*, 2 vols. (New York: Novello & Ewer, 1890), I, 247. Niecks’s book was the first exhaustive biography of Chopin (two large volumes), and also the first one written in English. Niecks’s monograph was groundbreaking in many ways. He reviewed the early historiography of the composer, especially Liszt’s and Karasowski’s biographies, and was critical of both of them for their tendency to over-romanticize some aspects of the life of the composer. In addition, Niecks gave some valuable information about the folk traditions and literature of Poland. He also discussed at length Chopin’s liaison with George Sand. Born in Düsseldorf, Niecks settled in Scotland in 1868, where he taught at the University of Edinburgh.

What we know is that day on one day in March 1832, Chopin performed at Rothschild's salon, and things were never the same. The wealthy banker's wife engaged him as piano teacher for herself and her daughters, and other well-to-do ladies followed suit. Chopin's fees were high enough to secure his financial situation completely. Prospects of monetary stability were soon accompanied by the public's recognition of his performing abilities, and his participation in the musical life of Paris became more active.<sup>18</sup> He befriended some of the best musicians of his generation, including Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Liszt, and Bellini, composers who, like him, had come to Paris in search of international fame and recognition. His humor also changed, and by December, he sounded optimistic, seemingly having found his position as an artist.

Chopin's encounter with the best opera being produced in Europe at the time was also decisive. Always an enthusiast of *bel canto*, he heard some of the world's most celebrated opera singers, including María Malibran (1808–1836) and Giuditta Pasta (1797–1865)—performers whose vocal styles became a crucial influence in the aesthetic development of his style. Early in 1833 he wrote to a Warsaw friend: “[I have] entered the best society. . . . I sit with ambassadors, princes and ministers; and I don't even know by what miracle this is, for I have never crowed about myself.”<sup>19</sup> After those final successes, the intention, if indeed it ever existed, to move to the United States vanished once and for all.

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<sup>18</sup> Most of Chopin's public concerts in Paris took place between 1832 and 1835. The concert at the Salle Pleyel, attended by Liszt and Mendelssohn, was immediately followed by others at prestigious venues like the *Conservatoire*.

<sup>19</sup> Letter to his friend Dominik Dziewanowski (1811–1881), undated, probably written in January 1833. *Chopin's Letters*, 168–69.

Niecks was the first scholar to cast some doubts on the authenticity of the rumor about Chopin's plan to move to America. Intrigued by Karasowski's story, he asked some of the composer's early acquaintances directly, including Liszt, Hiller, and cellist August Franchomme (1808–1884); all of them rejected Karasowski's claim.<sup>20</sup>

Understandably, some Chopin scholars in the United States have found the story very attractive. In his essay "The Greater Chopin," included in the book *Mezzotints on Modern Music* (1899), James Huneker argued that Chopin's career would have failed, had he chosen to move here. Recreating the cultural landscape of the United States at the time, Huneker claimed that "America was not a pleasant place for an artist a half century ago . . . One is filled with horror at the thought of a kindred poetic nature also being cast in the prosaic atmosphere of this country; for if Chopin had not had success at Prince Valentine Radziwiłł's soirée . . . he would certainly have tried his luck in the New World, and do you not shudder at the idea of Chopin's living in the United States in 1831 [sic]?"<sup>21</sup>

One last, intriguing question comes to mind regarding Chopin's hypothetical American journey. Even assuming that the artistic evolution of an imaginary Polish-American Chopin wouldn't have changed substantially, would his *image*—an idea that includes the conception and reception of his music, and of the man himself—have been different? In the nearly two hundred years since the time that journey did *not* happen, a more or less unified idea of the meaning of Chopin's music seems to have been finally established, if still a bit precariously—an idea stemmed from the amalgamation of the

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<sup>20</sup> Niecks, *Frédéric Chopin as a Man and Musician*, I, 247, *n*.

<sup>21</sup> James Huneker, "The Greater Chopin," *Mezzotints in Modern Music* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1899), 202.

different images that emerged at the beginning of his career and kept evolving through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Early on, there was not one collectively accepted image of Chopin, but several. These included the salon composer, representative of the bourgeois values of the July Monarchy; the national hero, as a flagship of nineteenth-century Polish political aspirations; and the advanced composer whose works anticipated some of the harmonic innovations of late Romanticism. Chopin's aesthetics were recognized as undeniably romantic—expressive, virtuosic, subjective, intimate—and yet he framed his compositions, even the most elaborate, within classical structures that suggest a certain preoccupation with conventionality.<sup>22</sup>

All those images circulated in Europe and were soon exported to musically competitive emerging American cities like New York. This study is an attempt to investigate how New York participated in the propagation of that combination of images towards the future formation of a universally recognized one.

### ***1. Musical Life in Antebellum New York.***

In the early 1800s, the United States was expanding quickly, both as an idea and as a reality. Some Americans realized that a culturally competitive nation should match the country's economic growth and prosperity centered on agriculture, industry, and active commercial interchange with the Old World. It took some time for New York to achieve the status of a musical center of first order, similar to European musical metropolises like Paris, London, Vienna, or Leipzig, but the number and quality of

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<sup>22</sup> The opposition of those two elements, romanticism and classicism, is one of the main emphases of Tomaszewski's monograph on Chopin. See the review by Zbigniew Skowron, trans. Anna Masłowicz and Richard Topp, *Polish Music Journal Online* 3/2 (winter 2000).

spectacles, patronized by an increasing number of cultivated concertgoers, never stopped its rapid growth: cultivation led to independent, distinctive, and assertive opinions, detached from assumptions collected from European interpretations.

By the time Chopin's music arrived in America, the city was still rivaled by Boston and Philadelphia as the nation's major artistic hub, but the stream was slowly shifting towards New York.<sup>23</sup> Early responses to Chopin's music were indistinguishable throughout America; as musical infrastructure developed, they began to be interpreted through the distinctive lens of the people of New York.

With a population of more than 300,000 inhabitants by the late 1830s,<sup>24</sup> New York had become the focal point of economic growth of the United States, a consequence of its active trade with Europe and the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. By 1840, Philadelphia had lost its economic lead over New York and had been dethroned as the most populous city in the United States. The trade of both goods and people between New York and Europe led to a gradual acquisition of social habits imported from there, which included artistic and musical taste. Elsewhere in the nation the city's cultural sophistication would be imitated: in 1835, the *American Musical Journal* reported that there was "an assumption that all [musical] talent must fail in America which is not imported *via* New-York and makes its debut in this city."<sup>25</sup> European musicians sailed to

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<sup>23</sup> In the South, Charleston, Savannah, and especially New Orleans also hosted a vibrant artistic life. New Orleanians had traditionally boasted about their cultivated tastes. Many first American productions of opera took place in New Orleans, and a Philharmonic Society was founded as early as 1829.

<sup>24</sup> Edward K Spann, *The New Metropolis, 1840–1857* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 156.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music: The New York Music Scene in the Days of George Templeton Strong, 1836–1875* 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), I, xxvii.

New York and invariably tried to introduce themselves to the public and the critics of the city first. These immigrants turned New York into a sort of “ground zero” where performers, managers, theater owners, and piano manufacturers concentrated. For a great part of the century, however, Boston and Philadelphia managed to maintain their control over music printing, a consequence of their efficiently run businesses.<sup>26</sup>

But what really distinguished New York from European metropolises was its multiculturalism. Along with the original British settlers, immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Scandinavia, and Eastern Europe constituted an energetic body of citizens who strived to maintain their culture and traditions. By 1860, the spectrum of New York’s musical life was turning as culturally diversified as its citizens.<sup>27</sup> The most varied types of musical activity converged in the city. There were variety spectacles along the Bowery; minstrel shows on Broadway (below Fourteenth Street); a season of symphonic music (significant attempts to offer regular orchestral concerts were made before the Philharmonic Society of New York was founded in 1842, while Theodore Thomas founded an orchestra that immediately rivaled the Philharmonic in 1862);<sup>28</sup> opera reigned supreme, with various companies offering, often contemporaneously, Italian, German, and French opera throughout the musical season and beyond.

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<sup>26</sup> See chapter 7 for a list of early American publishers of Chopin’s music.

<sup>27</sup> John Graziano, “Introduction,” *European Music and Musicians in New York City, 1840–1900* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>28</sup> Concert societies paved the way for modern concert giving in the nineteenth century. The London Philharmonic Society and the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna were founded in 1813, and the *Société des concerts du Conservatoire* of Paris in 1828. The first opera represented in New York, on 29 November 1825, was Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* by the company of the Spanish tenor Manuel García (1775–1832). García was Almaviva, the role he had created in Rome in 1816. His daughters Paulina (the soprano and composer Pauline García-Viardot, who later became a close friend of Chopin and arranged some of his mazurkas for voice and piano) and Maria traveled with him. Maria married a New York banker, François Eugène Malibran, whom she divorced shortly thereafter.

Before 1850, exclusively instrumental concerts were rare: in fact, they did not exist as such. Concerts fell under two main categories, benefit and miscellaneous, the latter being the dominant one. The purpose of the miscellaneous concert was to entertain—rather than to enlighten—by means of presenting an always-enticing variety of genres and timbres. A typical program would feature a number of arias and ensembles from operas; art and popular songs; and instrumental ensembles and solos, in which the pianist was usually in charge of the accompaniment. A sacred piece, and—depending on the budget—an orchestral work or two might also be performed. Around mid-century, things started to change. The violinist and conductor Theodore Eisfeld (1816–1882) established a series of chamber music in 1851, and a regular series of concerts. In 1855, William Mason and Theodore Thomas launched with great success the Thomas/Mason Soirees of Chamber Music.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, the piano was attaining increasing prestige as an instrument suited to the concert hall—comparable to other instruments and the voice—, a circumstance that proved crucial for the dissemination of Chopin’s music in the concert hall. As American scholar Adrienne Fried Block has observed, by mid-century, “in a typical evening, there could be [in New York] a dozen or more events: orchestral, band, solo, and chamber, and programs by choral and family singing groups.”<sup>30</sup> Such vibrant activity never slowed down, not even during the years of the Civil War.

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<sup>29</sup> Other members of the ensemble included violinist Joseph Mosenthal (1834–96), violist George Matzka (1825–83), and cellist Frederick Bergner (1827–1907). The series ran for fourteen consecutive seasons.

<sup>30</sup> Adrienne F. Block, “Matinee Mania in New York,” *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 31/3 (Spring 2008): 195.

## 2. *New York Theaters*

Along with immigration, economics played a crucial role in the development and diversification of New York's musical life. By the time the first notable European pianists came to the United States, some with the intention of settling indefinitely, the country was experiencing a period of economic bonanza and optimism. With the growing economy, financially stable citizens found themselves hungry for a type of entertainment of quality—especially if offered by foreign artists—that they would support and enjoy. Affluent New Yorkers were aware of the city's deficient cultural infrastructure since virtually no concert halls of quality existed until the 1840s, contributing financially to putting an end to the situation.

The pianist Richard Hoffman, an early champion of Chopin in New York, described the state of the city's theaters at the time he arrived from England in 1847:

The Tabernacle was a large building on Broadway and Leonard Street, used on Sundays for religious services and for all kinds of secular entertainments throughout the week. It was the only large room available for public concerts or meetings except Castle Garden (then used for the opera), and its acoustic properties were very good. It was, however, a dismal, badly lighted place and the entrance could only be approached through a long, narrow alley from Broadway. The New York audiences of to-day [around 1900] would revolt against the inconveniences which were cheerfully endured by their grandparents in 1847.<sup>31</sup>

Hoffman neglected to mention the Apollo Rooms, also on Broadway (near Canal Street), a theater used by the recently created New York Symphonic Society, and the City Assembly Rooms, located nearby, on Broadway at Grand Street. Along with Clinton Castle, at the southernmost tip of Manhattan, these theaters completed the foursome of major concert halls in the city by mid-century. Niblo's Gardens, on 537 Broadway at

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<sup>31</sup> Richard Hoffman, *Some Musical Recollections of Fifty Years* (New York: Scribner, 1910; reprint, Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1976), 95–96.

Prince Street, opened in 1827 (Niblo's Music Saloon would open in 1852, on the same location). It was a theater primarily devoted to opera, vaudeville, and other entertainments; instrumental concerts were only occasionally offered. In addition, high-quality music was performed in private houses as well as in public open places during the summer season.

An element of anxiety, triggered by the desire to emulate the exciting musical life of the great European capitals, played a significant role in the impressive development that the entertainment industry in New York experienced in the 1850s and 60s. The city's new priorities included the creation of concert halls of quality, which could accommodate the newly interested public and convince first-rate European artists to come to the New World to perform in them. In 1854, the biggest theater thus far opened in New York. The Academy of Music, on East Fourteenth Street, held about 4,600 people (4,000 after the 1866 fire) and had an area only slightly smaller than that of the Berlin State Opera (*Staatsoper unter den Linden*), which had also recently been renovated after a fire. Table 1.1 offers a comparison of the relative size, in square feet, of the Academy of Music and other opera theaters in Europe:<sup>32</sup>

Name	Whole area in sq. ft.	Stage	Auditorium
Academy of Music	24,020	9,760	14,260
Paris, <i>Académie</i>	51,300	28,800	22,500
Milan, <i>La Scala</i>	40,300	17,550	22,750
Naples, <i>San Carlo</i>	39,825	15,525	24,300

<sup>32</sup> *Dwight's Journal of Music* (hereafter *Dwight's*), 6/1 (7 October 1854): 4.

London, Covent Garden	35,475	17,325	18,150
St. Petersburg, <i>Alexander</i>	41,600	17,600	24,000
Berlin, State Opera	29,700	12,100	17,600

### 3. *Piano manufacturers*

In 1853, the critic John Sullivan Dwight (1813–1893), in his influential *Journal of Music*, acknowledged the importance of the piano and its popularity over other instruments in American households: “Among musical instruments the Piano is that most in use. For it the greatest number of works has been written, from Bach down to our days.”<sup>33</sup> The development of the industry of piano manufacturing played an important role in the rise of New York as a musical capital. By 1830, it is estimated that 2,500 pianos were made in the United States yearly; more than half of those were made in New York. Twenty years later, American manufacturers were making 9,000 pianos per year, while English imports had virtually ceased (only the wealthiest continued to purchase pianos made in France and Germany). By 1860, the number had risen to 21,000: more than half of those were manufactured in New York.<sup>34</sup> With such an overwhelming demand, pianos became increasingly affordable and no longer restricted to an affluent minority. In fact, the popularity of the instrument reflected its status as a consumer’s must-have good. This situation would have an extraordinary influence in the spread of Chopin’s music and its popularization among New York amateur pianists.

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<sup>33</sup> *Dwight’s 3/4* (30 April 30 1853): 26–27.

<sup>34</sup> Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos: A Social History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 468.

Manufacturers and merchants publicized the merits of their instruments in colorful advertisements printed in all local newspapers and journals. Some manufacturers made arrangements with “celebrity” pianists so that they would endorse their product (the situation was not different in Paris during Chopin’s lifetime: he and other pianists had professional relationships with manufacturers such as Pleyel and Érard, a circumstance that they used to their mutual benefit, not only financial: the piano writing of Chopin and Liszt was unquestionably influenced by the mechanical developments in the pianos introduced by those manufacturers.)

In the years covered by this dissertation, the number of piano manufacturers in the city multiplied, as can be seen in the following Table.

Piano manufacturers in New York, 1835–1875.

Henry Lindeman & S. G. (opened 1836)

Boardman & Grey (1837)

Hazelton Brothers (1840)

Hardman & Peck (1842)

Pease Piano Company (1844)

J. & C. Fischer (1845)

Horace Walters & Co. (1845)

Needham Piano Company (1846)

Freeborn G. Smith (1848)

Kurtzmann & Co. (1848)

Weber Piano Company (1851)

Steinway & Sons (1853)  
Ernest Gabler & Brothers (1854)  
Decker & Sons (1856)  
Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company (1856)  
George Steck & Company (1857)  
Behning Piano Company (1861)  
Biddle Piano Company (1861)  
Sporer, Carlson & Berry (1861)  
Vough Piano Company (1861)  
C. E. Byme Piano Company (1862)  
Kranich and Bach (1864)  
Marshall and Mattauer (1867)  
Wing & Son (1867)  
Krakauer Brothers (1869)  
Doll, Jacob & Sons (1871)  
Mathushek & Son Piano Company (1871)  
Sturz Brothers (1871)  
Sohmer & Company (1872)  
Jamse & Holmstrom (1874)  
Ahstrom Piano Company (1875)

Early on, the pianos made by Boston manufacturers such as Jonas Chickering (1798–1853) had the best reputation. By the 1860s, however, most newly arrived pianists

were choosing the instruments made by a German émigré named Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg (later Henry E. Steinway, 1797–1871), who founded *Steinway and Sons* in New York in 1853. In less than twenty years, the reputation of the firm had expanded to the other side of the Atlantic, thanks to the introduction of the “overstrung design,” the revolutionary cast-iron frame to support the soundboard. Before the 1850s most visiting virtuosos traveled to the United States from Europe with their own instruments, but once in New York, they often chose American-built instruments for their concerts, since manufacturers sponsored them in exchange for promotion of their instruments. Gottschalk, for instance, traveled from France to America in 1853 with his own piano, but ended up using instruments by Chickering in his concerts, as did Hans von Bülow in 1875. William Steinway (1835–1896), son of Heinrich, engaged Anton Rubinstein to play his pianos during his 1872–73 American tour. By that time, contracts between pianists and manufacturers had become customary in the United States.<sup>35</sup>

#### **4. *Images of New York among European musicians and Europe in the Imagination of New Yorkers***

As the nation’s main port, New York received the greatest number of immigrants, many of whom settled there. Starting in the 1830s, the spectrum of the city’s residents, until then rather monochromatic, experienced a significant transformation with the arrival of two new groups of immigrants, from France and from Germany. The main cause for the exodus was political rather than economic; during the years in which proto-socialism

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<sup>35</sup> The tradition by the Steinway firm of engaging pianists was continued into the twentieth century, with the creation of the Steinway Artists Program. Jan Paderewski, Cole Porter, Vladimir Horowitz, Krystian Zimerman, Evgeny Kissin and Billy Joel, to name a few twentieth-century renowned performers, have all been “Steinway artists”—although the practice started *de facto* much earlier: the association between Chopin and Pleyel in the 1830s could be taken as an example.

emerged as a political threat to the status quo (culminating in the revolutions of 1848), fear of persecution led many citizens in Europe to seek refuge elsewhere. In just a few years, these émigrés managed to establish two differentiated, culturally active communities. Many were financially stable, intellectual, and musically educated individuals. For the Germans, who were at the time making strong attempts to establish a national identity, music became one of the pillars of their quest, helping to support an emerging sense of individuality and distinctiveness. Both the German and French communities maintained a certain sense of pride in their musical heritage and a desire to make it a symbol of their presence in the city. Their contribution to the emergence and development of a significant musical life in New York, both in quantity and quality, was vast, as was the involvement of the new communities in the city's progressive pursuit of culture and competitiveness.<sup>36</sup>

Newly arrived German musicians naturally favored the establishment of a repertory that suited their tastes. From the beginning, Mendelssohn was the most popular composer, while the music of Schumann and Liszt was initially met with more reticence.<sup>37</sup> The efforts of highly cultivated German-born conductors, such as Carl

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<sup>36</sup> Starting in the 1840s, the Irish started to arrive en masse as they escaped the potato famine. Musically uneducated for the most part, the contribution of the Irish to the musical scene of the city was nonetheless important: Irish folk music thrived in the 1850s and 60s, songs being frequently performed in classical concerts and in variety theaters. Before the Irish, the most important wave of immigrants came from France, as thousands of French citizens fled the 1789 Revolution and, later, the 1830 revolt. The first French newspaper, *Le Courrier des États-Unis*, appeared in 1828. By 1851, over 20,000 French immigrants had come to the United States, many of them settling in New York. The next group of immigrants before the arrival of Eastern Europeans and Italians in the late 1880s came from Germany; by the early 1860s, the German population in New York City had reached 100,000, being only surpassed by the Irish. By then, the German community managed twenty churches, fifty schools, ten bookstores, and two German daily newspapers. At the time, there were either opera or instrumental concerts (or both) almost every day, even on Sundays. Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 434.

<sup>37</sup> Andrew C. Minor, *Piano Concerts in New York City 1849–1868* (M. M. Thesis, University of Michigan, 1947), 474.

Bergmann, Theodore Eisfeld and, later, Theodore Thomas, would effectively put Schumann's and Liszt's orchestral and choral music on the map. Within a few years of the first important arrival of immigrants, the musical refinement of New York concertgoers had evolved noticeably. In 1861, a critic wrote: "Musically, the past generation was in Egypt. Their children have come into the promised land; and, under the lead of Beethoven and Mozart, Chopin and Franz, Handel and Mendelssohn, Wagner and Schumann, are driving out the barbarian and the profane . . . The great masters . . . are interpreted now in excellent fashion among us, and are appreciatively estimated and enjoyed."<sup>38</sup>

Due to the large number of immigrants who settled in New York, the city became a place where issues surrounding vernacular versus imported culture became significantly noticeable.<sup>39</sup> An element of prejudice, based on nationality, affected American performers to various degrees. For the average nineteenth-century American, a good artistic inclination was an attribute almost exclusive to those born, or at least raised, in Europe. The common idea was that non-European performers had a lower level of artistic sensitivity in general, the result of insufficient exposure to the arts. The proficiency, knowledge, and degree of musicianship of a foreign artist, it was believed, could never be challenged by a local one. The absence of competitive music schools and professional instructors, combined with the lack of confidence in musical matters, made a thorough artistic education difficult to be achieved anywhere in the United States. As a result, local artists tended to be regarded as less prepared than their European counterparts, and local

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<sup>38</sup> *Christian Examiner* 71/1 (July 1861): 67.

<sup>39</sup> *Finer, Leslie Jane, The Dissemination and Reception of Liszt's Piano Music in New York, 1835–1875.* (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2006), 29.

artists had to build a European reputation first.<sup>40</sup> In 1854, the *New-York Musical Review and Choral Advocate* addressed the issue:

[O]ur artists are afraid to make their appearance at home before having made a 'European reputation.' 'Nothing can be done in America,' say they, 'until we have got up a name in Europe.' One must come as 'Prima Donna from La Scala,' or 'Violinist to His Sublime Majesty the King of Lilliput,' or 'Pianist to the Emperor of Russia' or 'A Pupil of Mendelssohn,' in order to secure a hearing. There is a 'toadyism' in this which is not in harmony with the American character, and the sooner we respect ourselves sufficiently to rise above it, the better.<sup>41</sup>

In his discussion of Gottschalk's failed first American tour in 1853, his biographer Frederick Starr has observed that "American audiences had endured a seven-year plague of heavily promoted European divas and thundering pianists . . . Critics honed their knives at the first mention of the word *virtuoso*."<sup>42</sup> In fact, Gottschalk's arrival was not preceded by the usual fanfare dispensed to other pianists, the *Courrier des États-Unis* being the only newspaper that regularly informed the New York's French community about his successes in Europe.

But Gottschalk had also been subject of discrimination in Europe. In an entry from *Notes of a Pianist*, the diary of sorts in which he chronicled his concerts from the late 1850s until nearly the end of his life, Gottschalk recalled his early days in France, when disdain was generally bestowed on most things American. Even though Gottschalk had French ancestry and had received a French education (he spoke and wrote in French and was never fully competent in English), he was denied an audition at the Paris Conservatoire by the school's director, Pierre Zimmermann (1785–1853), under the

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<sup>40</sup> While prejudice against American performers was common, there were also defenders of local artists. As an example, the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia had supported local performers since 1830.

<sup>41</sup> *New York Musical Review* 4/17 (17 August 1854): 289.

<sup>42</sup> Frederick Starr, *Bamboula!* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 125.

pretext that an American could never be a true artist. As he put it, “L’Amérique n’est pas qu’un pays de machines à vapeur.”<sup>43</sup> When the American composer and music critic William Henry Fry (1813–1864) attempted, in 1846, to have his opera *Leonore* (1845) staged in Paris, he was rebuffed with the argument that “in Europe we look upon America as an industrial country—excellent for railroads but not for art.”<sup>44</sup>

To many Europeans, the distorted idea of America as a land of extraordinary wealth and opportunities acted as desirable bait. In 1855, Maretzek, who arrived from Moravia (now part of the Czech Republic) in 1848, explained with ironic eloquence how America was perceived to be. In the first of his two autobiographies, *Crotchets and Quavers* (1855), Maretzek reviewed the opinions most Europeans had about America at the time of his arrival: “Some believe it to be a literal *El Dorado*, the Land of Musical Promise running with rivers of milk and honey . . . These plant the land of their imagination with cities . . . filled with gold, and silver, and ivory. Their inhabitants are wealthy, confiding and generous, in the extreme. . . In fact, the wealth, opulence, and prodigality of republican America have become proverbial. . . .”<sup>45</sup> Opinions, however, were often contradictory. Maretzek continued:

Others are here, however, to be found in Europe, who regard America in a very different light. These believe it to be inhabited by a set of savages, barbarians, and Red Republicans. In their opinion, it contains a race of

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<sup>43</sup> “America is nothing but a country of steam machines.” Louis M. Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, (1881; reprint, Jeanne Behrend, ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 130. Charles de Talleyrand had gone even further, Gottschalk noted, saying that America was “un pays de cochons.” Gottschalk might have been further discriminated against because he had both African (Creole) and Jewish ancestry.

<sup>44</sup> Fry recalled the event in *The Musical World and The New-York Musical Times* 5 (26 March 1853): 195–96. Fry returned to New York in 1852 and became the music critic of the *New-York Tribune*.

<sup>45</sup> Max Maretzek, *Crotchets and Quavers: or, Revelations of an Opera Manager in America* (New York: S. French, 1855; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), 65–66.

people who eat raw meat and devour uncooked vegetables, who chew tobacco, and void their rheum upon ladies' dresses and Turkey carpets, who drink unheard quantities of brandy, schnapps, ale and Monongahela whiskey while, instead of having been provided with a delicately palpitating heart like other races of mankind, Nature has in its place inserted simply a silver dollar, coined in their own mint.<sup>46</sup>

Many European virtuosos, however, were eager to tour America. The disadvantages they would find from meeting with a presumably uneducated public would be compensated by the financial gains acquired from their lengthy concert tours in both Eastern and Southern cities and in small towns in the emergent Midwest. They came to America lured by expectations of fast financial gain, rather than by the desire to be recognized as artists. Paul-Émile John's alleged proposal to Chopin could be seen as an example of this attitude.

The fascination that audiences in the United States felt for virtuosos from the Old World was reciprocal. American concertgoers were regarded as appreciative consumers of music and as wealthy patrons, regardless of their presumed lack of musical sensitivity. Typically, virtuosos entertained the idea of touring the New World only after they had succeeded in Europe and their celebrity status was at its height. Many had already visited countries outside the boundaries of Europe's musical epicenters, at that time largely confined to the German-speaking countries and Paris. Some of the greatest triumphs of Liszt, Thalberg, and Gottschalk (once again, an American who had been educated in Europe) took place in countries like Britain, Russia, Spain, and modern-day Italy. Once fame and fortune had been achieved in Europe, conquering new audiences was next on the pianists' agenda. The United States and some countries of Central and South

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

America, notably Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, became the natural next step in their pursuit of definitive professional success, understood mainly as financial gain.

Even Liszt, the most sensational of all living virtuosos, once made plans to visit the United States in the late 1840s, shortly before meeting Princess Caroline Sayn-Wittgenstein (1819–1887), and retiring from the concert stage as a touring pianist, in 1847. By then, however, he had settled permanently in Weimar and had no intention of resuming his concert career. In case he doubted, he was discouraged by, among others, Berlioz, who asked his colleague how he could contemplate the idea of crossing the Atlantic “to make music for the Yankees who just now are thinking about California gold.”<sup>47</sup> In 1857, an American critic (probably Henry Cood Watson [1818–1875]) acknowledged that, despite “being urged on all sides to visit America, [Liszt] seems to have the smallest possible respect for the musical intelligence of the Yankees, and refuses all offers of speculators. He thinks something of gaining money, but not everything—and ‘will not play . . . where he may be stared at as a *rara avis* but not understood or appreciated as an artist’.”<sup>48</sup> Friedrich Wieck (1785–1883) also declined an invitation to his daughters Clara (1819–1896) and Marie (1832–1916, herself an accomplished pianist) to tour the United States. In a letter addressed to an unidentified correspondent in Germany for *Dwight’s Journal of Music*. Wieck wondered if “America [was] yet ripe for exhibitions of Art so fine and noble.”<sup>49</sup> Several letters from the correspondence between

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<sup>47</sup> Hector Berlioz, letter to Franz Liszt, ca. 25 March 1849. *Hector Berlioz: A Selection from His Letters*, ed. and tr. Humphrey Searle (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 110.

<sup>48</sup> *New York Musical World*, 17 (7 March 1857): 270. Quoted in R. Allen Lott, *From Paris to Peoria: How Piano Virtuosos Brought Classical Music to the American Heartland*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 110. In Liszt’s defense, he had effectively ended his tours long before the article was published.

<sup>49</sup> *Dwight’s* 1/17 (31 July 1852): 133.

Robert and Clara Schumann from the early years of their marriage reveal that in the spring of 1842 they seriously considered a trip to America—perhaps even a permanent move—with hopes of alleviating their problematic financial situation.<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile, news about the formidable accomplishments and appealing stage presence of European virtuosos circulated in the United States. Savvy American managers and impresarios saw the opportunity to invite them and created efficient promotional campaigns designed to attract large audiences. The era of the sensational American tours by Europe's leading virtuosos began in the early 1840s with the visits of singers such as Henriette Sontag (1806–1854), Giulia Grisi (1811–1869), and especially Jenny Lind (1820–1887), whose success during her American tour in 1850–51 was legendary. Lind's first manager, the vociferous Phineas T. Barnum (1810–1891), orchestrated a reception preceded by such an efficient and aggressive publicity machine that the success, both artistic and financial, was secured. As soon as news about her success reached Europe, the United States became a sort of a promised land for performers of all kinds, even though the magnitude of Lind's accomplishments would not be equaled easily.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Several letters written from February to May, 1842, attest this. See *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann*, ed. Eva Weissweiler, vol. 3 (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 288, 295, 301.

<sup>51</sup> Some sopranos had been remarkably successful in New York before Lind. In addition to Malibran, the English sopranos Jane Shirreff (1811–83), Elizabeth Austin, and Mrs. Joseph Woods (née Mary Ann Paton, 1802–64), to name a few, were greatly acclaimed in the 1840s. For these and other early opera pioneers in America, see Katherine Preston, *Opera on the Road: Traveling Opera Troupes in the United States, 1825–60* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), especially pp. 44–98. The American tour of Jenny Lind has been extensively discussed in numerous monographs and articles, among them Gladys D. Schultz: *Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1962); Adrienne F. Block: "Two Virtuoso Performers in Boston: Jenny Lind and Camilla Urso," *New Perspectives on Music: Essays in Honor of Eileen Southern*, ed. J. Wright and S.A. Floyd (Warren, MI, 1992): 355–72.

The golden era of the virtuosos culminated in the 1850s with the tours of the violinists Ole Bull (1810–1880) and Henry Vieuxtemps (1820–1881), and the pianists Leopold de Meyer (1816–1883), Henri Herz, and Sigismund Thalberg. Some of the most celebrated European performers kept going on tour to the United States throughout the nineteenth century, but they also encountered a gradually more selective audience. New York critics gained confidence in their own judgment as they developed an ability to decide by themselves on the merits of a visiting performer without the aid of extravagant publicity campaigns or pre-conceived notions. Although condescending views about the United States were by no means eradicated by the end of the century, they became, gradually, no longer an assumption. The successful visits of composers such as Tchaikovsky (1891) and Dvořák (1892–1895) could be interpreted as indicators of the growing mutual respect and appreciation between the two continents.

##### ***5. European Images of Chopin: From Romantic Vanguard to Classical Paradigm***

Throughout the nineteenth century, the stature of Chopin's music as a whole was, with few exceptions, never questioned, as was its widespread appeal. His status as a first-rate composer, however, remained elusive, a quandary—and a conflict—that, some would argue, has not been completely disentangled two hundred years after his birth. Musicians and music lovers soon realized that his music resisted a classification according to parameters adopted for other composers of his generation.<sup>52</sup> One of the first conflicts derived from his unique relationship with the piano: Chopin did not (or could

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<sup>52</sup> Jim Samson, "Myth and Reality: A Biographical Introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 8.

not) write for the orchestra.<sup>53</sup> The whole of Chopin's oeuvre is not smaller than that of many other composers who, like him, died before turning forty, but his almost complete dedication to a single instrument made him a special case.

At the time, not wanting or not being able to write a substantial symphonic or dramatic work had important implications for the image projected by a composer among his peers, critics, and the public. Those implications may not be exactly detrimental by themselves—a composer could show his knowledge of form and harmony in his piano pieces alone, leaving out his command of orchestration as the only potential shortcoming as a composer. Yet it could be a sign of lack of ambition: the assumption, especially during the age of romanticism, was that a composer would try his hand first at works for the piano, and, perhaps, works for small ensembles and songs. Once the developing composer had shown signs of being in control of the main aspects of composition in piano writing and had established his *voice*, he would start writing large works for the orchestra or for voice and orchestra. Schumann's, Liszt's, and, to a lesser degree, Mendelssohn's careers illustrate this correlation. There may be significant exceptions: Berlioz (another case of a composer whose placement among his peers was also problematic), Paganini, and countless piano virtuosos who doubled as composers (opera composers did not write any significant music for a medium other than the voice, but each one of them needs to be assessed individually: they belonged to a specific category, especially in Italy, where they were trained to write for the stage from the beginning). Audiences expected that Paganini would exclusively write pieces that showcased his dazzling virtuosity (the same applied to other virtuosos, including pianists). Berlioz's

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<sup>53</sup> Chopin's lack of proficiency in writing for the voice can be refuted by the fact he wrote nearly twenty songs for voice and piano, which, however, he did not wish to have published.

inability to write for the piano (he never learned to play the instrument, itself a rarity) was not necessarily seen as a handicap. Conflicts surrounding responses given to his music were not the result of his complete dedication to the orchestra, a medium which, everybody would admit, he handled like no other. Chopin, instead, did feel pressure for not writing in a medium other than the piano: his teacher Jozef Elsner (1769–1854), an opera composer, and probably some other Poles had hoped he would create the first great Polish opera, and felt disappointed that he did not.

Another criticism endured by Chopin has to do with the allegedly poor handling of sonata form and his dedication to smaller forms (chapter 2 explores the attempts made by some nineteenth-century American scholars to counter those claims). Jim Samson has observed that Chopin’s music contains “the many forms in which it has been promoted and interpreted.”<sup>54</sup> To Samson, that multiplicity—small pieces, like the mazurkas and nocturnes, and extended ones, like the ballades and sonatas—added to Chopin’s nearly null interest in exploring timbres other than the piano and resulted in an array of aesthetic interpretations. Chopin defied conventions even further: while some saw him as the epitome of the romantic composer, he was also viewed as a classical model, as his concern for well-defined, balanced structures revealed.

Another aspect that removed Chopin from his contemporaries rested on his lack of interest in literature and philosophy as sources of inspiration. Goethe (especially his *Faust*), Schiller, Heine, Byron, Shakespeare, Saint-Simon, Lamartine and other literary heroes of the romantics were direct sources of inspiration for Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Berlioz (not to mention opera composers), but never to Chopin. Even his liaison with Sand and his friendship with Delacroix, a writer and a painter

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<sup>54</sup> Samson, *Chopin*, 8.

respectively, did not alter his attitude with respect to the independence of music from other artistic disciplines and his reliance on abstract inspiration.

Finally, an important component of his image was also drawn from his eventful biography, rich in episodes of sickness, doomed love affairs, and nationalistic yearnings.

Thus Chopin moved precariously between various worlds, and in various phases. Early in his career he was perceived as a virtuoso, still somehow indistinguishable from other performers and composers; the earliest American references to Chopin, as we shall see in chapter 3, identified him as a representative of the “modern school” of the pianoforte, along with Liszt, Adolf von Henselt (1814–1889), and Thalberg. The bravura pieces favored by these composers in the early romantic period represented, with their influences from vocal music and literature, an aesthetic challenge to classical forms.

Chopin abandoned virtuosity for its own sake, approximately at the time of the publications of the Scherzo op. 20, the Ballade op. 23, and the Two Polonaises op. 26, all of them works written in or around 1835. After that, Chopin was mostly regarded as a modernist, an assessment confirmed by his distinctiveness of his harmonic idiom and his innovative ways of writing for the piano. He was also viewed as a paradigm of originality and individuality, an idiosyncratic composer and performer who did not belong to any school but his own. Yet it was because of the clever combination of harmonic audacity, melodiousness, and classical balance, and with emphasis on abstract forms that still retained some figurative meaning (for example his nocturnes and ballades), that Chopin remained, in general terms, as popular as Mendelssohn. Compared with Schumann’s music, for example—whose early experimental pieces did not have an immediate appeal among general audiences—Chopin’s was, with a few exceptions, well accepted.

Chopin's modernity, however, was hardly understood in New York at the time. In 1845, a naïve American critic admitted that Chopin had "always been a kind of riddle to us;" instead, the critic claimed,

De Meyer should be considered a great composer of piano music. Indeed, he is perhaps one of the most original writers of the present day, and certainly the most diverse of all. H[enri] Herz can do little worthy of notice except variations, and his music is rather out of fashion now; T[heodore] Dohler [1814–1846] has indeed some very good melodies, but his pieces in general are mere imitations of [Carl] Czerny's [1791–1857] style; Liszt will never be considered as a great composer by any serious judge.<sup>55</sup>

Toward the second half of the nineteenth century—shortly after his death—the image of Chopin turned increasingly into the epitome of the "salon composer." By then, "salon" had many connotations, but none of them was innovative, daring, or modernist. Of all the images that somehow ended up co-existing, the last one seemed to prevail. In the words of Samson, "[Chopin's] association with the salon generated a number of powerful images which have proved enduring in [his] reception."<sup>56</sup> This categorization harmed Chopin's reputation to the point of becoming sometimes a stigma: if the salon was a space governed by women, by logic "salon music" was perceived as feminine, a categorization that, by male-imposed nineteenth-century standards, automatically diminished its status and therefore its significance with respect to music for the concert hall.<sup>57</sup>

Further complications in the attempt to establish a universal understanding of Chopin had to do with the failure to provide a satisfying geographical placement of the

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<sup>55</sup> *The Anglo American, a Journal of Literature, News, Politics and the Drama and Fine Arts* 6/2 (1 November 1845): 43.

<sup>56</sup> Samson, *Chopin*, 2.

<sup>57</sup> Rosenblum, "A Composer Known Here but to a Few," 323.

composer and his oeuvre. To most music lovers, Chopin's music was unequivocally Polish, but it also embodied the spirit of what was understood as French. At the same time, there were attempts to associate his compositions with the dominant German musical culture, which had become the representative of universal musical values. Finally, the English tried to accommodate Chopin's music to values and moral attitudes of the Victorian period. This myriad of meanings has been summarized, once again, by Samson:

It is as though Chopin held a mirror to the conflicting ideologies attending a critical period in music history, right on the cusp between classical and modernist notions of art. French critics sought to preserve him as [an] ideal Romantic composer, a poet. English music lovers tried to domesticate him, absorbing him easily into a musical culture that affirmed, with no significant critical element, the middle-class ascendancy. Russian composers turned him into a modernist, drawn into the orbit of a pioneering music responsive neither to the professional establishment nor to public taste . . . in these opposed perspectives we view separately, and with particular clarity, the two strands which were held in a sort of forcefield in Germany, resolved only when Chopin was elevated to the canon, and thus absorbed by history—a classical composer.<sup>58</sup>

In his examination of Chopin's reception in Europe, Huneker, who had spent some years in Paris studying piano with George Mathias (1826–1910), himself a pupil of Chopin's, believed that his image had become particularly distorted in France:

The French understand Chopin to a limited degree, and they worship in him the qualities that were almost fatal to his genius. I never heard a French pianist give an adequate interpretation to Chopin's masterworks. If the Germans treat him in a dull, clumsy and brutal manner, the Frenchman irritates you by its flippancy, his nimble, colorless fingers and the utter absence of poetic divination. Without Slavic blood in your veins you may not hope to play Chopin, and all Polish pianists do not understand him.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Samson, *Chopin*, 290.

<sup>59</sup> Huneker, "The Greater Chopin," 212.

To Huneker, the true essence of Chopin's music was ultimately unattainable by both French and German performers:

The something inexplicable to Western imaginations in Chopin's playing and music, which Liszt so elaborately explains with his definition of *Żal*, is nothing but the hopeless antinomy of the East and the West. The touch of the Asiatic in Chopin, tempered by French blood and subjected to the attrition of Parisian drawing rooms, will never be quite clear to us."<sup>60</sup>

In any case, throughout the nineteenth century, the categorization of Chopin as a nationalistic composer was also problematic; it could never be understood through parameters applicable to, for example, composers like Smetana, Glinka, or Grieg.

An amalgam of these images traveled across the ocean and gave way to a distinctively American image of the composer, an image that inevitably originated in New York. It is therefore important to know these European images before finding parallels and discrepancies with autochthonous responses, which are assessed in the next chapter.

## 6. *Four European Responses to Chopin*

### **Poland**

In Poland, Chopin was seen through a nationalistic lens, as could be expected from a country whose convulsed nineteenth-century history was determined by the continuous struggle for independence from constant occupations by the threatening giant of the East, from Prussia in the West, and from Austria in the South. Although the composer's departure from Poland and subsequent "exile" was by no means due to political reasons (nor was he ever directly involved in his nation's politics), Chopin came

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 217–18. *Żal* is commonly translated as "remorse" or "regret."

to be regarded throughout Europe as a herald of Polish identity like no other artist in the nineteenth century.

Chopin's treatment of the two genres most intimately associated with the national music of Poland, the polonaise and the mazurka, was highly original, especially the latter. Adapting the folk roots of the dance to his unique harmonic language he created a new sub-genre which would eventually be recognized as "salon mazurka," a type of "urban mazurka" accessible to both Poles and non-Poles.<sup>61</sup> In some of those mazurkas, particularly the earlier ones, folk elements appear more unequivocally than in others. These elements include the distinctive rhythm of the dance (with the stressed second or third beat), the structure (a drone-like phrase in the middle section), and, sometimes, the melodic and harmonic adaptation to what "sounds like" Phrygian or Lydian modes. However, Chopin's interpretation of the most characteristic of all Polish dances could also be made under the premise that they constitute avant-garde compositions of the romantic era rather than mere miniature piano pieces inspired by folk music. This view, championed by the Germans, was not shared in Poland, for whom the mazurkas and polonaises were loaded with representations of patriotic identity. But the nationalistic reception of Chopin's music given by the Poles (and shared by other Slavic countries) was not limited to the mazurka and the polonaise. The composer's trademark harmonic idiom and melodic turns, often shaped in ornamentation, which form the quintessential "melancholic" character of his music, was often associated with the nostalgic air that for many epitomized the essence of the struggling Eastern European people.

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<sup>61</sup> Zofia Chechlinska, "Chopin Reception in Nineteenth-Century Poland," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 214.

The nationalistic essence of Chopin's music was perceived by New York audiences indirectly, since Polish immigration was not noteworthy until the early twentieth century. In this regard, there was no difference with Western European nations. Significantly, however, the evolution of the composer's recognition in Poland and in the United States was similar: the Chopin scholar Zofia Chechlinska has written that "[T]he [Polish] public was not aware of Chopin's complete oeuvre; it knew only a selection comprising primarily works for piano with orchestra and compositions from the 'second period' [the 1830s]. The later works . . . were not readily understood."<sup>62</sup> Chopin's compositions fared similarly in America.

American writers would normally echo European stereotypes about Polish music. One critic, writing for a Brooklyn periodical in 1864, referred to the "barbaric element" present in the music of the Slavic peoples. He attributed it to their penchant for melodies in the minor mode, a feature shared with much Asian, African, and Native American music. According to that critic, the quality of Chopin's music had nonetheless redeemed his country from falling into the category of barbarian:

Poland is the only among the Slavic family of nations which has produced music of worldwide notoriety; and to her proximity to the intelligence of western Europe, she may be supposed to have partaken more deeply of the infection of progress, than others of her sister races—yet all connoisseurs are familiar with the wild, unearthly character of the Polish national music; which even after being largely refined and toned down by their best masters, still retains its distinctive individuality. The eminent Polish composer, Chopin, is well known in musical circles; and his reductions may be taken as a type of the music of Eastern Europe, in its most polished and scientific form. Chopin was undeniably a person of high musical capability, and a consummate artist; and in him the idiosyncrasies of his nation assumed their most refined shape; yet throughout his music is heard the inevitable wail—subdued, intensified, and melodious, it is true,

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 220.

yet ineffably sad; as if it were the embodiment of the untamable genius of those wild Slavic races...<sup>63</sup>

In August 1858, an article in the *Musical Review and Gazette* announced the imminent publication in America of seventeen of Chopin's Polish songs edited by Jules (or Julian) Fontana (1810–1869), and published posthumously as op. 74. The occasion was celebrated by the reviewer, who admitted that the demand for songs destined for domestic consumption and the reputation of the composer would ensure a favorable response by the public and would guarantee good sales, no matter how indigenous the songs might sound to non-Poles. In his discussion, the critic took the opportunity to establish connections between the two unquestionable, universally accepted features of Chopin's music, namely individuality and nationalism:

We do not think that there are many instances in the history of any art, where an author of decided talent, even genius, leaves no trace of his style but that which is to be found in his own works . . . It is Chopin who furnishes one of these instances. Although he has plowed a new path in the field of musical literature, as applied to the piano-forte; although he has produced a series of compositions which contain all the elements for the foundation of a new school, yet no such school has ever been formed. There have been a few attempts to imitate his style, but of these attempts nothing is left, and in our days nobody would think of composing as did Chopin, although the character and the treatment of his works are just as modern as they were twenty years ago. We have had successful Beethovenites, Schumannites, Mendelssohnites, etc., but we have not one disciple of Chopin who can lay claim to distinction . . . And why? Because that which formed the originality of Chopin was such a mixture of rare gifts, circumstances, and especially, nationality . . . Moreover, Chopin's art was based entirely upon his individuality . . . His melodies were his own, and his harmonizing. [Melody and harmony] emanated at the same moment from his inspired soul; and to play them separately, would produce . . . nothing but a mass of unmeaning, mostly discordant sounds. . . [W]e must recognize the tone of Polish nationality that prevails in every one of his compositions.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *The Circular* 1/6 (25 April 1864): 43.

<sup>64</sup> *Musical Review and Gazette* 9/16 (7 August 1858): 243–44. The opportunity of publishing songs for admirers of Chopin's piano music was seized upon by the Boston publisher Oliver

The corpus of Karasowski's biography of Chopin was the correspondence between the composer and his family, much of which had been destroyed during the Polish uprising against the Russians in 1863. Karasowski's purpose was, according to his own account, to clarify some erroneous data and to correct some ideas contained in Liszt's biography of the composer, presumably co-authored with his lover at the time, Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein and published in France in 1852 (it appeared one year earlier in serial form in *La France musicale*). Liszt's biography would soon be considered rather unreliable from a scholarly point of view, but the status as a "celebrity" of its author and the evidence of his close knowledge of Chopin and his music had made it widely read and influential from the time it was published. Karasowski was correct when he questioned much of Liszt's interpretation of the nationalistic (to Liszt, "folkloric" would be a more suitable adjective) aspect of Chopin's music. Modern scholars have noted that while Liszt made a commendable effort to explain the essence of the mazurka to the readers of his book, intending to both "raise the status of [Chopin's mazurkas]" and demonstrate the direct influence of Polish music on Chopin (he even provided descriptions of some of the various dances upon which Chopin based his mazurkas, and did the same with the polonaises), he made serious mistakes, which passed on to the scholars who read him. In fact, Liszt interpreted the word "national" as "folk," creating the "longest standing myth in Chopin criticism—the myth that Chopin's

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Ditson, who published three of them in 1862: "The Two Lovers," "Lithuanian Son," and "Fair Was the Sunlight." News about the publication was conspicuous in several feminine journals, such as *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*.

mazurkas are national works rooted in an authentic Polish-folk music tradition.”<sup>65</sup>

Chopin was exposed to that music in Warsaw, where the “folk” was inevitably filtered through the “urban.”

Even though Karasowski’s biography was published in German, for German readers, the author—a Pole—emphasized the nationalistic traits of Chopin’s music. To him, the composer had deliberately appropriated the aesthetic and ideological principles laid out by the same contemporary Polish poets who heralded the nationalistic momentum that emerged after the Congress of Vienna, adapting them to his music. Thus, the book, available to American readers in 1879, brought the composer closer to an ideological and aesthetic space that non-Polish listeners might have found completely out of place.

In any case, the patriotic élan attributed to Chopin’s music, reinforced by preconceived ideas about his supposed involvement in his nation’s struggles, would have an indirect but lasting effect on the reception Americans gave to Chopin’s music. While there would be no point in portraying Chopin as a Byron-like revolutionary, resonances of nobility, struggle, sorrow, and dignity were easily recognizable in his music, and Karasowski consistently emphasized them. His biography is full of references to Chopin living as a foreigner in France, always distressed by the trauma of being away from his beloved country. Echoes of that suffering found a response in the sympathetic ears of some newly arrived immigrants, some of whom had also left their countries of origin forced by grim circumstances.

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<sup>65</sup> Barbara Milewsky, “Chopin’s Mazurkas and the Myth of Folk,” *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 23/2 (1999): 114. Milewsky claims that Bartók was skeptical about Chopin’s real exposure to the authentic folk music of Poland.

## France

The oeuvre and the persona of most nineteenth-century composers are often treated as two parts of an indivisible whole. The case of Chopin is probably one of the most illustrative. Arguably, no other romantic composer has ever been so closely identified with a particular image and a series of biographical events and personality traits so universally recognized. Even during his lifetime, a number of distinctive signs of identity were “assigned” to Chopin, especially in France: to French critics, Chopin became the definitive image of the melancholic, angelic, soulful, and frail artist. The “Ariel of the piano” was a recurrent trope, especially towards the end of his life and upon his death.<sup>66</sup> Later on, in the twentieth century, Chopin would be seen as a link in a long tradition of a French school of keyboardists that could be traced back to the times of composers such as Faubergé and Couperin, and continued by Saint-Saëns, Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel.<sup>67</sup>

The evolution of Chopin’s distinctive language was a direct consequence of his technique as performer. The instruments he favored and used, which were those that allowed a delicate and crystalline touch, were a crucial factor in the evolution of the composer’s piano writing. Those instruments were made by the French manufacturers Pleyel and Érard. During Chopin’s life, his “sound” was recognized as French and closely associated with the sound of French pianos, as opposed to the more resonant English pianos.

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<sup>66</sup> The angel Ariel is a character in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Chopin was compared to him in several French obituaries. Jeffrey Kallberg, “Small Fairy Voices: Sex, History, and meaning in Chopin,” *Chopin Studies* 2, John Rink and Jim Samson, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 52.

<sup>67</sup> Samson, *Chopin*, 285. It has been noted that French pianists have traditionally excelled on Chopin’s “non-Polish” works. James Methuen-Campbell, *Chopin Playing: From the Composer to the Present Day* (New York: Taplinger, 1981), 79.

Berlioz was among the first to acknowledge Chopin's originality and distinctive voice both as composer and interpreter, arguing that he had "no point of resemblance with any other musician" (Berlioz might have been thinking about himself when he wrote that).<sup>68</sup> But while his genius as a pianist was never questioned, Chopin the composer was not always judged favorably: in his influential *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (1835), Fétis affirmed that Stephen Heller (1813–1888) was more relevant than Chopin as a member of the modern school of piano.<sup>69</sup> While admiring the composer on the whole, Fétis thought that "the merit of his works has been exaggerated," claiming that his "harmonic successions" were often "false to the tonal feeling."<sup>70</sup> Fétis's criticism was based on the observation of Chopin's musical material (rather than on a discussion of his personality), views that sounded empirical and objective compared to Liszt's. In that regard, Fétis offered a contrast to the over-romanticized image projected by Liszt through his biography of Chopin.

The Bohemian composer Ignaz Moscheles (1794–1870), who was living in Paris at the time Chopin arrived in the city, co-edited with Fétis an album of études for piano written by twelve composers (among them Chopin, who contributed three pieces), titled *La Méthode des méthodes du piano* (1838). Moscheles's opinion of Chopin was ambivalent at best. While admitting that Chopin's originality was incontestable, he judged his music forced and artificial. In his diary, he stated that his thoughts "stumble[d]

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<sup>68</sup> *Le Rénovateur* 2/345 (15 December 1833). Quoted in Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 272.

<sup>69</sup> "Un jour viendra où les influences de coterie ayant disparu laisseront juger du mérite réel des choses; alors on reconaîtra, sans aucun doute, que Heller est, bien plus que Chopin, le poète du piano." François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, vol. 4 (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1866), 288.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

at certain hard, inartistic, and to me inconceivable modulations. On the whole I find his music often too sweet, not manly enough, and hardly the work of a profound musician.”<sup>71</sup>

In France, where Romanticism was above all a literary movement, nineteenth-century images of Chopin were prone to have storybook resonances. One of them declared that “Chopin is a poet and above all a tender one.”<sup>72</sup> For another—the poet Heinrich Heine, who, like Chopin, moved to Paris in 1831 and never returned to Germany—Chopin was the Raphael of music and an artist of genius who could only be mentioned beside Mozart, Beethoven, Rossini, or Berlioz.<sup>73</sup> Berlioz, after hearing Chopin perform in 1833, imagined that the piano had been played by sylphs and elves.<sup>74</sup> The works of French romantic poets were often used as a reference: another critic wrote that “to listen to Chopin is to read a strophe by Lamartine”.<sup>75</sup>

Chopin’s ten-year liaison with Georges Sand, one of the most influential and celebrated writers in France in the nineteenth century, has been the source of countless studies, speculation, and semi-fictional accounts. Sand was one of the most celebrated writers of the time and the epitome of the French Romantic thinker, due to her

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<sup>71</sup> Charlotte Moschles, ed., *Recent Music and Musicians* (extracts from Ignaz Moscheles’ diaries), tr. A. D. Coleridge (New York: Henry Colt, 1873), 196–97.

<sup>72</sup> Léon Escudier, *La France musicale*, 27 May 1842. Quoted in “Chopin Reception: Theory, History, Analysis,” John Rink and Jim Samson, eds., *Chopin Studies* 2, 3.

<sup>73</sup> Heine offered an interesting comment: “Nothing can compare to the joy that he gives us when he improvises on the piano. Then he is no longer either a Pole, Frenchman or German, he betrays far loftier origins: he comes from the land of Mozart, Raphael and Goethe; his true homeland is the kingdom of poetry.” Heinrich Heine, *Lutèce* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1842), 317.

<sup>74</sup> *Le Rénovateur* 2/345 (15 December 1833). Quoted in Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*, 272.

<sup>75</sup> *Le Ménestrel*, *Journal de musique*, 2 May 1841. Quoted in “Chopin Reception: Theory, History, Analysis,” John Rink and Jim Samson, eds., *Chopin Studies* 2, 3. These identifications were not only limited to French poets; for example, Schumann compared Chopin to Lord Byron, and Huneker, to Edgar Allan Poe.

rebelliousness and heterogeneous nature. She met the composer in October or November 1836; in September, Chopin had been forced to break his engagement with Maria Wodzińska (1819–1896), a fellow Pole he had met in Dresden, after failing to have it sanctioned by her father. Sand’s account of the time she and Chopin spent together (the romance developed in May 1838 and ended bitterly in the fall of 1846), revealed in two autobiographical accounts, *Un hiver à Majorque* (1842) and *Histoire de ma vie* (1855), obviously had a very significant effect on the reception the French gave to Chopin.<sup>76</sup>

Chopin’s health was a recurrent source of interpretative analyses, exploited to such a degree that in France Chopin’s sickness and musical production were regarded as inseparable. Sand (who never questioned his genius, even after their bitter rupture) often referred to him as *notre malade*; other nicknames included “velvet fingers,” “Chopinsky,” and even “Chipette,” a girl’s name to any French speaker. Liszt, who wrote Chopin’s biography in French, primarily for French readers, resorted to references to illnesses to explain what he attributed as a decay of Chopin’s artistic talent as illustrated in some of his late works (Karasowski agreed with Liszt).<sup>77</sup> In the second half of the nineteenth century, as Chopin’s music kept gaining popularity, there was the impression that a compelling interpretation of Chopin’s music should recreate the morbidity of his condition, as it were. Although that image was created in France, it became appealing and was taken for granted elsewhere. As late as 1876, John S. Dwight wrote that “to interpret

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<sup>76</sup> *Un hiver à Majorque* was first published serially in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1841. Dwight published excerpts of the book (probably in his own translation) in 1861.

<sup>77</sup> Liszt, *F. Chopin*, tr. Martha Walker Cook (Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1863; reprint, Mineola, NY: Dover, 2005), 56–57.

the music of Chopin as it should be interpreted would be to die, as Chopin himself dies of his own genius.”<sup>78</sup>

### *The Parisian Salon*

During the first years of the reign of Louis Philippe (1773–1850), also known as the July Monarchy (1830–1848), a commodity known as the salon flourished in post-revolutionary Paris. Powerful citizens, such as the banker Baron de Rothschild and other influential *nouveaux riches*, and new monarchists, who prospered during the affluent times of the Citizen King, competed to have the young pianist delight their selected audiences with his profoundly sentimental music, dazzling playing, and charming personality. The identification of Chopin with salon music was reinforced by the fact that the composer lived through the heyday of that Parisian phenomenon.

The salon was still a novel, bourgeois idea of entertainment (not only musical) associated with the cultural and economic elite of Paris. However, by the second half of the nineteenth century the salon had transcended its original boundaries. Such spaces flourished in all major European and American cities, adapted to the idiosyncrasies of their new occupants. Participants in musical events held at prominent salons included composers; performers, both professional and amateur; intellectuals; artists and writers; and even the dilettanti. A new musical genre of piano works, the *morceau de salon*, flourished amidst this atmosphere. Chopin’s identification with the salon (as well as his participation in its development) would have many implications, some of them adverse.

Negative undertones concerning salon music have been discussed by Carl Dahlhaus, who has observed that “[I]nstead of clinging to a watered-down notion of this term, extracted from pieces that were intended to delude provincial middle-class

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<sup>78</sup> *Dwight’s* 10/9 (22 November 1876): 351.

audiences into a musical daydream of salons they were not allowed to enter, we should instead try to reconstruct the aesthetic of a musical genre imbued with the spirit of the authentic salon,” adding that “what is referred to nowadays as salon music is almost invariably pseudo salon music . . . the deadly mixture of sentimental tunefulness and mechanical figuration and passage work that characterizes lesser examples of this music is by no means stylistically representative of salon music as a whole.”<sup>79</sup> For those who did not have easy access to it, the salon became also an *idea*, a sort of an imaginary place, which provided a comfortable, familiar environment for an array of selected guests, eager to be both enlightened and entertained. Encouraged by publishers, composers wrote music destined to be consumed by amateur pianists. Often, those pieces would be identified as pertaining to the salon: Chopin’s waltzes, mazurkas, impromptus, and nocturnes, among other pieces, belonged to that category.

In the homes of affluent New Yorkers, some of the ideas associated with salon music, or, more appropriately, “drawing-room music,” were not dissimilar (the term, in any case, refers to a specific piano repertory, rather than to a physical space). Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, American historian Waldo Selden Pratt explained the consequences that the phenomenon of the salon and the “striking multiplication of small piano works,” which resulted from its social implementation, had on the reception given to some of Chopin’s music. This outlook came from a person who had witnessed a phenomenon that, though it had adapted itself to the transformations of its uses, was still healthy. According to Pratt, the appropriation of Chopin’s small pieces and their adaptation to domestic use by “polite society” was “an inevitable result of their search for tone-forms to express relatively transient moods and fancies.” Aware of the negative

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<sup>79</sup> Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 148.

connotations that the term “salon” had acquired, he was surely thinking of Chopin when he wrote that not all salon music is “necessarily sentimentally vapid or structurally mechanical. Even in its shallower illustrations, parlor music is a large social force, bringing myriads of persons into touch with [piano music, including Chopin’s].”<sup>80</sup> Pratt’s outlook sounds surprisingly current nearly a century later.

## Germany

“[T]here is not a little in Chopin that more than anticipates Wagner, indeed passes him by, not only harmonically, but in a general psychological sense.”

Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*

From a German-centered point of view, Chopin embodied various conflicting characteristics: he was the refined, sentimental composer for the salon, but also an innovative and progressive composer. His exclusive dedication to the piano might be interpreted as an absence of ambition and universalism. Chopin’s associations with the salon proved a major obstacle to his public success in Germany, in sharp contrast with France. Some of the leading German critics of the period were overt detractors of Chopin. Louis Ehlert (1825–1884) argued that Chopin could not be ranked with the great German composers, and Edward Hanslick (1825–1904) neglected Chopin in his voluminous writings, for example in the *Conservations-Lexicon*, even in late nineteenth-century editions.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Waldo Pratt, *History of Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1907), 533.

<sup>81</sup> Henry Finck, “Chopin, the greatest Genius of the Pianoforte,” *Chopin and Other Musical Essays* (New York: Scribner, 1889), 12. Finck was particularly hurt by what he interpreted as Hanslick’s derogatory remarks on Chopin.

A widely held German view of Chopin was that he was a great composer of small pieces but an unsuccessful composer of extended works such as sonatas: his genius was best perceived in the short pieces. The always-perceptive Liszt was among the first who justified his adherence to small forms. In his biography of the composer, he stated that “by confining himself exclusively to the piano, Chopin has proved himself, in our opinion, to possess one of the most essential properties of a writer or a composer: namely, a correct appreciation of the *form*, in which his mission was to be achieved, and his designs executed. And yet this fact, which we impute to him as a high merit, has harmed his reputation.”<sup>82</sup> In turn, Mendelssohn’s appreciation of Chopin’s artistry could be described as ambiguous. He disliked the mannerisms of the more “exotic” pieces, such as the mazurkas, while unreservedly admiring Chopin’s gift for melody: to Mendelssohn, the Prélude in A-flat major, op. 28, no. 17 (1836), was an example of melodic perfection, and defended him against the criticism of his sister, Fanny, arguing that she would change her mind if she could have heard Chopin playing his own works.<sup>83</sup>

As stated earlier, Chopin’s earliest international appreciation as a composer and pianist occurred in Vienna and other German-speaking cities in 1829 and 1830. While in there, he composed some pieces with the Viennese public in mind, including some of his early rondos and variations, the *Introduction et Polonaise brillante* for Violoncello and Piano, op. 3 (1829–30), and the *Grande Polonaise* for Piano and Orchestra, op. 22 (1830; revised, with an introductory *Andante spianato*, in 1835).

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<sup>82</sup> Liszt, *F. Chopin*, 17.

<sup>83</sup> Niecks, *Frédéric, Chopin as a Man and Musician*, II, 332.

In the eyes of the Germans, Chopin acquired the status of a classical composer gradually, until he became an “adopted” German composer.<sup>84</sup> Karasowski had been aware that initially Chopin had been a victim of a group of narrow-minded but influential German musicians who misunderstood him, starting during the composer’s lifetime: “There exists, at all times, a species of half-educated, envious criticism, ever ready to support mediocre talent, and to stifle the first germs of genius. Chopin felt its sting.”<sup>85</sup> Foremost among such opponents was [Ludwig] Rellstab [1799–1860], of Berlin, who, in his Journal, *Iris*, wrote disparagingly of Chopin. Karasowski was referring to Rellstab’s 1830 review of Chopin’s set of variations on Mozart’s “Là ci darem la mano,” op. 2. The critic claimed that the composer had “vandalized” the original melody; this would be the first of the many negative pieces of criticism Rellstab would direct towards Chopin’s music (he would later feel particularly appalled by the études).<sup>86</sup> Another response to the same work, written about a month earlier, illustrated the opposite view: Schumann admired it so much that his prophetic review in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* effectively put Chopin on the map, especially in the eyes of the Germans, with the famous exclamation (through his alter-ego Florestan): “Off with your hats, gentlemen—a genius!”<sup>87</sup> The admiration professed by Mendelssohn and by Robert and Clara Schumann gave tremendous momentum to the career of the young composer. Although these

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<sup>84</sup> Samson, *Chopin*, 287.

<sup>85</sup> Karasowski, *Frédéric Chopin: His Life, Letter, and Works*, 133.

<sup>86</sup> Ludwig Rellstab, *Iris im Gebiete der Tonkunst*, 37/38 (5 November 1830): 5.

<sup>87</sup> *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 49 (7 December 1831): 806. This review marked also the debut of Schumann as a professional critic. Louis Spohr was another defender of the work, which he heard performed by Clara Wieck in the Leipzig *Gewandhaus* in April 1832. Rellstab would be rebuffed by another German critic, the philosopher Karl August Kahlert (1807–1864), who wrote enthusiastically about Chopin in the essay *Über Chopins Klavier-Kompositionen* (1834). In later years, Rellstab’s assessments of Chopin became less negative.

musicians were still very young, their reputations, as composer and pianist (Mendelssohn), virtuoso (Clara Schumann), and critic (Robert) had already been established by the time Chopin made his first impact on the European musical world.

One of the main purposes of Karasowski's monograph was to demonstrate the stature of Chopin's music compared to other German composers of the pre-1850s "new school," such as Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Liszt (the latter was, at the time, recognized as German). Karasowski referred to Liszt's and Schumann's writings as often as he felt he needed to justify Chopin's talent. Writing in the 1870s, he observed, perhaps too optimistically, that negative judgments had for the most part dissipated, thanks to "the younger generation of musicians, who . . . having, in great measure, studied Chopin from their early youth, know how to appreciate him . . . The discussion as to Chopin's status in the musical world is over, and his high position assigned to him once for all."<sup>88</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, German editions of Chopin's works outnumbered those in France and England. Between 1878 and 1880, Breitkopf und Härtel undertook an important task: an authoritative edition of the complete works of several composers, including Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schumann.<sup>89</sup> In 1878, the editors asked Brahms and Liszt, among others, to direct the publication of a critical edition of Chopin's complete works, completed two years later and comprising fourteen volumes: he would be the only non-German composer included in Breitkopf's index besides, remarkably, Palestrina.<sup>90</sup> The editors shared common editorial standards and

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<sup>88</sup> Karasowski, *Frédéric Chopin: His Life, Letters, and Works*, 133.

<sup>89</sup> Breitkopf had already issued "complete" editions of the works of Mozart, Haydn, Clementi, and Dussek in the 1810s.

<sup>90</sup> Franchomme (dedicatee of the Sonata for Cello and Piano, op. 65), Woldemar Bargiel (1828–1897), Carl Reinecke (1824–1910), and Ernst Rudorff (1840–1916) also collaborated in the edition. Liszt took care of the two sets of Études, opp. 10 and 25.

some pieces included critical commentary. The importance of this event in the history of the reception of Chopin in the nineteenth century was paramount, for it further established Chopin as a representative of a musical tradition from the Austro-German sphere. Samson, who has discussed the position of Chopin in the “formation of a canon” of mostly German works, has observed that the integration of the composer “was tantamount to a kind of adoption, and it represented an almost symbolic moment of resolution in German Chopin reception,” marking the end of the “scattering of meanings” that had coexisted up to then. In the United States, where that Austro-German-centered idea dominated, the position of Chopin among the great classical composers was still not completely settled by the end of the period covered by this study, as can be gathered by the fact that many of the American responses to his music kept revolving around this conflict. Some saw the need to recognize Chopin as one of the great romantic composers according to German parameters, trying, simultaneously and paradoxically, to dismantle associations of greatness in music under those same German principles; in the end, they would claim that Chopin’s uniqueness needed to be appreciated according to his own merits.

The increasing presence in New York of German immigrants after 1848 must account for the establishment in the city of a German-centered idea regarding music. Some of these immigrants were highly educated musicians who soon asserted their influence, becoming reputed conductors, performers, singers, instrument manufacturers, and impresarios. As we shall see in later chapters, many young American musicians were sent to Germany to study; as might be expected, their appreciation of Chopin was influenced by German thought.

## England

Handel, Johan Christian Bach, and Haydn are perhaps the most important composers from the continent who settled or lived in London in the eighteenth century. Just like them, some of the foremost pianists of the early nineteenth century, such as Moscheles and Johann B. Cramer (1771–1858)—both of whom were well acquainted with the music of Chopin—lived and worked as piano teachers in London. It is acknowledged that some of Chopin’s early, shorter pieces were particularly popular among English female students since early on.<sup>91</sup> The composer first visited London (incognito, according to Niecks) for a few days in July 1837. The originality of his style however was identified by some British listeners, and he was soon discovered: “The incognito could only be preserved as soon as Chopin kept his hands off the piano. When after dinner he sat down to play, the ladies of the family suspected, and, suspicion being aroused, soon extracted a confession of the truth.”<sup>92</sup>

Some of the most enthusiastic reviews Chopin received during his lifetime appeared in English journals. In 1838, a London critic wrote:

Were [Chopin] not the most retiring and unambitious of all living musicians, he would before this time have been celebrated as the inventor of a new style, or school, of pianoforte composition. During his short visit to the metropolis last season, but few had the high gratification of hearing his extemporaneous performance. Those who experienced this will not readily lose its remembrance. He is, perhaps, *par eminence*, the most delightful of pianists in the drawing-room. The animation of his style is so subdued and systematic, the *tout-ensemble* so perfect, and evidently the result of an accurate judgment, and most finished taste, that when exhibited in the large concert-room, or the thronged saloon, it fails to impress itself on the mass.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Huneker, “The Greater Chopin,” 19.

<sup>92</sup> Niecks, *Frédéric Chopin as a Man and Musician*, I, 312.

<sup>93</sup> *Musical World of London* 8/102 (23 February 1838): 120–21.

Other sources, however, seem to contradict his early British fame. Niecks, who lived in Britain, claimed that “in those days, and for a long time after, the appreciation and cultivation of Chopin’s music was in England confined to a select few . . . the composer Alfred J. Hipkins [1826–1903, an early champion of Chopin in England] had to struggle for years to gain adherents to Chopin’s music.”<sup>94</sup>

Samson has observed that Chopin’s reception in England was framed in what has been called “the role of music as social regulation, a role which was strengthened through the early nineteenth century [and beyond].”<sup>95</sup> The “social regulation” alludes above all to women, who, during the Victorian era, were the main practitioners of music-making in the homes of the middle class. It had significant consequences in the ways Chopin’s music was heard and judged: it was played, in great part, by amateurs, whose repertory was limited to short, not too challenging pieces. The Anglo-German pianist Charles Hallé (1819–1895), a friend of Chopin and another early champion of his music, once observed that, by the last third of the century, the composer had become the property of every school girl in England, with negative consequences for the general appreciation of his music.<sup>96</sup> In 1870, an English ladies’ journal addressed the issue: “How frequently . . . do we witness the sad spectacle of a girl, entirely devoid of musical ability, compelled to drudge away for hours daily at the piano because forsooth, every young lady ought to be able to play. The result is that for a few seasons the patience of friends is exhausted, and

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<sup>94</sup> Niecks, *Frédéric Chopin as a Man and Musician*, II, 278.

<sup>95</sup> Samson, *Chopin*, 288. The author attributes the idea to the scholar Richard Leppert.

<sup>96</sup> *Life and Letters of Charles Hallé*, ed. M. Hallé. (London: Smith Elder, 1896), 33.

their ears are tortured by the girl's wretched performance."<sup>97</sup> Samson has referred to the scenario that Hallé and the journal described as a set of codes immersed in Victorian attitudes, "which ensured that women were the main consumers and practitioners of an art firmly centered on the piano—the 'household orchestra'," and to a repertory of works "suitable for performance by the Victorian woman, including short, manageable piano pieces—simple transcriptions, dance pieces, 'character' pieces."<sup>98</sup>

New Yorkers knew about Chopin before his music was popular in the city's concert halls: American journals often reprinted articles taken from their British counterparts. In April 1850 the New York-based *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature* reprinted an article from the English journal, *Bentley's Miscellany*. To American readers, the article, a two-page combination of obituary (Chopin had died six months earlier) and biography, was the first substantial writing on the composer made available in the United States. The article was laden with the stuff from which the American image of Chopin was going to take shape: references to his health, his elusive personality, his antipathy to performing before large audiences, the lyrical, sentimental aspect of his music, and even his intriguing relationship with George Sand. The author suggests that, initially, Chopin's music was too original and complex for the English public, and that only after having been assimilated by the Parisians could it have been brought to London: "I believe that in London his Mazurkas, Scherzi, Ballades, Polonaises, Notturni or Studies, if then put forth, would have been wasted on the empty air. In Paris they became the high fashion (as

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<sup>97</sup> M.A.E.L., "The Girl of the Future," *Victoria Magazine* 15 (1870): 495. See also Ruth Solie, "Girling in the Parlor Piano," *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 88.

<sup>98</sup> Samson, *Chopin*, 288.

distinguished by the rage), and their composer the favorite master of the most refined and poetically disposed pianoforte players.”<sup>99</sup>

The critic’s presumption was explained by the intellectual disparity of the members of the salons of either city:

At all events, no two things could be more different than Madame Dudevant’s [George Sand] intimate circle, with its eccentric ordinances and artificial usages—part savage, part super-civilized—and its intensely exciting conversation . . . from the matter-of-fact, bustling, unsympathetic drawing-rooms of London; where *Mrs. Leo Hunters* may be found by the score eager alike to stare at a *Bastardella* or a *Prince Lee Boo*, and into which refined, and intelligent, and appreciating admirers of instrumental music rarely enter.<sup>100</sup>

Editions of Chopin’s works had sold well in England since the mid-1830s (London publisher Christian Rudolph Wessel started issuing Chopin’s earliest published works between 1833 and 1836). The pianist Jules Fontana, a childhood friend of Chopin and, as we shall see, an important figure in the early spread of Chopin’s music in New York, lived in London during the same years and collaborated on the editions of Wessel (the editions indicate “edited by Chopin’s pupil J. Fontana” and “fingering by Fontana”).

## 7. *Feminine Images in Chopin’s Music*

As late as 1900, James Huneker wrote:

American girls are naturally buoyant, self-reliant, and full of healthy sentiment. Why, then, should these daughters of a young, triumphant nation seek to interpret the subjective utterance of a wounded, moody soul, the soul of a sorrowful, subdued race? . . . Far better for our daughters is the music of the healthy, sweet-souled Mozart, the music of the quaint and periwigged Haydn, of the strong,

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<sup>99</sup> *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature* 19/4 (April 1850): 543. Another New York journal, the *Albion*, printed another obituary from a London newspaper. Chopin was placed as the head and creator of the new school of piano composition, “subsequently imitated . . . by Thalberg and Liszt . . .” His music would make the “purists . . . shake his heads at his peculiar system of harmony, and the crudeness of certain modulations.” *Albion* 8/46 (17 November 1849): 551.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

manly Beethoven, or Schumann, Grieg, MacDowell, or best of all, Bach and his endless melody. If you are not of Chopin's psychical order, let his music rest . . . to be quite frank, I consider Chopin's very lovely, but also very morbid music. American girls require fresh air and sunlight in their art, so if finical critics write that women cannot play Chopin, let them console themselves—have they not the bicycle?<sup>101</sup>

The view that women in general were incapable of doing justice to Chopin in performance beyond the confines of their drawing rooms was shared by many male performers, critics, amateurs, and audiences; in addition, American women suffered—like their male compatriots before them—further discrimination with respect to their European counterparts. Two assumptions are therefore confronted in an uncomfortable paradox: the affinity between Chopin's music and women is uncontested, yet women cannot fully appreciate it and thus play it satisfactorily. This was to become a persistent conflict as well as the basis of one of the most enduring projections of the composer's image in nineteenth-century America, as critical responses to women's performances of Chopin's (and other composers') music will show in later chapters. As Judith Tick has observed, by the turn of the twentieth century the music of Chopin was still being categorized as leaning toward what Goethe called, at the end of his *Faust*, the *Ewigweibliche*: the “eternal feminine.”<sup>102</sup> The problem was, of course, not exclusively American. The connection between women and Chopin had started in Paris. From the start, Parisian women bonded with Chopin and with his music. It was women—the spouses of the powerful men—who ran the salons; much of the music consumed in that area was therefore perceived as “feminine.”

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<sup>101</sup> James Huneker, “The Girl Who Plays Chopin,” *Harper's Bazaar* 33/25, 466.

<sup>102</sup> Judith Tick, “Passed Away Is the Piano Girl,” *Women making music: the Western art tradition, 1150–1950*, ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 337.

In 1874, the *Oneida Circular* reprinted an article titled “Sex in music” from the English journal *Pall Mall*, in which a critic attributed an unmistakable feminine gender to Chopin’s music.<sup>103</sup> A year later, Dwight saw fit to reprint an article from the *Musical Record* of London whose author openly categorized Chopin’s music as feminine, in contrast to that of Bach and Beethoven:

[Chopin’s small pieces] are “outpourings of [his] heart . . . pictures of states of mind. Chopin is a subjective composer. Beethoven too, but his subjectivism embraced the whole humanity, while Chopin’s is confined to himself. The morbidity of his feelings easily imparted to those that too exclusively communicate with him, relaxes out nature and vitiates our taste . . . His influence is so subtle, that I am almost tempted to call it feminine. [Like women], he captivates us by throwing wreaths of flowers around us, which prove stronger than iron chains. We require a counterpoise, which is to be found in strong and healthy men like Beethoven [or] Bach.”<sup>104</sup>

But the connection between women and Chopin was also directly associated with the connection between women and the piano, an instrument traditionally regarded as “suitable” for female performance since early on (the origins of that social convention could be traced to the Baroque, long before the salon, the piano, and the bourgeoisie existed), since it allowed the preservation of decorum while playing, unlike many other instruments.<sup>105</sup> In 1875, an article in the journal the *New-York World* discussed the affiliation between women and the piano. The instrument, the author wrote,

is in reality the artificial nervous system, ingeniously made of steel and silver, which civilization in its poetic justice provides for our young women. Here it is, in this parlor with closed doors, that the daughter of our day comes stealthily and pours out the torrent of her emotions through her finger-ends, directs the forces of her youth and romanticism into the

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<sup>103</sup> *Oneida Circular* 11/12 (16 March 1874): 95. The author regarded Bach’s music as masculine, while Wagner’s was deemed neuter.

<sup>104</sup> *Dwight’s* 35/9 (7 August 1875): 66.

<sup>105</sup> Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos: A Social History*, 64.

obedient metal and lets it say in its own mystic way what she dare not confess or hope in articulate language. . . . Presently it becomes her companion, her confidant, her lover. It tells her what no one else dare utter . . . Who would dare to talk to her as Chopin talks? Not a blush either. Ah, how well they understand each other! He reaches out his arm from the past, it encircles her, he drops his languid kisses on her cheek, he breathes his feverish aspirations into her ear.<sup>106</sup>

Since mid-century, the increasing demand for piano pieces had run parallel to the popularization of Chopin's music, but it had also contributed to its banalization. An 1870 article on amateur music making in *Dwight's Journal* attributed the unstoppable popularity of Chopin to its presence in the parlor, which, paradoxically, was undermining his status, generally the result of over-sentimental, average—if not plain mediocre—interpretations. The correlation of sentimentality with vulgarity was recognized, and despised, by the musical elite. Also in 1870, Dwight saw fit to reproduce, in a translation by the pianist Fanny Raymond Ritter (ca. 1830–1891), some excerpts from Louis Ehlert's influential *Letters on Music to a Lady*, published in Germany two years earlier, which emphasized the connection between mediocre amateur (female) playing and Chopin: “There is not a drawing-room in which he is not falsified or misunderstood.” [There has emerged a] “style of playing [Chopin's] works which is disagreeable both to the taste and to the mind . . . [it is] a mixture of buffoonery and looseness.”<sup>107</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the homes of the affluent and of the middle class were often equipped with a piano. Owning one was a sign of distinction which indicated not only financial security but also culture and refinement. Women were confined to their

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<sup>106</sup> Nym Crinke (pseudonym of A. C. Wheeler), “The Great Pianist,” *The New-York World* 6 (5 December 1875): 1–2. Quoted in R. Allen Lott, *From Paris to Peoria*, 263.

<sup>107</sup> *Dwight's* 30/9 (16 July 1870): 273–74. Ritter was also the translator of Liszt's biography of Chopin and many of Wagner's essays. She was married to the influential music scholar Louis Frédéric Ritter (1834–1891).

homes, both before and after marriage. A great part of their education focused on subjects like music, otherwise neglected by most men. In 1870, Dwight wrote: “Without a doubt, music is the art that is most fostered among us. No parlor is considered furnished that lacks a piano. No young lady’s education is thought complete without some knowledge of the divine art.”<sup>108</sup> Without the need to become professional performers, women could benefit from the emotional relief that resulted from recreational playing. It was an indoors activity and not too strenuous, and it could help them avoid dissipation, since improvement required regular, almost daily, practice. In addition, learning to play the piano could also be advantageous for women: at a time when they did not have any prospects of becoming professionals in any discipline, piano teaching was deemed an appropriate way of making ends meet, and so, unmarried and widowed women benefited economically from the activity of private teaching to children and young women. In that regard, the spread of Chopin’s music through the work of female piano instructors should not be underestimated. In 1869, a critic described the proliferation of teachers in New York, generally recruited “from the large dominion of governesses and housekeepers, not excluding a host of milliners, who do by no means object to impart lessons to beginners.”<sup>109</sup>

Referring specifically to America, Richard Crawford has observed that women transformed the home into “an artistic statement of sorts . . . the piano serving as “the parlor’s refined ethos”;<sup>110</sup> in that “artistic space,” a particular domestic activity (piano playing) was, like embroidering or baking, eminently a feminine commodity, edifying

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<sup>108</sup> *Dwight’s* 29/22 (15 January 1870): 173.

<sup>109</sup> *The New-York Weekly Review*, “The Pianoforte Teachers of New York” (30 January 1869): 70.

<sup>110</sup> Richard Crawford, *American Musical Life* (New York: Norton, 2001), 236.

and harmless according to puritanical values. More so, the perceived abstractness of music and its lack of ideology made it particularly suitable for women.<sup>111</sup> Hence it was in the home, as much as in the concert hall, that the music of Chopin first made an impact in New York, although there is lack of direct evidence (domestic performance was not documented as concerts were). The dissemination of Chopin's music through amateur performance is, instead, indicated by other, less explicit evidence: the sale of individual pieces in sheet music, which flourished as a result of women's demand. The high number of editions of Chopin's music, which is discussed in chapter 7, attests to the popularity of the composer among the amateur.<sup>112</sup>

The classical matinees organized by Mason and other pianists, starting in the 1850s, were crucial, as we shall see, to the dissemination of music by Chopin and other "classical" composers in New York. Critics who attended them were often surprised by the attentiveness shown by the women in the audience—the majority, since they could attend the matinees unescorted—and by their apparent familiarity with the classic repertory. Such knowledge can only be explained by the fact that many of the pieces were part of the repertory of amateur pianists. Albums of collected sheet music in the 1850s already contained pieces by Chopin, usually the less technically demanding pieces, and, occasionally, more difficult pieces. Their brevity was another advantage, for they were fitting for integration into personalized albums.

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<sup>111</sup> Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 50.

<sup>112</sup> Block has written that "for [women], families bought pianos, paid for music lessons, and purchased large quantities of sheet music. As a result they became the main customers of the three leading industries supporting musical life: piano and other instrument manufacturing, music teaching, and music publishing. Usually unacknowledged, women's amateur activities made a large contribution to the thriving musical life of the city. Block, "Matinee Mania in New York," 196.

Unlike male virtuoso pianists, who were both performers and composers, professional female pianists were generally exempted from that duality, because they were rarely seen as composers. There were exceptions, the young Clara Wieck being the most recognizable, but her status as a composer was always overshadowed by her fame as a virtuoso. Women were therefore expected to perform works written by male composers, a circumstance that led them to discover Chopin (early in her career, Wieck had programmed some of the early works of Chopin, including his Piano Concerto in E minor).

The generalized idea that women, as the main consumers of Chopin's music at home, were guilty of the conspicuous substandard interpretations had sometimes a detrimental effect on professional female pianists. Among critics there was a tendency to neglect, or at least downgrade, the work of female performers, not because of their supposedly poorer skills—substandard interpretations by male pianists were equally denounced—but from the association of women with amateur playing. Early critical responses to pianists, both male and female, often revolved more around extra-musical matters, including appearance and demeanor, than on the performance itself. Reviewers who attended the early matinees by Mason, Thalberg, and Gottschalk were often more interested in discussing the attires of the patrons and the “ambiance” than the music performed. Although the real appreciation of women changed as they made an impact as performers, bad habits were hard to break: as late as 1876, a review of the debut of the Russian pianist Annette Essipoff (1851–1914) by the New York correspondent to

*Dwight's* still focused on her appearance, including a detailed description of her physical features, costume, and posture at the piano.<sup>113</sup>

*“Feminine genres”*

In the Victorian era, gender attributions to specific genres and to some specific qualities of music, such as melodiousness, were taken for granted and could not escape a very precise categorization. Chopin was directly affected because his adherence to small forms, which linked with gender-related issues. The “character” or “miniature” pieces that Chopin cultivated were regarded as particularly well suited for women, while more “masculine” genres that also interested Chopin, such as the sonata, were rarely associated with him. There was an important exception, though: the polonaise fell unequivocally in the sphere of the masculine. Character pieces did not require the kind of strenuous physical and intellectual effort that a virtuosic set of variations or a multi-movement sonata did. The complex harmonic tensions that characterize the sonata might be considered too intellectually and emotionally demanding for a non-professional female pianist.<sup>114</sup> In fact, the “character piece,” like the art song, flourished in the parlor while virtuosic music was associated with the stage. In the eyes of the nineteenth-century musician, the music of Chopin was regarded as less virtuosic than Thalberg’s or Liszt’s, with the exception of some early pieces in the bravura style. Instead, Chopin’s waltzes, nocturnes, and some of the mazurkas (those with less contrapuntal complexity) were immediately identified as aesthetically closer to women. From a purely musical point of view, Chopin’s short pieces required, in theory, a limited level of expression and musicianship (the majority of them present a balanced, symmetrical structure, the

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<sup>113</sup> *Dwight's* 36/17 (25 November 1876): 343.

<sup>114</sup> Block, “Matinee Mania in New York,” 197.

“ternary form” being the most common). Typically, a unique affect required more of a sensitive predisposition than raw passion. This was most evident in the case of the nocturnes: editors found evocative titles and descriptive stories with the undeniable intention to make them more appealing to women.

As Samson has observed, “the cult of the feminine . . . [was] reinforced not just in critical writing but in portraits, drawings and pictorial representation in nineteenth-century editions.”<sup>115</sup> Chopin disliked and disapproved the practice of assigning nicknames or setting romantic stories to his works, but he could not deter Christian Rudolph Wessel (1797–1885), his English publisher, from doing it. In his editions, the two Nocturnes op. 37 (1836–37), published in London by Wessel in 1840, appeared as *Les Soupirs*. Other similar epithets used by Wessel in his editions included *Les Murmures de la Seine* (Nocturnes op. 9, 1836–37, published in 1833); *Les Zéphyr*s (op. 15 [1830–31], pub. 1834); and *Il lamento* (or *Les Plaintives*) and *La consolazione* (op. 32, B major and A-flat major, respectively [1836–37], pub. 1837).<sup>116</sup> Not only were the nocturnes prone to Wessel’s colorful titles. There were also *Adieu à Varsovie* (Rondo op. 1 [1825], published in 1836); *Hommage à Mozart* (Variations on “Là ci darem la mano,” op. 2, pub. 1833); *La Gaité* (Introduction and Polonaise for Piano and Violoncello, op. 3 [1829–30], pub. 1833); *Souvenir d’Andalousie* (*Boléro*, op. 19 [c. 1830]) and *Le Banquet infernal* (Scherzo op. 20 [c. 1835], both published in 1835); *La Méditation* (Scherzo op. 31 [1837], pub. 1837); *Ballade ohne Worte* or *La Favorite* (Ballade op. 23, pub. 1836);

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<sup>115</sup> Samson, “Myth and Reality,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3. According to Samson, certain pieces were viewed as particularly suited for women, especially the nocturnes.

<sup>116</sup> Charles S. Wilkinson, *Well Known Piano Solos How to Play Them with Understanding, Expression and Effect*, second series. (London: 1909), 54–55. Quoted in Derek Carew, “Victorian Attitudes to Chopin,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 231.

and *La Gracieuse* (Ballade op. 38 [1839], pub. 1840). Such fanciful titles, which Chopin loathed, found a favorable reception in America, as England was the country of reference to affluent and middle-class New Yorkers, and Wessel's editions circulated in the country soon after publication.<sup>117</sup>

### *Conclusions*

Nineteenth-century images of Chopin in New York were fundamentally the result of the amalgamation of these European views. Understandably, the most influential came from Britain and Germany, the two nations that most actively shaped an emerging New York musical aesthetic. German New Yorkers stood as arbitrators of the canonic standing of composers—in which the position of Chopin, as we have seen, was somehow problematic—and the British, as transmitters of Victorian morals, values, and traditions. French influence was more apparent in the personal characterizations that the composer received, while the Polish perception was felt only tangentially, wrapped in nationalistic feelings and sentimentality.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, America struggled to establish a distinctive musical character. Chopin's music arrived in New York at a time when all the perspectives and infrastructures examined above coexisted. Later in the century, as an American cultural identity was finally recognized, assertive and independent responses were possible, the most significant of which are discussed in the following chapter.

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<sup>117</sup> In a letter to Fontana dated 9 October 1841 Chopin complained about the “idiotic titles that [Wessel] gave to them, in spite of my forbidding it and in spite of repeated ridicule.” *Chopin's Letters*, 240.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *American Responses to Chopin's Music*

#### *Primary Sources: Advertisements, Announcements, Reviews, and Articles in the Press*

Reviews and advertisements found in newspapers and periodicals constitute the fundamental source of information for a study of reception such as this one. In addition, diaries, letters, and all types of writings produced by musicians who worked in New York, including performers, composers, critics, concert managers, etc., provide other necessary resources.<sup>1</sup> Reliance on reviews from nineteenth-century newspapers can be troublesome, especially in the case of instrumental music. The tendency to neglect or even ignore instrumental concerts in newspaper reviews was common during the first half of the century. Before the 1860s, announcements of concerts and advertisements in newspapers tended to be rather erratic. Dates of performances were often erroneous or contradictory, depending on the source. Complete lists of performers were rarely printed in the advertisement. Complete program information was exceptional. A laconic “works by Chopin” was, at best, all the information provided. Likewise, mistakes in opus number assignment, key, and even type of piece were common.

Acknowledgment of concerts in the press was often limited to formulaic announcements on the “amusements” page, and reviews were generally very brief. Generally, they included a few lines recognizing the attendance. Remarks on the performer’s proficiency (or lack thereof) at the piano, commentaries that today seem

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<sup>1</sup> By 1840, there were about forty newspapers being published in New York, in English, German, French, Spanish, and other languages. In terms of readership, the most important were *The New-York Herald*, *The New-York Tribune*, *The New-York Evening Post*, *The Evening Signal*, *The Morning Courier* and *The New-York Enquirer* (daily newspapers), and, after 1851, *The New-York Times*.

rather stereotyped, often almost pedestrian, were common: for most critics, a performance would be judged by the ability to carry out an expressive interpretation while displaying a high degree of virtuosity.

In general, much more emphasis and space was devoted to plays and opera than to concerts. “Low-brow” entertainment, including minstrel shows, pantomimes, burlesques and later vaudevilles, centered around lower Broadway and the Bowery, received attention in some newspapers in the form of advertisements. Reviews often contained exaggerations. Opinions were sometimes biased as a result of certain “alliances” between theater owners and newspapers (coverage of performances at certain theaters could be neglected while others could be favored), and, in general, objective analysis was atypical: lack of knowledge of repertoires and performers led critics to rely on subjective opinions which often resulted in rather clichéd information.

New York theater managers could not afford any extra expenses at a time when an industry of entertainment had not yet developed. Before mid-century, shows were usually advertised in the press in small print; things would change as more New Yorkers were drawn to the concert hall. Initially, advertisements and announcements tended to provide with information about the primary and assisting performers. Next in importance were the names of the composers whose music would be featured. More rarely, an advertisement gave the full program; facts such as key and opus number were exceptional before the 1870s. In 1869, *Dwight's Journal* published an interesting erratum a few days after a concert in Boston by the pianist August Arnold. A piece on the program had been advertised in the journal erroneously as Nocturne in F-sharp minor instead of F-sharp

major [op. 15, no. 2].<sup>2</sup> The concern shown by Dwight would have seemed rather strange, if not meaningless, just a few years before: by that time, though, providing accurate information about the details of a program was no longer considered superfluous. In 1876, the reviewer of the *New-York Tribune* found no longer acceptable carelessly written concert programs with omitted details that a few years earlier would have been considered unnecessary. In the review of a concert by the Russian pianist Anna Essipoff in 1876, the critic complained that “in scarcely any case has the opus number of a work been given in the programme after the title . . . [pieces] should have their numbers given in every possible instance. It not only enhances the pleasure of the audience . . . but by giving an opportunity for studying the music over before the concert it greatly enhances its educational value. It also makes the programmes valuable to preserve as a record.”<sup>3</sup>

A reason for the apparent carelessness in the newspapers’ reporting of musical events was ultimately the lack of professionals among the staffers. With some exceptions, including Fry, Watson, and Charles B. Seymour (critic of the *New-York Times* from its founding in 1851 until his death in 1869), concert reviews and news about music of any kind often were written by people who might or might not be specialized journalists, as many of their names have remained unknown. As a result, stock phrases and brief notices were the norm, sometimes spiced with social gossip.

The amalgam of responses to Chopin’s music in New York have reached us through the writings by those who witnessed the first performances of his works (critics from both specialized music journals and daily newspapers) and by those who made the effort to widen the public’s knowledge of the composer’s life and works through their

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<sup>2</sup> *Dwight’s* 28/26 (13 March 1865): 415.

<sup>3</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (23 November 1876): 5.

writings, both original or transcribed from European sources. Since early American writings on Chopin were collected from Europe and assimilated practically without question, American periodicals consistently reprinted articles from their English, French, and German counterparts. In 1935, Edward Waters, discussing the state of the specialized press in the first half of the nineteenth century, wrote that “musical criticism and journalism lagged far behind musical practice . . . The newspapers of the first half of the nineteenth century have not yet been systematically studied, but there is ample evidence that in reporting concerts and giving notices they retained much of their eighteenth-century flavor, even past the half-century mark.”<sup>4</sup> The influence of Europe became weaker as the century progressed, as a vernacular tradition in music criticism was developed. With the emergence of specialized music periodicals, independent ideas about music evolved. Critics sought to accommodate reviews to the tastes, idiosyncrasies, and musical realities of their nation.

American reviewers and essayists modeled their writings primarily on British and German criticism. One of the city’s most influential critics, Henry C. Watson, who began working as music critic for the *New World* in 1841, and later for the *Albion* and for the *Tribune* (between 1863 and 1867), was English. Early American music journals such as *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, *The New-York Musical World* and *The New-York Musical Review and Choral Advocate*, as well as other general journals that devoted substantial space to musical matters, such as the *Albion* and *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, were indebted to their English equivalents; sharing a common language made this a natural option. Some American-born critics had learned their craft in Europe: Others,

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<sup>4</sup> Edward N. Waters, “John S. Dwight, First American Critic of Music,” *Musical Quarterly* 21/1 (January 1935): 74. The article was used as a preface to the reprint edition of the complete issues of *Dwight’s Journal of Music* (New York: Arno Press, 1968).

however, were seasoned critics long before they traveled to Europe: William Henry Fry, who preceded Watson in the *New-York Tribune* (1852–1864) and also wrote for other publications, including the *Albion*, had been writing about musical matters in his father's newspaper in Philadelphia (*The National Gazette and Literary Register*) before his eight-year journey to Paris (1846–52). John S. Dwight was the leading American critic during the second half of the nineteenth century. Even before creating his influential *Journal*, he worked as music critic for journals issued in his native Boston, notably the *Harbinger*, *Devoted to Social and Political Progress* (from 1845 to 1849), the *Dial*, the *Boston Commonwealth*, and the *Chronotype*. Dwight devoted much of his time translating and transcribing articles from German and French publications and reprinting articles from English music journals. He also translated and printed some early European writings on Chopin, which became the first substantial sources of information about the composer for Americans.

### *Dwight's Journal of Music and Other Journals*

When *Dwight's Journal* was first published, in April 1852, it was welcomed as the first important American periodical devoted entirely to music.<sup>5</sup> Many other journals were published around that time, but none exhibited the same level of professionalism and seriousness that *Dwight's Journal* did. An early champion of Chopin, Dwight tended to favor a discussion of the music, rather than the performance, with a degree of insightfulness that was uncommon at the time. Although Dwight lived in Boston, he maintained a permanent correspondent in New York, George William Curtis (1824–1892), who sent his chronicles of concerts on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

In a circular, written days before the first issue of the periodical was published, Dwight revealed his agenda and what he aimed to convey: “critical reviews of concerts, oratorios, operas; with timely analyses of the notable works . . . Notices of new music published at home and abroad . . . A summary of significant musical news from all parts, gathered from English, German, French, as well as American papers . . . Correspondence from music persons and places . . . Essays on musical styles, schools, periods, authors, compositions, instruments, theories,” as well as articles on literary and artistic matters.<sup>6</sup>

Dwight’s approach could thus be described as a combination of the style of some European journals such as *La France musicale* (Paris), *Musical Review* (London), besides the above-mentioned *Zeitschrift für Musik*, and his own personality and beliefs. His taste in music became more conservative as he grew older; claims that Dwight had always been suspicious of innovation have been fortunately refuted.<sup>7</sup> Early in his career as critic, he championed composers such as Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt, composers who were then viewed as progressive. According to a list he made in 1871, his musical preferences included, in chronological order, Handel, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Schumann.

Dwight translated excerpts of biographies and essays on composers, many of which were not yet available to the American public, such as Johann N. Forkel’s 1802 biography of J. S. Bach, which was printed over several consecutive issues in 1854. Other composers examined included Handel, Beethoven, Robert and Clara Schumann, Liszt, Mendelssohn, and Schubert. An avid reader of European journals, Dwight’s estimation of Chopin’s music was influenced by writers such as Liszt and especially Schumann, whose

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>7</sup> See Ora Frishberg Saloman, *Beethoven’s Symphonies and J.S. Dwight* (Boston: Northeastern University Press), 14 and ff., and 154–62.

writings for the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* and the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* he occasionally reprinted in translation. Dwight translated and printed most of Liszt's biography of Chopin, serially, between April and June 1852, in the very first issues of his journal. Regardless of the veracity of Liszt's account and its blatant subjectivity—of which the critic was aware—the biography printed by Dwight offered the first glimpse of the life of Chopin to American readers, including the biographical episodes and stylistic traits that soon became universally recognizable: his fragile health, his status as an “exile” in Paris, and his amorous relationships, as well as the nationalistic character of his music, the influence of *bel canto*, and the poetic élan that his music transmitted. Through Liszt's account, Dwight's readers sensed, for the first time, that Chopin's music was inseparable from his persona, thus forging one of the most lasting and deeply rooted images of the composer in America. Also in 1856, Dwight provided an English translation of George Sand's novel *The Castle in the Wilderness* (1847). Dwight's possible reason for publishing the novel must have been the desire to satisfy the gossipy instincts of the readers who felt intrigued by Chopin's relationship with Sand: the novel (*Lucrezia Floriani* in the original) was the notorious *roman à clef* that precipitated the rupture of the couple shortly after its publication. Similarly, in September 1855, Dwight translated and printed some excerpts from George Sand's book of memoirs, *Histoire de ma vie*, which had just been issued in France. As one might expect, the excerpts included were related to her liaison with Chopin, especially their sojourn in the isle of Majorca in the winter of 1838–39. Dwight was acknowledging the “new interest . . . awakened in Frédéric Chopin by the posthumous publication of a number of his works” (opp. 66 through 74).<sup>8</sup> The excerpts from Sand's memoirs end with her account of Chopin's final

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<sup>8</sup> *Dwight's* 7/25 (22 September 1855): 194–95.

days (based on hearsay, since they had stopped seeing each other after their bitter rupture). Dwight thought that Sand's interpretation of Chopin's genius was often exaggerated, and ended his transcription with a personal comment: "Mme. Sand's estimate of Chopin's musical genius, rare and delicate as it was, is certainly extravagant. The idea of his including in himself Bach, Beethoven, and Weber is as wild as is the coupling of the third in the same trio with the two grander masters. But it is all natural and honorable to the imaginative and sympathetic subjectivity of the woman and the intimate companion."<sup>9</sup> In November 1862, Dwight printed the entry on Chopin from the second edition of Fétis's *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, published in France two years before. Many other articles on Chopin, including letters, aphorisms, and reprints of reviews from European journals, kept appearing in the pages of the periodical during its entire run (it was discontinued in 1881). Throughout its run, *Dwight's Journal* kept Americans informed about editions of Chopin's music, sometimes offering remarkably insightful critical assessments.

In 1843, the English critic James William Davison (1813–1885) published a puff for Wessel, Chopin's publisher in England, *A Critical and Appreciative Essay on the Works of Frédéric Chopin*—the first significant piece on the subject ever published. In 1856, Dwight decided to reprint it, but not without warning his readers that the essay was written "in a rather high flown and extravagant style of eulogy, although it is in the main appreciative . . . Retrenching some of its most transcendental superfluties, we think it will not be uninformative to those who are curious to know the extent and character of this

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<sup>9</sup> *Dwight's* 7/26 (29 September 1855): 206–07.

poet-pianist's composition."<sup>10</sup> Regardless of its supposedly extravagant style, Dwight felt compelled to publish the essay. Davison's analyses of Chopin's works, genre by genre, constituted the first of its type available to American music aficionados and, especially, to piano students. Opinion

Just like *Dwight's Journal*, the New York-based *Musical Gazette*, founded by William Mason in 1853, also devoted some space to Chopin in one of its first issues. A few years after the serialized publication of Liszt's biography of Chopin in *Dwight's Journal*, Theodore Hagen (1823–1871), the German-born editor of the *Gazette*, wrote a small article on Chopin. It was arguably the first writing on Chopin directed specifically to the city's readers.<sup>11</sup> In it, Hagen attributed Chopin's innovative language to his vulnerable personality: the “strange resolutions,” progressions and dissonances were but “shrieks” of an individual who “dreaded of exhibiting himself.”<sup>12</sup> Remarkably, he had words of admiration for Chopin's “finished conception of form,” a surprising statement coming from a German critic. Like Dwight, Hagen made frequent references to Chopin's biography, insisting on the parallelisms between his life and his works that nineteenth-century readers always found so attractive:

There are few men who are so reflected in their compositions as is Chopin . . . [T]hat which characterizes Chopin is not so much his ideas as the form he gives them; and this form is nothing more than the anxious effort of a

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<sup>10</sup> *Dwight's* 10/8 (22 November 1856): 57. Later in life, Davison, critic of *The Times* of London and editor of *The Musical World* of the same city, changed significantly his good estimation of Chopin. In 1860 he wrote another essay, *The Mazurkas and Valses of F. Chopin*, as a preface to an edition by Boosey and Sons. Davison then wondered if Chopin's music had been overrated. *Musical World* 24/45 (10 November 1841): 705. Niecks suggested that Davison's opinion about Chopin might have been caused by the “fear that the rising glory of Chopin might dim that of Mendelssohn” (an ongoing debate in London since the early 1840s). Niecks, *Frédéric Chopin as a Man and as a Musician*, II, 279.

<sup>11</sup> Hagen wrote it in German. The title reads “Chopin: Translated from the German by Theodore Hagen.” *The Musical Gazette* 1/2 (18 November 1854): 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

morbid artist nature to curb its over-sensitive outpourings . . . Chopin was most sensitive . . . at the rigged contact of the world he felt his inner man grow cold . . . [H]ence his desire to be polished before the world; hence his cultivation of his innate sense of form, for society; hence the formation and development of the man of the world.”<sup>13</sup>

### *Two Nineteenth-Century American Writers*

Henry Theophilus Finck and James Gibbons Huneker were the first New York-based American champions of Chopin who wrote significantly about the composer. Their essays offer a genuinely American perspective, which justifies their inclusion in this study even though they were written some years after the period covered by it. Their analyses of the responses to Chopin contrast with those of their European counterparts, especially Karasowski and Niecks (whose writings had been available to American readers since 1879 and 1888 respectively).<sup>14</sup>

### *Henry Theophilus Finck*

Both Finck’s and Huneker’s viewpoints were indebted to Liszt and, especially, to Niecks. Their ultimate goal, however, was to challenge these writers. They shared two common objectives: to reconfirm Chopin as one of the great composers of the nineteenth century, and to dismantle some associations of greatness in music with German principles, so that he could be valued for his own merits. As Finck put it,

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Another interesting early monograph on Chopin by an American author was Edgar S. Kelley’s *Chopin the Composer: His Structural Art and Its Influence on Contemporaneous Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1913). The book could be described as an attempt to validate Chopin’s music according to German (Wagnerian) standards. Kelley showed that the prevalent images of Chopin continued to circulate around three basic aspects: the aesthetic reach of his music, which overwhelms an intellect-governed approach and his eventful biography. These aspects, according to Kelley, had taken over the real value of Chopin’s most important contribution, namely his innovative harmonic language. In this regard, Kelley lamented that some authors (Liszt for example) had “contemplated Chopin’s creations from the pathological standpoint,” emphasizing the emotional impact of his music over its intellectual value. In this regard, Kelley called for a “need for a revaluation” of the composer’s historical position. Kelley also gave a vehement defense of Chopin as a master of form (still a rather audacious statement in 1913).

I have dwelt so much on the attitude of the Germans toward Chopin, because I am convinced that in this attitude lies one the main reasons why no one has hitherto dared to place him in the front rank of composers, side by side with Bach, Beethoven and Wagner. For the Germans are the *tonangebende* [standard-setting] nation in music today, and, as there seems to be a natural antipathy between the Slavic and the Teutonic mind, the Germans are apt . . . to regard as mannerism what is simply the exotic fragrance which betrays a foreign nationality.<sup>15</sup>

In 1889, Finck published a series of essays devoted to opera, aesthetics, and to some composers, which were collected in a book, *Chopin and Other Musical Essays*. The first chapter, “Chopin, the Greatest Genius of the Pianoforte,” was the earliest significant essay on Chopin written by an American scholar. A passionate defender of the composer, Finck’s essay was fundamentally an attempt to re-assess Chopin’s stature among the great modern composers, especially Wagner, and dissipate some erroneous misconceptions which, he believed, had hampered the just appreciation of his music.

Finck’s ideas, although put into writing in the 1880s, were the result of years of observation and reflection, and could have been applicable to the 1860s and 70s—the years in which he became acquainted with Chopin’s music. The essay revolves around three premises: first, Chopin’s image needed to be restored after having been badly damaged by conspicuously bad, “over-sentimental renderings by ill-prepared pianists” of his music, music carelessly left under the control of amateur performers, who consumed it with the same responsibility and rigor that they showed to any lesser composer of salon music.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Finck, “Chopin, The Greatest Genius of the Pianoforte,” 12. Finck was born in Bethel, Missouri, and raised in Portland, Oregon, where he was taught piano and violoncello. After studying music and philosophy at Harvard he traveled through Europe (Vienna, Berlin, and Heidelberg), being able to attend the world premiere of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in Bayreuth in the summer of 1876. Upon his return to America, he became the music editor of the *New-York Evening Post*. Finck wrote books on travels and several monographs on contemporary composers, including Grieg, Massenet, Wagner, and Chopin.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. Finck was perhaps suggesting that some of Chopin’s most progressive and uncommon harmonic patterns had become so familiar that they had lost much of their ambiguity. This idea has been explored in

Second, Finck sought to re-establish Chopin's position among the most progressive composers, a status he had nearly lost; at the time, the reputation of Chopin was sustained by the popularity of his least daring compositions, such as the waltzes and the early nocturnes. An audacious statement at the time, Finck wrote that "in his own sphere Chopin is quite as original and has been almost as revolutionary and epoch-making as Wagner."<sup>17</sup>

Finally, Finck aimed to remove the stigma of a composer who was regarded by some as less worthy than others because of his disinterest in orchestral and operatic works. He argued that, in Chopin's time, the cultivation of small genres was not necessarily seen as a fault: Liszt, for example, had seen it as an advantage.<sup>18</sup> Chopin endured, more strongly than other composers, the prejudice that size, rather than quality, was the parameter upon which music was measured, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. He coined a term to refer to that obsession with size, "Jumboism," an allusion to *Jumbo*, the legendary elephant that was being exhibited in New York at the time. "Jumboism" was the result of the exclusivist reliance on large-scale symphonic and operatic works, a trend promoted by contemporary German composers. In an attempt to emphasize his universalism, Finck, paradoxically, insisted on Chopin's uniqueness: because of his exclusive dedication to the piano, Chopin's power of conveying a wide range of emotions without the benefit of timbral variety was superior to other composers'; his exploration of the ultimate possibilities of the piano, found by him alone,

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recent times by Edward T. Cone. See "Ambiguity and Reinterpretation in Chopin," *Chopin Studies* 2, 140–60.

<sup>17</sup> Finck, "Chopin, The Greatest Genius of the Pianoforte," 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

were comparable, and as astonishing, as Wagner's, himself the paradigm of individuality.<sup>19</sup>

Finck claimed that Chopin would not have been a successful composer of symphonic works because his musical language was too idiomatic.<sup>20</sup> He wrote despairingly about the many arrangements of the composer's *Marche funèbre* that circulated at the time, praising only Theodore Thomas's version but insisting that the original version was by far superior. In this regard, Finck disagreed with the group of composers, including Liszt and Schumann, who lamented Chopin's disinterest in orchestral timbres. Similarly, the widespread presumption that Chopin's innovations were less significant than other composers' because they had been limited to one instrument and primarily to small forms was "one of the most ludicrous misconceptions . . . by shallow critics, and which brings us back again for a moment to the question of 'Jumboism'. I do not know whether he was a German or a French critic who first wrote that Chopin, although great in short pieces, was not great enough to master the sonata form."<sup>21</sup>

An important, generally unaccredited contribution of Finck was his analysis of Chopin's powerful mastery of counterpoint, an idea that would be seized upon by various twentieth-century Chopin scholars—that the foundations of his innovative language lay in the quasi-contrapuntal textures he accomplished with the sustaining pedal and by his preference for extended and scattered chords; neither Karasowsky nor Niecks had realized or shown a particular interest in that important feature of Chopin's compositional

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 40.

language. His achievement in that field was, according to Finck, parallel to Wagner's and equally as revolutionary, for both composers had accomplished a similar effect: the succession of "an uninterrupted flow of richly colored harmonies."<sup>22</sup> In addition, Finck regarded the *rubato* as a distinctively Slavic musical trait which further explained the initial reticence of the Germans: "of the Germans it may be said that, as a rule, they had, until recently, no special liking for the *tempo rubato*. [German critic Edward] Hanslick . . . referred to it thirty years ago as 'a morbid unsteadiness of tempo'. Mendelssohn . . . repeatedly expressed his aversion to Chopin's *rubato*."<sup>23</sup> Once again Finck found here an opportunity for comparing Chopin and Wagner. "[T]he *rubato* is too important an element of expression not to have been partially anticipated in the works of some of Chopin's predecessors, just as Wagner's leading motives had imperfect prototypes in the works of some preceding composers."<sup>24</sup>

One of Finck's most valuable and original ideas concerned the sacrosanct status of sonata form, which he dared to challenge with Chopin's music as his defense. He dismissed the German-influenced argument that correlated musical talent and mastery of sonata form: some second-rate composers, such as Herz and Hummel, had written many sonatas that were absolutely correct as regards form. Chopin had "felt instinctively that [sonata form] was too artificial to serve as vehicle for the expression of poetic thought."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 36–37.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 36. Finck, however, noted that the *rubato* had been subtly present in the music of German composers, including Mozart and Beethoven, and had been finally assimilated by Schumann, under the direct influence of Chopin. Wagner's music had also some propensity to *rubato*, in this case the result of the influence of Liszt. Finck cited an essay by Wagner on *Tannhäuser*, in which the composer urges the singer, having grasped the essence of the musical idea, to ignore "strict time" and to be "guided by his feelings alone."

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 41.

Finck admitted that Chopin's attempts in sonata form had been generally unsuccessful, but offered an explanation: "Concentration is one of Chopin's principal characteristics, and the sonata favors diffuseness."<sup>26</sup> Writing in the last years of the century, Finck seemed to be anticipating, if not echoing, attitudes that were growing in the minds of some modern composers, especially non-Germans, such as Debussy, and, later, Stravinsky. Finck felt that the sense of orthodoxy associated with sonata form could set limits to the imagination of a composer, an idea he associated to the "current trends" in music:

"too much thematic beating out is the bane of the sonata. A few bars of gold are worth more than many square yards of gold leaf; and in Chopin bars are solid gold. Moreover, there is no organic unity between the different parts of the sonata, whatever may have been said to the contrary . . . the psychology of the sonata is false. Men and women do not feel happy for ten minutes as in the opening allegro of a sonata, then melancholy for another ten minutes, as in the following adagio, then frisky, as in the scherzo, and finally, fiery and impetuous for ten minutes as in the finale."<sup>27</sup>

Chopin was, in fact, foreseeing the future: he had opened a path which other composers followed eagerly, at a time when the sonata had arguably become an obsolete genre: "Few contemporary composers have written more than one or two [piano sonatas] and even Brahms, the high priest of the conservatives, has, in his later period, devoted himself more and more exclusively to shorter modern forms in his pianoforte music."<sup>28</sup> In truth, the adherence to small forms was not unique to Chopin. Mendelssohn and Schumann, to name two of Chopin's contemporaries, wrote many character pieces, but their competence in the sonata form was proved by their symphonies and chamber works.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 43.

If Chopin was foreseeing the future of music aesthetics, Finck was clearly foreseeing the future of the historical analysis of music.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the ability to create long, sensuous, irregular melodies was one important element by which the talent of a composer was measured, as much of the music of Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Dvořák, attests. It remains, in any case, an archetypal aesthetic feature of the music of that period. It was in this light that Finck refuted another common assumption, which correlated Chopin's expressivity with the originality of his melodies. The power of Chopin's music resided ultimately in his harmonic audacities, not in the charm of his melodies. As he put it, modulation was "a deeper source of emotional expression than melody" in Chopin's music.<sup>29</sup>

Published only a year after Niecks's massive biography, Finck managed, in less than sixty pages, to express in definite terms the state of the reception of a composer who, he believed, was in a precarious position with respect to other major romantic composers. Some of his statements were quite audacious at the time, driven by his desire to question the image of Chopin as a salon composer, but have proved to be fundamentally correct.

Finck ended his essay with a final comparison of Chopin with, once again, Wagner and Bach himself, another attempt to integrate the composer in a canon controlled by German principles. Chopin, Finck wrote, was "a composer for the few, and he is the composer *par excellence* for musicians. From him they can get more ideas, and learn more as regards form, than from anyone else, except Bach and Wagner. In comparing his last works with his first, and noting their progress, the mind tries in vain to conceive where he would have led the world had he lived eighty instead of forty years."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 56–57.

*James Gibbons Huneker*

Huneker's most significant writings include "The Greater Chopin," the first of five essays that also included Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Liszt, and Wagner, compiled in a book he titled *Mezzotints in Modern Music* (1899), and a full-length biography, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, published a year later, the first significant monograph on the composer written by an American author.<sup>31</sup> The first half of the book is, to some extent, a conventional biography of Chopin, largely based on Niecks's. The second contains a meticulous analysis of Chopin's works, in the author's insightful, if rather subjective and idiosyncratic, style. Huneker's book was seemingly directed to performers, considering his emphasis on performance issues (in his youth, Huneker had been considered a promising pianist). He included a number of performance indications and assessed the technique of a selected group of contemporary pianists who "specialized" in Chopin. Finally, Huneker compiled a detailed bibliography of all kind of writings on Chopin available to English-speaking readers, as well as editions of his works, including those by Hans von Bülow, Theodor Kullak (1818–1882), and especially Karol Mikuli (1819–1897). Huneker's biography of Chopin was translated into Polish and German shortly after its publication in the United States, a sign of the international recognition it soon achieved.

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<sup>31</sup> Born in Philadelphia, Huneker was sent to Europe to study piano at the Paris Conservatoire, where he became a student of George Mathias, himself a student of Chopin and teacher of renowned pianists like Teresa Carreño (1853–1917) and Vladimir de Pachmann (1844–1933), both of whom would have very successful careers in the United States. Upon his return from Europe, in 1885, Huneker settled in New York. Soon after, he was asked to contribute a historical and analytical introduction to the first American edition of Chopin's complete works by the publisher Gustav Schirmer (1829–1933), issued in twelve volumes from 1894 to 1898. In addition, Huneker worked as music editor of *The Musical Courier* and *The New-York Sun*. He died in New York City in 1924.

Huneker continued the line of thought laid down by Finck, with whom he shared common objectives, including the dissociation of Chopin from the salon and other stereotypes and the need to question the reception of Chopin's music through German-based musical aesthetics. Like Finck, Huneker made frequent allusions to Wagner to justify his opinion of Chopin as a revolutionary composer. To him, both composers were related by their mutual emphasis on feeling; in fact, they had become "the rulers of human emotion."<sup>32</sup> Chopin, Huneker argued, "had greater melodic and as great harmonic genius as Wagner."<sup>33</sup> In fact, Chopin's genius was revealed by the overtly emotional quality of his music. The weak sentimentality that had taken over in recent times had reduced him to a composer some identified as bland.<sup>34</sup> Condescending opinions about a feeble Chopin were contested vehemently by Huneker, who instead attributed to him some of the heroic features established by Nietzsche's idea of the *Übermensch*.<sup>35</sup>

In "The Greater Chopin," Huneker argued that the only reason the status of Chopin as a composer continued to be questioned was the limited popular interest in his "greater works," the ones alluded to in the title of the essay. Huneker admitted that Chopin's smaller pieces showed his talent unequivocally, but his larger works, particularly those from his later period, were unknown treasures. His essay was an attempt to rescue those works from oblivion. As he put it, "It is not upon [the short] pieces I would dwell. The new, the larger Chopin will be known to posterity by the three great polonaises in F-sharp Minor [op. 44, 1841], the Polonaise in A-flat [op. 53, 1842–

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<sup>32</sup> Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (New York: Scribner, 1905; reprint, New York: Dover, 1966), 68. Huneker was, like John S. Dwight, a follower of Transcendentalism.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

43], and the *Polonaise-Fantaisie* [op. 61, 1846].”<sup>36</sup> Acknowledging that some of the early Chopin had become faded, he claimed that “the greater Chopin, like Bach and Beethoven, will last as long as the voice of the piano is heard throughout the land.”<sup>37</sup>

Huneker’s perspicacity led him to establish an interesting comparison between Chopin and the poet Edgar Allan Poe, which included biographical details, such as the dates of their birth and death.<sup>38</sup> Stylistic analogies between the two artists served to further reinforce his defense of Chopin: “It would be a strained parallel to compare Chopin and Poe at many points yet the chronological events referred to, are not the only comparisons that might be made without the fear or flavor of affectation. There are parallels in the soul-lives as well as in the earth-lives of these two men.”<sup>39</sup> Huneker’s laborious quest to find specific equivalents between their works included analysis of works both authors produced around the same time. Both artists were “morbid [and] neurotic . . . disposed to a certain melancholy hauteur . . . probably poseurs . . . all their lives were tortured by the desire of beauty, by the vision of perfection.”<sup>40</sup> Perhaps Huneker’s most felicitous point of comparison had to do with their shared cultivation of the small form (Poe wrote only one novel), and with the decadent tone of both artists’ late

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>37</sup> Huneker, “The Greater Chopin,” *Mezzotints in Modern Music*, 210.

<sup>38</sup> In the nineteenth century many sources claimed that Chopin was born in either October or March 1809 (Karasowski, Liszt, Fontana, and Niecks, among others). Twentieth-century scholars have set the date as 1 March 1810, after his baptismal certificate was found in 1892. Poe was born in January 1809. Both authors died within days of each other in October 1849.

<sup>39</sup> Huneker, “The Greater Chopin,” 196.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 201–04.

works: “I am conscious of the critical claims of those who taste in both Poe’s and Chopin’s later music the exquisite quality of the over-ripe, the savor of morbidity.”<sup>41</sup>

Elsewhere in the essay, Huneker discussed the literature on Chopin available to American readers. An admirer of Niecks, Huneker was critical of Liszt for having perpetuated the association of Chopin with weakness, and of Karasowski for having done the opposite, presenting him as a brave, unsubmitive patriot, “in a frantic endeavor to escape Liszt’s Camille of the keyboard, with his violets, his tears and tuberculosis, created a bull-necked athlete, who almost played Polish cricket and had aspirations toward the prize ring.”<sup>42</sup>

Huneker’s moral principles might have made him reluctant to appreciate Liszt’s biography, which he dismissed for being not more than a compilation of unreliable gossip, responsible for divulging the Chopin-Sand “episode,” the veracity of which he judged doubtful.<sup>43</sup> Joseph Bennett’s *Frédéric Chopin*, an inconspicuous biography published in London in 1884 and largely based on Liszt’s book, represented to Huneker the other side of the spectrum. Huneker applauded Bennett for his efforts in dismantling the feminine images associated with Chopin, but, seemingly, he went too far. “Let us once and for all rid ourselves of the dawdling poseur of Liszt, and on the other side avoid the neat, prim, rare-roast beef portrait drawn by Joseph Bennett.”<sup>44</sup> Huneker, seeing flaws in all the available biographies, argued that the real life of Chopin had yet to be written. That would include “a life that shall embrace his moral and physical natures, that will not

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 221.

shirk his marked abnormalities of vision, of conduct, and will not bow down before that agreeable fetish of sawdust and molasses called ‘Frédéric Chopin,’ created by silly sentimentalists and rose-leaf poets.”<sup>45</sup>

Ever since Chopin’s music arrived in America, Huneker argued, audiences had been exposed to his most conventional works, while remaining oblivious of his most original ones. He hoped that precisely the works that had neither achieved popularity nor recognition would sustain the future appreciation of the composer. These included the *Fantaisie*, op. 49; the Polonaise op. 44; the Ballade op. 52; the Scherzos opp. 20 and 39; the *Prélude* in D minor (op. 28 no. 24), the piano sonatas opp. 35 and 58, and the étude op. 25 no. 12.

Finck and Huneker represent, in complementary ways, an important link in the emancipation of American criticism from European views. Their assessment of Chopin was the reflection of an image that was genuinely forged in America—in New York especially—one that challenged a number of pre-conceived images projected from a German-centered view. Finck and Huneker culminated a process that had started half a century earlier, when the Americans first heard the music of Chopin.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 223. Elsewhere, Huneker offered a prototypically Victorian nineteenth-century view on the always conflictive issue of women and their ability to do justice to Chopin in performance. In the same year he published his biography of the composer, he penned an article for the widely read *Harper’s Bazaar* titled “The Girl Who Plays Chopin.” Acknowledging that Chopin was the favorite composer of women—“a sentimental religion,” especially for “girls of eighteen or thereabouts”—Huneker concluded, after much pseudo-scientific debate, that women played Chopin’s music “abominably,” but not necessarily worse than most men. Only one female pianist, Annette Essipoff, made it to the list he drew up with the best performers. James Huneker, “The Girl Who Plays Chopin,” *Harper’s Bazaar* 33/25 (23 June 1900): 466–68.

## *Reception: Some American Views*

### *1. Small Forms for Piano*

The aesthetics associated with the July Monarchy in France or the *Biedermeier* era in Austria were responsible for a novel musical practice associated with that repertory of character pieces—a rather vague term that may refer, as we have seen in chapter 1, to a vast number of short pieces for piano solo, very common in the first half of the nineteenth century, and typically associated with Chopin. These pieces illustrate the “genteel tradition,” which Gilbert Chase described as “the cult of the fashionable, the worship of the conventional, the emulation of the elegant, the cultivation of the trite and artificial, the indulgence of sentimentality, and the predominance of superficiality.”<sup>46</sup>

Americans first knew Chopin through his short “character” pieces, the ones that had given him notoriety in Europe. Specifically, Chopin’s music arrived in 1839 precisely through the nocturnes and the mazurkas.<sup>47</sup> As Sandra Rosenblum has noted, Chopin’s distinctive voice was thus established by two quintessential components: nationalism (represented by the mazurkas) and melodic expressivity, illustrated by the nocturnes.<sup>48</sup>

### *Nocturnes*

Two things must account for the lasting esteem of the nocturnes: the popularity of Italian opera in the early nineteenth century and their ability to convey pictorial and narrative images, to which nineteenth-century music lovers typically related: most of Chopin’s nocturnes “sound” like Italian *cantabiles*, at least in part, but most encourage

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<sup>46</sup> Gilbert Chase, *America’s Music, from the Pilgrims to the Present*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 165.

<sup>47</sup> Performances of Chopin’s music are discussed in chapters 3 through 6.

<sup>48</sup> Sandra Rosenblum, “A Composer Known Here but to a Few,” 315.

programmatic interpretations due to their capacity to amalgamate different genres. These include the funeral march (Nocturnes op. 48, no. 1 and op. 55, no. 2); the étude (op. 27, no. 1); the barcarolle (op. 27, no. 2); even the waltz (op. 9, no. 2) and the operatic recitative (op. 32, no. 1).<sup>49</sup> Although John Field (1782–1837) should be considered the legitimate creator of the nocturne, Chopin’s own early nocturnes not only defined the genre, but also forged one of the most enduringly distinctive qualities of Chopin’s music, that is, its connection with *bel canto* style. In his 1843 essay, Davison had singled out the nocturnes, using words that unequivocally evoke the aesthetics of the salon (“elegant sketches, all the finesse, all the coquetry, all the infinitesimal delicacies, all the minute and barely perceptible graces”) as the pieces that defined Chopin’s musical language.<sup>50</sup>

It could be argued that the widespread popularity of the nocturnes had ultimately a detrimental effect on Chopin’s music: they made it “fashionable,” popular, and trite. They may have also contributed to the generalized identification of Chopin’s music with femininity and feebleness. The connection was in part due to the fact they were technically accessible and thus they soon became favorites among amateur pianists—most of whom were women. Later prejudices against Chopin were often the result of generalized mediocre renditions of, precisely, the nocturnes; the once ubiquitous Nocturne op. 9, no. 2, sounded “banal” to Huneker at the end of the century, the result, he argued, of generalized substandard performances by female amateurs. Huneker, who nonetheless admitted that Chopin’s nocturnes, like much of his other works, sounded “androgynous,” made women responsible for erroneously instilling feminine qualities to Chopin’s music:

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<sup>49</sup> Samson, *Chopin*, 102.

<sup>50</sup> James W. Davison, *An Appreciative Essay on the Works of Frédéric Chopin* (London: Wessel and Stapleton, 1843) Reprinted in *Dwight’s Journal of Music* 10/28 (22 November 1856): 58 and ff.

The nocturnes are sometimes beneath contempt . . . I would sentence to a vat of boiling oil . . . any woman who presumed to touch a note of Chopin. They have decked the most virile spirit of the age in petticoats, and upon his head they have placed a Parisian bonnet. They murdered him while he was alive, and they have hacked and cut at him since his death. If women must play the piano let them stick to Bach and Beethoven. They cannot hurt those gentlemen with their seductions and blandishments, their amblings and jiggings.<sup>51</sup>

Initially, the early nocturnes (opp. 9 and 15) were the most popular. As the century progressed, Chopin's middle nocturnes, especially opp. 27 and 32, took the lead.<sup>52</sup> The bold, late nocturnes, with their unexpected modulations and asymmetrical melodies, were seldom played, both at home and in the concert hall, evidence that the process of assimilation of Chopin's late musical language was a long one.

### *Mazurkas*

The mazurka was a genre particularly favored by Chopin. He wrote fifty-eight of them during his entire musical career. They are his most comprehensive collection of pieces, covering, more so than the nocturnes, virtually each of the features that defined his style: *bel canto*, salon music, folk traditions, progressive harmony, contrapuntal writing, even virtuosity. In fact, Chopin's mazurkas are idiosyncratic recreations of folk dances embedded in some of his most complex harmonic language, representing both the "exotic" and the progressive sides of his music. The harmonic intricacy, not always easily understood at the time they were written, and the "Polish spirit" of Chopin's music was best expressed through the mazurkas than through the polonaises, the other fully Polish genre that Chopin cultivated: with the excuse of their "exoticism," broad and harsh dissonances were deemed permissible in the mazurkas. Other pieces, like the early

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<sup>51</sup> Huneker, "The Greater Chopin," 171.

<sup>52</sup> The Nocturne op. 27, no. 1 appealed to violinists like Henri Vieuxtemps and Pablo Sarasate (1844–1908), who performed their own arrangements of the piece for their New York concerts.

nocturnes, followed harmonic progressions easily recognized and accepted by the average listener.

In 1843, Davison identified the mazurkas as Chopin's most genial, characteristic, and idiosyncratic works (he would later change his opinion, as we have noted), claiming that there was "more of the genuine spirit of Chopin in one of these brief mazurkas, than in the whole of his concertos, sonatas, and larger compositions put together."<sup>53</sup> While in his elaborate compositions he was "stilted, mannered, and catachrestical," in his mazurkas Chopin was "spontaneous, natural, and, therefore, sympathetic."<sup>54</sup> Schumann meanwhile believed that Chopin "elevated the mazurka to a small art form."<sup>55</sup> Liszt, Moscheles, and later Niecks found the mazurkas mysterious, their meaning difficult to grasp by non-Poles, a consequence of their Slavonic origin. Echoing Niecks, Huneker regarded them as "a sealed book for most pianists," also deeming them virtually inaccessible to non-Slavic pianists.<sup>56</sup>

Performances of mazurkas in New York were scant compared to those of nocturnes and waltzes. The identification of the most popular among the ones that were performed is particularly difficult since the information provided in newspaper advertisements was inconsistent—opus number and key were only sporadically given, and often it was wrong. We can speculate that the early mazurkas, less accessible to general audiences because of their harmonic and melodic "oddities"—tonal deviations that reflect their folk origins—were nonetheless appealing precisely for the same reason,

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<sup>53</sup> Davison, *Chopin: An Appreciative Essay*. In *Dwight's*, 17/7 (12 May 1860): 51.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Robert Schumann, *Music and Musicians (Essays and Criticisms)*, tr. and ed. Fanny Raymond Ritter (London: William Reeves, 1880), I, 484. On that occasion, Schumann was reviewing the Mazurkas, op. 30.

<sup>56</sup> Huneker, "The Greater Chopin," 167.

their easy identification with folklore, thus satisfying the listener who sought the nationalistic side of Chopin's music. Perhaps, however, the most popular mazurkas were the ones that adhered to the waltz and the "Mazurka de salon" favored by countless nineteenth-century composers. As in the late nocturnes, in the last sets of mazurkas Chopin reached a level of introspection and harmonic elaboration that would render them less accessible there is noble and thus seldom performed. The Mazurka in B minor, op. 33, no. 4, a piece that contains elements of the salon while keeping a strong folk flavor, became a particularly popular concert piece after 1870.

In 1852, Dwight praised a Boston performance of an unidentified number of mazurkas by a Polish pianist, Wojciech Wołowski.<sup>57</sup> Dwight discussed both the impenetrability of the pieces and their unsuitability to non-initiated pianists, which to him meant pianists of any nationality other than Polish: "The set of mazurkas by Chopin was of course good; but how strange the style, how headlong the time. How perplexing the expression, of that rendering of them . . . [Wołowski] is an exiled Pole, of high birth and feelings, who has suffered, had trying romantic experiences, and should *feel* music, like a soul that truly *needs* to love it."<sup>58</sup> Dwight's enduring fascination for the mazurkas prompted him to print, in 1860, some excerpts from *Eight Letters to a Friend*, a widely read epistolary essay in Europe by the German composer Johanna Kinkel (1810–1858). Kinkel recognized in the mazurkas "the *Weltschmerz* and wretchedness of [Chopin's] youth . . . He poured out ironically these sentiments in his numerous mazurkas which

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<sup>57</sup> Dates unknown. Wołowski also gave some concerts in New York, but there is no evidence that he played any music by Chopin.

<sup>58</sup> *Dwight's* 1/3 (24 April 1852): 22.

borrow nothing of dances but the name and the 3/4 time.”<sup>59</sup> By 1861 Dwight started to occasionally publish some mazurkas in his journal, reprints of Ditson’s edition, starting chronologically with the first two from op. 6. Finally, also in 1861, Dwight printed the excerpts from Liszt’s biography of Chopin devoted to the mazurkas.<sup>60</sup>

### *Waltzes*<sup>61</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, the waltz had become the salon piece par excellence. Davison noted that Chopin’s waltzes were unmatched by any other composer’s because of their “more fluent melody, greater length, and superior elaboration, their ampler resources of harmony.”<sup>62</sup> Unlike the mazurkas, Chopin’s waltzes were regarded as easily accessible and enjoyable, never extravagant or bold. Some of his early waltzes are in fact a succession of little waltzes, some of which are reprised, a model first used by Weber in his *Aufforderung zum Tanz* (1819). Short, technically accessible to amateurs (some of them at least), the waltzes contained the traits that appealed to Victorian audiences, such as elegance and sentimentality.

There is little significant discussion of the waltzes in nineteenth-century American literature on Chopin, other than echoing responses by European critics and essayists. Finck found a competitor to Chopin in the waltz in Carl Maria von Weber’s piece, which

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<sup>59</sup> *Dwight’s* 18/10 (10 December 1860): 290.

<sup>60</sup> *Dwight’s* 20/13 (28 December 1861): 310–11. Ditson’s edition was one of the most complete of its time, since it included some mazurkas taken from private albums and the unfinished Mazurka in F minor, op. 68, no. 4 (c. 1849), until recently believed to be Chopin’s last composition, published posthumously by Fontana in 1855.

<sup>61</sup> Of the seventeen known waltzes by Chopin, only eight were published during his lifetime (Opp. 18, 34, 42, and 64). Five others appeared in Julian Fontana’s posthumous edition of 1855 (Opp. 69–70), and these were followed by the Waltzes in E major (1861), E minor (1868), A-flat major (1902) and A minor (1955). The Waltzes in E-flat major (1902) and F-sharp minor (1932), previously attributed to Chopin, are no longer considered to be authentic.

<sup>62</sup> Davison, *Chopin: An Appreciative Essay*. In *Dwight’s*, 10/8 (22 November 1856): 58.

for him constituted “the source of the modern idealized waltz, because it was not written for the feet alone, but also for the heart and the imagination.”<sup>63</sup> The urban, cosmopolitan waltzes of Chopin were heirs of Weber’s spirit. Unlike the mazurkas, thoroughly Polish in spirit, the waltzes seemed somehow less characteristic, but their adaptability and universalism made them very popular in the American home. They were, besides, much more accessible than the waltzes “di bravura” that Liszt and other composers favored: melodies reminiscent of Italian operatic arias, often presented in thirds or sixths, loud introductions and brilliant codas, and an overall sense of mundane refinement were factors that contributed to their rapid popularity because they represented a compendium of the features associated with a sophisticated Chopin.<sup>64</sup>

The first documented public performance of a Chopin waltz took place in 1843. For the next three decades, editions of Chopin’s waltzes proliferated, being only outnumbered by the études and the ubiquitous *Marche funèbre*.<sup>65</sup> On the stage, by the 1870s the waltzes had become staples in the repertoires of most pianists, being often reserved as material for encores.

### *Impromptus*

The impromptu is a particularly ambiguous genre because, in most cases, it does not correspond to a definite form or character. Chopin wrote four of them; the last one, op. 66 was published posthumously by Fontana, who added the term *Fantaisie* to the

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<sup>63</sup> Finck, “Chopin, The Greatest Genius of the Piano Forte,” 44.

<sup>64</sup> Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, the American pianist Edward Baxter Perry (1855–1924) looked for narrative elements in the waltzes, describing them as “idealized tone-pictures . . . of ballroom scenes and experiences. Edward Baxter Perry, *Descriptive Analyses of Piano Works* (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser, 1902), 168.

<sup>65</sup> Ditson published the *Marche funèbre* in 1846 in its original form. At least three more editions appeared in the 1850s. Simplified versions and arrangements for band and orchestra were common later in the century.

title.<sup>66</sup> It could be said that all four impromptus are somehow related in their melodic, harmonic, and formal material, as if Chopin had considered them as parts of a coherent group.

With its combination of simplicity and inspiration, Chopin's Impromptu op. 29 (c. 1837) exemplified the paradigm of the romantic "character" piece—not unlike Schubert's own earlier attempts at the genre. Chopin's use of the term impromptu was rather arbitrary, although the first—perhaps more so than the other three Chopin wrote—possesses some of the spontaneity that listeners would have associated with the supposedly improvisatory nature of the piece. Chopin's other impromptus opp. 36 and 51, remained largely in a no-man's land until late in the nineteenth century, being rarely performed in public; in fact, no performances of the Impromptu op. 51 have been identified during the years covered by this study. The relative unpopularity of the Impromptu op. 36 (only two public performances have been identified in the years covered by this study) may be explained by its unfamiliar structure, an oddity among Chopin's other impromptus. Rather than the standard structure (ABA plus coda, found in all the remaining impromptus), op. 36 is based on different formal principles, wholly unconventional for Chopin. It is also less defined tonally and less lyrical and tuneful than the others, and the most genuinely "improvisation-like" piece of the group.

Instead, the Impromptu op. 29 adhered to qualities that by that time were recognized as emblematic of Chopin, including a standard ternary form, with a clear contrast between the cheerful, elegant outer parts and the lyrical middle section, featuring typically Chopinistic melody of evident *bel canto* inspiration. The piece was once

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<sup>66</sup> Chopin did not wish the piece to be published, and instructed to have it destroyed after his death, along with several other unpublished pieces.

described in the *New-York Herald* as the epitome of delicacy: “fine, ethereal threads which seem not to belong to our nature but to the fairy world.”<sup>67</sup> With its formal simplicity and lack of virtuosity embodying the essence of the amateur piece appropriate for domestic performance, the impromptu soon became one of Chopin’s most popular pieces in the parlor. In the review of the first performance of the piece in New York, by William Mason in 1854, the correspondent to *Dwight’s* visited all the commonplaces around which Chopin reception revolved in mid-century. Today, it reads as a compendium of the images that circulated at the time: the lyrical, the melancholic, the effeminate, the unhealthy, and the intimate composer were all represented. According to the critic, the piece brought

an unusually bright and exhilarating mood of Chopin’s delicate, feminine, pensive and reverie-living genius. It has the wild, rapturous whirl of the *Tarantella* [op. 43, 1841], made doubly expressive by an occasional sudden break; yet in the episodic middle portion Chopin gravitates back to his own wonted mood of tenderness and fine and melancholy humor. . . [Chopin was] the most poetic and spiritual of piano-forte composers since Beethoven . . . an invalid, sensitively shrinking from the public gaze, Chopin was no pianist for the great concert room, but the most rare and inspiring of musicians, in the small room, in the sympathetic circle of listeners.”<sup>68</sup>

It was through the works which precisely captured the “essence” of Chopin, such as the Impromptu op. 29, that his music acquired the distinctiveness with which he was then being recognized and slowly made him a household name among amateurs. The same tunefulness and approachability distinguished the *Fantaisie-Impromptu*, making the

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<sup>67</sup> *The New-York Herald* (15 January 1870): 7.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 205. The first documented New York public performance of Chopin’s *Tarantelle*, op. 43 (1841), one of Chopin’s most impersonal pieces, took place in 1873. Years before, in 1846, Dwight had reviewed the piece in the short-lived journal *The Harbinger*. It was the first review of a work by Chopin written by an American critic. Although Dwight knew little about Chopin’s music at the time, he was intuitive enough to recognize one of the most characteristic traits of the composer: harmonic expansion and melodic embellishment by means of “almost insensible chromatic changes,” a feature for which Chopin would be soon universally recognized. J. S. Dwight, “Musical Review,” *The Harbinger* 3/5 (11 July 1846): 76.

piece an exceptionally popular one since the early 1850s, when it reached the United States.

### *Études and Preludes*

In October 1829, Chopin wrote to Titus Woyciechowski that he had composed a “grand exercise in my own manner.”<sup>69</sup> He was referring to the first of the *Twelve Études* op. 10 (1830–32). Eventually, the twenty-six additional études he wrote (the eleven remaining exercises of op. 10; another set of twelve études [op. 25, 1835–37]; and the *Trois Nouvelles Études*, Chopin’s collaboration in Moscheles’s *La Méthode des méthodes*, (KK 905–17, 1839–40),<sup>70</sup> came to represent a degree of aesthetic distinctiveness unsurpassed by any other pieces, except perhaps the *Préludes*, op. 28, a circumstance that explains the pairing of the two genres in nineteenth-century in performance, as the recitals of Robert Goldbeck (1839–1908) in the late 1850s showed. Superior to any other études at the time, Chopin’s études were the first of their kind to become accepted as concert pieces; they were soon integrated into the curriculums of most conservatories. Both the études and preludes offered a degree of variety unsurpassed by any other collection of pieces by Chopin, from the most elaborate to the most simple. Perhaps for that reason they were often combined in performance and regarded as related pieces (Chopin did the same), the études transcending their function as exercises and thus their didactic purpose. Even though Chopin wrote some of the études early in his life, they contain some astonishingly advanced harmonic schemes, some of which would only reappear in the music of late-romantic composers: Huneker,

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<sup>69</sup> Letter dated 20 October 1829. *Chopin’s Letters*, 71.

<sup>70</sup> Works without opus number (KK = Kobylanska, *Katalog*). Besides Chopin, twelve composers contributed twenty études to Moscheles’s collection.

for example, compared the middle section of the C-minor étude of op. 10, the “Revolutionary,” to Wotan’s entrance in Act III of *Die Walküre*.

One of Chopin’s most enigmatic pieces, the nocturne-like Étude op. 25, no. 7—an elaborate study in phrasing and expressivity with much harmonic complexity that sounds almost proto-Wagnerian—was often heard on the New York stage. Despite its elaborateness and lack of virtuosity, it became one of Sebastian Bach Mills’s (1839–1908) signature pieces and a recurrent choice in his programs and as encores.

The *Twenty-Four Préludes*, op. 28, published in 1839, form one of Chopin’s most remarkable achievements. Comprising but one or two short ideas, often only sketched, and a sole affect, each prelude contributes to the dismissal of the unspoken rule that equated classicism with the ability to draw finished ideas, worked-out materials, and carefully crafted, balanced melodies. In truth, the preludes were received with equal amounts of admiration and bewilderment. Upon their publication, Schumann (through his alter-ego Eusebius) said that he would have “expected something quite different, carried out in the grand style, like his études; these are sketches, beginnings of études, or, if you will, ruins, eagle pinions, all disorder and wild confusions.”<sup>71</sup> Liszt posited them as compositions of an entirely different order, unrelated to any other works, unlike Davison, who acknowledged the influence of Bach’s homonymous pieces for the harpsichord, but not to more recent examples of preludes in all twenty-four keys by Joseph Kessler (1800–72) or by Hummel.<sup>72</sup> Gottschalk, who introduced some of them to the New York public in 1856, was most eloquent in his description of the preludes, calling them “short bursts

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<sup>71</sup> Schumann, *Music and Musicians (Essays and Criticisms)*, vol. 1, 484.

<sup>72</sup> Davison, *Chopin: An Appreciative Essay*. In *Dwight’s*, 10/9 (29 November 1856): 67.

of inspiration.” With the exception of Robert Goldbeck and Gottschalk, pianists did not pay attention to the pieces until Anton Rubinstein played some of them in 1872.

Although logic implies that the *Préludes* were conceived as a unitary work (each piece being related to the next one by its key), in practice, complete performances of the twenty-four preludes throughout the nineteenth century, in Europe as in America, were exceptional, if not entirely unheard of: pianists (including Chopin) performed them separately, or in groups of two or more consecutive ones. But the preludes did not work well as a set or as independent pieces on the stage, either, precisely because they sounded too short, fragmentary, and disconnected; a critic remarked, after a performance of some of them by Rubinstein: “*Les Préludes* of Chopin consist of twenty-four petites, characteristic themes . . . Rubinstein played four or five of them, but they were so different in character that even he could not reconcile a musical mind to such a mosaic pattern in a work of art. In a Philharmonic concert we like to hear a work which is founded on one grand conception and not a set of heterogeneous ideas loosely strung together.”<sup>73</sup> Of all the *préludes*, only the fifteenth, the longest of the set, was a standard piece on the stage and in the home, precisely because of its finished, symmetrical (ternary) form and technical accessibility. The alleged story behind its creation, recounted famously by George Sand in her memoirs, gave way to suggestive programmatic readings and surely contributed to its popularity.

## 2. *Extended forms for piano*

In general terms, Chopin’s large works for piano, a group that includes ballades, scherzos, polonaises, sonatas, rondos, as well as individual pieces such as the *Fantaisie*,

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<sup>73</sup> *The New-York Herald* (17 November 1872): 9.

op. 49 (1841) or the *Barcarolle*, op. 60 (1845–46), were generally introduced to New York audiences after the shorter pieces—the ones the public knew and played at home—had gained some popularity: most of the “character pieces” that responded to collective ideas about Chopin belonged to this group. The seeming neglect of large works responded not so much to aesthetic preferences or unapproachability as to the influence of a series of generalized conventions that affected the format of concerts. Starting in the 1860s, with the establishment of a standard piano repertory that included abstract, longer works, pianists felt confident to add Chopin’s to their repertoires. Even so, a number of such large works remained problematic because they did not fit as easily as others. For example, the Ballades opp. 38 and 52, as well as the *Fantaisie*, op. 49 are very original pieces in both their tonal and formal layout. Their just appreciation among American critics may have been hampered by this fact, which may also account for its relative absence from the programs. Similarly, pianists eschewed pieces that potentially might have yielded negative reactions; such was the case of some late compositions by Chopin, such as the *Barcarolle*, and the *Polonaise-Fantaisie*.

### *Polonaises*

While the polonaises constituted, along with the mazurkas, one of the pillars on which the image of Chopin was universally constructed, public performances of these pieces were less common than those of other works by Chopin. It is conceivable that they were less popular among amateurs, as their technical demands made them less suited for domestic consumption than other works.

The polonaises embodied the essence of Polish nationalism, but, unlike the mazurkas, they had lost much of the distinctive Polish character after Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Spohr and other non-Polish composers had incorporated them into

their works. By the time Chopin wrote his own polonaises, the genre had become international. An important effect of the polonaise in the reception of Chopin was the martial and “noble” character of the works, which could function as a redemptive agent in the always prickly issue of Chopin and masculinity: in fact, codes for masculinity found in the polonaises continued to be voiced in all the biographies of the composer, from Liszt to Huneker. To Niecks, for example, the Polonaises op. 40 no. 1, and op. 53, showed that Chopin was not “languid.”<sup>74</sup> Finck singled out the polonaises as the works that redeemed Chopin from accusations of over-sentimentality, allowing him to stay in the sphere of the masculine. To him, the Polonaise op. 53 represented, “both in its subject and the style of music, the masculine side of Chopin’s genius.”<sup>75</sup> In turn, Huneker, for whom the polonaises were, as a group, Chopin’s best compositions, declared that the ones in E-flat minor (op. 26, no. 2), C minor (op. 40, no. 2), and F-sharp minor (op. 44) contained “some strong, virile writing.”<sup>76</sup>

The earliest American edition of a polonaise, the first from op. 26, appeared in 1854, by the Boston publisher Nathan Richardson. Eleven years later, Oliver Ditson (also in Boston) published the complete set, including one of the polonaises that Chopin wrote as a child, and which were published posthumously. The occasion was celebrated by Dwight, who went on to describe each one in rather colorful terms. For example, the Polonaise in E-flat minor, op. 26, no. 2, was “plaintive, heroic, patriotic, full of Polish

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<sup>74</sup> Niecks, *Frédéric Chopin as a Man and as a Musician*, 246.

<sup>75</sup> Finck, “The Greater Chopin,” 45. Karasowski divided the polonaises between the “melancholic” and the “martial” ones; the Polonaise op. 53 belonged to the latter group. It was, along with the Polonaise in F-sharp minor, op. 44 (1841), the “boldest” of the group.

<sup>76</sup> Huneker, “The Greater Chopin,” 168. Rather surprisingly, Huneker did not apply the same adjectives to the polonaises op. 40, no. 2, or op. 53.

fire and chivalry”; op. 40, no. 1, “trumpet toned, full of brio, dash and energy”; and op. 40, no. 2 in C minor, “mystical and dreamy.”<sup>77</sup>

The *Grande Polonaise*, op. 22, a work embedded in the bravura style of Chopin’s early period, reigned supreme on the New York stage in terms of popularity. It was only occasionally performed with the preceding *Andante spianato* and its orchestral accompaniment, its final form as it appeared in publication in 1835. Meanwhile, the emotional charge of the Polonaise op. 53 compensated for potential problems derived from its technical complexity; premiered in New York in 1856, it soon became the most popular polonaise—in fact, the most popular piece among Chopin’s mature works. Prone to pictorial interpretations and narrative accounts, critics saw in the work more opportunities for elaborate discussion than in most other pieces. In 1872, the critic of the *New-York Herald* described it as “one of those battle pictures which none but Chopin ever could draw on the keyboard of a piano. The clash of opposing armies, all the pomp and circumstance of war and its glittering panoply . . . You heard the tramp of squadrons, the martial music that called them to the field, the struggle, victory and the plaints of the wounded.”<sup>78</sup>

### ***Ballades***

Along with the nocturnes and the mazurkas, the ballades represented Chopin’s original contribution to the piano literature of the nineteenth century, like Schubert’s impromptus, Beethoven’s *Bagatellen*, Mendelssohn’s *Lieder ohne Worte*, or Schumann’s *Noveletten* are examples of other original contributions by early nineteenth-century composers. Liszt, Brahms, and Fauré are some of the many composers who cultivated the

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<sup>77</sup> *Dwight’s* 25/12 (2 September 1865): 94.

<sup>78</sup> *The New-York Herald* (28 September 1872): 6.

genre of the ballade after Chopin. Structurally solid, the four ballades redeemed Chopin from his supposedly awkward handling of large forms. Liszt and his disciple Hans von Bülow elevated the ballades to the category of symphonic poems, making Chopin a true forerunner of the *Musik der Zukunft*.

Chopin's ballades, part extended character pieces, part narrative movements, and part rhapsodic works, were regarded as highly original compositions from the beginning but fared with unequal degrees of success. The contrapuntal treatment of materials and greater concern with form, especially in the careful handling of key relationships, was unexpected for listeners accustomed to the composer's shorter, more accessible pieces. The ballades reflected Chopin's power of expression and unity of dramatic content with musical form better than any of his other compositions. In the line of E. T. A. Hoffmann or Robert Schumann, nineteenth-century American scholars discussed the ballades in programmatic terms, with frequent allusions to literary imagery: to Huneker, for example, the ballades were "faëry dramas."<sup>79</sup> In any case, in Chopin's ballades—probably inspired by the epic poems of the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855)—narrative and literary metaphors were seemingly more substantiated than in other works.

A pivotal work and arguably his first masterpiece, the composition of the Ballade op. 23 was long and laborious, but gave Chopin the confidence he needed to attempt larger works in the future. Early lukewarm responses to the Ballade in Europe did not deter many pianists from programming it a recurrently in their programs. Unfamiliarity with Chopin's extended works led critics to see the ballade as a mystifying composition, unclassifiable with the rest of Chopin's works. Its complexity had also surprised the European musical world when it appeared. Schumann called the Ballade "one of

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<sup>79</sup> Huneker, *Chopin, The Man and His Music*, 155.

Chopin's wildest and most original compositions."<sup>80</sup> Huneker, in turn, nicknamed the piece "the thunder and surge of the Odyssey" and tried to demonstrate that it closely followed a programmatic design, derived from "Konrad Wallenrod," a narrative poem by Mickiewicz.<sup>81</sup> His description of the ballade was surprisingly metaphoric and rich in suggestive imagery, a style uncharacteristic of him. The beginning of the piece, for example, implausibly followed this story:

That 'cello largo with its noiseless suspension stays us for a moment in the courtyard of Chopin's House Beautiful. Then, told in his most dreamy tones, the legend begins. As in some fabulous tales of the Genii this Ballade discloses surprising and delicious things. There is the tall lily in the fountain that nods to the sun. It drips in cadenced monotone and its song is repeated on the lips of the slender-hipped girl with the eyes of midnight.<sup>82</sup>

Gender-related issues returned to Huneker in his discussion of the coda of the ballade, which he described as one of the episodes that accurately displayed the virile side of Chopin's music, a trait that was more elusive in other pieces: "[F]or two pages the dynamic energy displayed by the composer is almost appalling. . . It is a storm of the emotions, muscular in its virility."<sup>83</sup> The work presented several new, unfamiliar features that could be seen as problematic: first, its unusual harmonic plan, starting with the enigmatic opening phrase, in which C minor unexpectedly becomes G minor, including a mystifyingly harsh dissonance in the seventh measure (D, G, E-flat, B-flat) which hangs on for some time, giving the impression that is left unresolved; some editors, like Rafael Josefy (1852–1915), who edited Karl Klindworth's earlier edition of Chopin's complete

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<sup>80</sup> Schumann, *Music and Musicians (Essays and Criticisms)*, I, 202.

<sup>81</sup> Huneker, *Chopin, The Man and His Music*, 275.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

works (issued between 1873 and 1876), gave an *ossia* (D, G, D, B-flat).<sup>84</sup> In his assessment of the editions of the ballade, Huneker echoed the controversy surrounding the dissonance at the end of the introduction. He condemned the editions that eliminated it on the grounds that it was against Chopin's intentions, evidenced by the testimony of the German pianist Ferdinand von Inten (1848–1918), who had seen the manuscript in Stuttgart. Without the dissonance, Huneker wrote, the Ballade was “insipid [and] colorless.”<sup>85</sup>

The formal layout of the ballade was also confusing due to the juxtaposition of genres—hints of the nocturne, the waltz, the scherzo, and even the etude—succeeding each other. Karasowski summarized accurately the essence of the piece when he stated that it was “inflamed by passion,” and acknowledged that some regarded it as an elaborate rondo, and others, as a programmatic work.<sup>86</sup>

Before the work was introduced to New York audiences in 1855 by Gustave Satter (1832–1879), knowledge of Chopin's music was limited to works that allowed prompt identification of its author, such as the nocturnes and the concertos. Seymour, in the *Times*, was not prepared to recognize the merit of a work by Chopin which, in dimensions and complexity, seemed so uncharacteristic of the composer: “The next

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<sup>84</sup> Klindworth's edition of Chopin's complete works continues to be widely used by pianists and students in the United States. It has nonetheless been often criticized for being inaccurate and for taking too many liberties: Klindworth was a pianist and wanted to show his personal interpretation of Chopin's ideas. “[Klindworth] was an interfering busybody and even tidied up Chopin's progressions when they embarrassed his pedantic prejudices.” Frank Merrick, “Some Editions of Chopin”, *Musical Times*, 97 (November 1956), 575–77. Huneker noted that editorial interventions included enriching harmony, phrasing, dynamics, pedaling, etc. He also mentioned Theodor Kullak and Hugo Riemann (1849–1919) as examples of editors who made modifications to the “original text.” Klindworth's edition would become very popular in the United States after 1875, when the first volume was reprinted by Julius Ferdinand Schuberth (1804–1875), a German publisher who had opened a branch of his firm in New York in 1850 (the remaining five volumes appeared in the following years).

<sup>85</sup> Huneker, “The Greater Chopin,” 158.

<sup>86</sup> Karasowski, *Frédéric Chopin: His Life Letters, and Works*, 345.

ballad [*sic*] by Chopin . . . did not impress us so favorably. The individuality of the composer was preserved too tenaciously, and the thin, thought-like outline of this ballad became lost in what should have been the subordinate characteristic coloring.”<sup>87</sup> To John Templeton Strong (1820–1875), the diarist who chronicled the musical life in New York for almost forty years, starting in 1835, the ballade was “gymnastics rather than music . . . unmeaning sequences of notes to show off a player’s muscle and aplomb; puzzles for an *artist* to undo.”<sup>88</sup>

Dwight heard the Ballade op. 23 in its American premiere, in Boston in 1853. He seemed perplexed by its unconventionalities, but described it as “full of poetry and meaning.”<sup>89</sup> When Oliver Ditson published the piece, in 1868, Dwight returned to the piece, calling it “a composition of great power and breadth and depth of feeling, taxing the strength . . . of a player to the utmost, full of imagination and fire.”<sup>90</sup> In contrast, two years later, in the review of Satter’s New York premiere of the piece, the correspondent to his journal found the piece confusing:

The Ballade . . . one of the most florid, dreamy, passion-fraught, and difficult of his compositions, was played with wonderful ease and brilliancy; but it suffered, as we thought, somewhat like the Sonata [Beethoven’s *Appassionata*, also in the Boston program], in being wrought up to *too* vehement a pitch toward the close. To say that this performance was so truly steeped in the delicate peculiar spirit and sentiment of Chopin, as some that we have heard, would be saying too much . . . it would be too much to expect of [Satter] all that earnest depth of feeling, and of inward experience, all that maturity of conception,

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<sup>87</sup> *The New-York Times* (20 March 1855): 4. Strong was a staunch enthusiast of symphonic music but not so much an admirer of piano music. The originality of Satter’s program was truly remarkable: the concert included Schumann’s *Carneval*, op. 9, a piece deemed “trashy and interminable,” and Liszt’s 1851 transcription of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony for two pianos, with Henry Christian Timm (1811–1892).

<sup>88</sup> Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, II, 561–62.

<sup>89</sup> *Dwight’s* 3/16 (22 January 1853): 124.

<sup>90</sup> *Dwight’s* 28/7 (20 June 1868): 263.

which should leave nothing to be desired in his interpretations of such poets as Chopin and Beethoven.<sup>91</sup>

The Ballade op. 47 (the third in the composer's catalogue) was popular among all audiences from the beginning, a circumstance that prompted Huneker to complain that the two were, by the end of the century, "becoming hopelessly vulgarized,"<sup>92</sup> while the second and the fourth ballades remained rarely performed until the 1880s. Soon to be regarded as one of Chopin's best works, the A-flat major ballade was enthusiastically received by critics and public from its New York premiere, in 1855. More accessible and less arduous to play than the first ballade, the third ballade did not present the stylistic and structural conflicts of Chopin's other three.

### *Scherzos*

With the scherzos, Chopin effectively walked away from the virtuosity that had become commonplace in the first half of the nineteenth century, namely brilliancy for its own sake. Scholars regarded the four scherzos as some of the composer's most remarkable accomplishments: Karasowski believed that Chopin's scherzos were thirty years ahead of their time, compared to those of his contemporaries,<sup>93</sup> while Davison (and later Niecks) compared the Scherzo op. 39 (1839) favorably to Beethoven's scherzos, a remarkable statement at the time.<sup>94</sup> In fact, the scherzos revealed a different, broader side of Chopin, unconfined to the melancholy and sentimentality projected by the nocturnes and the waltzes. Finck saw in the scherzos (as in the polonaises) the occasion to

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<sup>91</sup> *Dwight's* 7/1 (7 April 1855): 6.

<sup>92</sup> Huneker, "The Greater Chopin," 165. He identified the Ballade in A-flat as Chopin's second, obviously a mistake.

<sup>93</sup> Karasowski, *Frédéric Chopin: His Life, Letters, and Works*, 346.

<sup>94</sup> "[I]t may vie with the best movements of the same kind that have proceeded from the pen of Beethoven, and though extravagantly rhapsodical in its outline . . . it lacks none of the essentials of classical and fine music." Davison, *Chopin: An Appreciative Essay*. In *Dwight's*, 10/8 (22 November 1856): 59.

dismantle the stereotypes around Chopin, noting that he misled the listener by means of writing passages of profound sorrow followed suddenly by comic episodes.<sup>95</sup> To Huneker, the scherzos were “fierce, grave, sardonic, demoniacal, ironic, passionate, fiery, hysterical, and most melancholy,” and saw in them the best evidence of the originality of the composer.<sup>96</sup>

Of the four scherzos, the second, op. 31, proved to be irresistible after Gottschalk played it for the first time in 1853. Soon, the piece would become a staple in the repertory of most pianists, and a guarantee of applause. Chopin’s three remaining scherzos were seldom heard in public.

### *Sonatas*

Nineteenth-century responses to Chopin’s Second Sonata, op. 35 (the Sonata in C minor, op. 4, written in 1827–28, is a work of less interest) were lukewarm at best and overtly negative in some cases. Schumann denounced the lack of unity among the movements, suggesting that the title “sonata” was a joke, if not sheer bravado: “[Chopin]seems to have taken four of his most unruly children and put them together, possibly thinking to smuggle them, as a sonata, into company where they might not be considered individually presentable.”<sup>97</sup> He found “something repulsive” in the funeral march, noting that “an adagio in D flat, say, would have had an immeasurably more beautiful effect” (Chopin had written the *Marche funèbre* at least two years before the other three movements, presumably without the intention of making it the slow

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<sup>95</sup> Finck, Chopin, *The Greatest Genius of the Pianoforte*, 53.

<sup>96</sup> Huneker, “The Greater Chopin,” 174. Interestingly, Huneker added the scherzos from the sonatas opp. 35 and 58 in that list.

<sup>97</sup> Schumann, *Music and Musicians (Essays and Criticisms)*, II, 280.

movement of a sonata), while the last movement was “joyless,” and sounded “more like a joke than a piece of music.”<sup>98</sup>

Like Schumann, Niecks found the sonata structurally faulty, an estimation that gave credibility to the perennial criticism of Chopin as a weak handler of large forms.<sup>99</sup> To him, the fact that the slow movement worked well as an independent work (it was generally performed separately) confirmed the lack of uniformity of the whole work.<sup>100</sup> As the century advanced, the merits of the sonata became more apparent and led to positive analyses by scholars like Finck and Huneker. At the turn of the twentieth century, the pianist Edward Baxter Perry became one of its most passionate defenders, calling the sonata nothing less than the greatest composition in all piano literature.<sup>101</sup> In an attempt to dissipate concerns about lack of unity among its movements, Perry sought to find a subjacent programmatic plan which Chopin would have followed, no matter how improbable the statement may sound. Accordingly, he wrote that the four movements corresponded to the four cantos of an epic poem by a Polish writer he could not identify. Although he did not substantiate his claims any further, Perry argued that Liszt—one of the first performers of the sonata—knew the story.<sup>102</sup>

The first complete performance of the sonata in New York was delayed until 1873. Before, the *Marche funèbre* had become one of Chopin’s most recognizable compositions and a staple in the programs of both Gottschalk and Thalberg, to the point

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Niecks, *Frédéric Chopin as a Man and Musician*, 226.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Perry, *Descriptive Analyses of Piano Works*, 113.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 117.

that it tended to be avoided by other pianists at the time. Very soon, band, organ, and orchestral arrangements proliferated.<sup>103</sup> Along with other great works by Chopin, especially those written in his later years, including the *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, the Ballade op. 52, and the Sonata op. 58 (the third in Chopin's catalogue, which received its New York premiere by Hans von Bülow in 1876), the Sonata op. 35 remained in relative obscurity throughout the nineteenth century.

*Berceuse, Fantaisie, Polonaise-Fantaisie*

Shaped more by texture than by harmonic progression or dynamic contrast, of which there are virtually none, the *Berceuse*, op. 57, a set of variations in disguise, was recognized as quintessentially Chopinesque by its harmonic simplicity and use of ornamentation. In October 1854, Dwight informed his readers of an edition by Boston publisher Nathan Richardson of a "little-known composition by Chopin." At the time, he might have heard the piece in Boston, played by Otto Dresel (1826–1890). In his review, Dwight took the opportunity to discuss the use of embellishments as a stylistic resource in Chopin and in some of his less-talented peers, who still relied on the bravura variations as their preferred concert piece. Chopin, Dwight observed, had transformed the filigree into an integral part of the composition:

The *Berceuse* "clashes with the products of the modern virtuoso age of pianism . . . The difficulties are all secondary and subordinate to the inspiration which conceived the piece. The very mode of treatment, which in most cases is the most artificial and shallow, is here wonderfully suggestive and beautiful . . . It is not a set of variations; but the stream of melody, as it flows along, continually breaks into finer and finer eddies and ripples . . . As a mere exercise in the art of curiously varying and

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<sup>103</sup> Another favorite was the Polonaise, op. 40, no. 1, arranged for orchestra by, among others, Theodore Thomas.

embellishing the melody, it is admirable; but you forget all that in the perfectness of the poetic expression.<sup>104</sup>

Robert Goldbeck gave the first New York performance of the *Berceuse* in 1858.

The piece gained great popularity in the following years because of its unequivocal correspondence to some preconceived images of the composer, including the delicate and the sentimental.

The *Fantaisie*, op. 49, an undisputed masterpiece and an archetypal Chopin work in spite of its distinctiveness, was soon recognized as one of Chopin's most elaborate and difficult compositions in both its formal layout and tonal plan. It has enough complexity to confuse an unprepared listener accustomed to the direct charm of Chopin's melodious character pieces; even Schumann had found the *Fantaisie* somehow faulty and too bold.<sup>105</sup> One of the first problems derived from its name: Chopin's fantasy was not a virtuosic work based on a popular or operatic tune, as audiences at the time would have expected. Davison was the first one who realized that the *Fantaisie* (published right before he wrote his essay) was a "transcendental work" that possessed "all the modern difficulties."<sup>106</sup> To Karasowski and Niecks, and later to Huneker, the *Fantaisie* redeemed Chopin from accusations of poor handling of form and showed that he could also be a "thinker"; to the latter, the *Fantaisie* was nothing else than Chopin's greatest composition.

The *Fantaisie* was premiered in New York in 1860 (there is speculation that Jules Fontana might have played it in 1846; the issue is discussed in chapter 3). Reviewers

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<sup>104</sup> *Dwight's* 6/3 (October 21, 1854): 23.

<sup>105</sup> Schumann, *Music and Musicians (Essays and Criticisms)*, I, 284.

<sup>106</sup> *Dwight's* 10/8 (29 November 1856): 66.

reacted with reserve. The critic of the *New-York Times* could only say that the *Fantaisie* contained “lovely episodes and poetic vagaries in it which demand exquisite delicacy of appreciation to detect and lay bare.”<sup>107</sup> Almost five years later, when Mills played it again, the *Fantaisie* still mystified some listeners: *Dwight’s* New York correspondent admitted that the piece needed to be heard more than once to be appreciated and understood.<sup>108</sup>

In the years covered by this study, only one inconspicuous performance of the *Polonaise-Fantaisie* op. 61 has been identified, in 1871. Chopin invested eighteen months composing his last great composition for solo piano, a piece so emancipated from the genre of the polonaise that Chopin had to add the qualifying term “fantasy.” It is arguably Chopin’s freest and most advanced composition, both structurally and harmonically. The work puzzled pianists and audiences alike; even its supporters ascribed its alleged faults to the composer’s debilitated physical and mental state during his last years. To Liszt, this and other late compositions like the cello sonata were “more or less marked by a feverish and restless anxiety. No bold and brilliant pictures are to be found in it . . . A deep melancholy . . . reigns throughout. Like all descriptions of moments of extremity . . . they only serve to torture the soul.”<sup>109</sup> Referring specifically to the *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, he wrote that “although comprising thoughts which in beauty and grandeur equal—I would almost say surpass—anything that Chopin has written, the work stands, on account of its pathological contents, outside the sphere of art.”<sup>110</sup> Karasowski

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<sup>107</sup> *The New-York Times* (13 February 1860): 4.

<sup>108</sup> *Dwight’s* 16/21 (18 February 1860): 373.

<sup>109</sup> Liszt, *F. Chopin*, 47.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

had also attributed the problems of the work to “health-related,” or pathological, issues.<sup>111</sup> In “The Greater Chopin,” Huneker concurred with Liszt and Karasowski in his appreciation: “Beautiful as it is, Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, with its hectic flush—in its most musical, most melancholy cadences—gives us a premonition of death. . . . Composed three years before he died, it has the taint of the tomb about it and . . . the sick brain is heard in the morbid insistence of the theme.”<sup>112</sup> However, in his subsequent Chopin monograph, Huneker seemed to have reconciled with the work, admitting that increasing exposure to works of progressive composers, such as Wagner and Strauss, had influenced his attitude: “For a generation accustomed to the realism of Richard Strauss, the *Fantaisie-Polonaise* [*sic*] seems vaporous and idealistic . . . It was music of the future when Chopin composed it; it is now music of the present, as much as Richard Wagner's.”<sup>113</sup>

### 3. *Works for piano and orchestra and piano and ensemble*

#### *Piano Concertos*

Before the 1880s, there were few complete performances of Chopin's concertos in New York. The unity of a musical work was not necessarily taken into consideration during a public performance. Partial performances of concertos (not only Chopin's) were customary until the late nineteenth century. Arrangements of concertos for small ensembles were also relatively common, when hiring an orchestra was not possible: for his debut in Vienna, Chopin performed the Variations on *Là ci darem la mano*, op. 2, and

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<sup>111</sup> Karasowski, *Frédéric Chopin: His Life, Letters, and Works*, 343.

<sup>112</sup> Huneker, “The Greater Chopin,” 198.

<sup>113</sup> Huneker, *Chopin, The Man and His Music*, 334.

his Concerto op. 21, accompanied by a small ensemble, probably a string quartet or quintet.

Regarding the Concerto op. 11, Clara Wieck realized the affinities between Chopin and Field, and wrote in her diary, rather surprisingly, that she “would have thought it a work of Schumann.”<sup>114</sup>

Early reception of the concertos in Warsaw, London, and Paris did not differ greatly from the responses given by New York critics. After their first performances in Warsaw, some Polish critics admired the harmonic originality and charming melodies of the works, and the references to the mazurka in the last movements of both concertos.<sup>115</sup> Other European reviews agreed, mentioning the originality of the melodies, harmonic progressions, and modulations. Some pointed out the “abundance of imaginative ideas,” unconventional figuration, “freshness,” “genius,” and “over-rich harmonies.”<sup>116</sup> Negative responses were directed to the alleged weakness of the form and orchestration: Liszt, for example, objected to Chopin’s lack of contrapuntal skill and his control of the orchestra.<sup>117</sup> Niecks thought that Chopin’s possible faulty handling of form was redeemed by the originality of his melodic ornamentation. Huneker agreed, noting that for Chopin, “writing a concerto or sonata was an effort, and the effort was always inadequate for the attainment of the object . . . he lacked the peculiar qualities, natural and acquired, requisite for a successful cultivation of the larger forms. He could not grasp

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<sup>114</sup> Quoted from John Rink, *Chopin: The Piano Concertos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 112.

<sup>115</sup> “[Chopin’s] compositions are particularly characterized by the way he incorporates his lovely and original melodies, brilliant passages . . . into a unified whole.” *Kurier Polski* (20 March 1830). Quoted in John Rink, *Chopin: The Piano Concertos*, 17.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>117</sup> Liszt, *F. Chopin*, 10–11.

and hold the threads of thought which he found flitting in his mind, and weave them into a strong, complex web.”<sup>118</sup> Huneker’s reticence was further supported by what he saw as poorly written orchestral parts, even suggesting that Chopin might not have written the *tuttis* himself.<sup>119</sup>

In New York, responses to Chopin’s two concertos were almost invariably positive. Charm and melodic fluency outweighed any supposed deficiencies. After the nocturnes and the mazurkas, New York audiences were exposed to Chopin’s music through the Concerto op. 11. In Warsaw, Stuttgart, Vienna, and Paris, the concertos had served the same purpose, to introduce the music of a still unknown composer to the public. Once Chopin acquired the status he sought, he never felt the need to write any more concertos, nor did he play them in public after 1835.<sup>120</sup>

The first partial performance of op. 11 (last two movements) took place in 1846, with Henry Timm at the piano accompanied by the Philharmonic Society. In the *Evening Standard*, Watson discussed the concerto briefly: “[T]he andante [*sic*] is remarkable for the wonderful sustainment of its lovely subject, and ... the Finale is replete with those peculiar beauties which form the charm of Chopin’s style.”<sup>121</sup> Those “peculiar beauties” were traits of Chopin’s style that Watson was able to distinguish as quintessentially Chopinesque: melancholic expressivity and elements of Polish folk music. The second movement, in fact, is basically a nocturne with string accompaniment, and the third, an

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<sup>118</sup> Niecks, *Frédéric Chopin as a Man and Musician*, I, 205.

<sup>119</sup> Huneker, “The Greater Chopin,” 187.

<sup>120</sup> Chopin, however, worked on a third concerto in the early 1830s. He abandoned the idea and reworked the material of what would have become the first movement into the *Allegro de concert*, op. 46 (1846). There have been more or less successful attempts to arrange the piece for piano and orchestra.

<sup>121</sup> *New-York Evening Standard* (2 November 1846): 2. Chopin gives *Romance: larghetto* as the tempo marking of the movement.

extended mazurka; both illustrate accurately the composer's idiosyncratic piano writing. Chopin's limited interest in the orchestra and supposedly inadequate handling of large forms were recognized by the perceptive critic of the *Morning Courier* in the review of Timm's performance of the concerto when he wrote that the work was "much less crude in its harmonies and more shapely in form than any other of Chopin's compositions which we know," then adding that the work was "not a concerto," but rather "a sonata with orchestral accompaniment."<sup>122</sup> Perhaps the critic was acknowledging an evolution of taste that became evident by mid-century. Chopin's two concertos, written in the virtuoso style of the late 1820s, were starting to be regarded as old-fashioned, being challenged by more "symphonic" concertos by Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Grieg, and Rubinstein, which were successfully presented to the public in the coming years.<sup>123</sup>

### ***Trio, op. 8***

Chopin's Trio for Cello, Violin, and Piano, composed in 1828–29 (around the time he left Warsaw), has remained a seldom-performed work and is regarded as a rather unremarkable example of its genre. Its interest resides in the fact that it is one of a very few of his extended chamber works, and that it allowed him to experiment with sonata form; at the time, he was attempting extended, multi-movement works, such as the first sonata and the two concertos. These experiments gave Chopin confidence to later compose successful extended forms, such as the ballades, the two mature piano sonatas, and the sonata for violoncello and piano.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *Morning Courier* (23 November, 1846): 2.

<sup>123</sup> It could be argued that the concerto, as a genre, was going through a period of relative stagnation: Mendelssohn and Chopin had died, and Liszt's and Schumann's concertos were written in the 1840s. Another twenty-five or so years would have to pass before there was significant new literature in the field.

<sup>124</sup> Samson, *Chopin*, 47.

As an expert on chamber music, Schumann spoke highly of the Trio.<sup>125</sup>

Remarkably, it found a passionate defender in Finck, who ended his essay on Chopin with a discussion of the work. He disagreed with those who had criticized Chopin's inability to write idiomatically for the violin or the violoncello, and even compared the trio with the Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, op. 65, an association that, then as much as now, seems improbable:

The Trio, though an earlier work, is, like the 'cello sonata, admirably adapted for the instruments for which it is written. I once belonged to an amateur trio club. Our tastes naturally differed in many points, but in one thing we all agreed: we always closed our entertainment with this Chopin trio. It was the climax of the evening's enjoyment. Yet, only a few years ago, the leader of one of the principal chamber music organizations in New York admitted to me that he had never heard of this trio!—an incident that vividly illustrates the truth of my assertion that Chopin's genius is still far from being esteemed at its full value.<sup>126</sup>

Only one New York performance of the trio has been identified, in 1854. The correspondent to *Dwight's* found the work less “characteristic of Chopin as his later works” and “entirely devoid of that deeply romantic spirit which pervades all the composer's similar compositions.”<sup>127</sup>

### ***Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, op. 65***

In 1845–46, three years before his death, Chopin took an unforeseen turn by writing a full sonata for cello and piano. Thus, at the very end of his career as a composer (it was his last opus published before his death), Chopin pointed towards a genre and a medium that, one would have thought, had never particularly appealed to

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<sup>125</sup> Robert Schuman, *Music and Musicians (Essays and Criticism)*, II, 175.

<sup>126</sup> Finck, “Chopin, The Greatest Genius of the Pianoforte,” 57.

<sup>127</sup> *Dwight's* 8/8 (24 November 1855): 61.

him. It was also Chopin's first work for this type of ensemble since the *Introduction and Grand Polonaise* for Violoncello and Piano, op. 3, written seventeen years earlier.

Though it is only a conjecture, one cannot help think that the sonata could have signaled the onset of new phase in his career, had he lived longer.

The work is a complex one, so intricate in its harmony that it baffled many of his unconditional admirers. To Liszt, it showed the "torture of the soul" of Chopin like no other piece.<sup>128</sup> Moscheles articulated more eloquently than anyone the confusion and abruptness that many of Chopin's contemporaries saw in his late works; the work was the ultimate proof of Chopin's inability to handle sonata form. Upon hearing it, he wrote in his diary: "Chopin shows that his best ideas are but isolated; he leaves them fragmentary, and fails to produce a work of complete unity. [In the sonata] I find often passages which sound as if someone were preluding on the piano and knocked at all the keys to learn whether euphony was at home."<sup>129</sup>

Discussing Chopin's troubles with sonata form, Karasowski wrote that Chopin's "inventive power and melodic wealth were so abundant that it was irksome to him to work out his themes systematically; and his sonatas, therefore, with respect to form, sometimes appear unfinished."<sup>130</sup> The degree of harmonic intricacy, density of texture, and elaborate contrapuntal work of the Sonata op. 65 also bewildered some of the staunchest supporters of Chopin, such as Liszt and Karasowski. The latter saw in the sonata evidence of the physical decay of a composer who was aware of his imminent

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<sup>128</sup> Liszt, *F. Chopin*, 57.

<sup>129</sup> Charlotte Moscheles, ed., *Recent Music and Musicians* (extracts from Ignaz Moscheles's diaries), 335. Despite such reticence, Moscheles would pay tribute to Chopin by arranging the sonata for piano four-hands.

<sup>130</sup> Karasowski, *Frédéric Chopin: His Life, Letters, and Works*, 338–39.

death, extending the consideration to the *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, described as “throughout beautiful, and poetical, but the melancholy and peculiar agitation displayed . . . reveal the morbid mind of the composer.”<sup>131</sup> Niecks would voice once more the Germanic contempt for Chopin’s handling of sonata form: he regarded the sonata as a piece “in which hardly anything else but effort, painful effort, manifests itself.”<sup>132</sup>

In contrast to his European counterparts, Finck became a staunch defender of the work. He was a particularly passionate advocate of the work and other late works, arguing that accusations of morbidity and unintelligibility had also been “brought by philistines against the best works of Beethoven, Schumann, and Wagner. The fact is that these last works are of an almost matchless harmonic depth and originality, as superior to his earlier works as Wagner’s last music dramas are to his first operas.”<sup>133</sup> For a Wagnerite like Finck, comparisons between Chopin and Wagner were the ultimate compliment. He observed that the Sonata op. 65 was destined to open a new period in Chopin’s career, in which he would have tested other genres and other instruments. Finck ranked Chopin’s cello sonata above those by Mendelssohn, Brahms, Beethoven, and Rubinstein.<sup>134</sup>

William Mason and the cellist Frederick Bergner gave the only identified public performance of the piece in New York, in 1865.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>132</sup> Niecks, *Frédéric Chopin as a Man and as a Musician*, II, 229.

<sup>133</sup> Finck, “Chopin, The Greatest Genius of the Pianoforte,” 56.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 57.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Early Performances, 1839–1853*

#### *Instrumental Concerts and Repertories in Antebellum New York: The Golden Age of Virtuosity*

Carl Dahlhaus has written that in the nineteenth century, “virtuosity came to be part of the history of music as art.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, between 1820 and 1850, the repertory of piano concert music was almost invariably composed of rondos, fantasies, and variations on operatic tunes, all written in the typical bravura style of early romanticism. Until the 1840s, concerts in Europe were a heterogeneous combination in which several artists, and, whenever possible, an orchestra, participated. The overwhelming dominance of opera as a source of entertainment—enjoyed by both the upper and middle classes, and by the wealthy, the musically cultivated, and the dilettanti—may explain performers’ reliance on arias and other operatic numbers as sources of inspiration. Opera was everywhere in New York at the time, not only at the Academy of Music or at Niblo’s Garden, but also in the parodies of the minstrel shows and burlesques. Virtually all New Yorkers were exposed to opera, not just the select group of the wealthy or the musically cultivated who attended it regularly.

In most cases, virtuosos limited their repertories to their own bravura pieces; only occasionally did they include a work by a fellow pianist, or, more rarely, a solo piano or ensemble piece by a composer like Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, or Mendelssohn. By concentrating on their own compositions, they were able to show their particular abilities, display their best technical skills, and hide their shortcomings. In this regard, Chopin had

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<sup>1</sup> Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 134.

been no different than Kalkbrenner, Thalberg, Liszt, and dozens of similar virtuosos. He usually played his own music, though sometimes a work (usually an ensemble piece) by another composer would be added. Similarly, he would not have expected his music to be performed in concert by other pianists—even if they sometimes did.

In Europe, repertoires and concert programs at the time were not necessarily different. Concerts on both continents tended to follow a rather fixed structure including a number of solo piano pieces, piano duets, and vocal pieces (arias from operas; English, American, or Irish ballads; etc.), usually accompanied by the piano virtuoso himself. Sometimes, a movement or two from a concerto or ensemble would be placed in the middle of the program, and a rondo or set of variations would conclude the concert. A comparison of two concerts, one by Chopin in Paris in 1841, another by Leopold de Meyer in New York five years later, is illustrative:

Paris, October 1841 (Chopin; all piano works and piano accompanying by Chopin):

1. Chopin: “Andante” [*sic*] followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ballade
2. [Josef] Dessauer: “Felice donzella,” aria [op. 36, no. 5] (presumably sung by Pauline Viardot-Garcia)
3. Chopin: Nocturnes, préludes, and études
4. Handel: Diverse vocal pieces (sung by Viardot-Garcia)
5. Solo for violoncello (performed by Auguste Franchomme)
6. Chopin: Nocturne, préludes, mazurkas, impromptu
7. “Le Chêne et le roseau,” song (composed and performed by Viardot-García)

New York, February 1846 (de Meyer):

1. Ballad, “My Heart Is on the Rhine” (sung by Mr. Brough)
2. Bellini: Fantasia on Airs from *I puritani* (performed by de Meyer)
3. Rossini: “Come dolce,” cavatina from *Armida* (sung by Mme. Otto)
4. De Meyer: Variations on Airs from Rossini’s *Semiramide*
5. Blum: Aria Tyrolien (sung by Mme. Otto)
6. De Meyer: Introduction and Variations Brillants from Donizetti’s *Lucrezia Borgia*
7. Benedict: “Rage Though Angry Storm,” from *The Gypsy’s Warning* (sung by Mr. Brough)
8. Félicien [David]: Grand Duet from the celebrated Ode Symphony, *Le Désert* (performed by de Meyer and Charles Perabeau, a New York pianist of German birth)

Variations, rondos, and bravura works for piano and orchestra comprise most of Chopin’s early works, which he wrote primarily with the intention to make a name for himself as a pianist. Once he succeeded, he did not see the need for continuing with his

concert career, as he began favoring other types of shorter works. Chopin became arguably the only pianist and composer of his generation who did not find it necessary to present his new works to the public: he was recognized as a distinctive artist soon after his early concertizing began.<sup>2</sup> More so, he was one of the rare composers whose music was occasionally played by other pianists, including some of the best: Liszt included some of Chopin's études in his recitals in the 1840s and even earlier, when Clara Wieck played the Variations on *Là ci darem la mano*, op. 2, and the Concerto op. 11 as early as 1834; she would soon add some nocturnes and études to her repertory.<sup>3</sup>

In New York, piano concerts had slowly arrived in the late 1820s and early 30s through unexceptional virtuosos whose names were soon forgotten. Their programs were a combination of their own bravura pieces as well as other, similar works by both renowned and second-class virtuosos; it was amidst this environment that Chopin's music arrived in the city. Until the mid 1850s, Chopin's music was seldom heard in public. In comparison, the incidence of Schumann's or Liszt's music in programs was also small, while Mendelssohn's appealing, classicizing style and his popularity in Great Britain made it more easily accepted, judging by the number of performances identified.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Janet Ritterman, "Piano Music and the Public Concert, 1800–1850," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 27.

<sup>3</sup> In England, Carl Filtsch (1830–1845), a student of Chopin, had time to introduce some of his teacher's works to English audiences before his death at the age of fourteen. Sir Charles Hallé (1819–95), one of the most dedicated champions of Chopin, performed some of his larger pieces, such as ballades and scherzos, in London in 1843.

<sup>4</sup> From approximately 1840 to 1855, the following Mendelssohn works for piano solo and ensemble with piano had been heard in New York: *Capriccio brillante* for piano and orchestra, op. 22; the Piano Concertos no. 1 in G minor, op. 25 and no. 2 in D minor, op. 40; the Piano Trios no. 1 in D minor, op. 49, and no. 2 in C minor, op. 66; the Piano Quartet in B minor, op. 3; several *Lieder ohne Worte*; the *Rondò capriccioso* in E major, op. 14; a "Concertant" for piano (unidentified); and a piano duet co-written with Moscheles on the "Gypsy March" from Weber's *Preciosa* (pub. as Moscheles's op. 87b).

The individuality of Chopin's voice was sufficiently original to be recognized amid the puddle of virtuoso pieces that plagued the stages. The acknowledgment of Chopin's stylistic traits slowly established a common idea, based on a shared perception. Critics began to use a language that presumably the readers could associate with Chopin immediately, and that sounded exclusive to him: "delicate," "poetic," and "intimate" were recurrent adjectives that American critics would use indiscriminately in their reviews of Chopin's music.

### ***The First Performance: Ludwig Rakemann***

All evidence seems to indicate that the first public performance of Chopin's music in New York City—and in the United States—took place on 16 October 1839 at the City Hotel, a small theater near Trinity Church, at the intersection of Broadway and Wall Street.<sup>5</sup> At that time, Chopin was twenty-nine years old; he was by then very famous in Paris and fairly well known in the musical circles of Warsaw, London, Vienna, as well as Berlin and Leipzig, cities where some of his friends and champions—Mendelssohn, and Robert and Clara Schumann—lived. Chopin's music sold well: editions of his music were published simultaneously in Paris, London, and Leipzig, an indication of its acceptance among amateur pianists. Meanwhile, in New York, Chopin's music was still virtually unknown. The day before the concert, an ad in *The New-York Morning Courier*

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<sup>5</sup> Located at 115 Broadway. Opened in 1796, the City Hotel was one of the first places set up for concerts in the city. A few days after Rakeman's performance, on 28 October, the émigré Polish pianist C. Kossowski (dates unknown) gave the first documented public performance of a work by Liszt, his *Grand Galop chromatique*, S.219 (1838), also at the City Hotel. Besides the *Galop*, other early performances of Liszt's works included some of his Fantasies and *Réminiscences* on operatic themes by Bellini and Donizetti, favorites of many visiting virtuosos. Performances of his *Études de concert*, S. 144, and the *Grandes Études d'exécution transcendante*, S. 139, were rare until the 1860s. Sebastian Bach Mills (1838–1898) gave the first American performance of the Piano Concerto in E-flat major, S. 124, in New York in 1867, with the Theodore Thomas's Orchestra.

announced that a pianist from Germany named Ludwig Rakemann<sup>6</sup> (1816–?) would perform a nocturne and two mazurkas by Chopin, along with works by Herz and Thalberg. Although we cannot identify the pieces Rakemann played, by 1839 Chopin had published a total of ten nocturnes (opp. 9, 15, 27, and 32) and twenty-five mazurkas (opp. 6, 7, 17, 24, 30, and 33).<sup>7</sup>

A few days before his first public appearance, Rakemann played a private concert before a select audience. One of the attendees wrote a “communication,” reproduced in the *Evening Star*, announcing that “Chopin, a Pole,” was a composer “known here but to a few.”<sup>8</sup> The assessment was remarkably analytic by the standards of the time, putting together some of the basic pillars upon which much of the nineteenth-century American reception of Chopin’s music was going to be established, such as the integration of melody and harmony, melancholy, and expressivity.

[W]e were most delighted with some nocturnes by someone known here but to a few—Chopin, a Pole. This author not so much astonishes by the velocity and apparent difficulty of his passages, as he entrances his auditors by the fire, the soul-stirring pathos of his compositions. He appears to expand the powers of the instrument by a masterly combination of melody and harmony—*singing* divinely. . . we were never more charmed than in listening to these effusions of a master mind, given with an intensity of feeling and power of expression which we have seldom heard equaled—never surpassed.<sup>9</sup>

On the day of the performance, the same newspaper made the first identified reference to the composer as a noteworthy representative of a style and a school. A

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<sup>6</sup> Louis was alternatively used in the press (he presumably used it too). His last name was sometimes spelled Rackemann or Rakermann.

<sup>7</sup> Earlier examples of both genres existed (mostly pieces written during Chopin’s childhood and teenage years), but they were published—or discovered—after his death.

<sup>8</sup> *The New-York Evening Star* (15 October 1839): 2. It was the custom among visiting pianists to perform privately for the press and a group of connoisseurs before the formal public presentation.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

reviewer noted that Chopin was, with Henselt, “[one of the] leaders of the *new school of pianists*,” a designation used to refer to a style of composition and performance that New York audiences could have hardly recognized at the time; Rakemann should therefore be credited as the pianist who introduced not only Chopin but other composers of early romanticism.<sup>10</sup> Unsure of the effect that Chopin’s music would have on the audience, Rakemann performed the nocturnes and mazurkas between much more arresting works by Thalberg and Herz. In combining the highly virtuosic music of these composers with Chopin’s comparatively undemanding pieces, Rakemann showed his audience that there was a category of piano music that belonged to a different sphere, less ostentatious and more profound, capable of moving rather than electrifying.

Shortly after his New York debut, Rakemann introduced the music of Chopin to Boston audiences.<sup>11</sup> John S. Dwight, then writing for the journal *The Dial*, was enthusiastic. He immediately acknowledged in Chopin’s compositions the voice of that “new school” centered on a group of composers which included, besides Chopin, Liszt, Henselt, and Thalberg. These composers had attained, according to Dwight, a mastery of the powers of the piano, bringing out the peculiar soul . . . of the instrument, in a way unknown before . . . [Their compositions] are rich, brilliant, wild, astonishing.”<sup>12</sup> Dwight added that the “Nocturnes” by Chopin that Rakemann had played contained “sweet

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<sup>10</sup> *The New-York Morning Courier* (15 October 1839): 2.

<sup>11</sup> *The New-York Mirror: A Weekly Gazette of Literature and Fine Arts*, 17/24 (7 December 1839): 191. Reprint of a review of Rakemann’s concerts in Boston in November 1839, originally published in *The Musical Magazine*. The reviewer (probably Theodor Hatch or T. B. Hayward) acknowledged Rakemann as “being a thorough master of the modern piano-forte school, and of the compositions of its authors and leaders, Thalberg, Henselt, and Chopin,” and referred to his performance as “the first illustration of the style of this school which has ever been offered to the Boston public.” The review also discussed aspects of the technique required for playing the music of Thalberg and Henselt, but not Chopin.

<sup>12</sup> J. S. Dwight, “Concerts of the Past Winter,” *The Dial* [Boston] 1/1 (July 1840): 129–30.

pathos.”<sup>13</sup> Years later, writing for *The Harbinger*, he would return to the nocturnes and mazurkas. In his characteristic prose, Dwight described his reaction:

“How sweet and soothing . . . to bathe one’s wearied, dazzled senses in the more delicate and spiritual *Nocturnes* and fairy *Mazurkas* of Chopin. His music seems all compounded of spirit-voices and harmonic cadences . . . It is like the fragrance of flowers; we seem to breathe it, as well as hear it, till we reel in a drowsy oriental languor. He is the most sentimental of the tribe; an invalid, who seldom plays before large audiences.”<sup>14</sup>

The reference to an unspecified physical ailment—“an invalid”—was probably used here for the first time by an American critic but it would soon become a recurrent metaphor in American criticism for which both Chopin’s music and personality would be immediately recognized.

Rakemann’s unimpressive American career in the United States (he returned to Europe in the mid-1840s, after trying his luck in New England) proved that audiences were still unprepared to acclaim a pianist whose repertory was probably regarded as odd and unexciting. In fact, after his presentation, Rakemann resorted to more traditional programs, designed according to the established pattern of virtuosic rondos and variations. As a virtuoso, however, Rakemann was unsuccessful, his technique judged poor by some of the few respected critics at the time. Henry C. Watson wrote that although Rakemann had a “light and brilliant tone . . . [and] articulated every passage with perfect distinctiveness . . . the weakness of his left hand [made] his playing somewhat unequal.”<sup>15</sup> On another occasion, after an unsuccessful performance by Rakemann of a set of variations by Thalberg “so difficult and chromatic . . . that not one

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> *The Harbinger, Devoted to Social and Political Progress* 1/24 (22 November, 1845): 6. The other member of the “tribe” alluded to by Dwight was Liszt.

<sup>15</sup> *The New World* (18 September 1841): 335. Quoted from Vera B Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, I, 137.

in fifty in the audience could make anything of it,” Watson suggested that he should concentrate on a more suitable repertory: “Mr. Rakemann would find it in his advantage, if desirous of *general* appreciation, to perform some of the light and graceful works of Herz or [François] Hunten [1793–1878], or the more classical pieces of Hummel or Moscheles.”<sup>16</sup> Significantly, Watson did not include Chopin in the list of composers of “light and graceful works,” as one might have expected; having lived in England, it is unlikely that Watson, who moved to New York in 1841, was not acquainted with Chopin at the time, even if the composer was still less famous than Moscheles and Hummel. In any case, the determining factor in Rakemann’s failed New York career was the imminent arrival of virtuosos from Europe, led by Leopold de Meyer in 1845, whose thunderous appearance eclipsed momentarily the careers of virtually all other pianists who were active in New York at the time.

### *Some Successors of Ludwig Rakemann*<sup>17</sup>

#### *Frederick Rakemann*

After Rakemann’s concerts of 1839, the next attempt to bring Chopin’s works to New York was carried out by his brother Frederick (1821–1884). Arriving in October or

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<sup>16</sup> It was a *Fantasy on Rossini’s La donna del lago*. *The New World* (26 November 1842): 351. Quoted in Vera B Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, I, 173.

<sup>17</sup> The following pianists were active in New York between 1835 and 1845, although there is no evidence any of them played any music by Chopin: Miss Sterling, W. A. King, Daniel Schlesinger, William Pease, William Scharfenberg (1819–1896), Dennis Étienne, Thibault, Horn, Edward L. Walker, Rudolph le Fleur, W. Holst, C. Kossowski, Schorbeck, Julian Metz, William Vincent Wallace, M. F. Miró, and Anna Maria Cole. Other pianists doubled as performers of other instruments. The annals of the Philharmonic Society lists the following: William Vincent Wallace (violinist in the New York Philharmonic Society), and William Alpers and Edward Hodges (organists). Dennis Étienne played the French horn. Of all the pianists listed above, only Scharfenberg, who was also a violinist, left an important mark in the early musical history of the city. He was one of the earliest members of the Philharmonic Society, and its president for some years. There are no documented public performances of Chopin’s music by Sharfenberg, although his friend George Templeton Strong reported in his diary that he would occasionally play some Chopin’s music in private gatherings.

early November of 1842, he was welcomed by Watson as “the best pianist that has yet visited America.”<sup>18</sup> Watson compared his technique to Thalberg’s—perhaps the most flattering compliment a young pianist could expect at the time.<sup>19</sup>

From the beginning, Frederick Rakemann chose his repertory more carefully than his brother, with a focused aim to please the audience. His programs offered the usual array of sets of bravura variations by himself or by other virtuosos, with an occasional nod to Mendelssohn and Liszt. His New York debut at the Apollo Theater, on 7 November 1842, generated expectation as he was announced a “worthy disciple of Liszt” and the brother of the pianist who had “occupied and maintained the place left vacant among us by the death of [German pianist Daniel] Schlesinger [1799–1839]” by the *Morning Courier*.<sup>20</sup> The twenty-year-old Frederick Rakemann found a way to add a work by Chopin to the program that effectively suited the expectations and taste of the audiences in the 1840s, the multi-authored *Hexaméron* (KK 903–04, 1839). The work, a set of six variations (Chopin wrote the last one), plus an introduction and a finale, on

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<sup>18</sup> *The New World* (12 November 1842): 320. Watson could not, however, compare his playing to that of Liszt, whose playing was “as variable as the colours on a dolphin’s back.” *The New World* (29 October 1842): 239. Quoted in Vera B Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, I, 172.

<sup>19</sup> Among other praising comments, Watson remarked: “[Frederick Rakemann] is quite a young man. We should not judge him to be yet twenty, but his attainments have far outstripped his years; for he stands in a position as a mechanical performer which but very few have reached at his age.” Quoted in Vera B Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, I, 172.

<sup>20</sup> *The Morning Courier* (November 7 1842): 2. The German pianist Daniel Schlesinger (1799–1839) was active on the New York stage for three years, from 1836 (the year of his arrival) until his death, which occurred unexpectedly in 1839, shortly before Ludwig Rakemann’s arrival. His programs usually consisted of sets of variations on operas and popular songs. Sometimes he made interesting choices: at his debut at the City Hotel in April 1837 he played Hummel’s Piano Concerto in A minor, op. 85 (1816).

Bellini's "Suoni la tromba," from the opera *I puritani*, is nowadays very rarely performed, but it enjoyed great popularity in Europe around the time it was composed.<sup>21</sup>

Chopin's contribution was a short *Largo* variation, which Watson deemed was the best of the set: "The *Andante* [*sic*] variation by Chopin was as exquisite in performance as it was in composition."<sup>22</sup> It is also the most lyrical of the set, and contains no elements of bravura style (it is, in fact, a nocturne). *Hexaméron* gave New York listeners, including Watson, the opportunity to hear Chopin's distinctive voice—namely his *bel canto*-inspired melodies—amidst the virtuoso style displayed by the other authors who collaborated in the composition of the piece.

Frederick Rakemann's first concert was successful enough to be followed, a few months later, by a series of three more at the New York Library Society, located at 348 Broadway, assisted by William Scharfenberg.<sup>23</sup> For the last concert of the series, on 26 April 1843, Rakemann felt confident to include some of Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* and works by Weber, Liszt, and Chopin (an unidentified nocturne and once again *Hexaméron*). The concert was altogether ignored by the press.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Some of the most famous pianists of the day contributed a variation to the composition: Chopin, Liszt, Herz, Thalberg, Czerny, and Johann Peter Pixis (1788–1874). The introduction, finale, and connecting passages in between the variations were by Liszt. Chopin performed the piece on several occasions (the first time with Liszt and the rest of the composers). It was still performed occasionally in Paris as late as 1853. An arrangement for piano solo was one of Liszt's most celebrated pieces during his European tours in the 1840s.

<sup>22</sup> *The New World* (12 November 1842): 320. Quoted in Vera B Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, I, 173.

<sup>23</sup> To give an idea of how much concertgoers were charged, a ticket for all three concerts of the series cost two dollars. Three tickets for the same concert could be obtained for the same price.

<sup>24</sup> Between 1839 and 1842 Chopin published two new sets of nocturnes, op. 37 (1840) and op. 48 (1842). Frederick Rakemann's success was ephemeral. Within a few years after his debut, he applied for a post as organist at Trinity Chapel, which he did not get.

Newly arrived performers sought to increase both their artistic success and their income by offering multiple concerts, known as concert series: in the years of New York's emerging concert life, most artists were introduced to the public in this way. The first concert of the series was generally well advertised in the press, but the celebration of a second or third concert would depend entirely on the financial success of the first. In most cases, series were cancelled after two or three concerts, and very few performers succeeded in maintaining a series until the end of the musical season. Many factors contributed to the success or failure of the venture: the sudden arrival of a new pianist; adequate coverage in the press; the verdict of the critics in their reviews of the concert; and competition among newspapers. In addition, disputes between theater owners, managers, and even artists, and unpredicted situations, such as bad weather, were circumstances that could jeopardize the continuity of a series. Failure to organize effectively a series of concerts could prevent the immediate success that all newcomers desperately needed in order to consider staying in the city for an extended period of time, much less to establish residence. There were cases of pianists who failed to make a good impression upon their arrivals due to poor organization, poor advice, or ignorance of the politics of the concert business in New York. This situation was once addressed in *The Albion*, after a performance by the Catalan pianist José (or rather Josep) Miró (1800–1879):

“These artists arrived in this country a few days since, they labored under one disadvantage, having no one to advise them familiar with getting up a concert in this city. We are decidedly against the system of preparatory puffing, but we are well aware of the necessity of circulating extensively the names and capacities of artists arriving here, whose European reputation has not become familiar in the musical circles of this country.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *The Albion* 2/44 (4 November 1843): 547.

### *Sophie Gjertz*

In the fall of 1843, the European violin virtuosos Henri Vieuxtemps and Ole Bull, on tour in America, organized a series of joint concerts in New York. One of their assistants at a concert on 12 December, at the Tabernacle, was the Norwegian pianist Sophie Gjertz, who, despite being announced with much fanfare as the “appointed Pianist to the Royal Family of Denmark,” did not leave a good impression.<sup>26</sup> Gjertz’s solo contribution consisted of a fantasy by Thalberg and an unidentified waltz by Chopin, thus heading a long list of female pianists for whom the composer would have a particular place in their programs.<sup>27</sup>

The unquestionable primacy of the bravura repertory at the time was revealed by the fact that Gjertz’s rendering of the waltz was ignored by the critics, who instead chose to censure her for the poor rendering of Thalberg’s fantasy. Chopin’s waltzes, however, were not unknown to the public. According to the incidence of the waltzes in the early American editions of Chopin’s works, amateur pianists must have known and played at least some of them; this might be taken as proof of the profound disparity between the concert repertory and music destined for domestic consumption.<sup>28</sup>

### *Jules Fontana*

There are no documented performances of Chopin’s music in New York during the three years following the waltz played by Gjertz in 1843. In the fall of 1846, the Polish pianist Jules Ignace Fontana arrived in New York from Havana (where he had

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<sup>26</sup> *The New-York Herald* (12 December 1843): 4. Gertz’s career in the United States career seems to have ended with that concert.

<sup>27</sup> By 1843, Chopin had published the following waltzes: Waltz in E-flat major, op. 18 (1831–32); Three Waltzes, op. 34 (1835–38); and Waltz in A-flat major, op. 42 (1840).

<sup>28</sup> See list of early American editions of Chopin’s works in chapter 7.

planned to settle), by way of Philadelphia. Had the times been more favorable, the significance of Fontana's visit could have been paramount to future responses to Chopin. He was one of Chopin's closest and oldest friends (they met while studying at the conservatory in Warsaw), his most reliable copyist (in 1837 he prepared the copies of all his works from op. 25 to op. 49, which were used as the basis for the future French, English, and German editions), and the publisher of Chopin's collected songs, published in 1859 as op. 74. He was also the dedicatee of the *Polonaises* op. 40 (1839–40). More importantly, Fontana was also responsible for the compilation of many of Chopin's unpublished manuscripts, which he edited for the 1855 publication of the *Oeuvres Posthumes*, opp. 66–73. These included some waltzes, nocturnes, and the *Fantaisie-Improptu*—pieces that acquired instant fame in New York.

The incipient recognition of Chopin as a composer was not enough to ensure a warm welcome to one of his closest collaborators. On 8 December, the *New-York Herald* announced that “a new candidate for fame on the piano, [who] claims to be a professor of the instrument and probably hopes to rival de Meyer,” had arrived in the city.<sup>29</sup> Fontana's debut took place at the Apollo Rooms on 3 January 1846, a few days later than planned. In a concert that was sparsely attended, Fontana performed works by Liszt, Thalberg, the German composer Heinrich Rudolph Willmers (1821–1878), as well as his own *Grand Fantasia on Spanish Airs* and the waltz *Lolita*, but, interestingly, nothing by Chopin. If Fontana wanted to leave a good first impression, he had to play what the public expected; in New York in 1846, that did not include Chopin's music.

Several circumstances may have contributed to his lackluster debut, starting with bad timing: Not only de Meyer was then triumphing in New York; Henri Herz, another

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<sup>29</sup> *The New-York Herald* (8 December 1845): 2.

potentially formidable competitor, was about to arrive. The piano chosen for the occasion, a Chickering (the Boston firm had recently opened a warehouse in New York), was reportedly in bad shape.<sup>30</sup> Finally, poor managerial choices, including failure to announce his concerts in the press, revealed his ignorance of the city's politics of propaganda.

The remaining of Fontana's New York journey went largely unnoticed by the press. A far cry from the noise that had preceded de Meyer's arrival, Fontana chose to keep a very low profile, nothing strange in a man who was timorous at best, as his almost submissive relationship with Chopin can attest. The critic of the *Herald* noted that, before his arrival, Fontana's portrait did not "adorn the windows of the music stores in Broadway . . . nor have his friends presented him with a biography of himself on his departure from Europe."<sup>31</sup> Critics were not prepared to assess the talent of a performer whose style seemed too restrained for their taste: his playing was described as "chaste, legitimate, and [focused on] the soul of the music rather than [on] external effect"; in other words, Fontana was not the virtuoso they expected, but, intriguingly enough, a perceptive reader might have realized that those words contained a veiled reference to the style of Chopin.<sup>32</sup>

On 15 October Fontana performed again at the Apollo Rooms, at a benefit concert for the English soprano Anna Abramowitz (*ca.* 1821–1871). The *Albion* reported that

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* Fontana, accustomed to pianos made by Érard and Pleyel, might have found the sound quality and touch of the American instrument foreign to the ideal timbre associated with Chopin's music.

<sup>31</sup> *Broadway Journal* 2/26 (3 January 1846): 406.

<sup>32</sup> *The New-York Herald* (4 January 1846): 4.

Fontana had “performed variations by Chopin in a very excellent manner.”<sup>33</sup> The possibility that Fontana might have played Chopin’s *Fantaisie*, op. 49, not at all an accessible work for the average concertgoer at the time, remains an intriguing possibility. According to the *Morning Courier*, Fontana did not play a set of variations but “a Fantasia by Chopin, in a manner which showed him a worthy pupil of his master,” praising his technique and expressivity.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, the information provided by that newspaper is not precise enough to give evidence that the “Fantasia” was indeed the *Fantaisie*, op. 49. Chopin wrote only one piece with the concise title of *Fantaisie*, but the indefinite article (“a” rather than “the”) used by the reviewer seems to indicate that he could have composed more than one. Besides, “Fantasy” was too loose a term at the time, and could possibly refer to some of Chopin’s early pieces, such as the Variations op. 2, or the *Fantasy on Polish Airs*, op. 13, originally for piano and orchestra; in that case, Fontana would have played the version for piano solo. It is safer to presume that Fontana would have chosen one of these early pieces rather than the intricate *Fantaisie*, a piece that otherwise would not be heard in public in New York until 1860; even then it was received with some reserve. Had Fontana actually played the work, the importance of his visit would rest on this premiere alone.

Fontana devoted himself to teaching for the remaining five years he stayed in New York. Rarely, if ever, did he return to the stage.

### ***Henry C. Timm***

On 21 November 1846 the German-born pianist Henry Christian Timm played the last two movements (Largo and Rondo) of Chopin’s Concerto op. 11, with the New York

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<sup>33</sup> *Albion* 5/42 (17 October 1846): 504.

<sup>34</sup> *The Morning Courier* (16 October 1846): 2.

Philharmonic Society, then in its fifth season (Timm had recently become its president). His relationship with the orchestra explains why he was chosen to premiere the work. Otherwise, one might have thought that Fontana would have been a more natural choice. In any case, the Concerto op. 11 would become a favorite of the public and the Philharmonic for the next thirty years.

George Templeton Strong (never an enthusiast of Chopin) attended the concert, laconically describing the concerto as “a pretty thing.”<sup>35</sup> Conversely, Watson’s review in the *Evening Standard* (he wrote another one for the *Albion*) contained the most insightful remarks written about Chopin in an American publication to date, including the acknowledgment that the composer was the “greatest living master” of the piano. Watson placed Chopin “at the head of the Romantic school” [of piano composers]; his works “redeemed [the romantic school] from every shade of that sickening sentimentality which in general is its bane and defect.”<sup>36</sup>

Lack of familiarity with the works of Chopin explains the general absence of commentary on certain works and the emphasis on the performance, a common denominator in the reviews of the antebellum years. The concerto, however, received an unusual amount of attention. The reason is twofold: the initially favorable reception by the public encouraged pianists and orchestras to program it repeatedly, making the work familiar enough to allow critics to discuss it substantially in their reviews. At the same time, the aesthetic and structural conventionality of the concertos contrasted with the musically challenging late works by Chopin, which, as a norm, tended to be more sparsely performed and consequently less acknowledged by the press. In the following

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<sup>35</sup> Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, I, 389.

<sup>36</sup> *The Evening Mirror* (22 November 1846).

years, the general public appeal of Chopin's concertos would remain unquestioned, as their incidence in the programs of the Philharmonic seems to attest. As for Timm, he was again the soloist in the same concerto in 1876. Otherwise, he does not appear to have given any other performances of any work by Chopin in the intervening thirty years.

### *Édouard Boulanger*

On 4 October 1851, at Tripler Hall, a theater located on Broadway and Bond Street, a French pianist, Édouard Boulanger (1820–1863), who claimed he had been a student of Chopin—as many pianists did at the time, sometimes untruthfully or at least exaggeratedly—performed an unidentified “Étude en la bémol” by Chopin (perhaps the all-time favorite in that key, op. 25, no. 1), becoming the first known performer of an étude in a public concert in New York.<sup>37</sup> Only the *Herald* reported on the concert, describing it as “scientific,” perhaps a code meant to designate it a serious, “classical” piece. Boulanger's performance was very successful. A critic remarked that he had been “the first pianist that for many a day has not tired the audience at public concerts in New York.”<sup>38</sup>

With the exception of the isolated performances by Timm and Boulanger, it appears that Chopin's music was not heard on any New York stage for almost three years, evidence of the fact that Chopin's works had no place in the dominating bravura repertory of the time (though the number of editions of his music seems to suggest that he was popular among amateurs). That period of neglect came to an end with the onset of a

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<sup>37</sup> Boulanger is not mentioned in any available list of students of Chopin. Many pianists claimed they had taken lessons from Chopin throughout the nineteenth century and beyond; Henri Péru (1829–1922) is believed to be the oldest one, though there is no complete evidence that he was indeed one of Chopin's students. Eigeldinger believes that if one considers anyone who received Chopin's advice as a pupil, then the number of students would reach around 150. Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*, 7.

<sup>38</sup> *The New-York Herald* (5 October 1851): 4.

new generation of pianists, some of them Americans who had lived in Europe and knew Chopin's music well. The effect of these performers on the dissemination of his music will be discussed in chapter 4.

*Touring virtuosos: Leopold de Meyer and Henri Herz*

In New York, the fever for virtuoso playing was represented first by Leopold de Meyer, Henri Herz, who toured extensively the country in the late 1840s, and Sigismund Thalberg, who came in the late 1850s.<sup>39</sup> Their dazzling personalities and the excitement created by the press before their arrivals overshadowed anyone who might have attempted to pursue a career as a performer, as was the case of Fontana or the Rakemann brothers. De Meyer spent almost two years touring the United States, from 1845 to 1847. His arrival was preceded by unprecedented press coverage, which noted that his fame was long established in Europe. The pianist, or more likely one or more of his admirers in Europe, wrote a thirty-two-page autobiographical pamphlet specifically directed to his future American audiences, "to prove to the inhabitants of the New Continent that his extraordinary fame, already gone forth amongst them [the Americans], is but the echo of the Old World."<sup>40</sup> Similar puffs would be distributed to New York concertgoers before the arrival of other famous pianists. The repertory of de Meyer in America included marches and characteristic pieces, some based on American tunes, expressly composed for American audiences (evocative of places or events, such as "The Battle of New

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<sup>39</sup> Thalberg stayed in America from 1856 to 1858. His concerts are examined in chapter 4.

<sup>40</sup> Leopold de Meyer: *A Memoir of M. Leopold de Meyer* (London: Palmer and Clayton, 1845), 3. The pamphlet contains reviews from English, German, and French papers, with drawings of the pianist performing at various European courts. De Meyer denied being the author of the highly hagiographic pamphlet, a statement that was contested in some journals, among them *The Musical Gazette* 1/25 (4 January 1847): 194.

Orleans”); eight fantasies on operas by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Meyerbeer; two piano transcriptions of operatic excerpts by Rossini and Félicien David (1810–1876); and a fantasy for violin and piano, which he wrote for violinist Charles de Bériot (1802–1879) and the pianist George Osbourne (1806–1893), a friend of Chopin in Paris.

Upon their arrival in America, pianists would customarily be “presented” to a select group of connoisseurs (critics, fellow pianists, artists and intellectuals) in the home of a wealthy person: only on that occasion would they play classical works. Public triumph depended on successfully combining impressive technical prowess with imagination and creativity as revealed in the virtuoso’s own compositions. Although the assumption was that the classical repertory was not suitable for concert performance, de Meyer made one attempt to give a “classical soiree devoted to classical music of the style of Beethoven, Hummel, &c”<sup>41</sup> in 1846, directed to piano students—the only ones who presumably would appreciate the program at the time. Unfortunately, the concert was ultimately canceled for unknown reasons; de Meyer could well have been dissuaded by his manager, who would have anticipated little profit from such an enterprise.

Henri Herz succeeded de Meyer as the ultimate European virtuoso, touring the country for three full seasons (1847–50). His repertory was larger than de Meyer’s and included a few classical works, notably two piano trios by Beethoven, including op. 1, no. 3. Chopin was represented in his repertory by some of his mazurkas, which he might have played in concert in places other than New York, as well as the always appealing third movement of the Sonata op. 35, the soon-to-be ubiquitous *Marche funèbre*.<sup>42</sup> In 1847, the critic of the *Albion* advised Herz to add new works to his repertory and

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<sup>41</sup> *The New-York Herald* (10 December 1846): 4.

<sup>42</sup> Lott, *From Paris to Peoria*, 134.

“endeavor to produce novelty,” a clear indication that some concertgoers were growing weary of the bravura repertory.<sup>43</sup>

### *Louis Moreau Gottschalk*

The colorful life and personality of Gottschalk, soon to become the most charismatic American pianist of the century, was, in appearance, the opposite of Chopin's. They nonetheless had some points in common. Despite the fact that Gottschalk did not play Chopin's music during his first American tour, the affinities between the two composers were apparently so obvious that critics kept making interesting references to Chopin in their reviews of Gottschalk's concerts, including the perceived physical resemblance of the two artists and their refined manners.

Chopin attended Gottschalk's debut in Paris in 1845. He famously praised the young American pianist and predicted a great future for him.<sup>44</sup> To Camille Pleyel, Gottschalk was the only heir worthy of Chopin.<sup>45</sup> The appeal of Gottschalk was founded not only on his dazzlingly innovative technique but also on his well-studied showmanship: he represented the new generation of pianists who were sending the “old-fashioned” pianists into oblivion. Gottschalk once recalled how the public reacted disappointingly when an aging Hummel performed in Paris in the 1830s. Gottschalk's disparaging description of the pianist (“a fat man with a bourgeois face and an awkward

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<sup>43</sup> *Albion* 6/40 (2 October 1847): 479.

<sup>44</sup> According to Gottschalk's sister, Clara, who was at the scene, Chopin went backstage to congratulate Gottschalk, and exclaimed “*Donnez-moi la main, mon enfant. Je vous prédis que vous serez le roi des pianistes.*” Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, xxxii.

<sup>45</sup> During Chopin's funeral, Pleyel said that Gottschalk was “the only one who can fill Chopin's place.” Starr, *Bamboula!*, 80.

gait, wearing a long landlord's coat, with a black skullcap that he never took off even in his concerts)" only reflected how the times were changing.<sup>46</sup>

Gottschalk shared some qualities with Chopin that must have been evident to whoever was familiar with the composer's personality and alleged demeanor, including his often-mentioned elegance and aristocratic manners, and the fact that, at some point, both pianists were émigrés living in Paris. But their resemblance was not only visible on the surface. More important was the fact that both of them found fame primarily as exponents of the national traits of the music of their country. Chopin expressed them in mazurkas and polonaises, while Gottschalk made the earliest attempts to successfully reflect the spirit of the African rhythms he had heard growing up in his native New Orleans, in pieces such as *Bamboula!*, op. 2 (1844–45), *La Savane*, *Ballade Créole*, op. 3 (1845–46), and *Le Bananier*, op. 5 (1846).

In fact, the influence of Chopin on the piano works of nineteenth-century American composers was never as strong as in the case of Gottschalk. Some of his piano pieces were heard as samples of the "exotic" by contemporary listeners, not unlike Chopin's mazurkas; the fact that Chopin represented Polish folk music and Gottschalk (pseudo) Spanish and (pseudo) Afro-Caribbean sounds would be irrelevant, since they both embodied, to their listeners, the charm of a music mysterious and unfamiliar. That Gottschalk never achieved the level of harmonic and contrapuntal complexity of Chopin may be taken for granted by some, although it might also be debatable; his rhythmic

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<sup>46</sup> Louis M. Gottschalk, "La música, los pianistas, Espadero y 'La Plainte du poète', *Liceo de La Habana*, 27 April 1860." Quoted in F. Starr, *Bamboula!*, 51.

innovations, however, surpass those of most of his contemporaries.<sup>47</sup> The always perceptive Dwight was the first critic who discussed the similarities, or lack thereof, between Chopin and Gottschalk, though his purpose was to substantiate his poor opinion of the latter as a composer:

Some of the compositions [by Gottschalk] we had heard from other players, and by their triviality were forced to feel that either these belied him, or that it was by sheer professional puffery that he had been so long proclaimed a peer of Liszt and Thalberg and even Chopin; all of whom, particularly the last, have been true tone-poets, of decided individuality, which is stamped upon their written works, with which the Gottschalk *Bananiers* and *Danses Ossianiques* bear no more comparison than the lightest magazine verses with the inspired lyrics of the great bards.<sup>48</sup>

Gottschalk arrived in New York on 10 January 1853, enticed by the promises of success made by the impresario Bernard Ullmann (1817–1885), who had also managed the American tours of de Meyer and Herz. In the next few weeks two biographies of Gottschalk were rushed into print, one in French (then translated into English) by Paul Arpin (1811–1865) and another by H. Didimus, the pseudonym of New York lawyer Edward Henry Durell (1810–1887), future mayor of New Orleans; his account included the more-or-less apocryphal dictum of Chopin about Gottschalk in 1845. On 17 January Gottschalk was introduced to selected members of city’s musical elite at his temporary residence on Irving Place, steps away from the site where the Academy of Music was then being built, on East Fourteenth Street. The guests included journalists, among them Watson and James Gordon Bennett (1795–1872), editor of the *New-York Herald*, as well

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<sup>47</sup> Gottschalk famously anticipated the “Tristan chord” in his piano piece *Dernière Espérance* (“The Last Hope,” 1854), though he was by no means the first composer to have used it. Fétis seems to have discovered it. It is prominent in his 1844 harmony treatise, *Traité complete de la théorie et de l’harmonie*. Laura M Pruet’s Ph. D. dissertation, *Louis Moreau Gottschalk, John Sullivan Dwight, and the Development of Musical Culture in the United States, 1853–1865* (Florida State University, 2007), provides some valuable insight on the influence of Chopin in the compositional style of Gottschalk.

<sup>48</sup> *Dwight’s* 4/3 (22 October 1853): 22.

as other musicians and prominent citizens. Following the norm, Gottschalk showed his musical cultivation and versatility playing “serious” music for the initiated, reserving his own compositions for future public concerts. The “seriousness” upon which Chopin was regarded by the connoisseurs was confirmed by the fact that Gottschalk played exclusively music by Chopin. The selections included a “Grand polonaise” (perhaps op. 53), several mazurkas, waltzes, preludes, nocturnes, and “some sonatas” [*sic*]. Bennett claimed, rather intriguingly, that his playing was similar to Liszt’s and Thalberg’s, but not to Chopin’s; it is licit to presume that many of the members of the audience, including Bennett, had never heard some of those pieces before.<sup>49</sup> That private recital provides an eloquent testimony of the divide between serious music and music for entertainment that characterized concert life in the 1850s. That Gottschalk was a cultivated musician and, at the same time, understood that distinction is confirmed by the fact he considered Chopin a “classic” in private but eschewed his music completely during his public appearances that season (only a selected handful of pieces would be added to his repertory in future visits to the city).

Gottschalk debuted in New York on 11 February to great success. The *Herald* reported that never since Jenny Lind’s concerts was any other artist received with such enthusiasm.<sup>50</sup> *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine* praised the individuality of Gottschalk as a sign of distinctiveness, which drew him closer to Chopin:

[Gottschalk] belongs clearly to the most modern school . . . We mean that he is not merely a player . . . but that he has a marked individuality in composition and in the interpretation of his compositions. We can illustrate what we mean by Chopin. He was an adept upon the piano.

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<sup>49</sup> *The New-York Herald* (24 January 1853): 4. The critic must have felt impressed enough to include a short review of the private performance; these gatherings were usually not reviewed.

<sup>50</sup> *The New-York Herald* (12 February 1853): 5.

There was no music written for that instrument which he could not play with more or less skill and effect. But, in playing Beethoven, or Mozart, or Haydn, Chopin might have been not better than any other accomplished performer. But in playing Chopin he was unapproachable . . . This *individuality*, this something which Chopin has, or Liszt has, or Gottschalk has, is the secret which, combined with mechanical skill, makes an artist.<sup>51</sup>

Gottschalk's initial success proved to be momentary. Later concerts were postponed as the pianist fell sick. By the time he recovered, the public's initial excitement had apparently diminished. Gottschalk then planned a tour of New England, which failed to attract the public, the result of bad advertising and poor managerial work in general. By the time he reached Boston, Gottschalk's tour seemed doomed.<sup>52</sup> Questions about Gottschalk's elusive origins may have played a role. The discrimination he suffered in France corresponded to that in America, although the reasons might seem the opposite: Gottschalk was not fully recognized as a "thorough bred" American pianist: besides the fact that he was a Creole, Gottschalk had been born and raised in the most French of all American cities and his first language was French. His personality and appearance were interpreted as unmistakably French, including his way of dressing, manners, and his combination of gallantry and sensitivity. A French critic and New York resident, Oscar Comettant (1819–1898), had once declared that "Gottschalk has nothing American about him except the fact of his birth; he is French in spirit, heart, taste and habits."<sup>53</sup>

It was Dwight, however, who, from the pages of his influential *Journal*, inflicted the most damage. Judging Gottschalk a mediocre composer compared to the great masters (he included Chopin), Dwight was more assertive in his denunciation and less

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<sup>51</sup> Putnam's *Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science, and Art* 1/3 (March 1853): 349.

<sup>52</sup> Starr, *Bamboula!*, 151.

<sup>53</sup> "Il est Français d'esprit, de goût, et d'habitudes." Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, xxvi.

afraid to criticize Gottschalk than his fellow critics in New York, who had been probably blinded by the enthusiastic response of the public. Dwight summed up his skepticism in a review: “New-York critics,” he wrote, “seem amazed by the brilliancy of his execution. All the compositions that we see ascribed to him seem to be of the modern finger-miracle school . . . we [shall] wait until we hear him—and we can afford to wait patiently, since we have fine pianists among us.”<sup>54</sup> In order to substantiate his poor opinion of Gottschalk, Dwight selected some of the less enthusiastic reviews he found in New York and Boston newspapers and reprinted them in his publication. *The New-York Courier*, for example, had described Gottschalk’s playing as technically irreproachable but “full of dash, and glitter, and quaint conceit.”<sup>55</sup> Conversely, Dwight became almost aggravated when Fry, in the *Tribune*, praised Gottschalk for deliberately neglecting the works of the classics in favor of works that showed the paths taken by the modern school of piano:

The *Tribune*, usually so sound and cautious, goes ahead of all in the extravagance of [Gottschalk’s] praise; and has a theory for it, namely, that it is an age of progress and that we must not nail our notions of perfection in piano music down to Beethoven’s Sonatas, and that it may be permitted to a young man, a citizen of this great “manifest destiny” republic, to go beyond those ‘old fogies’ who are cried up as ‘classical’. That is the drift of it. And the implied inference is that Beethoven was well enough in his way, but that Gottschalk has opened a new path, etc. etc. In what?<sup>56</sup>

Years later, when Dwight’s estimation of Gottschalk as a composer had turned more positive, he continued to feel irritated at any mention of the supposed stylistic similarities between him and Chopin:

[In] his *Ojos Criollos*. . . he undertakes the part of a Chopin for the Creoles. . . . When a real genius, a Chopin, comes along, we certainly wish to hear him play his

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<sup>54</sup> *Dwight’s* 2/18 (5 February 1883): 143.

<sup>55</sup> *The New-York Courier* (12 February 1853).

<sup>56</sup> *Dwight’s* 2/ 20 (6 March 1853): 158.

own compositions; first because we may suppose them to be worth hearing, and secondly, because others can play us Beethoven and the other classics.<sup>57</sup>

### *The Boston-New York Rivalry in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*

By mid-century, opera had succeeded as the primary form of musical entertainment in New York. Economic factors evidently played a big role in that success. Opera productions were expensive and large audiences were needed: New York received more immigrants than Boston, thus providing a more heterogeneous social tissue. Entertainment was diverse, as were audiences; even in classical concerts, there were members of different social classes and backgrounds, with diverse musical tastes and different degrees of artistic cultivation. Such social mixture often led to heterogeneous and uneven responses. To some critics, the supposed musical superiority of Boston was the consequence of the higher moral standards and refinement of its citizens. In 1867, a critic writing for the journal *Zion's Herald* observed that "it would be presumptuous to call ourselves yet a musical people . . . but the vigor with which we seize upon all musical opportunities . . . is fast becoming a great sign of the times with us . . . [T]here is a deep musical movement in this community, strongest and deepest just where there is the most of general culture and the most of faith and true humanity; strongest in New England, and in such centers of intellectual and moral life as Boston."<sup>58</sup> Similarly, piano virtuosos were more likely to triumph in New York than in the more conservative Boston. The more subdued New England public would instead gain in instrumental ensemble performances of quality, which possibly explains the greater acceptance of

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<sup>57</sup> *Dwight's* 23/4 (16 May 1863): 31.

<sup>58</sup> *Zion's Herald and Wesleyan Journal* 38/22 (29 May 1867): 86.

classical works in Boston than in New York. Considering both the number of pieces and their variety, New York was clearly surpassed by Boston. Not until the late 1860s would New York lead all other American cities in number of performances of music by Chopin. The antipathy of Boston audiences towards dramatic music was perhaps the result of New England's deeply rooted religious standards: the bloody, violent early operas of Verdi, by then the rage in New York, must have been difficult to swallow by a still puritanical society. Instead, oratorio flourished thanks to the Handel and Haydn Society, which had been founded as early as 1815. Otherwise, the works of progressive or unfamiliar composers were rarely heard in Boston. Edward Waters observed that in Boston, prior to 1890, "the composers zealously cultivated (to the exclusion of almost all others) were Schumann, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Handel, and Haydn, with a sprinkling of Wagner and Brahms . . . Little music of Berlioz or Liszt was heard except such as was presented by visiting organizations like Theodore Thomas' orchestra."<sup>59</sup>

In relative numbers the superiority of Boston was also evident. The consumption of concert music of the "serious" kind for a city of about 150,000 inhabitants in 1850—less than half of the population of New York—was rather impressive. In the 1852–53 season, orchestral concerts, oratorios, chamber music, and solo recitals amounted to more than a hundred. As an example, all nine Beethoven symphonies were performed, some of them more than once. The music of Mozart, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Weber, Bach, Hummel, Handel, Henry C. Litloff (1818–1891), George Onslow (1754–1853),

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<sup>59</sup> Waters, "John Sullivan Dwight: First American Critic of Music," i. Note that all the popular composers were German. Instrumental music in Boston was controlled by a small group of musicians and music lovers. Until the creation of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in 1881—almost forty years after the New York Philharmonic—societies such as the Germania and the Musical Fund Association were in charge of most performances of orchestral music, while chamber music was mostly dominated by the Mendelssohn Quintette, an ensemble that gave the first American performances of a remarkable selection of chamber works by Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, and Mendelssohn.

Moscheles and others was also represented in all kinds of symphonic, chamber, and vocal works, as were the oratorios of Handel, Haydn, and Mendelssohn.<sup>60</sup> The following season, the New York correspondent to *Dwight's Journal* marveled at the number of concerts and variety of repertory given in Boston: "I doubt if Berlin itself, now the headquarters of classical music in Germany, can show a list much beyond this."<sup>61</sup> The critic nonetheless admitted that Boston had "no established opera . . . and has had but two orchestras."<sup>62</sup>

While the bravura playing of the virtuosos triumphed in New York, the presence of Chopin's music in Boston grew spectacularly in the 1850s. In April 1853, Dwight discussed the recently ended musical season in Boston:

[T]he past musical winter in Boston has been marked, among other things, by the development of an interest in the compositions of this most exquisite and individual composer . . . who, so far as depth and purity of sentiment and originality of ideas go, is far above all his modern contemporaries . . . Until this season it has been a rare thing to get any work of Chopin played here, beyond a mere Mazurka or two. But [German pianist Otto] Dresel in his chamber soirées, and [Austrian pianist Alfred] Jaëll [1832–1882] even before the vast audiences in the Music Hall, have changed all that. Mazurkas, waltzes, polonaises, nocturnes, études, even his most difficult Ballades and Concertos, have had repeated hearing; and we have scarcely entered a private musical circle this winter where Chopin did not figure as principal.<sup>63</sup>

The differences between New York and Boston's approaches to music were ultimately tested and judged by Dwight himself. In June of the same year he spent a few days in New York and attended several concerts and operas, as well as some amateur

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<sup>60</sup> *Dwight's* 3/4 (3 April 1853): 30–31. For several years, every April, Dwight printed a detailed list of composers, works, and performers engaged in Boston during the year's musical season (from September of the previous year to March or April of the current one).

<sup>61</sup> *Dwight's* 3/7 (21 May 1853): 53.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Dwight's* 3/1 (9 April 1853): 7.

performances. He was unimpressed, claiming that, with the possible exception of the Philharmonic, concerts in Boston were better. He noticed, however, that there were some very good pianists in New York working in the shadow of the visiting virtuosos: “New York is rich in the possession of several accomplished, genial, genuine artists of the piano, who have scrupulously kept their talent safe above the corrupting influence of concert-playing and the temptation to resort to cheap effects, after the example of the fleet-fingered adventurers who came one after another to astonish and to spoil the (musically) childish public.”<sup>64</sup> Perhaps those “serious” pianists were semi-professional performers who played Chopin’s music far from the concert hall.

In 1854, an article in the *New-York Musical Review* titled “New-York versus Boston” attacked New York audiences for being too frivolous: “The fact that Sontag, Lind, [contralto Marietta] Alboni [1826–1894] and other magnates are better patronized, and therefore give more concerts in New York than in Boston, proves nothing in favor of our musical appreciation. People attend those concerts for fashion’s sake, because of the *prestige* of a great name, and especially to gratify a love of the marvelous.”<sup>65</sup> Dwight indirectly responded to the article in the *Review* with another claiming that music entertainments in New York surpassed Boston in number, but not in quality: “some may consider best that which for a while pleases the million . . . *Best* means that whose intrinsic merit gives it permanence.”<sup>66</sup> As an example, Dwight reminded his readers that Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, a very popular opera in New York throughout the nineteenth century, was for many years less successful than some of the operas of Ferdinando Paër

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<sup>64</sup> *Dwight’s* 3/9 (June 4 1853): 70.

<sup>65</sup> *The New-York Musical Review* 5/5 (3 February 1854): 72.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

(1771–1839) or Giovanni Paisiello (1740–1816).<sup>67</sup> But it was the pianist William Mason (1829–1908), a Bostonian who made his career in New York, who most eloquently described the difference between the taste of New York and Boston. To him, it was stamped in the ways music had evolved in either city: “Boston is a self-developing musical city. New-York has received its musical culture from abroad.”<sup>68</sup>

The same article asserted the superiority of Boston in its offering of high-quality concerts while denouncing the deficit of cultured concertgoers in New York:

It is an unquestionable fact that in musical appreciation and taste, Boston is far in advance of New-York. A striking evidence of this is afforded by a comparison of the musical enjoyments of these two cities, during the present winter. In Boston, a continual succession (three or four a week) of really good concerts and rehearsals are numerous attended and supported; and these not of the humbug order of latter days, which make such a show in the way of displayed advertisements, huge posters, and purchase puffs; which people attend because it is the fashion, or for the gratification of mere curiosity; but honest, substantial concerts—not depending on the attractions of someone pompously-heralded star, or on any Barnum tactics, but actually attended and sustained for the musical gratification they afford. Meanwhile, in New-York, our vaunted ‘Metropolis’, notwithstanding it is several times larger than our neighbor, we are almost reduced, in musical fare, to Christy’s Minstrels and street organs. Why is this? If Boston can sustain four good musical performances a week, we ought to be able to support, at least, sixteen.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Don Giovanni* was customarily staged at the end of the opera season, as a benefit to the company.

<sup>68</sup> William Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life* (New York: The Century, 1901), 5.

<sup>69</sup> *The New-York Musical Review* 5/5 (3 February 1854): 72. Accusations that New York audiences lacked personality and judgment still resonated in the early twentieth century. As late as 1910, the English critic Hermann Klein (1856–1934) complained that New York acted as a magnet to opera singers and impresarios, but that cultivated audiences who enjoyed instrumental music were to be found mainly in Boston. New York audiences were uneducated musically: receptive, indulgent and impressionable, but not analytical. Herman Klein, *Unmusical New York* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1910, Reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1979, 25.

From a modern perspective, the “good music” alluded to by the critic referred to concert music by classic and contemporary composers, roughly from Bach to Schumann, Mendelssohn, or Chopin.

***Two Champions of Chopin in Boston: Otto Dresel and Alfred Jaëll***

The rivalry between the Boston and New York reached Otto Dresel, a pianist who left Germany in 1848 for political reasons, and because he had fallen in love with an American girl. Dresel initially intended to settle in New York, encouraged by Scharfenberg, with whom he performed occasionally—they gave the first documented performance of a piano piece by Schumann, the *Andante con variazioni* for two pianos, op. 46 (1843), at a Philharmonic concert on 17 March 1849.<sup>70</sup>

Scharfenberg introduced Dresel to two other German émigrés, the conductor Theodore Eisfeld and Hermann Saroni, editor of the *Musical Times* and driving force behind the first series of chamber music soirees in New York, in 1849, in which Dresel participated. Uninterested in the bravura repertory, Dresel failed to make an impression in New York, and, after a short stay in Germany and England, he returned to the United States, settling permanently in Boston. During his two-year stay in New York, Dresel never played Chopin in public. In Boston, however, he routinely programmed his works, especially after he established his own series of classical soirees in 1854. Although his playing was sometimes harshly criticized—“his attempts to interpret Chopin’s music are absolutely ridiculous”—the critic of the Boston *Musical Review* once wrote—“they

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<sup>70</sup> David F. Urrows, “Apollo in Athens: Otto Dresel and Boston, 1850–1890,” *American Music* 12/4 (Winter 1994): 348.

would cause the bones of Chopin to writhe with agony in his grave”—his dedication to the composer was unrivaled by any pianist in New York.<sup>71</sup>

Although his career was essentially limited to Boston, Dresel was a pivotal figure in the spread of Chopin’s music in the United States. He and Dwight held intellectual control over musical matters in Boston for as long as the journal was published, their influence being capital in the rest of the country. Both advocated German music and agreed in their appreciation of Chopin’s music. Dresel’s dedication to Chopin’s music is illustrated in this example; between December 1852 and December 1853, he played no fewer than fifteen of Chopin’s pieces in Boston: the *Berceuse*, op. 57; the *Marche funèbre*; two études; two mazurkas; three nocturnes, including some of the late ones, seldom heard in New York (opp. 55 and 62); a prelude; a polonaise; and three waltzes (meanwhile, in New York, there were no public performances of Chopin’s works).

The Austrian pianist Alfred Jaëll, one of Liszt’s favorite students at Weimar, made Boston his home during his nearly three-year American sojourn. Jaëll arrived in 1851, under the auspices of impresario Max Maretzek, who had promised that Jaëll would “rank, if not outrank the very best pianists that have ever played in this country.”<sup>72</sup> Jaëll, a pupil of Moscheles, had also studied briefly with Chopin in 1846.

Like Dresel, Jaëll needed to adapt his repertory and programs to the idiosyncrasies of his public. Thus his programs differed greatly, depending on whether he played in Boston or in New York. Chopin, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Weber, Schumann, and even Bach were represented in most of his Boston concerts, but he played works by

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<sup>71</sup> *The New-York Review of Music* 5/2 (19 January 1854): 27. Such harsh words, however, might have been motivated in part by the fact that Mason, editor of the journal and the legitimate creator of the classical soiree, was also starting a similar series in New York, exactly at the same time.

<sup>72</sup> *The New-York Times* (14 November 1851): 2.

virtuosos—including some of his own compositions—in New York. A comparison of the programs of two of his concerts, one in each city, is illustrative. For his New York debut, on 15 November 1851, at Tripler Hall, Jaëll played a *Grand Fantaisie* on Bellini's *La Sonnambula* (perhaps by Thalberg); Gottschalk's *Le Bananier*—announced not by its title but as a “Negro Song,” probably its American premiere; a *Dance des Fées* by Jacques Blumenthal (1829–1908); and two of his own works, *La Source* and *Gypsy Polka*.<sup>73</sup> Exactly one year later, in Boston, Dwight announced that Jaëll would play a concerto by Chopin with the Germania Musical Society, and a few days later, on 8 December, he played a program that seemed suitable to a modern audience: Beethoven's Piano Trio in B-flat major, op. 97 (“Archduke,” 1811), the *Moonlight Sonata* (1801), Mendelssohn's Sonata for Violoncello and Piano in D major, op. 58 (1843), and his *Andante and Rondo capriccioso*, op. 14 (1824), as well as some lieder by Schubert and Schumann, including the latter's *Dichterliebe* (1840), in which Jaëll played the piano part. It was no surprise that Dwight acknowledged that he could play “the widest range of music, of all styles and authors, old and new.”<sup>74</sup> Jaëll's dedication to Chopin's music was, like Dresel's, remarkable. Also between December 1852 and the same month a year later, Jaëll gave the complete Concerto op. 11, twice; a waltz from op. 64; an unidentified polonaise; the Ballade op. 23, twice; and the *Marche funèbre*, also twice.<sup>75</sup>

Dresel's detached, intellectual approach embodied Dwight's ideal of a pianist: he once described the pianist as “nervous, fastidious, self-exacting, critical, anxiously loyal to an artistic ideal, caring mainly for the music and the master's thought, and despising

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid: 6.

<sup>74</sup> *Dwight's* 2/16 (22 January 1853): 124.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

all parade of mere performance.”<sup>76</sup> Jaëll, instead, offered some contrast to Dresel’s severity: he was “happy as the day is long, plump-full of music to his fingers ends, reveling in unbounded faculty of execution and happy to interpret . . . the works of all sorts of masters, a sort of Rossini, or Alboni of the piano.”<sup>77</sup>

Outside Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, Chopin’s music was rarely heard in smaller American cities and towns. Programs were designed accordingly, for an audience less sophisticated than in New York or Boston. Some pianists were afraid of the reaction of a less cultivated public. In February 1852 Jaëll changed his program at the last minute in Providence. The concert was scheduled to include Chopin’s *Ballade*, op. 23, the piece he had performed in Boston a couple of weeks earlier. In Providence, Jaëll ultimately replaced the work with his own fantasy on operatic themes. Gottschalk made similar decisions in his tours around the country in the 1860s. William Mason attributed the failure of his tour of 1854, which took him as far as Chicago, to the lack of familiarity of the audiences with piano solo recitals in general, in which some of Chopin’s music was usually included.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, pianists might program more complex works when they played close enough to an important cultural center. Richard Hoffman played the last two movements of Chopin’s *Concerto* op. 11 with a small orchestra in Worcester, Massachusetts.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> *Dwight’s* 2/22 (5 March 1853): 175.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life*, 185.

<sup>79</sup> A rich industrial city, by the mid-1800s Worcester was also becoming an important cultural center. In 1857, *Mechanic’s Hall*, one of the largest theaters in New England, was built. The *Worcester Music Festival*, one of the first organized concert series in the United States, was founded in 1858, sponsored by the Worcester County Music Association.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Performances, 1854–59*

The creation of the New York Philharmonic Society in 1842 and the symphonic concert series organized by Carl Bergmann and by other German émigrés gave momentum and status to instrumental concerts in the city. In the 1850s, before the classical soirées emerged, the miscellaneous type of concert—characterized by featuring multiple performers, both professional and amateur, with an emphasis on vocal music and virtuosic pieces by living composers—was still thriving, but was starting to show some signs of decline. As stated on chapter 1, programs usually included excerpts from operas, songs, instrumental ensembles and solos, and, and, occasionally, one or perhaps more orchestral works. The program of a concert of 1855 benefiting the Danish soprano Caroline Lehmann at Niblo’s Saloon, assisted by several singers and players (among them several members of the Philharmonic), is illustrative. The performers included, besides Lehmann, Gustav Satter at the piano; three male vocalists identified only by their last names, Adams, Urchs, and Friedeborn; the German violinist Joseph Noll, concertmaster of the Philharmonic; the violist Henry Reyer; the cellist Frederick Bergner (1827–1907); and the flutist Edward Lehmann (perhaps the husband of Caroline). All of the players were members of the Philharmonic. Henry Timm “presided at the piano.” The program, as it appeared in the press, read:<sup>1</sup>

First Part:

1. Mendelssohn: Quartette no. 3 for Piano-forte, violin, alto and violoncello [op. 3]

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<sup>1</sup> *The New-York Times* (March 3, 1855): 8.

2. Weber: Scene and aria from *Der Freischütz*
  3. Auber: *Masaniello* [*La Muette de Portici*]. Flute solo on themes from the opera
  4. [Alberik?] Zwissig: German Psalm
  5. Schubert: “The Erl-King” [“Der Erlkönig”]
- Second Part:
6. [Giorgio] Stigelli: Song, “The Brightest Eyes”
  7. Meyerbeer: “Va di-t-elle” from *Robert le Diable*
  8. Mozart: Minuetto (piano)
  9. Beethoven: Minuetto (piano)
  10. Satter: *Marcia* for piano
  11. Robert Franz: Prayer
  12. Liszt: *Widmung* [piano transcription of Schumann’s Lied from the cycle *Myrthen*, op. 25]
  13. Mendelssohn: Vocal Quartette, “Farewell to the Woods” [*Abschied vom Wald*, op. 59]
  14. [Karl Anton Florian] Eckert: “Swiss Song”

In the mid-1850s, the bravura repertory started to be questioned by the more knowledgeable concertgoers. A great amount of nineteenth-century piano literature that had been neglected on account of its expressive and dramatic complexity: some of the late Beethoven sonatas, much of Schumann’s piano music, and the late works of Chopin, for example, started to be heard on the stage for the first time.<sup>2</sup> Seeking artistry,

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<sup>2</sup> The deaths of Mendelssohn and Chopin (1847 and 1849, respectively), Schumann (1856; his most innovative piano works were however written before 1840), and the decision by Liszt to put an end to his concert career in 1847, symbolized the end of a stunningly creative “golden era” of piano music.

erudition, and power of expression over vacuous virtuosity, listeners became aware of the fact that bravura fantasies were often dazzling but poorly crafted works, and began to consider the idea that the talent of a pianist should be measured according to his or her ability to interpret the works of the great composers of the past rather than their own compositions.<sup>3</sup> While virtuosity continued to be valued, listeners began to understand it as a tool to attain control over the expressive power of music: technique started to be regarded as the means to achieve a convincing, expressive rendition of a piece of music, not an end in itself. The “classical” repertory was typified by a group of abstract works, such as sonatas and symphonies, which demanded a greater intellectual engagement from the listener than the customary bravura variations. Those pieces were typically less arduous technically but more challenging from a purely musical point of view. Thus, serious, intellectually demanding works no longer required boisterous virtuoso performers, but charismatic, scholarly ones, who specialized in a repertory that featured works written between, roughly, 1775 and 1850: it was the result of the awakening, a few years earlier in Europe, of what modern musicology has called *historicism*.

There had been some well-received early attempts in Europe to perform complex, lengthy works in public. In 1836, Liszt played Beethoven’s entire *Hammerklavier* Sonata; around the same time, Clara Wieck added the *Appassionata* to her concert repertory. It has been observed that such changes of appreciation were prompted by the influence of an educated and committed middle-class taking control of the programs, while rejecting an aristocratic assessment of music based on enjoyment and entertainment rather than serious artistic accomplishments: “[T]he new mentality pointedly rejected

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<sup>3</sup> See Janet Ritterman, “Piano Music and the Public Concert, 1800-1850,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 11–22.

aristocratic values, which relegated serious artistic strivings to the background. To program an entire symphony by Beethoven was in many cases an idealistic act, even a subversive one; musicians were striking a blow on behalf of the rights of the ‘self-willed individual’.”<sup>4</sup>

In 1855, Dwight wrote:

Because the fleet-fingered, wonder-working virtuosos have sought through the piano merely to astonish, where the proper end of music is to please, to give expression to the feelings; because they would fain make its keyboard speak through all its length at once, and do the work of a whole orchestra, are we to forget its humbler and more genuine services to Music? Are we to forget that there are such works as Beethoven’s Sonatas, *Lieder ohne Worte*, Chopin’s fiery inspirations and delicate dreams of sentiment, and so many products of the purest poesy of sound, written expressly for the piano? . . . Who shall say that much of the purest essence of musical thought, the choicest wine of musical inspiration, is not found in such works, written for and discoursed from the vibrating strings of the Piano?<sup>5</sup>

The shift from miscellaneous concert to classical soirée was accomplished faster in Boston than in New York. The example of Dresel is illustrative: almost singlehandedly, by the end of the 1860s he had introduced the majority of Chopin’s works published to date to the Boston public, including the late, less accessible ones—a great accomplishment by any standard. In New York, where critics and audiences had traditionally celebrated the histrionics associated with virtuoso playing, those changes arrived more slowly. In Europe, meanwhile, some concertgoers around mid-century had begun to disdain showmanship, relating it to poor taste. The incorporation of the middle and working classes into the cultural activities in the big cities, a consequence of the social changes that had brought the 1848 revolutions, led to the legitimization of more

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<sup>4</sup> Alex Ross, *The New Yorker* (8 September 2008): 80. Review of William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>5</sup> *Dwight’s* 7/24 (15 September 1855): 189–90.

citizens as members of an expanding, heterogeneous group of music lovers. The public grew in size and, with it, a progressive divide between serious and frivolous musical entertainment—which today is generally identified as “classical” and “popular.” In Paris, the emergence of the café-concert and the *opéra bouffe* gave the opportunity of musical entertainment that could be enjoyed by the musically uncultivated. Similarly, ballad concerts emerged in England and, in New York, minstrel shows, burlesques, vaudeville, and “musical theater” (after the momentous success of *The Black Crook* in 1866) thrived. Progressively, the divide between highbrow and lowbrow types of entertainment became more established. In this atmosphere, Chopin’s music assumed a prominent position in the programs of the newly created classical soirées.

In New York, an interesting group of performers, some of them pianists, emerged in the city. It was formed by a number of young Europeans, who, motivated by diverse reasons (economic, ideological), chose to succeed in New York, where the lack of musical tradition could be counteracted by the enthusiasm of the public and the intrepid initiatives of some impresarios. The ever-growing acceptance of piano music in the concert hall gave them new opportunities. Some of them organized series of classical concerts, or soirées, which, while not always successful, were sufficiently encouraging for newly arrived pianists to follow suit. A fifteen-year period, roughly covering the years 1855–1870, can be seen as the phase in which the presence of piano music, and Chopin’s in particular, became “normalized” in New York. The shift from virtuoso composer to pianist-interpreter of other composers’ music started with that mindset.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste. Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms*, 141.

It has been noted that “the limited volume of sound [of the piano] and its perceived lack of singing qualities appeared to reduce its potential as a solo instrument and encouraged the view that it was generally heard to most advantage in concerted works.”<sup>7</sup> That supposition was no longer valid in 1860 for some concertgoers for whom aesthetic enjoyment was, in principle, less important than the possibility of being intellectually stimulated and historically educated. Yet, the growing demand for pianos made possible the impressive development of the piano manufacturing industry; pianos became increasingly affordable, sturdier, and more resonant. For a growing population of upper-and-middle-class music aficionados, its timbre was no longer perceived as tedious and monochromatic. In 1855 Dwight realized that the advantages of the piano as a solo instrument had been hampered by the extravagances of the virtuosos who had rendered the classical repertory negligible. Dwight, however, foresaw the end of their reign: “while Beethoven remains, are we going to judge the piano only by the Liszt-ian standard? Rather let us comfort ourselves that Thalberg and Liszt seem to have reached the extreme in their direction, and that piano playing henceforth, in order to make progress, must come back to the starting-points of truth and nature, and begin again with a more modest aim and method.”<sup>8</sup>

### ***Richard Hoffman***

In October of 1847, Richard Hoffman, a seventeen-year-old pianist from Manchester, England, arrived in New York. Like any other ambitious performer in those

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<sup>7</sup> Janet Ritterman and William Weber, “Origins of the Piano Recital in England, 1830–1870.” *The Piano in Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 171. The authors note that there were exceptions, such as the concerts featuring only string quartets organized by Ignaz Schuppanzigh in Vienna in 1804 and by Pierre Baillot in Paris in 1814.

<sup>8</sup> *Dwight's* 7/24 (15 September 1855): 190–91.

times, he initially tried to establish himself as a virtuoso. After debuting on Thanksgiving Day, he was engaged to play Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto in G minor, op. 25, with the Philharmonic Society, and the ensuing success encouraged him to settle in the city. His final recognition arrived after he was chosen to assist the Swedish soprano Jenny Lind during her American tour. Hoffman was also the main assistant of Gottschalk during his 1853 visit, a collaboration that resulted in a lifelong friendship and mutual admiration—even though their approaches to performance were very different. Nevertheless, Hoffman's early success was somehow hampered by the overwhelming presence of de Meyer and Herz. For several years, Hoffman remained active more as an assistant than as a solo performer.

In his autobiography, Hoffman described the New York audiences he encountered upon his arrival: "My bravura playing always called forth abundant applause from my audiences, and it was a temptation to neglect the more serious music which alone can develop the true musician, but which at the time the musical patrons of New York were only willing to receive in small doses."<sup>9</sup> Hoffman's playing of Chopin was generally deemed too detached and unsympathetic, unsurprising epithets in a time when the standards were set by the virtuosos' affected style. His fellow pianist William Mason recalled Hoffman's approach as "characterized by precision, accuracy, and clearness in phrasing, with an excellent technique, combined with repose."<sup>10</sup> Hoffman was aware of the difference, but he did not necessarily see it as a handicap: he claimed he chose to distance himself from the virtuosos by concentrating on a repertory of serious works suitable to his style. Unlike them, Hoffman did not promote his stage presence (which

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<sup>9</sup> Hoffman, *Some Music Recollections of Fifty Years*, 101.

<sup>10</sup> Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life*, 207.

was probably dull in comparison) and chose, instead, not to concentrate on his own compositions.

Hoffman waited seven years before he attempted to play music by Chopin in public. By 1854 he felt confident enough. On March 11, he played the second and third movements of Chopin's Concerto op. 11 with the Philharmonic, in what constituted the second (partial) performance of the work; advertisements in several newspapers and journals announced it as a premiere, neglecting to acknowledge Henry Timm's performance of the same two movements eight years before. Among the daily newspapers, only Fry in the *New-York Tribune* reviewed the concert. Although most of the extensive review was devoted to Beethoven's First Symphony and other symphonic works featured in the program, Fry briefly mentioned Hoffman's performance, making an interesting comment about the concerto. To him, it was "more Italian in its melody than the works generally of that composer," the concerto being in fact one of the best exponents of Chopin's adherence to *bel canto* style. Fry, however, was perceptive enough to declare that "national" (i.e., Polish) features were Chopin's most distinctive trait. The slow movement of the concerto was particularly "Italian": the coda to the rondo, Fry claimed, "would pass for the kind which Herz invented."<sup>11</sup> Fry's reference to the similarities he found between Herz and Chopin were accurate: the codas of most of the former's eight concertos feature rapid scales in *legato*, in the manner of a *moto perpetuo* present in Chopin's coda of the rondo. Meanwhile, the New York correspondent to *Dwight's* emphasized the similarities between Chopin's style and *bel canto*. His review of Hoffman's performance read like a compendium of the characterizations of Chopin's music at the time: "The Romance and Rondo of Chopin's concerto are lovely in the

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<sup>11</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (3 March 1854): 5.

highest degree. Nothing can surpass the *Chopinism* of the Romance, with its Aeolian delicacy and the dreamy, delicious feeling which flows all through it.”<sup>12</sup>

The *Musical Review* was ambivalent about Hoffman’s performance. He had “exhibited a very great improvement in the neatness of his execution, and especially in the delicacy of his expression [although] he did not attain to all of Chopin’s exquisite ethereality...”<sup>13</sup> The German critic Charles Burkhardt, then writing for the *Albion*,<sup>14</sup> wrote a very positive review of Hoffman’s performance of the concerto but lamented his choice for the encore:

Mr. Hoffman truly astonished us by the progress he has made since we last heard him. Always a fine and brilliant, but an impetuous, dashing, now over-careful pianist, he seems to have suddenly corrected all the faults which heretofore might critically have been found in him . . . Mr. Hoffman fully deserved all the warm applause that greeted him, as well as the encore; but the audience deserved and demanded a repetition of what he had played, or a portion thereof—not the unworthy trifle he gave them.<sup>15</sup>

Hoffman would play the same two movements of the same concerto on 19 May 1855, again with the Philharmonic Society; the occasion was a complimentary concert to their conductor, at the time Theodore Eisfeld. This time the response was overwhelmingly positive, so much so that the concert was repeated a week later. Critics seemed to have become acquainted with the work enough to discuss it more assertively; the growing presence of Chopin’s music, especially in the programs of Mason’s classical soirées that season, could explain the familiarity. The *New-York Times* wrote that Hoffman possessed “considerable facility and a beautiful perception of piano-forte

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<sup>12</sup> *Dwight’s* 3/23 (11 March 1854): 181.

<sup>13</sup> *The New-York Musical Review and Choral Advocate* 5/6 (16 March 1854): 90.

<sup>14</sup> At the time, music critics were often hired to write for several publications at the same time.

<sup>15</sup> *Albion* 13/10 (11 March 1854): 8.

effects. He is incomparably the best performer of Chopin's music we have heard for some years," although his performance had lacked "that strange delirious fire of the master."<sup>16</sup> The critic's appreciation of Chopin's style was novel and perhaps sounded overstated to some at a time when Chopin's music was invariably described as "delicate" and very rarely as ardent and passionate, particularly when describing the first concerto. Perhaps increasing exposure to Chopin's music was helping the critics to acquire expertise for interpreting the value of his music, based more on personal experience than on stereotypes, as could be inferred from the assertive and confident tone of this review. Dwight, instead, once again emphasized archetypal aspects he had already expressed in his review of the work the year before:

It is a most beautiful composition—first the dreamy, delicate, languishing Romance, then the bright, sparkling, pearl-like Rondo—that intoxicates one like the wine which it resembles. Mr. Hoffman continues to improve, from year to year. I well remember the time when, a mere wonder-child or boy, he astonished people by his strength and brilliancy of execution, in pieces of the 'prodigious school'. For some years he continued more or less in this line. After a lull, he came out last year so able an interpreter of Chopin, as to prove that he was, after all, no mere trickster, but had a depth beneath the surface.<sup>17</sup>

To the *Musical World*, Hoffman's detached approach was unsuitable for playing Chopin's music: "[W]e really believe an artist must suffer a little, before he deepens down to the true soul of music. Mr. Hoffman . . . seems always to have had a good time in the world,"<sup>18</sup> an allusion to the morbid scenarios which were commonly associated with Chopin.

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<sup>16</sup> *The New-York Times* (21 May 21 1855): 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Dwight's* 7/8 (26 May 1855): 61.

<sup>18</sup> *The Musical World* 12/4 (26 May 1855): 37.

A review of the same concerto performed by Charles Hallé in London, also in 1855, offers an interesting opportunity to compare responses from two important cultural centers, related but ultimately different. While the concerto was only starting to be esteemed in New York, in Europe some perceived it as old-fashioned. A reviewer for the *Musical World* of London wrote: “Chopin’s concerto has some attractive *motives*, but for the most part consists of an uninteresting series of bravura passages of greater or lesser difficulty. The instrumentation is as feeble and bad as Kalkbrenner’s, and the form is null and void.”<sup>19</sup> In truth, however, Chopin’s concertos remained popular long after the concertos in the virtuoso style become obsolete, in America as much as in Europe.

### *The Classical Soirée*

In the 1850s, the classical soirée emerged as a type of small-scale concert not unlike chamber music concerts of today. In New York, the soirées were semi-private affairs, patronized by a homogeneous group of cultivated individuals who formed a kind of musical elite in the city. They became the perfect vehicle for pianists who could not compete with the magnetism of the virtuosos, offering an alternative which also benefited concertgoers who did not fall under their spell. Pianists who participated in the soirées enjoyed none of the immediate success and acknowledgement by the critics given to the virtuosos, not only because of the repertory they cultivated but because their premise was different. In the preface to Hoffman’s memoirs, his wife evoked the nature of the early soirées: “These evenings were attended by so many people who knew each other well that they became friendly and social reunions. The encores were often ‘requests’ and the concerts too informal to enter the lists for public criticism, but I remember how pleasant and delightful they were and with what sincere regret they were relinquished when [piano

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<sup>19</sup> *Dwight’s* 7/11 (16 June 1855): 84.

manufacturer] Chickering moved to their larger quarters on Fifth Avenue and Eighteenth Street, with a concert hall much too large for these entertainments.”<sup>20</sup> Years later, an article in the *Tribune* summed up the essence of the idea of the Classical soirée:

[The Soirées] give Pure Music: that is, music devoid of admixture with anything else—not even with great resonance—dependent solely on the sequences of notes, or melody; on the simultaneous utterance of the notes, or harmony; and on the form of the pieces, which is rhetoric. This species of music is, of course, less difficult to write—imagining that anything is difficult to him who has . . . the brain therefore—because it is not hampered with words, metres, vocal accents, respirations, stage-business, and the curtness or progress of the scene. But it is pure high music, nevertheless; and as it is studied and appreciated, will Music rise in estimation as a first-class intellectual science.<sup>21</sup>

With its inclusion in the soirées, Chopin’s music achieved a status until then reserved to a select group of revered composers of days gone by.

The first “Classical Soirées of Chamber Music” in New York were established by Theodore Eisfeld in 1851. Some of Mendelssohn’s piano music was programmed during the first couple of seasons, but the soirées tended to emphasize chamber music and vocal works, including lieder. In that regard, Chopin’s music was less suitable than Mendelssohn’s, and it was not programmed until the 1853–54 season. Similarly, Schumann was only represented in the early seasons by his piano quintet and other chamber works, not by his music for piano solo.

Days after Hoffman’s 1854 performance of Chopin’s Concerto op. 11 with the Philharmonic, Eisfeld invited him to participate in one of his classical soirées. On March 31, Hoffman played the Nocturne in A-flat major, op. 32, no. 2, announced in the press as *La consolazione* (which indicates that the pianist was using Wessel’s edition) and the

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<sup>20</sup> Hoffman, *Some Musical Recollections of Fifty Years*, 24.

<sup>21</sup> *The New-York Times* (16 February 1863): 4.

Polonaise op. 53 (such precise information about the program reflected the higher standards set by the classical soirées). Reviews of Hoffman's performance were mixed. The critic of *The Musical World* thought that "*La consolazione*" was "insignificant, and, like most composers' titles, unmeaning . . . [it lacked] sufficient feeling, gentle inspiration, or anything else, suggestive of it being called the Consolation."<sup>22</sup> Richard Storrs Willis (1819–1900), editor of the journal at the time, added in a footnote that the performance of the nocturne had been too "ponderous. Chopin, who... always breathed rather than played, his exquisite creations upon the piano . . . a *Pleyel* . . . used to play this piece... with the most extreme sensibility and delicacy;" Hoffman had played with "twice the force" the music required.<sup>23</sup> If the nocturne was "ponderous," one can only imagine what he might have thought about the polonaise, but his review, like all others, disappointingly eschewed comments about the piece; only the reviewer for the *Musical World* mentioned that Hoffman's powerful left hand (the passage in octaves in the middle section) had caused an impression.<sup>24</sup>

### ***William Mason***

William Mason, the son of the renowned American composer and pedagogue Lowell Mason (1792–1872), was the first outstanding American-born champion of Chopin, Mason was first introduced to a select group of New York concertgoers at a concert at Niblo's Saloon on 5 October 1854, upon his return from Europe, where he had spent five years studying in Europe with an array of reputed pianists which included

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<sup>22</sup> *The Musical World and The New-York Musical Times* 8/15 (15 April 1854): 177. Willis was one of the most knowledgeable American critics, having studied at the Leipzig Conservatory; while there, he met Hans von Bülow and Otto Dresel.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, *n*.

<sup>24</sup> *The Musical World and The New-York Musical Times* 8/15 (15 April 1854): 177.

Moscheles and Moritz Hauptmann (1792–1868). More importantly, Mason was Liszt’s first American student in Weimar. This fact must account not only for his responsibility in the early spread of the Liszt’s music, but also for paving the way for other Americans who participated in the celebrated series of “master classes” that Liszt continued to conduct until the end of his life. It was probably because of this that Mason’s debut was awaited with expectation: the fact that he was an American—a more “genuine” one than the Frenchified Gottschalk—intensified the anticipation. Fry welcomed Mason with an unusually lengthy, laudatory article, “A New Great American Pianist,” in the *Tribune*.<sup>25</sup>

Mason left some interesting remarks about Chopin in his autobiography, published in 1901. One of the motivations that the young pianist had for traveling to Europe was the hope to meet Chopin and study with him. Chopin’s early death frustrated Mason’s wish. Although he never heard Chopin play, Mason relied on anecdotes of the Bohemian pianist Alexander Dreyschock (1818–69), who had told him of Chopin’s “inability to play beyond mezzo-forte.” Mason nostalgically evoked the beginning of his career with a reference to Chopin: “The distinguished characteristic of Chopin’s piano playing was his lovely musical and poetic tone, his warm and emotional coloring and his impassioned utterance,”<sup>26</sup> adding, as if trying to justify a manner of playing that had become obsolete and mannerist at the time he was writing it, “in those days one was not afraid to play with a great deal of sentiment, although pianists who were capable of doing this poetically were rare.”<sup>27</sup> Mason offered a compelling illustration the way performance practices had evolved from the time of Chopin’s death to the end of the century when he

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<sup>25</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (2 October 1854): 4.

<sup>26</sup> Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life*, 76.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

declared that “in modern times it has become the fashion to ridicule any tendency toward emotional playing and to extol the intellectual side beyond its just proportion.”<sup>28</sup>

Mason only performed two of his own compositions in his private debut, as usual restricted to a select group of connoisseurs, choosing instead works like Beethoven’s *Moonlight Sonata* (but nothing by Chopin). Seymour, who attended the event, wrote in the *Times* that Mason’s playing was “wonderfully vigorous,” calling him a “thorough master of the German School of playing.”<sup>29</sup> Fry had also been to the private concert and in his report for the *Tribune* compared Mason to Gottschalk, emphasizing Mason’s “abundant muscular force and power of endurance.”<sup>30</sup> For a pianist who became identified with detachment and rationality, traits most evident in his approach to Chopin, Fry’s comparison seems hard to sustain. In his memoirs, Mason claimed that he always had little patience for exaggeration, for excessive *rubato*, and for licenses with tempo in general; these were typical features of Gottschalk’s style, whose personal appeal was an important part of his success as a pianist and as a composer, and one of the reasons he did not need to update his programs with other composer’s works. Mason’s modest presence on the stage (like Hoffman) allowed him to focus on serious repertory, paying occasional visits to bravura works by himself or by other pianists.<sup>31</sup> His anti-virtuoso stance must account for his interest in the classical repertory, which he helped disseminate through the classical soirées he inaugurated in 1855.

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>29</sup> *The New-York Times* (14 October, 1854): 4.

<sup>30</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (6 October 1854): 4.

<sup>31</sup> Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life*, 246.

Among the ten or so works Mason programmed for his public presentation, on 12 October (he repeated the concert two days later), were a fugue by Handel (a curious choice at the time), again the *Moonlight* Sonata, and Chopin's Impromptu op. 29. The originality of the program was celebrated by the critic of the *Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer*, among other critics. Seymour wrote in the *New-York Times* that Chopin's piece had been "an unusual treat," deeming Mason as the only "performer in five hundred [who] is capable of appreciating or rendering the solemn majesty of [Chopin's music]."<sup>32</sup> Dwight, who had attended Mason's debut in Boston, gave the best and most thorough description of Mason's style, commending him for avoiding the mannerisms of the virtuosos. Mason had

first, a clear, crisp, vital touch. Secondly, the easy, quiet, graceful manner, with which he executes all the difficulties of a modern pianist:—a manner thoughtful and serious withal. Thirdly, firmness, sonority, a full bringing out of the powers of his instrument in strong passages, worthy of the pupil of Liszt. Fourthly, great delicacy, purity, and evenness in his rapid scales and ornaments, clear and distinct in the pianissimos to a degree we have not heard exceeded. Fifthly, an expressive, truly singing cantabile, with the art of truly favoring the melody always and setting it in all the truer light by means of the accompanying harmony. Finally, an artistic, conscientious, sympathetic surrender of himself to the spirit of the author and the piece.<sup>33</sup>

Some recognized in Mason the authentic American pioneer who would create a precedent for disseminating the music of the classics to the audiences of his country, so much in need of learning. That role, a critic warned, would make him a favorite among the connoisseurs but vulnerable to the indifference of the public:

Mr. William Mason, an American and a pianist, gave his first concert . . . The fact is worthy of record, as marking one more day's advance in the toilsome march of American musical art. Mr. Mason is one of the

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<sup>32</sup> *The New-York Times* (14 October, 1854): 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Dwight's* 5/25 (30 September 1854): 204.

pioneers, and being so can scarcely hope to arrive at the fruition of an artist's hopes. It is for him, as it is for all pioneers . . . to clear the soil, to cut down the weeds which spring from a false taste, finally to plant the good seed, but another shall enjoy the fruit. In a word, we doubt that he, or any one, however great a master of his instrument, can ever attain either great success by concert-giving, or, indeed, that he expects to do so. These, we presume, are test-concerts, intended to ascertain and establish the rank which Mr. Mason is to take among our resident pianists, and, to lay at once the cornerstone of his future career, by introducing him to the public of his own country.<sup>34</sup>

On 27 March 1855, at Eisfeld's fifth Classical Soirée of the season, Mason played an unidentified impromptu, which, most likely, was again op. 29: the piece was famous enough to be labeled "*the*" impromptu by the correspondent to Dwight (the italics are his).<sup>35</sup> In the *Times*, Seymour praised Mason for playing the impromptu "as quickly and purely as we ever heard it before."<sup>36</sup> The familiarity with the piece reinforces the idea that the impromptu had a special place in the preferences among the city's amateur pianists. Meanwhile, the correspondent to *Dwight's* did not appreciate Mason's excessive reliance on one of the quintessential elements of Chopin's music, the *tempo rubato*, a surprising criticism of a pianist who, in any case, distinguished himself for his cerebral approach to the score.<sup>37</sup> While the rhythmic fluctuations of the *rubato* was expected in the music of Chopin, it could be regarded as a wrong quality *per se*: it was one of the characteristics of style that distinguished Chopin's style from the "round, even style of the classics," and the failure to render it properly was the main reason Chopin could be

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<sup>34</sup> *The New-York Post* (13 October 1854): 4.

<sup>35</sup> *Dwight's* 7/2 (14 April 1855): 11.

<sup>36</sup> *The New-York Times* (28 March 1855): 4.

<sup>37</sup> *Dwight's* 6/26 (31 March 1855): 207.

misunderstood.<sup>38</sup> “The peculiarity of this school,” the critic reasoned, “is the *tempo rubato* and the uneven renderings of the time, one hand lagging after the other, in order to attain a certain marked expression and effect.”<sup>39</sup> An irritated reader wrote a letter to *Dwight’s* begging to differ on the reviewer’s account of Mason’s rendering of the Impromptu and to protest against what he, or she, identified as bias against a native talent;<sup>40</sup> the critic replied that he had only admiration for the first “thoroughly American pianist,” but insisted that the rendering of the Impromptu had been poor.<sup>41</sup> The *Musical World* also addressed the issue of Mason’s apparently indiscriminate use of *rubato*, after a performance of Weber’s *Konzerstück* for Piano and Orchestra: “Mr. Mason apparently lacks . . . the power of a conscientious and literal rendering of the notes exactly as they are written—we presume from the more artificial school which he seems to have cultivated, where the tempo yields wholly to the momentary caprices of the player.”<sup>42</sup> Such emphasis on accuracy reveals a preoccupation with performance authenticity that was still rather unusual at the time.

After his promising debut concerts, Mason had a startlingly audacious idea. He planned a tour, which included a vast number of solo piano recitals, a format unknown in America at the time, in multiple cities, many far away from the traditional concert circuit, in New England and the Midwest. The *Times* discussed the response by the New York audience to Mason’s first solo concerts: “We were glad to observe a crowded attendance at Mr. Wm. Mason’s second piano concert on Saturday evening. The entertainment was

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> *Dwight’s* 7/1 (7 April 1855): 7.

<sup>41</sup> *Dwight’s* 7/2 (14 April 1855): 11.

<sup>42</sup> *The Musical World* 11/17 (28 April 1855): 194.

very fine, and merited not only the attendance but the applause bestowed by the attendants. It is a little difficult to popularize entertainments that depend mainly on the piano for their attractiveness, but Mr. Mason will, we think, undoubtedly do so.”<sup>43</sup> Regrettably, the tour was ultimately canceled due to poor receipts from ticket revenues: American concertgoers were not excited about the project of sitting through a concert featuring only music for piano. He nevertheless would try again with a series of matinees, this time with great success, and the initiative would soon be embraced by other pianists; as we shall see in following chapters, piano recitals became standardized in New York within a few years.

Mason discussed the failure of his tour in his autobiography: “My first enterprise, after returning from Germany, was a concert tour. This I believe to have been the first exclusively pianoforte recital tour ever undertaken in this country.”<sup>44</sup> He claimed he had designed his piano solo recitals after Ferdinand Hiller, who had pioneered the solo recital in Germany. Hiller’s programs, however, had been made up exclusively of his own works. Instead, Mason played works ranging from Bach to Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt.

On 17 November 1855, at another of Einfeld’s classical soirées at Dodworth’s Hall (806 Broadway), Chopin’s rarely heard Piano Trio, op. 8, received its first New York performance, with Hoffmann at the piano, the violinist Joseph Noll, at the time concertmaster of the Philharmonic, and the cellist Frederick Bergner. The concert was attended by the musical elite of the city, among them veteran pianists such as Scharfenberg and Timm, and received an unusual amount of coverage in the press. Regardless of some considerations about the unidiomatic writing for the violin (Chopin

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<sup>43</sup> *The New-York Times* (16 October 1854): 4.

<sup>44</sup> Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life*, 183.

himself regretted not having written it for a viola, instead of violin),<sup>45</sup> the trio was considered worthy of being selected for a concert on Eisfeld's series; as in the case of the Cello Sonata, an ensemble work by Chopin, *any* work, was an attractive addition to any program of chamber music. For the *Times*, "Chopin's Trio was the grand redeeming feature of the evening" and once again Hoffman was praised for his detached, anti-virtuosic approach to Chopin's music. Instead, Charles Burkhardt (presumably) in the *Albion* reproached Hoffman for being too distant, quoting what a woman who attended the concert had told him: "I do not know whether Hoffmann has ever loved, but I doubt whether he has ever *suffered*."<sup>46</sup>

In 1855, Eisfeld's soirées found a competitor in the chamber-music series organized by Mason, Carl Bergmann, and Theodore Thomas (in 1856, Bergmann left the ensemble after a fallout with Thomas, who, eventually, succeeded Bergmann as conductor of the Philharmonic). The series was then named after Mason and Thomas, who added the adjective "classical," and ran uninterrupted until 1868. The programs always featured never-heard-before works by Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, and even Brahms and Wagner. In organizing the series, Mason and Thomas were aware that New York audiences were as ignorant of the classic repertory as they were interested in learning about it; that circumstance must account for the success of the soirées.

Mason's labor of unveiling the music of Chopin to the New York public was perhaps not as intense as his involvement with Schumann's piano music, which was very

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<sup>45</sup> "It would be better to use the viola than the violin because on the violin it's the first string that dominates, and here it's scarcely used." Letter to Tytus Woyciechowski, 31 August 1830. *Chopin's Letters*, 97.

<sup>46</sup> *The Albion* 14/46 (24 November 1855): 560.

little known in the city at the time. It is ironic that an American pianist was the one who became the foremost supporter of Schumann's piano music at a time when music in the city was ruled by German immigrants—although, arguably, Schumann's music was not popular even in German-speaking countries at the time.<sup>47</sup> Mason himself acknowledged that before living in Leipzig he didn't know the music of Schumann, "for Mendelssohn then dominated the musical world."<sup>48</sup> Indeed, Schumann's music, unlike Chopin's, was ill-suited for the salon, lacking the qualities that defined the music of the "ever-affable, polished Mendelssohn,"<sup>49</sup> and obviously was opposed to the flamboyant virtuosity of Liszt's piano music at that time as well as the rest of the virtuosos.

### *Mason's Matinees*

In the fall of 1855 William Mason organized a groundbreaking series of classical piano matinees at Dodworth Hall. Their purpose was, according to the advertisements, "to enable lady amateurs and students to be present without escort."<sup>50</sup> In fact, Mason matinees would be mostly attended by an appreciative feminine audience who enjoyed them the more not only because they could attend them unescorted, but because they, as the main consumers of piano music at home, were better acquainted with the classical piano repertory than their male counterparts. Mason was aware of that circumstance, for his programs featured works that would not have been appreciated in a regular evening

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<sup>47</sup> New York audiences had had a few opportunities to hear some Schumann's music. Besides the *Andante con variazioni*, op. 46, performed by Dresel and Scharfenberg in 1849, the Philharmonic had given the first American performance of the cantata *Das Paradies und die Peri*, op. 50 (1843), in 1848, and the Piano Quintet in E flat, op. 44 (1842), in 1851, at one of the early Eissfeld's soirées (with Scharfenberg at the piano).

<sup>48</sup> William Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life*, 39.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>50</sup> Block, "Matinee Mania in New York," 205.

concert. The program of the first matinee, on 27 November 1855, is illustrative: Brahms's Piano Trio op. 8 received its world premiere;<sup>51</sup> it was followed by one of Liszt's Fantasies on *Tannhäuser* (perhaps the transcription of the aria "O du mein holder Abendstern," published in 1848) and Chopin's newly published *Fantasia-Improptu*, op. 66. The positive reception given to the works by Brahms and Wagner—two composers whom anyone would identify as "cerebral" and "masculine"—casts doubt, to say the least, on the supposed conventions relating aesthetics and gender. *Dwight's* description of the audience is eloquent: "Dodworth's hall was completely filled . . . chiefly with ladies; the audience was so large that many had to stand throughout performances. It was a very attentive and apparently interested audience . . . the applause [was] most heartily given by the fair sex, who usually take no part in such matters."<sup>52</sup>

Not surprisingly, some critics thought that the program was excessively serious. In the *Times*, Seymour complained that the concert "was classical in the severest sense of the word. A slight admixture of something not German would have been a relief, particularly in the vocal department."<sup>53</sup> He felt, however, that the *Fantaisie-Improptu* (which he recognized as similar to the *Improptu* op. 29, "a piece that five thousand pianists are probably playing at the moment") came as a relief from the supposed inapproachability of Brahms and Wagner.<sup>54</sup>

Mason, obviously aware of the connection between Chopin and women, continued to play his music at virtually every matinee that season, always with success.

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<sup>51</sup> Graziano, "Introduction," *European Music and Musicians in New York City, 1840–1900*, 3.

<sup>52</sup> *Dwight's* 8/9 (1 December, 1855): 68.

<sup>53</sup> *The New-York Times* (29 November 1855): 4.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

On 8 December 1855, he gave the first New York performance of the Ballade in A-flat major, op. 47, a work that exemplified the gentler side of Chopin, a contrast to the more energetic style represented by the dramatic Ballade op. 23. The *Times* described the piece as “delightful,”<sup>55</sup> while it was “lofty, delicate, poetic” to the reviewer of the *Musical Review*.<sup>56</sup> The correspondent to *Dwight’s* noted that Mason’s “delicate, dreamy style” was better suited to Chopin’s lyrical works than his “rival” Hoffmann, who excelled in Chopin’s “wild, stormy, and restless compositions.”<sup>57</sup>

### *Gustave Satter*

On March 23, 1855, an émigré from Croatia (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) named Gustave Satter gave the first documented piano recital in New York history, at the store of music publisher Charles Breusing, located at 720 Broadway.<sup>58</sup> Since Mason’s recitals took place outside the city, Satter effectively became the first pianist who gave a piano “recital” in New York (even if it was only semi-private), long before the term became familiar to the city’s concertgoers. Strong, who attended the recital, wrote in his diary that it was “given in the manner of Liszt, except for Henry Christian Timm at a second piano, and confined the program to compositions for piano and transcriptions for two pianos.”<sup>59</sup> For his debut, Satter chose one of Chopin’s most emblematic works, the Ballade op. 23, along with another remarkable composition,

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<sup>55</sup> *The New-York Times* (19 December 1855): 4.

<sup>56</sup> *Musical Review and Gazette* 6/27 (27 December 1855): 431.

<sup>57</sup> *Dwight’s* 8/12 (22 December 1855): 92.

<sup>58</sup> Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the time. The program also featured Liszt’s piano transcription of “Le Rossignol”, a song by Alexander Alyabiev (1787–1851); a “Villanelle” by Luca Fumagalli (1837–1908); and Liszt’s 1851 transcription for two pianos of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony—presumably not the entire work!—with Henry C. Timm.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, II, 561, *n*.

Schumann's *Carnaval*, op. 9 (1834–35).<sup>60</sup> The concert received unusually large coverage in the press, due to the atypical format and the program. Some critics were not ready to accept the novelty and deemed the concert too long. In the *Times*, Seymour thought that “a vocalist or two would have relieved the attention, and brought it to bear more freshly on the ensuing efforts of Mr. Satter.”<sup>61</sup> In a city of multiple, heterogeneous forms of musical entertainment, it is not surprising that Satter's venture was judged monotonous; in smaller cities, however, such “recitals” were not necessarily unusual, since pianos were often the only instrument available. The critic, however, deemed Satter “by far the most finished and enjoyable pianist we have had.”

### *The Return of Gottschalk*

In 1855 Gottschalk returned to New York from Cuba confident that a second tour would be more successful than the first. Gottschalk's concerts during his second New York journey included, finally, music by Chopin, especially in the series of pedagogical recitals or *matinées d'instruction* that he organized in September 1856 with a female audience in mind, in the fashion of Mason's own matinees. Presented at Descombe's Piano Warerooms, at 766 Broadway, the matinees were advertised as “practical and theoretical courses of instruction on the piano, on the plan of the Conservatoire of Paris.”<sup>62</sup> Besides the occasional mazurka, waltz, impromptu, or nocturne, two Chopin pieces were especially popular in his programs: the *Marche funèbre* (first performed on

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<sup>60</sup> The Ballade had already been heard in Boston at least twice. Alfred Jaëll played it for the first time in 1853. By the end of the season Dwight mentioned that, among other pieces, “even the most difficult Ballades [by Chopin] . . . have had repeated hearings.” Dwight was probably using the plural as an expressive resource, as no ballades other than the first were presumably performed in Boston that season. (*Dwight's* 3/1 [9 April 1853]: 7).

<sup>61</sup> *The New-York Times* (20 March 1855): 4.

<sup>62</sup> *The New-York Times* (26 September 1856): 7.

20 February 1856), usually followed or preceded by his own “Last Hope,” as was his habit, and the Scherzo in B-flat minor, op. 31. The matinees were discontinued in December; between then and his next departure from New York, three years later, Gottschalk gave only six documented performances of works by Chopin, slightly surpassing in number his performances of works by Schubert, Schumann, and Liszt.

Better management and Gottschalk’s personal appeal secured a success in his second tour. This time the audience was ultimately seduced by his originality and distinctiveness, attributes that had also been recognized in Chopin, and the supposed empathy between Gottschalk and Chopin was again acknowledged. After a performance of the Scherzo op. 31 by Gottschalk on 14 September 1856, the critic of the *Times* wrote that

no man ever possessed a stronger individuality than Chopin, and for this reason no man is more likely to be misunderstood by those who would play his works. Gottschalk is the only artist we can call to mind who possesses in a wonderful degree many of the striking characteristics of this great composer. In the performance of the *Scherzo* he was admirable, and the best traits of the composer and the player were blended together in a delightfully harmonious whole. We trust Mr. Gottschalk will give us other opportunities of hearing Chopin’s music.<sup>63</sup>

With that performance of the Scherzo op. 31, Gottschalk inaugurated another lasting infatuation of New Yorkers with a Chopin piece. It is impossible to determine whether Gottschalk had played it at an earlier concert, since many of his programs were not advertised, or whether it was already a hit at home, but it seems the Scherzo was well known by then: Dwight’s correspondent wrote that it “carried away his listeners, as usual, and he was recalled twice.”<sup>64</sup> Another critic, for whom the Scherzo was the most

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<sup>63</sup> *The New-York Times* (15 February 1856): 4.

<sup>64</sup> *Dwight’s* 8/22 (1 March 1856): 173.

interesting number in the program, criticized Gottschalk for playing it “more abruptly than ever Chopin’s music can endure.”<sup>65</sup> Advertisements for the soirée Gottschalk gave on 20 March announced that he would play the Scherzo again “by request.”

During that tour, Gottschalk also played some of his own compositions, which were greatly admired by some New York critics. His connection with Chopin was once again addressed. The *Albion* stated that his *Marche de Nuit* “would suffice to place Moreau Gottschalk high in the rank of piano-poets, if he had not already proclaimed himself by good right and universal consent a worthy heir of the glory of Chopin.”<sup>66</sup> Yet the most perceptive review came from the pen of Willis (probably), who, writing for the *Spirit of the Times*, was perceptive enough to identify the influence of Chopin on Gottschalk’s compositions, much more so than any other critic before him.<sup>67</sup>

### ***George W. Morgan***

In January, 1856, George Washbourne Morgan (1823–1892), an English organist at Grace Church and an occasional conductor of the Mendelssohn Union,<sup>68</sup> inspired by the early attempts by Mason, Satter, and Gottschalk, established a series of matinees entirely devoted to piano music, at Dodworth’s Rooms. Morgan was the first New York pianist who used the term “recital” rather than “classical matinee.” In the prospectus he penned, Morgan explained that the purpose of the series was to “assist the student in the elucidation of the best of the classical and modern schools of Pianoforte compositions,”

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<sup>65</sup> *Musical Review and Gazette* 7/5 (8 March 1856): 70. This review corresponds to a subsequent performance of the scherzo by Gottschalk.

<sup>66</sup> *The Albion* 15/1 (5 January 1856): 8.

<sup>67</sup> *Spirit of the Times* 27/12 (2 May 1857): 134.

<sup>68</sup> *The Mendelssohn Union* was the city’s most reputed choral organization. It was established in 1863 by some members of the *New-York Harmonic Society*, a choral association formed in 1850.

which he hoped to accomplish by illustrating “the different styles of the chef d’oeuvres of the great masters.”<sup>69</sup> Like Liszt in his early recitals, Morgan addressed his listeners verbally before each piece, in an attempt, perhaps, to recreate the friendly atmosphere of an informal music lesson. Morgan, however, was not as charismatic as Liszt, and his matinees were poorly attended. Of the four recitals he had announced, only three took place. Hagen, who reviewed the first matinee, had found Morgan’s “lectures” pedantic and presumptuous, and advised him to omit them entirely and to invite other performers to the remaining matinees (Morgan complied).<sup>70</sup>

Chopin was represented in Morgan’s series only once. According to the *Herald*, the only newspaper that reported on the series, Morgan played a polonaise on the first soirée, on 8 January. The reviewer assigned op. 10 to the piece, which corresponds to the first set of twelve études, published in 1833; it is therefore possible that Morgan did not play any polonaise after all. Of the four such recitals that Morgan announced, only three took place. Perhaps because Gottschalk was receiving the public’s attention at the time, Morgan’s recitals did not attract the expected public and the pianist decided to request the assistance of other performers in the last matinee.

### ***Robert Goldbeck***

In the winter of 1857, Goldbeck (1839–1908), a twenty-one-year-old German pianist who settled in New York two years earlier, organized a series of three matinees,

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<sup>69</sup> Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, II, 738.

<sup>70</sup> The invention of the recital has been traditionally attributed to Liszt, who gave the first unaccompanied piano concerts, in London, in 1840. The enterprise proved successful enough to be repeated in many European cities until the composer’s retirement from concert life in 1847 (although he had occasionally performed in both public and private concerts alone since 1837).

which were unsuccessful financially, despite the optimism shown by the critics.<sup>71</sup> Unable to procure a concert hall, the soirées took place at a friend's house, on East Twenty-Third Street. Besides presenting some of his works, he played a remarkable selection of "classical" composers, including Beethoven (the Sonata *Appassionata*), Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Chopin. It was perhaps his role as educator that made him a champion of Chopin's most didactic works, the études. Goldbeck played an "étude d'arpèges" (probably the first of the op. 10 set, in C major) as his solo piece in his debut with the Philharmonic, on 22 November 1856. According to the reviews, Goldbeck's initiative did not catch on, but the pianist would eventually become identified with Chopin's études (and préludes) just as Gottschalk was associated with the Scherzo op. 31 and the *Marche funèbre*, or Mason with the Impromptu op. 29.

On one of the matinees Goldbeck paired the Étude in D-flat major, op. 25, no. 8, an exercise on sixths and the shortest piece in either set of études, with the prélude in the same key (op. 28, no. 15). It is likely that Goldbeck made efforts to make sure the advertisements in the newspapers printed the program exactly as he intended, with no errors and with detailed information (still an uncommon occurrence at the time) so that the program, rather than the performer, would attract a select audience of students, connoisseurs, and enthusiasts of classical music. *Dwight's* correspondent in New York described the matinee as a reunion where there had been "an absence of pretension and formality, a social atmosphere about these entertainments [which had] lent them a peculiar charm."<sup>72</sup> Goldbeck played in a hall that had the size of a room, an arrangement

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<sup>71</sup> Dwight acknowledged that the programs of most evening concerts were not as high-quality as those of Goldbeck's matinees. *Dwight's* 10/22 (28 February 1857): 175.

<sup>72</sup> *Dwight's* 10/23 (7 March 1857): 179.

that would provide an atmosphere evocative of the Parisian salons where Chopin first played.

Watson, in the *Evening Post*, compared Goldbeck's playing and general attitude with Gottschalk's and Thalberg's in quasi-Biblical terms of truth and falseness:

As the early Christians were driven to assemble in obscure haunts of the city, or in dens and caves of the wilderness, to worship in spirit of the truth, so is it at present with piano-forte music, when those who love the works of those great *tone prophets*, Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Beethoven, are generally obliged to assemble in obscure nooks and corners, leaving the open concert hall to the undisturbed sway of those worse-than-heathen deities' potpourris and fantasias. When will not piano-forte players learn that skill is not inspiration? And that one may be a faithful acolyte and sincere worshiper without possessing the slightest qualifications for the office of high priest. This, for the whole tribe of fantasia-makers at large!<sup>73</sup>

Like Hoffman, Goldbeck's approach to Chopin's music failed to fully win the praise of the critics, who regarded it as too academic and emotionless—attributes deemed as unsympathetic to Chopin. The correspondent to *Dwight's* wrote that “in the Prélude of Chopin, which I anticipated great pleasure in hearing from him, he disappointed me very much. He seemed not to have entered at all into the spirit of that tender, sighing first part [first section of the piece], but played it in a really matter-of-fact manner, too fast, without the least delicacy, and with nothing of *rubato*, which, like so many of Chopin's compositions, it so evidently requires.”<sup>74</sup>

Goldbeck's matinees did not last long. He gave another, probably his last, on 16 January 1858. He had announced he would play a Chopin étude, “Liszt's favorite,” which could be the first of the three études from the *Trois nouvelles Études*, in F minor; it has been conjectured that Liszt was inspired by that piece to write his own étude, *La*

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<sup>73</sup> *The New-York Evening Post* (3 February 1857): 2.

<sup>74</sup> *Dwight's* 10/19 (17 February 1857): 150.

*leggerezza* (the second from his *Grandes Études de Concert*, S. 144/2, from 1848).<sup>75</sup>

Later that season, Goldbeck briefly resumed the matinees, choosing familiar Chopin pieces such as the Impromptu op. 29, and again the Scherzo op. 31.

In the fall of 1859, Goldbeck established a new series of concerts at his Conservatory cum Music Hall, at 765 Broadway, the former site of Lyrique Hall. The concerts took place on various evenings throughout October and November. In January 1860, Goldbeck once again brought back his series, which ran throughout the remainder of the season. This time, he was more ambitious in his conception of the series. In an effort to emulate the success of Mason's classical soirées and matinees, he changed their name to "Chamber Union Concerts." The stated purpose of the concerts was "to expose to the New York public the classical and contemporary ensemble and solo piano works of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Liszt," clearly an attempt to rival the always successful Mason/Thomas classical soirées, which were then in their fifth season.<sup>76</sup> Goldbeck was assisted by his wife in the recitation of poems by Longfellow, Browning, and Poe, and, in addition, he procured the participation of a number of first-class performers in some of the recitals, including the violinist Edward Mollenhauer (1827–1914) and the pianists Mason, Mills (a twenty-year-old Englishman who had recently debuted in the city), and William Saar (1840–1864). Audience numbers were low, despite the price of the tickets—the subscription to six concerts was three dollars—and critics paid almost no attention to the series. Goldbeck nonetheless managed

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<sup>75</sup> Chopin's Étude in F minor, op. 10, no. 9 may have also been a source of inspiration for Liszt's own *Étude d'Execution transcendante* no. 10, S. 139, which shares the same key. See Dorel Handman, "Chopin: Influence on Two Liszt Études," *Musical America* 49/3 (February 1949): 28, 164.

<sup>76</sup> Quoted in Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, III, 374.

to end the series as planned, giving a concert every Tuesday evening from 20 March to 1 May. Chopin's music was represented in the series by the Scherzo op. 31 (played by him, Mills, or Saar on 20 March), three unidentified pieces, presumably performed by Goldbeck, once again the popular Ballade op. 47, and the Rondo for Two Pianos, op. 73 (originally written for solo piano), performed by Mills and Saar in its New York premiere.<sup>77</sup>

Although there was scarce mention of the series in the press, Goldbeck's sparsely attended concerts gave momentum to the presence of Chopin's music in the concert hall. Like Mason and Hoffman before him, Goldbeck showed the public that a different type of concert repertory could be effective on the stage, and compete efficiently against the stockpile of bravura pieces that still dominated.

### *Sigismund Thalberg*

Thalberg arrived in America with great fanfare in October 1856. The press heralded him as the pianist who had once been known for being second only to Liszt, and described his playing as "both instrumental and vocal" and his style, "graceful without being ornate, effective without being pretentious."<sup>78</sup> Hoffman recalled that his reception had been comparable to Jenny Lind's a few years earlier.<sup>79</sup> Like Gottschalk, Thalberg favored a repertory made of operatic fantasies—his American repertory included twenty-eight of them—and variations, which he occasionally combined with works by other composers. In total, Thalberg gave fifty-six concerts in New York alone, with a repertory

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<sup>77</sup> Originally op. 14, written in 1828 for piano solo. The two-piano arrangement was made by Chopin himself and published posthumously in 1855.

<sup>78</sup> *The New-York Herald* (11 November 1856): 4.

<sup>79</sup> Hoffman, *Some Recollections of Fifty Years*, 127.

of forty-five pieces that he played 180 times.<sup>80</sup> He would often give two concerts on the same day: a matinee, often a *matinée d'instruction* with children in attendance, and a soirée, sometimes with the same program but different assistants.

In his memoirs, Hoffman discussed the impact of the classical soirées on the “virtuosos of the old school,” a category that included Thalberg (who had been one of his teachers in Europe). Hoffman flatly declared that Thalberg could not play serious music: “Thalberg was wise enough to avoid all compositions he felt did not belong to his peculiar genre; he did not encroach upon the classics and, consequently, he never scored any failures.”<sup>81</sup> Mason sided with Hoffman in his appreciation of Thalberg, both by necessity and by personal commitment. Assessing the style and repertory of Gottschalk, Mason had made a similar observation; although he admitted that Gottschalk was “an enthusiastic admirer of Beethoven symphonies and other orchestral works, [he] did not care for the pianoforte sonatas, which he said were not written in accordance with the nature of the instrument. It has been said that he could play all of the sonatas by heart but I am quite sure that Mr. Richard Hoffman, who was his intimate friend, will sustain me in the assertion that such was not the fact.”<sup>82</sup> Mason and Hoffman probably exaggerated, since both Thalberg and Gottschalk made deliberate efforts to add serious pieces to their repertories, in an attempt to adapt themselves to the new priorities. Their New York programs progressively included music by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Chopin, and, more rarely, Schubert and Mozart, composers who had been virtually omitted by de Meyer and

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<sup>80</sup> Lott, *From Paris to Peoria*, 297–99. For a complete list of performances, see the appendices.

<sup>81</sup> Hoffman, *Some Music Recollections of Fifty Years*, 129.

<sup>82</sup> Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life*, 207. Hoffman was Gottschalk’s main music assistant whenever he played in New York.

Herz in their tours a few years earlier. In fact, Thalberg's repertory for New York included Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, the "Archduke" Trio and the Concerto in G major, op. 58, at least two *Lieder ohne Worte*, a piece identified as *Capriccio*, and a sonata for violoncello and piano (op. 45 or 58) by Mendelssohn; Hummel's Septet; several unspecified pieces by Chopin; one or two of Liszt's *Réminiscences*; but nothing by Schumann or Schubert. Dwight celebrated that Thalberg made an attempt to "interpret those works of the great masters, which time and merit have stamped as models."<sup>83</sup> It was perhaps Thalberg's own recognition of the criticism of his reliance on the bravura repertory had drawn: only a few days before his praising article, Dwight had declared, referring to one of Thalberg's fantasies: "How different this Fantasia from a Sonata or Symphony, or even from the freer tone-poems of a Chopin! . . . They are essentially *virtuoso* compositions."<sup>84</sup>

Shortly after his arrival, Seymour had written an article comparing Chopin's and Thalberg's styles. Chopin was judged as "less original" than Thalberg, a surprising estimation of a composer whose most unquestionable attribute was precisely his originality:

The compositions of Chopin, even the most difficult compositions, may be so rendered by a student who thoroughly enters into their spirit and appropriates their poetic life, as to charm us continually . . . the difference between the performance of a true Chopinist, and that of Chopin himself . . . was felt to lie rather in their different apprehension of the composition, than in their difference of handling. Of Thalberg and his pupils, this is not true. When he plays his own music, you feel that you hear it for the first time.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Dwight's* 10/19 (17 February 1857): 151.

<sup>84</sup> *Dwight's* 10/16 (17 January 1857): 126.

<sup>85</sup> *The New-York Times* (22 November 1856): 1

Even more than Gottschalk, Thalberg was responsible for igniting the long infatuation between New York audiences and Chopin's *Marche funèbre*, a piece he performed at least five times, probably more if encores are taken into account. In addition, Thalberg added some unidentified mazurkas, as well as an incidental nocturne or two, to the repertory he reserved for the series of matinees he gave at Dodworth's Rooms, organized, like Gottschalk's, with the intention of attracting female patrons.

The *Herald* once described Thalberg's matinees as "the best social reunion for the ladies"—a selected group, since the concerts were by subscription only—offered in the city, noting that at one of the matinees there were only thirty men in attendance.<sup>86</sup>

Two years after Mason introduced the classical matinee in New York, the format was still regarded by critics as very innovative. In February 1857, the *Herald* printed an article about a series of "matinees of pianoforte music" that Thalberg, then visiting the city, was then about to offer. The author of the item, most likely Bernard Ullmann (Thalberg's manager), felt that the public needed to assure the public that playing without assistants "six or seven times, depending on the length of the pieces," was neither a farfetched idea nor appealing exclusively to musically cultivated listeners. The article summed up the essence of the still novel entertainment:

[I]t has always been a favorite wish of Mr. Thalberg's to introduce and permanently establish the matinee musicale in this country as he has done in Europe, it being in many respects preferable to evening concerts . . . it has been not infrequently observed to [Thalberg] that in a commercial country like this the matinee which naturally ought to take place about the middle of the day could not be so extensively patronized as in Europe, where the aristocracy resort to it as the means of [spending] a few unengaged hours. This is a mistake; matinees in Europe are fashionable

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<sup>86</sup> *The New-York Herald* (21 February 1857): 1. Meanwhile, the *Tribune* gave a colorful description of the matinees: "The audience was a most brilliant and fashionable one, consisting chiefly of ladies . . . Refreshments (chocolate, cake, ice cream, sandwiches) were served to all the company by Negro waiters in livery." *The New-York Tribune* (21 February 1857): 7.

but not quite so exclusive as is generally supposed. They are principally attended by professional people, by young ladies from seminaries, by clergymen, by families living out of town, by ladies who can go there unattended.<sup>87</sup>

Yet, with the exception of the dramatic *Marche funèbre*, the music of Chopin did not seem to suit the grand style of Thalberg. After a performance of the piece on 20 February 1857, the New York correspondent to *Dwight's* wrote that “[t]he march . . . was exquisitely given, with all the breadth and grandeur in the first part, and delicacy and tenderness in the second [the middle section, or trio, of the movement], but the mazurkas did not please me at all. There was harshness, loudness; an utter want of gracefulness in their rendering that astonished me.”<sup>88</sup> The review in the *Tribune* of a subsequent performance of the piece described it with the amount of detail that critics reserved for the most familiar works: “The gradation from piano to crescendo in the theme of the march was beautifully done; the rendering of the middle part, however, was not so much of our taste, as it lacked that poetic delicacy and depth that was the peculiarity and the great art of Chopin himself.”<sup>89</sup>

Thalberg left America, in May 1858, after a stay of nearly two years, touring incessantly. He made enough money to retire from concert life (he gave his last concert in 1863), just in time to avoid falling victim of the implacable decline of the era of the virtuoso of which he had been one of the best representatives.

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<sup>87</sup> *The New-York Herald* (15 February 1857): 7.

<sup>88</sup> *Dwight's* 10/22 (28 February 1857): 173.

<sup>89</sup> *Musical Review and Gazette* 8/5 (7 March 1857): 67.

*Eugénie de Roode, William Saar, Arturo Napoleão, Louise Abel, and Other Pianists*

In the mid-1850s, Carl Bergmann organized the first of the highly popular, yet controversial so-called “sacred concerts.” These events were given on Sundays, the name “sacred” being an excuse to exist on a day in which musical entertainments were not supposed to take place. The concerts, which catered to the German community, featured all types of works, by no means only religious. The presence of Chopin’s works in those concerts was rather limited, not because the German community did not care for his music, but because Bergmann tended to favor large vocal and symphonic works. On 16 March 1856, at the City Assembly Rooms, a pianist identified as Miss Lebrecht performed an unidentified piece by Chopin, the first time in one of these concerts. In a subsequent sacred concert, on 3 May 1857 at Niblo’s Saloon, a Mr. Dachauer-Gaspard played an unspecified nocturne and a mazurka. In the following years, Chopin continued to be represented at sacred concerts, particularly by his two piano concertos.<sup>90</sup>

Another performance of the ever-popular Concerto op. 11 took place on 24 March 1857.<sup>91</sup> This time, the soloist was a Dutch pianist, Eugénie de Roode (1842–?). She played from memory, a fact that was noted by the critics, and was accompanied by a small ensemble, probably a string quintet that included the three Mollenhauer brothers, Edward (1827–1914) and Frederick (1818–1885) at the violin, and Henry (1825–1889) at the violoncello. Chopin scholar Halina Goldberg has demonstrated that the practice of performing his concertos accompanied by a string quartet or quintet was by no means unusual in Europe during Chopin’s lifetime and probably throughout the nineteenth

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<sup>90</sup> Chopin’s piano concertos were popular among German-speaking audiences since 1830, when the composer himself played them in Vienna. Clara Schumann was the first German pianist who championed the concertos, performing them regularly from the mid-1830s.

<sup>91</sup> Hoffman played the last two movements again in Brooklyn with the Philharmonic on 12 December 1857.

century. For his Parisian debut, in 1832, it is believed that Chopin played the solo part, accompanied either by Kalkbrenner on a second piano, or by a string quintet; the first part of the concert had featured an ensemble, making the second option more than plausible. As early as 1833, there were editions of concertos with “*accompagnement d’orchestre ou de quintour ad libitum*,” for example, by the Leipzig publisher Friedrich Kistner.<sup>92</sup> The sacrifice of some phrases and contrapuntal lines was not a significant loss, since the concertos, written in the brilliant style of the 1830s, required minimal participation of the orchestra, except in the *tutti*s.

By 1859, Chopin’s polonaises were becoming favorites of the public. On November 12, seventeen-year-old William Saar, already known to the New York public after his debut as a child prodigy in 1850 and for having been Gottschalk’s assistant, returned with a “Polonaise concertante,” most likely the *Grande Polonaise*, op. 22, at Dodworth’s Hall. There is no evidence that he preceded it with the *Andante spianato*, and the use of orchestral accompaniment is only a presumption suggested by the title of the piece as shown in newspaper advertisements. Complete, “authentic” performances of Chopin’s works for ensemble or piano and orchestra were often overlooked at the time because the issue was not regarded as a problem; in fact, Chopin himself wrote an arrangement of the piece for piano solo and it has been traditionally played without orchestral accompaniment, which, in any case, is minimal. Critics did not like Saar’s performance; the inevitable comparisons between Saar and Gottschalk played against him. In the *Times*, Seymour lamented Saar’s “lack of delicacy,” the attribute without

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<sup>92</sup> Halina Goldberg, “Chamber Arrangements of Concert Works,” *Journal of Musicology* 19/1 (Winter 2002): 55. It should be noted that the practice of replacing the orchestra with a small string ensemble was by no means unheard of. Mozart played the solo part of his Piano Concerto, K. 449, accompanied by a string quintet in 1784. Similar “reduced” performances of that particular piece are still heard today in performance.

which any performance of Chopin in those times would be doomed.<sup>93</sup> On a subsequent performance on February 2 1859, Saar played two movements of the Concerto op. 11 with the Philharmonic. Reviews were again negative; Saar's concert career ended around that time, before it really had taken off. Regrettably, nobody seemed to notice the indirect influence of Chopin on the young composer, whose own mazurkas and nocturnes were clearly modeled after Chopin's.

A few days after Saar's unremarkable New York debut, the young Portuguese pianist Arturo Napoleão (1843–1925) made his debut in the city on 23 November, playing, for the first time in the city, one of Chopin's most emblematic pieces, the Polonaise op. 53. Like Saar, Napoleão's visit was preceded by news about his recently achieved reputation in Europe. Napoleão subsequent performances, at the Palace Garden Music Hall (located on Sixth Avenue and Fourteenth Street, well outside the theater circuit) included the same polonaise, and a nocturne in E-flat major, most likely op. 9, no. 2. Disappointed by the reception New York audiences gave him, Napoleão left soon for Brazil that same year, establishing himself in Rio de Janeiro, where he would rekindle his friendship with Gottschalk shortly before the latter's death near that city in 1863. The Polonaise op. 53 was heard again, with Hoffman at the piano, as his solo at a concert with the Philharmonic Society on 30 April 1859. The critic of the *Spirit of the Times* remarked that Hoffman's performance "roused the audience, critical and exacting though it was, to unwonted enthusiasm."<sup>94</sup> Similarly wholehearted reactions were common in future

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<sup>93</sup> *The New-York Times* (12 November 1858): 4. The New York periodical *Spirit of the Times* was the only other source that gave notice of the concert, although Chopin's piece was not discussed.

<sup>94</sup> *The Spirit of the Times* 29/13 (7 May 1859).

performances of a piece which soon became one of Chopin's most recognizable for the emotional power and for the patriotic yearnings that it conveyed.

The French pianist Louise Abel, “a very finished, neat, and lady-like pianist from the Paris Conservatoire” according to the *Albion*, was the last important newcomer to be heard in 1858. She may not have left a significant mark as an interpreter, but her status as a student of Chopin made her an *a priori* interesting performer. In November, awaiting her arrival, the *New-York Evangelist* published a lengthy biography of Louise Abel, titled “A New Musical Celebrity.” The article noted that she had been well known in Parisian musical circles since her childhood (Berlioz wrote an admiring review of her Parisian debut in 1844) and stated that “at the age of fourteen she was placed under the instruction of the celebrated Chopin, and remained with this beloved master until his death.”<sup>95</sup> Abel left a very good impression among the city's connoisseurs at her private New York presentation, and kept herself busy giving concerts and teaching for the rest of the season. A year after her debut, Abel traveled to Boston. Dwight attended her debut in that city, and wrote an insightful review in which her style was described as “French”—presumably a desirable quality for playing Chopin's music:

Madame Louise Abel . . . fully justified the high reports which came before her. She has the charm of youth and unaffected manners, with an air of modest intelligence. Her touch is clear and bright, her execution always clean and graceful, equal to passages of most brilliant difficulty and power . . . There was an infallible French grace in these, a nice instinct of light and shade. The French quality of her style, however, turned into timidity and did not work well in the polonaise she also played<sup>96</sup>

Upon returning to New York, Abel organized yet another series of classical soirées at Chickering Rooms in which Chopin's music was often featured. On 15 January

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<sup>95</sup> *The New-York Evangelist* 27/43 (18 November 1859): 4.

<sup>96</sup> *Dwight's* 16/9 (26 November 1859): 280.

1859, she played a movement of the Concerto op. 11, probably with a string ensemble. At another soirée, Abel performed Chopin's Étude in A-flat major, op. 25, no. 1, a Mazurka in B minor (probably op. 33, no. 4), one of Chopin's three waltzes in A-flat major, and, as encore, the Étude in F major, op. 25, no. 3, a rather inconspicuous little piece that was labeled, however, as "the gem of the evening" by the critic of the *Musical World*.

Dwight's correspondent laconically remarked that her playing would be effective only in small venues such as Chickering Rooms, not in large concert halls,<sup>97</sup> while Willis, who upon hearing Abel for the first time had thought that she would be a good choice as an instructor, not as a concert pianist, admitted now that her playing was "sound and thoroughbred."<sup>98</sup> Abel's success was discreet but solid enough to encourage her to settle in New York. She kept a busy schedule as concert pianist that would only be halted when the Civil War broke out.

### ***Sebastian Bach Mills***

The New York debut of a young pianist from England whose association with Chopin's music would be paramount throughout the later nineteenth century took place in March 1859. Sebastian Bach Mills gave the first American performance of Schumann's Piano Concerto, op. 54 (1841–45), with the Philharmonic on 25 March, becoming an overnight sensation, which prompted his decision to settle in New York. Unbeknownst to many concertgoers, Mills had actually played in public a few days earlier, on 13 March at a sacred concert organized by Bergmann at the City Assembly Rooms. On that occasion, he also performed a piece by Chopin identified as a Polonaise in E-flat minor, which

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<sup>97</sup> *Dwight's* 14/22 (26 February 1859): 382. Days later Abel performed the *Grande Polonaise*, op. 22, in Brooklyn.

<sup>98</sup> *The Musical World* (29 January 1859): 67. Quoted in Vera B Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, III, 301.

could be the one from op. 26 or, more likely, the more virtuosic *Grand Polonaise brillante*, op. 22, written in the key of E-flat major; mistakes in identifying keys were frequent at the time and it would be safe to presume that in fact he played the latter piece, which would have had a better effect in the concert hall.

Mills's magnetism almost erased the positive impressions left by Gottschalk and effectively ended the critics' infatuation with Thalberg, who was, on occasion, unfavorably compared with Mills on account of his inability to play works by the classic composers. On the other hand, the momentous success of Mills had a slightly detrimental effect on Hoffman, Mason, and Goldbeck, who were literally supplanted by Mills and would always remain in his shadow. Mills was immediately recognized as an unrivaled interpreter of Chopin, a status he maintained throughout his career: not until the arrival of Anton Rubinstein in 1872 would any pianist undermine his prestige and renown as an authority on the composer.

As an encore after his debut with the Philharmonic on 26 March, he again played a polonaise. This time, almost without doubt, it was op. 22. The review in the *Times* was prophetic. Mills was hailed as "the most remarkable player" the country had ever seen. His style was thoroughly discussed. His technique was described as "immense" and his tone "unimpaired;" he was, the review said, a brilliant exponent of the school of one of his teachers, Liszt.<sup>99</sup> The correspondent to *Dwight's* was as enthusiastic as he was surprised that a pianist would have taken New York by storm without having been

vigorously puffed previous to his debut . . . [Mills] is but twenty-one years old, yet he surpasses even the greatest pianists we have had in this country. His execution, his precision, are wonderful; his touch indescribably beautiful, and without the slightest apparent effort, he displays a degree of force which I have rarely heard equaled. These

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<sup>99</sup> *The New-York Times* (28 March 1859): 4.

however, are the mechanical qualities; perfect as he is in these, they are nothing to the higher worth which pervades his performance. His conception of the music he plays, his rare power of wringing out all the chief points of interest and beauty, his artistic truthfulness—taking nothing from, nor adding anything to the meaning of the composer, giving every note its full value and vocal beauty . . . all these combine to impress you with the conviction that you are listening to an artist in the highest sense of the word.<sup>100</sup>

The *Spirit of the Times* described the impression left by Mills in New York: “The musical world of New York, for a few weeks past, has been surprised by the accounts of the sudden appearance of a young Englishman whose playing was extraordinary,” adding that a “resident pianist, who ranks among the best, said that Mr. Mills could ‘put him in his pocket’.”<sup>101</sup> In May, Mills gave a concert in Brooklyn, presumably playing again the Polonaise op. 22. The *Herald* informed its readers that Mills had played the piece “in a style that astonished our neighbors over the water . . . No living pianist has perhaps proved himself more competent to render Chopin’s music, which is as yet but little understood and but little appreciated here.”<sup>102</sup>

The qualities observed in Mills, especially regarding his powerful sound, were not commonly sought after in relation to Chopin’s music. Mills gave other concerts that year, but he would leave an even greater mark in the next decade. Over the next twenty years or so, Mills made Chopin *his* composer in New York: the number of performances of Chopin’s works by Mills exceeded those by the rest of the pianists active in the city. His understanding of Chopin became nothing short of referential, to the point of setting the standard by which the interpretation of other pianists would be measured: Mills became

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<sup>100</sup> *Dwight’s* 15/1 (2 April 1859): 6.

<sup>101</sup> *The Spirit of the Times* 29/8 (2 April, 1859): 96.

<sup>102</sup> *The New-York Herald* (28 May 1859): 1.

the first pianist labeled “expert” on Chopin’s music. In the following decade, Mills would become the pivotal figure around which all other New York pianists revolved.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *Performances, 1860–1869*

As the nineteenth century progressed, the debate over the role of music—a source of entertainment or a path to enlightenment—acquired increasing relevance, though of course it had originated much earlier. In New York, as in other cities, the manifestation of this dichotomy became apparent with the establishment of two types of concerts, labeled by their organizers as either “popular” or “classical.” More often than not, the distinction between these two types was not clear. It could respond to repertorial choices as much as to commercial interests, based on the desire to appeal to larger audiences. But it was precisely this circumstance (the supposed distinction between popular and learned) that led to the progressive consolidation of their diversity, even if it was more fictitious than real. “Classical concerts,” such as Theodore Thomas’s (who also organized “popular” ones), were also represented in solo recitals, a format favored by most visiting pianists, which, by the mid-1860s, were no longer considered a novelty.

Starting in the 1860s, two paramount foundations of the early romantic spirit, originality and imagination—skills that virtuosos displayed in their settings of variations on operatic themes—were no longer necessarily regarded as the foremost sign of talent. In fact, such virtuosic pieces, which once had been the means with which the talent of a composer/pianist was measured, were now becoming crowd-pleasers (in a pejorative sense), an indication of frivolity, conventionality, and indistinctiveness. Some of the composers who had relied on that type of repertory reflected the changes in their style. Liszt, for example, continued writing piano fantasies on operatic themes (though he no longer played them in public), but the high quality of his later *Réminiscences* and

*Paraphrases* automatically detached them from the common examples of compositions of that kind. In a similar way, the concerto, which shared popularity with variations and rondos, was also affected by the change of attitude: concertos in the “brilliant style,” including the two by Chopin, started to be replaced by more serious, challenging compositions of greater depth, in which the participation of the orchestra transcended the role of mere accompaniment—as can be seen in the concertos of Liszt, Schumann, and, later, Brahms, Grieg, Raff, and Tchaikovsky. In sum, virtuosity for its own sake was increasingly viewed as old-fashioned and less relevant. Fewer virtuosos of the old school appealed to audiences, and had to co-exist, more and more precariously, with the group of scholarly performers that had made an impact in the previous decade.

The divide between serious and virtuosic piano works, until then only perceived by a minority of music lovers, continued to grow in the consciousness of general concertgoers. Changes in musical taste, as reflected in serious concerts, meant not so much a change of format but of quality of material. Virtuosos might still be revered by the public, but they no longer were identified solely as performers of bravura pieces; the greater pianist would be the one whose task was to recreate, as faithfully as possible, the intentions of another, and greater—classical—composer.<sup>1</sup> As Dwight put it in 1866, “the old-fashioned and foggy days of trashy programmes are gone by.”<sup>2</sup>

While opera remained the ultimate form of high musical entertainment in the 1860s, its hegemony started to be challenged by exclusively instrumental concerts, which kept gaining converts; interest in such “pure,” abstract musical works led to an increasing

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<sup>1</sup> It could be argued that the bravura piece has never been completely abandoned: the case of the pianist Vladimir Horowitz (1903–1989), who played his own Fantasy on Bizet’s *Carmen* throughout his career, is an eloquent example.

<sup>2</sup> *Dwight’s* 25/26 (17 March 1866): 208.

demand for competent instrumentalists. The “classic repertory” became firmly established, and works such as Beethoven’s symphonies, piano sonatas, and string quartets achieved the status of classical masterpieces. Similarly, audiences acquired a greater sense of the musical significance of the more complex, mature works of Chopin. Regardless of their potential lack of immediate appeal, they were admired precisely because they demanded a higher level of engagement and intellectual effort from the listener for their full comprehension and appreciation.

The incidence of Chopin’s music in the Mason and Thomas classical soirées decreased with respect to the previous decades, as their programs emphasized compositions for ensemble: the limited number of such works by Chopin led them to concentrate on other composers. Yet, the list of pianists who performed his music in New York between 1860 and 1869 increased significantly with respect to the previous decade, although it was still very short compared to the next one. Some European pianists felt confident enough to try for success in America before their prestige had been secured in Europe—unlike their predecessors in the 1840s and 50s; some ended up settling here. In addition, more and more American-born pianists followed the example of Mason and returned after completing their studies in Europe with the firm idea of establishing themselves as professional concert pianists in their native country. Together, European émigrés and American nationals made Chopin the favorite composer of piano music by the city’s increasingly appreciative, enlightened audience: it could be argued that a “golden age” of pianism in New York started around Mills’s debut in 1859. On the negative side, the increasing competition from newly arrived pianists compromised the careers of some established pianists: in the 1860s, Hoffman and Mason, the best of the

“local” pianists in the previous decade, started to be discreetly but inexorably pushed into the background.

With the realization that Chopin’s music was well liked, the repertoires of pianists expanded considerably. To the always popular concertos, impromptus, and the *Marche funèbre*, seldom heard études and préludes, polonaises, the Concerto op. 21, and complex pieces from Chopin’s mature years such as the *Berceuse*, op. 57, the *Fantaisie*, op. 49, or the Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, op. 65, were added to the programs. With some exceptions, these works were well received, some becoming staples in the repertoires of some pianists: Mills, for example, became associated with a particular group of Chopin works for which he seemed to hold quasi-exclusive rights, as it were, including the *Grande Polonaise*, op. 22; the Étude in C-sharp minor, op. 25, no. 7; and the two concertos.

The rise of piano music in Boston and New York had been initially celebrated by critics. In 1855, Dwight penned an article advocating the emancipation of the piano as a viable and self-sufficient instrument in the concert hall, encouraging pianists to add “serious” works to their repertoires.<sup>3</sup> Ten years later, his attitude had changed as a result of the “positive nuisance” caused by the “current piano-playing mania” which had made the pianist the principal attraction of every concert.<sup>4</sup> In February of the same year, the New York correspondent to *Dwight’s* was complaining that there were so many concerts in New York featuring piano music that he did not have time to attend and review all of

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<sup>3</sup> *Dwight’s* 7/24 (15 September 1855): 189–90.

<sup>4</sup> *Dwight’s* 24/16 (18 March 1865): 413–14.

them.<sup>5</sup> Months earlier, Gottschalk had protested against the fact that piano concerts had become “chronic,” adding that like all good things, they were abused.<sup>6</sup> Complaints notwithstanding, the proliferation of piano concerts only benefited the dissemination of Chopin’s music in the New York concert hall.

### *Satter*

From January to April, 1861, Gustave Satter organized a series of classical soirées at Dodworth’s Hall, which soon turned into matinees. Satter had the idea to have the piano placed in the middle of the room so that his playing could be not only heard but also seen by all the concertgoers. Satter’s matinees became a curious combination of both old-fashioned and new practices. His programs featured more works for piano solo and less for ensemble than was still customary—a step closer to what was starting to be referred to as piano recitals—and yet he liked to spice up his concerts with improvisations on themes requested by his audience, a practice that some might have found obsolete at the time. But Satter was an unconventional and eccentric pianist: in 1857, he had penned a pamphlet, under the *nom de plume* “Dr. Bernt,” categorizing some of the most renowned living pianists according to their talents and accomplishments. Satter always figured in the top position of each category. Dwight was maliciously happy to publish it.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Dwight’s* 24/12 (18 February 1865): 399.

<sup>6</sup> Gottschalk *Notes of a Pianist*, 238.

<sup>7</sup> *Dwight’s* 11/7 (16 May 1857): 54. The pamphlet was titled “Brief Catalogue of the greatest living pianists and Composers for the Piano-Forte, with notices of their special qualification.” According to his own ranking, Satter belonged to the group of the “Stars of the First Magnitude,” which included Liszt, de Meyer, and Thalberg, surpassing Clara Schumann and Anton Rubinstein; he also listed himself in the categories “Geniality of Playing” (along with Liszt and Litolff), “Conception,” “Finished Technicals,” “Touch and Clearness,” “Classical Players” (Satter is deemed “unsurpassed as a performer of Beethoven”), “Universality of Playing,” “Sight-reading,” and “Endurance.” Satter also labeled himself the best pianist of

Satter's performances of Chopin's music in his series of matinees included a Nocturne in E-flat, probably the ever-popular op. 9, no. 2; an impromptu disparagingly described by a critic as "the regular one, played with the velocity of the Presidential Express Train" (thus either the Impromptu op. 29 or the *Fantaisie-Impromptu*, op. 66);<sup>8</sup> and the Waltz op. 34, no. 1.

### *Abel*

Louise Abel had been keeping a busy agenda of concerts since her debut in 1859, giving performances of some of her teacher's etudes, waltzes, and, on one occasion, a "fragment" of the Concerto op. 11. In March 1861, she played the *Introduction et Polonaise brillante*, op. 3, for violoncello and piano, with Frederick Bergner at the piano, and the Polonaise in C-sharp minor, op. 26, no. 1, both pieces never heard in New York before. The responses to the *Introduction et Polonaise*, a work of youth still immersed in the aesthetics of the bravura style, were mostly negative, a sign that critics were by then less fascinated by virtuosity—despite the generally positive response to another early work, the Rondo for Two Pianos, op. 73, with Mills and Saar at the piano, the previous year. There would be another performance of the Polonaise op. 3 four years later, on 15 February 1865, at Niblo's Theater, with the English pianist James M. Wehli (1843—?) and Hélène de Katow (1830?—1876?), a cellist from Russia. On that occasion, the correspondent to *Dwight's* overtly censured Wehli's reliance on tricks reminiscent of the

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the "newest school," one of the best modern composers for the piano, and, to finish off, he topped the list called "First in everything." Satter wrote the article in German; it was first printed in *Die New-Yorker Staats Zeitung* and then in English translation in *Dwight's Journal, The Musical Review*, and other publications.

<sup>8</sup> *The Albion* 39/10 (9 March 1861): 115.

over-dramatic performances by virtuosos of the old school.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Wehli's antiquated mannerisms must account for his unremarkable and ephemeral career.

*Chopin in the Mason/Thomas Classical Soirées, 1860-1865.*

On 3 March 1860, Chopin's music returned to the first concert of the fifth season of the Mason/Thomas Classical Soirées. Mason performed the Ballade op. 47, the same one he had successfully presented to the New York public five years earlier. The *Times*, who seemed unaware of the fact that Mason had played the piece five years earlier, was perceptive of its solid structure and smooth narrative line: "Mason played a very delicious *morceau* by Chopin, called a *ballade*, but why so called, we cannot divine. It is filled with melodies, and it is a piece with strong effects—not a simple and uninterrupted narrative, as a *Ballade* should be. For the reason that it contains many ideas, it is necessarily fragmentary and discursive. Mr. Mason collected the author's meaning with fine foresight and feeling, and the performance was consequently excellent."<sup>10</sup> More accessible than works like the Ballade op. 23 or the *Fantaisie*, op. 49 (played by Mills in February of that year, as his solo in a concert with the Philharmonic), but still a complex piece, the success of the ballade seems to confirm that longer, demanding works by Chopin were finding their place in pianists' repertoires.

The momentum given to chamber music by Mason and Thomas made it possible that, by 1865, virtually all of Chopin's chamber works had been heard in New York, much sooner than many of his most important works for piano solo. The need to find ensemble works for Mason's soirées and Chopin's reputation were enough to have the

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<sup>9</sup> *Dwight's* 24/16 (18 March 1865): 413.

<sup>10</sup> *The New-York Times* (4 March 1860): 5.

chamber or ensemble works performed, regardless of their complexity and the potential unfavorable response from the critic and the public. Such was the case of the performance (the first in New York) of the Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, op. 65, with Bergner as cellist, which constituted one of the most remarkable events of the tenth season of Mason's soirées; it would also be one of the last important works by Chopin presented in the series. The fact that Mason deemed the sonata, one of Chopin's darkest and most arcane compositions, worthy of being programmed is a sign of his great musicianship and preoccupation for divulging difficult works regardless their lack of immediate appeal. Not surprisingly, responses to the sonata were unenthusiastic. In the *Times*, Seymour wrote that the sonata exhibited the worst period of Chopin—the same Liszt, and later Niecks, had thought of as morbid and decadent.<sup>11</sup>

### *Chopin's Music during the Civil War*

The first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, on 12 April 1861. The effect of the war on New York's musical scene was by no means as detrimental as one could have expected. The hasty departure of some visiting musicians from Europe and the decrease of the number of visitors during the war years was compensated by the arrival of other performers who found a safe haven in the city as theaters closed throughout the country, not only in the battle-ridden South.<sup>12</sup> Louise Abel was one of the performers who chose to leave New York at the onset of the war, only to return after it. A Dutch pianist, Madeleine Graever-Johnson (1829–1868), who had

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<sup>11</sup> *The New-York Times* (27 January 1865): 4. The critic extended the negative assessment to the other two composers featured in the program, Beethoven and Schumann, represented, respectively, by the Septet, op. 20, and the String Quartet op. 41, no. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Steven H Cornelius., *Music of the Civil War Era* (Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 2004), 167.

occasionally programmed Chopin's music since her arrival in 1857, also left for good. The departures of Graever-Johnson and Abel left a temporary void in the small space which, for a while, had been occupied by female performers. The exception was Louise Krolikowska, a Polish-American pianist of a somewhat lesser reputation than Abel and Graever-Johnson, who kept a rather busy agenda in New York during the war years. Apparently, she did not care much for Chopin's music, in spite of her nationality: only one performance of an unidentified Chopin work, in 1863, has been documented.

Otherwise, musical entertainment of all kinds thrived in the city like never before. The Philharmonic Society, under Carl Bergmann, championed some of the most innovative orchestral works of Schumann, Wagner, Berlioz, and Liszt. In 1863 Theodore Thomas created his own orchestra, promoting a competition against the Philharmonic, a move that only benefited the city and its music aficionados.

Chopin's concertos were particularly favored in the weeks and months after the onset of hostilities. The always musically active German community attended a benefit concert at Irving Hall in which Mills performed a movement from Chopin's E-minor Concerto, on 8 April,<sup>13</sup> and then, once again, one or two movements from the same piece, possibly accompanied by a small ensemble, at a "Classical concert" organized by Bergmann and the Mollenhauer brothers on 29 April, at Dodworth's Hall. Finally, a remarkable musical event during the first year of the war, in which Mills also

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<sup>13</sup> Announcements of this and other similar concerts commonly appeared only in the city's main German newspaper, *Die New-Yorker Staats-Zeitung*.

participated, was the American premiere of Chopin's Concerto op. 21, on 9 November, with the Philharmonic Society.<sup>14</sup>

Rather surprisingly, the Concerto, op. 21, was first performed in New York in 1861, fifteen years after the premiere of the Concerto op. 11. Reasons for this neglect may be found in the established idea that op. 21 was less original than its counterpart, though Liszt thought that the *larghetto* of the concerto was a perfect, almost ideal piece.<sup>15</sup> The situation had been somehow analogous in Europe, starting with Chopin, who played the first concerto more often than its counterpart. During the 1830s and 50s there had some performances of the F-minor concerto in Warsaw, London (where it was premiered, in 1843, by Louise Dulcken [1811–1850]), Leipzig, and Paris, but the E-minor concerto had always maintained a higher level of popularity for reasons that are difficult to explain. In New York, between 1846 (the year of Timm's premiere) and 1861 there had been at least nine performances, partial or complete, of the concerto. The always positive response that the concerto had received would have made, one would think, the Concerto op. 21 a sure hit, as it indeed was when it was finally played by Mills. What may have been the reasons for such neglect, or delay? A possible one could be that pianists preferred to play it safe by repeating a work that the public was always happy to hear. Or it could be that pianists could have thought that introducing a concerto written in the outdated brilliant style of the 1830s (the F-minor concerto is arguably more akin to the bravura style of the period) would no longer have the same appeal. In any case, Mills,

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<sup>14</sup> Dresel had played the slow movement of the concerto in Boston, in February 1854, presumably with the accompaniment of a string quartet (or quintet), since several chamber music works were also performed at the same concert.

<sup>15</sup> Liszt, *F. Chopin*, 24. In his 1836 review of the work, Schumann famously wrote that "ten editorial crowns" were nothing compared to the "adagio" [*sic*] of the piece, and found traces of Beethoven and Schubert in this and Chopin's other Concerto. Schumann, *Music and Musicians (Essays and Criticism)*, I, 204.

encouraged by the success he had playing the first concerto in 1859, decided it was time to introduce the second to the New York public.

The success of the premiere was attributed more to Mills's performance than to the work itself, which nonetheless was deemed nothing short of beautiful. Seymour, in the *Times*, noticed the originality of the second movement and praised the orchestra for not "overwhelming the declamatory passages for the piano-forte" (referring probably to the celebrated recitative-like middle section).<sup>16</sup> Visiting once again some of the commonplaces that were customarily reserved to Chopin, the critic noted that a successful performance of the movement "depend[ed] entirely on the breadth of style and emotional expressiveness of the performer"; Mills had made the performance successful owing to his ability to unite "execution" and "elocution."<sup>17</sup> The correspondent to *Dwight's*, meanwhile, credited Mills for his admirable translation of the "true Chopin spirit."<sup>18</sup> In fact, that performance was one of Mills's greatest successes in his entire career, to the point of becoming forever associated with the two concertos, perhaps more so than with any other work by Chopin or any other composer. In addition, it consolidated his association with the orchestra for the rest of his career. Mills gave no fewer than ten performances, partial or complete, of the Concerto op. 21 from 1861 to 1874, and, between 1859 and 1876, about fifteen performances of the E-minor Concerto, usually with either the Philharmonic Society or with Thomas's orchestra.

In the second half of the 1862–63 season, the Philharmonic programmed various works by Chopin in three consecutive concerts. On 31 January 1863, Mills played

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<sup>16</sup> *The New-York Times* (11 November 1861): 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Dwight's* 20/7 (16 November 1861): 263.

Beethoven's Piano Concerto in G major, op. 58, with the Philharmonic. In the *Times*, Seymour compared the work favorably to Chopin's second concerto, a rather odd, if not audacious statement.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, the public's infatuation with Chopin's impromptus continued: after the concerto, Mills played a piece erroneously identified by the same reviewer as "Impromptu in E," though such a piece does not exist (it can be deduced that the work was the *Fantasia-Impromptu*, written in the relative key, C-sharp minor). At the next Philharmonic concert, on 14 March, William Saar was invited to play Chopin's Impromptu in F-sharp major, op. 36 (1839), a piece theretofore neglected by pianists in New York. Saar fell ill and did not perform that day; the next (and only) documented public performance of the piece in the years covered by this study would take place thirteen years later.

Hoffman, whose public appearances were becoming more and more uncommon, returned to the Philharmonic in April 1863, where he played the Polonaise op. 53 as his solo. Meanwhile, Theodore Thomas's new orchestra engaged Mills to perform, on 5 May, the "other" popular polonaise (op. 22), "a first-class composition," according to the *Tribune*.<sup>20</sup> This time, it was probably preceded by the seldom heard *Andante spianato*, and likely performed with orchestral accompaniment.

A more important event was the long-awaited publication of Liszt's biography of Chopin, translated by Martha Walker Cook, which finally became available to American readers in the spring of 1863, by the Philadelphia publisher F. Leypoldt. Only the widespread interest in Chopin may explain the unusually large coverage of the event in the press—the biography was advertised as a must-have good not just for lovers of

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<sup>19</sup> *The New-York Times* (6 February 1863): 5.

<sup>20</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (11 May 1863): 3.

Chopin's music. Dwight, who had printed some excerpts in 1852 was one of the many who celebrated the issue of the complete work, acknowledging that the interest of the general public in Chopin was now noticeably greater: "Artists and art aficionados in America should feel very much encouraged when they see what advance has been made in these past ten years. Not only is such a book saleable now, but this very one has been asked for, because in this decade of years an audience has arisen for it."<sup>21</sup> The exaggerated style of Liszt and the inaccuracies, to say the least, that the book contained were noticed by the perspicacious reviewer for the *Tribune*, who judged Liszt's account rather unreliable, noting that his impulsive personality was too apparent (at the time, no one knew that much of the text had in fact been authored by the Princess Caroline von Sayn-Wittgenstein).<sup>22</sup>

Only a handful of identified performances of Chopin's music, all by Mills, took place in 1864. There seemed to be a certain inactivity compared to previous years: Gottschalk spent some more time in New York, but it is unclear whether he played any works by Chopin, and Mason and Hoffman equally eschewed Chopin in their concerts. The situation was different in Boston, where Dresel continued to champion Chopin's music, and, especially, in Philadelphia, where the German pianist Carl Wolfsohn (1834–1907) made an impressive achievement: a series of groundbreaking "historical recitals" which he would try in New York and Chicago. The format was absolutely innovative: historical recitals were still uncommon but by no means new in Europe, but no pianist had attempted to devote entire solo piano recitals to one composer. In the course of two seasons (1863–64 and 1864–65), Wolfsohn introduced to the public in Philadelphia the

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<sup>21</sup> *Dwight's* 23/3 (2 May 1863): 17.

<sup>22</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (11 June 1863): 3.

complete works of Chopin published to date, an accomplishment unprecedented not only in the United States but in Europe as well: even Chopin included works by other composers and had assistants whenever he gave one of his rare public performances.

Back in New York, Thomas established, towards the end of 1864, a series of symphonic soirées, modeled in part after the classical soirées he and Mason had started nine years earlier. For the first soirée, on 3 December, Thomas secured a success with the participation of Mills playing one of his signature works, the Concerto op. 21. Mills's prestige and his identification with Chopin kept growing with the years. In May 1865, days after the Union's victory at Appomattox, a review in the *Times* acknowledged Mills as the only pianist who could enter the spirit of Chopin. His secret lay in his ability to reveal the "weird harmonic tissue which envelops the compositions of Chopin."<sup>23</sup>

Mills's remaining performances of Chopin's music in 1865 included the *Berceuse*, op. 57, on 7 October, and two premieres, the first Scherzo op. 20, a work that, like the Ballade op. 23, and the Polonaises op. 26, revealed Chopin as a mature composer, and the seldom heard, technically imposing *Allegro de Concert*, op. 46.<sup>24</sup> The latter work, which Niecks would deem "indigestible," was judged rather long and uninteresting by the critic of the *Times*.<sup>25</sup> With only one more documented performance of the piece during the time period of this study, in 1876, it remains one of Chopin's least performed works.

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<sup>23</sup> *The New-York Times* (16 May 1865): 4.

<sup>24</sup> The piece is in fact an arrangement for piano solo of the first movement of a piano concerto that Chopin started to compose in 1833. Rink refers to it as "Chopin's third concerto." Rink, *Chopin: The Piano Concertos*, 88.

<sup>25</sup> *The New-York Times* (23 November 1865): 5.

### *Gottschalk's Last New York Appearances*

In 1862, Gottschalk returned to New York after a long stay in Cuba and Puerto Rico. He had hoped to return earlier, but the outbreak of the war caused him to change his plans. Upon his arrival, Gottschalk organized a series of *matinées d'instruction*. It was around that time when Gottschalk, a Southerner who favored the Union, received the highest praise of his American career. An article in the *Times* celebrated his undeniable contribution to the increasingly favorable status of the United States as a potential musical power: "American art is beginning to assume a respectable standing in the world . . . the praise we bestow on its favorites is merited, and not cheap incense burnt to the gods of our own making. Mr. Gottschalk's position is fortunately free of complication. He cannot be likened to anyone who has preceded him, nor does he resemble anyone who is here now. What light he possesses is his own."<sup>26</sup> On only one occasion during this series did Gottschalk perform Chopin's *Marche funèbre*, a piece that must have had a powerful effect among audiences at the time. Otherwise, Gottschalk, still a true virtuoso in the old-fashioned sense, continued to give priority to his own works. Fry, in the *Tribune*, lamented his neglect of Chopin's music, for which he was deemed especially gifted: "Mr. Gottschalk is capable of playing every style of music which is worth performance . . . We are told he doesn't play Chopin however. Who then does? What is the mystery, the fire, the melody, the harmony in one author beyond all others that nobody can play him?"<sup>27</sup> Gottschalk's magnetism alone was starting to be seen as an insufficient quality. After a performance of one of Chopin's waltzes in A-flat major and one of his two études in F major (either op. 10, no. 8, or op. 25, no. 3), Dwight, who had

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<sup>26</sup> *The New-York Times* (17 February 1862): 5.

<sup>27</sup> *The New-York Times* (5 May 1862): 4.

grown to appreciate Gottschalk's playing, but never unconditionally, complained that he had ultimately failed to become a "serious" pianist. His only goal, Dwight claimed, was to shine as a performer of his own virtuosic works; by doing so, he neglected much more interesting music by renowned composers. "What would be the fate of artists of this stamp, in communities like those that sometimes blame the noble Clara Schumann, because her programmes invariably contain at least one of her gifted husband's piano-forte works?"<sup>28</sup> Perhaps inadvertently, Dwight was acknowledging the need to establish the figure of the specialized interpreter, a performer who would possess a special proximity and empathy with a particular composer and a particular genre; that figure would arrive in the following decade. Writing again about Gottschalk a year later, Dwight declared: "When a real genius, a Chopin, comes along, we certainly wish to hear him play his own compositions; first because we may suppose them to be worth hearing, and secondly because others can play us Beethoven and the older classics."<sup>29</sup> If empathy between composer and interpreter was presupposed, with Chopin, more than other composers, it was regarded as a requisite.

Gottschalk's remaining performances included two Chopin *préludes*, the popular one in D-flat major and the diminutive first one in C major, on 8 November 1862 and again on 23 May 1863. In the summer of that year he began a grueling tour around a nation at war. He would return to New York occasionally, but, for unknown reasons, he increasingly avoided Chopin's music in his concerts. Even one of his signature pieces, the Scherzo op. 31, was notably absent from his programs after 1863. There would be only two exceptions. On 30 March 1865 he played Chopin's *Marche funèbre*, the same

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<sup>28</sup> *Dwight's* 21/9 (31 May 1862): 71–72.

<sup>29</sup> *Dwight's* 23/5 (16 May 1863): 31.

work he had introduced to the New York public almost twelve years earlier.”<sup>30</sup> That would be his last performance of Chopin in New York. In September of that year, he traveled to San Francisco and, from there, to South America. He died in Brazil in 1869.

Gottschalk never returned to New York, the city where he had arrived twelve years before and where he had always hoped to settle. In the course of those years, the pianist gave at least ninety concerts in New York alone. Deducting about a third of those concerts for which programs were not advertised, 135 compositions were given 138 performances.<sup>31</sup> Most of his repertory consisted of his original works, but other composers were also represented, including Beethoven (the Sonata *Pathétique*), Schumann (*Andante con variazioni* for two pianos), and Liszt (a *Réminiscence* on Berlioz’s “Bénédiction,” from *Benvenuto Cellini*). In addition, he gave sixteen performances of eight different pieces by Chopin, including some waltzes and *préludes*, an *étude*, the *Impromptu* op. 29, the *Scherzo* op. 31, and the *Marche funèbre*.

***Chopin in the Historical Concerts of John N. Pattison, Sebastian Bach Mills, Alide Topp, and Jerome Hopkins, 1865–1869***

By the mid-nineteenth century, a “historical concert” was a type of musical event in which a number of works from the past, presented in a reasoned, usually chronological fashion, were performed. The purpose of the historical opportunity was to enlighten, rather than to entertain. Historical concerts had emerged, in the late 1830s, almost

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<sup>30</sup> To the *Tribune*, Gottschalk had played it “solidly and grandly, throwing into it all the gravity of passion it required. The burst of wild yet tender grief which speaks all through the beautiful movement in the major [mode, the middle section of the movement], was rendered with exquisite pathos and sentiment, fully realizing the thought of the composer. The reviewer was probably Henry C. Watson, who replaced William Fry when the latter died in 1864. *The New-York Tribune* (31 March 1865): 7.

<sup>31</sup> Minor, *Piano Concerts in New York City 1849–1868*, 466.

simultaneously in England, France, and modern-day Germany. The first piano recitals were virtually undistinguishable from the early historical concerts: by definition, most early piano recitals were historical. For a great part of the century, “historical” remained somehow a slippery adjective; performers, managers, and reviewers used it rather arbitrarily. The same concert, with the same program, could or could not be advertised as historical. In his autobiography, Rubinstein used the word “historical” to describe his piano recitals devoted to individual composers in Europe in the 1880s, but not to those, almost identical, he had given in New York a decade earlier. In his early recitals, Liszt would play, depending on his mood, music by Handel, Beethoven, Schubert and Chopin, or, instead, focus on his own works.

In 1837, Ignaz Moscheles organized a series of concerts, or “classical soirées,” in London, programmed with a manifest historical intent: Moscheles called them “historical” because he played works by Domenico Scarlatti, Purcell, Handel, Johann Sebastian Bach, Mozart, Weber, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn, as well as some of his own works. In an attempt to be historically accurate, Moscheles used a Broadwood harpsichord (or fortepiano), built in 1771. Liszt, meanwhile, gave priority to his own works in his early recitals, but he increasingly programmed music by eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century composers, including Handel, J. S. Bach, Weber, and Beethoven. In the following decade, Moscheles’s initiative was taken by Charles Hallé, Alexander Billet, and Arabella Goddard (1836–1922) in England and, in France, by Marie Pleyel (1811–1875), Charles Alkan (1813–1888), and a child prodigy named Camille Saint-Saëns. Clara Schumann, whose early repertory was initially limited to virtuosic pieces in the brilliant style, made a drastic change after her engagement and

marriage to Robert, and started to play works by Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert in her concerts. By the late 1840s, Clara continued to champion works by classical composers while adding works by contemporary composers including her husband, Chopin, and Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn. In a recital in Leipzig in 1846, she played a concerto by Mendelssohn (the only work on the program not for solo piano), one or more *Lieder ohne Worte* by Fanny Hansel, her own Scherzo op. 10, and Chopin's newest work, the *Barcarolle*, op. 60, in one of its first public performances. Perhaps the most famous cycle of historical recitals was carried out by the Austrian pianist Ernst Pauer in London, starting in 1861. In them, Pauer offered a thorough illustration of the literature for keyboard from the early seventeenth century, combining performance and lecture, with copious program notes.

The programs of early historical recitals tended to follow a rather fixed structure. They would almost invariably start with a Baroque piece or two, usually a fugue or an excerpt from a suite by Bach or Handel. Very rarely would a pianist play music by other Baroque composers, or by Mozart, Haydn, or Schubert. A famous Beethoven sonata (*Pathétique*, *Appassionata*, *Moonlight*, *Waldstein*, etc.) would likely ensue, followed by some short "character pieces" by Mendelssohn (typically some *Lieder ohne Worte*) or Chopin (waltzes, mazurkas, polonaises, etc.). The recital usually ended with one or more pieces by a celebrated virtuoso, including Liszt.

Almost thirty years after Moscheles's first London concerts, the idea was replicated in New York by John Nelson Pattison (1845–1905), the second American-born pianist (after Mason) who showed significant interest in Chopin's music. Pattison had returned from Europe to the city in 1861 after spending several years in Leipzig and

Weimar studying with some of Europe's best pianists, including Liszt. Soon, Pattison become, after Mason, the first American-born pianist who showed significant interest in Chopin's music. Pattison's humble origins did not play in his favor, at least initially. Raised in rural upstate New York, Pattison was received alternatively with words of condescendence and admiration, depending on the emissary, for having a less distinguished upbringing than his colleagues. In an anonymous pamphlet published in 1868, Pattison was portrayed as an ideal representative of the "Young American" (the Northerner in particular), who embodied values such as wholeness, virility, humility, and honesty, and who had to overcome an upbringing rather hostile for a musician in rural America, within a family who "shared neither in his artistic enthusiasm, nor . . . in his belief in himself." He was lauded as "the most youthful, and, it may not be too much to say, the most original and most eminent of our American Pianists."<sup>32</sup> Fearing that his career as a virtuoso would find more obstacles than those of other pianists who came from overseas, he took a different tactic.

In January 1865, Pattison organized a series of "soirées of piano-forte music," to be held at the Steinway Concert Rooms, of manifestly didactic purposes, with such enthusiasm that he wrote the notes to the program to be distributed to concertgoers. For the fourth soirée, on 2 March, Pattison decided on an astonishing program which included works by J. S. Bach and then-obscure composers such as Jacques Champion Chambonnières (1601–1672), Domenico Scarlatti, Jean-Philippe Rameau, and Giovanni Battista Pergolesi. Days before, the press announced that Pattison proposed "to present to the public (for the first time in this country) illustrations of the earlier schools of

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<sup>32</sup> G. R. Cromwell, ed. *Memoir of J.N. Pattison, the Great Pianist and Composer* (New York: Torrey Brothers), 1868.

Pianoforte compositions extant in the sixteenth century . . . having secured an instrument similar to those used at the time to aid him in the more perfect representation of the music of that date. The instrument used was made 125 years ago in London, and is the Harpsichord and piano combined. It was purchased by J[onas] Chickering. It will be curious to contrast the old music with the new—the modern with the ancient.”<sup>33</sup> The program included one or more unidentified pieces attributed to Pergolesi, a sonata by Domenico Scarlatti, a prelude from Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*, an “Andante and minuetto” by Mozart, and a Chopin étude (the popular “Revolutionary,” op. 10, no. 12).

Reviews of Pattison’s recitals were, without exception, negative: the New York correspondent to *Dwight’s* (probably George William Curtis) reproached Pattison’s carelessness for providing the wrong date of composition of some of the pieces. To the critic, Pattison had been “but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous. He has not even an idea of how to handle this respectable old instrument, or to interpret these old, and, in their way, characteristic compositions.” In truth, Pattison had been treated with unwavering disdain by *Dwight’s* since his American debut. Even though he had studied with an impressive list of teachers in Europe, including Thalberg, Liszt, von Bülow, Reinecke, and Henselt, Dwight refused to appreciate the merits of a pianist whose early access to culture had been hampered by his unsophisticated origins: Pattison was the opposite of “a musician from inward, spiritual necessity; but as a tradesman selects the business of a baker, shoemaker, tailor . . . so has he chosen the piano-forte as his

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<sup>33</sup> The announcement was printed in, among other journals and newspapers, *Dwight’s* 24/26 (18 March 1865): 413.

business.”<sup>34</sup> Regardless of Dwight’s and other critics’ initial reticence, Pattison would eventually enjoy a rather prolific and successful career.

Also in the spring of 1865 Mills offered a series of “Soirées of Piano-Forte Music of the Old and New School” which included music by Scarlatti, Bach, Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt. Mills’s status as a pianist was not enough to ensure a large attendance. In the *Albion*, a critic (probably Henry C. Watson) gave the first American recognition of what was still regarded as a pioneering musical initiative. The objective of the historical recitals, he informed, was “to illustrate in the most direct and appreciable way the various schools of pianoforte music, from Scarlatti to Liszt”; Mills was, according to the critic, emulating ventures of that kind which had been carried out in London by Ernst Pauer and in Germany “by hosts of people.”<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, in the same issue in which Pattison had been so harshly censured, the New York correspondent to *Dwight’s* praised Mills for his knowledge of the classics and for continuing to snub the bravura repertory in the concert hall: to him, Mills was “not only a virtuoso, but also one who endeavors earnestly to remain true to the spirit of art. His musical cultivation is not one-sided; he does not strive to awaken astonishment by means of this or that species of charlatanism, he appears to have a higher aim.”<sup>36</sup> The works by Chopin that Mills played included the Rondo for Two Pianos, op. 73, with one of his students, Lina Luckhardt; an unidentified nocturne (as an encore); and two études, op. 10, no. 5 and op. 25, no 7, the latter a piece that would soon become one of his favorites. In addition, the program included a Sonata in D major by Scarlatti, one of the two preludes and fugues in C minor

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<sup>34</sup> *Dwight’s* 24/26 (18 March 1865): 413.

<sup>35</sup> *The Albion* 43/2 (3 June 1865): 259.

<sup>36</sup> *Dwight’s* 24/26 (18 March 1865): 414.

from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Schumann's *Intermezzi*, op. 4, and Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody* no. 10.

Other responses to Mills's enterprise were also positive. Watson wrote another review, this one for the *Tribune*, deeming the Rondo "extremely beautiful, imaginative, now bold and vigorous, then dreamlike tender, and through all there runs a vein of such inspiration of pure genius," while the etudes became "the executive gems of the evening. In these Mr. Mills displayed much sentiment and sympathy of touch, and a nice shade of color and expression."<sup>37</sup>

Three years after Pattison's and Mills's initiatives, historical concerts were still considered peculiar and somehow elitist. In January 1868, the press announced that Alide Topp would introduce a series of historical concerts "of a somewhat novel character," in which she would "render some of the characteristic compositions of some eminent masters, with a view to the illustration of their peculiar styles and the expression of the spirit of their works in a manner to interest a cultivated audience."<sup>38</sup> Topp ended up giving just one isolated soirée, on 6 February, in which she played (not in this order) a fugue by Handel, a Bach suite, Beethoven's Sonata *Appassionata*, Schumann's *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, Chopin's *Berceuse*, and two works by Liszt, one of the earlier *Mephisto* waltzes and the étude "La campanella." More ambitious than Pattison's and Mills's earlier experiments, Topp's concert reflected not only her musical expertise and taste but also her stamina: the program, in content more than in size, would not be out of place in a modern-day recital. Watson, then writing for the *New-York Tribune*, wrote that "no other lady pianist, and few artists of either sex with whom we are familiar,

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<sup>37</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (7 March 1865): 5.

<sup>38</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (27 January 1868): 4. Topp was one of von Bülow's favorite pupils.

would have ventured the dangerous experiment which Miss Topp tried last night of entertaining an audience for an entire evening without assistance of any kind, and with a selection of music fitted only for persons of a somewhat cultivated taste.”<sup>39</sup> Addressing the purpose of the concert, the critic believed that it was historical “inasmuch as it presented compositions from several of the principal masters of the art during the last hundred and fifty years; but the title would have been more appropriate if the program had been arranged in historical order, so the changes from Bach to Liszt would have been more clearly presented.” Watson disagreed with the idea that a pianist could show the same command and fidelity to the styles of different composers, anticipating the idea, so often taken for granted nowadays, that an interpreter should specialize in a particular style, period, or repertory. More so, Topp’s skill helped dissipate the notion that women could not, or should not, play certain works, particularly the more strenuous ones.

Yet another series of recitals featuring music “of the old and new school” was established at Dodworth’s Hall by an American pianist, C. Jerome Hopkins (1836–1898) in the spring of 1868. The purpose of these recitals was, like Pattison’s three years earlier, to educate rather than entertain by means of presenting emblematic works of diverse eras, usually to an interested and appreciative audience. Chopin was represented only once, by an unidentified piece. The series was sparsely attended and was soon discontinued.

Finally, in the spring of 1869, the organist, singer, historian, and lecturer Fanny Raymond Ritter collaborated with Mills in a series of historical recitals at Steinway Hall that introduced an important novelty. In addition to the expected selection of pieces from various eras, Ritter sang an assortment of folksongs from diverse nations, regions, and even ethnic groups including Gypsies, Arabs, Creoles, and, allegedly, Hottentots.

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<sup>39</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (7 February 1868): 4.

Meanwhile, Mills contributed with a selection of piano works derived from folklore. The pieces were collected and arranged by Fanny and her husband, Frédéric Louis Ritter. In the prospectus she wrote for the occasion, the singer explained that her goal was “to give as complete a sketch of the development of the vocal and piano repertoires as possible and to raise the artistic taste of the New York concertgoers,” by means of showing how “vernacular music” had inspired classical composers.<sup>40</sup> The recitals, especially the first, received an unusually large coverage both in specialized journals and local newspapers. Reviewers pointed out the ambitious scope of the programs and their originality, noting that values such as musicianship had prevailed over the potential aesthetic appeal of the music. The first recital was sparsely attended, due, in part, to the fact that the soprano Clara Louise Kellogg (1842–1916) was singing one of her signature roles, Marguerite, in Gounod’s *Faust*, that same afternoon at the Academy of Music. But critics who attended the recital were enthusiastic, some lamenting that so much great music of the past continued to be unknown and neglected by modern performers.<sup>41</sup>

The influence of folk music on composers was acknowledged without question: Watson thought that the identification of Chopin as a composer of folk music was improbable, but found that the mazurka and the polonaise, “being found on popular national melodies, [were] not out of place [in the program].”<sup>42</sup> Even the waltz, the ultimate example of cosmopolitan and fashionable dance at the time, was considered folk music (rather oddly, the performers chose to illustrate their claim with waltzes by Chopin).

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<sup>40</sup> *Dwight’s* 28/24 (13 February 1869): 400.

<sup>41</sup> *Dwight’s* 28/26 (13 March 1869): 415.

<sup>42</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (8 March 1869): 5.

After the second recital, *Dwight's* and other publications proudly informed their readers that, in Leipzig, the historian Friedrich Chrysander (1826–1901) had praised Mills's and Ritter's initiative in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, and eagerly reproduced his words: "We have read these programs and the remarks attached to them with real enjoyment. They display tact, insight and knowledge of the rich material employed; they are not put together without critical taste, as are those of the London recitals. We recommend their plan as an example to all our conductors and concert-givers in Germany."<sup>43</sup> When, in 1884, Frédéric Ritter reminisced about these those recitals in his influential book *Music in America* (1883), he noted that they were "so novel and artistically instructive that they excited interest and attention among musical connoisseurs all over the country: conductors began to arrange their programs in chronological order, and historical recitals, more or less copied from our plan, have become a necessary part of a city winter course or conservatory scheme of concerts."<sup>44</sup>

### *Other pianists, 1865–1869*

The question of empathy between the performer and Chopin continued to be a recurrent focus of discussion as the century progressed. It was again addressed in 1865 after a series of concerts given by the celebrated German pianist Edward Dannreuther (1844–1905), who visited the United States before settling in England. He debuted with the Chopin's Concerto op. 21 (second and third movements only) on 11 September, and five days later he played a nocturne, probably the first of op. 15, in F major, and the Waltz op. 64 no. 2; he played the latter again a week later. Dannreuther did not convince

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<sup>43</sup> *The New-York Post* (15 April 1869): 4.

<sup>44</sup> Frédéric Louis Ritter, *Music in America* (New York: Scribner, 1884), 359

the reviewer of the *Herald*, who stated that the originality and individuality of Chopin's music could only be revealed by "a pianist capable of sympathizing with the imagination . . . of the composer," qualities that Dannreuther allegedly lacked.<sup>45</sup> In the *Tribune*, Watson went further by accusing Dannreuther of inaccurate understanding of the *tempo rubato*, the stylistic feature always identified with Chopin, as the definitive sign of his lack of empathy.<sup>46</sup> He deemed Dannreuther's playing too impassive during the "recitations"—the recitative-like passages of the second movement of the concerto—where he "lacked breadth," preferring Mills' rendition of the same episode.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, opinions about Dannreuther's affinity to Chopin's music, the undying source of discussion among critics, were by no means unanimous. To the always perceptive correspondent in *Dwight's*, the pianist possessed "exactly the poetic feeling, the gentle and tender expression, absolutely needed in an exponent of this exceptional composer . . . [he was] intelligent, a true musician" who did not care about displays of vapid virtuosity.<sup>48</sup> The critic's appraisal of Dannreuther's cerebral, detached approach to Chopin's was the kind of assessment that was starting to be directed to German pianists; it would become clear in the responses to Hans von Bülow's approach during his 1875–76 American tour. A critic of *The Round Table* described Dannreuther as a pianist "of the phlegmatic, Teutonic type, and, to an audience accustomed to the sentimental style and astonishing contrasts produced by Gottschalk . . . rather cold and intellectual."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *The New-York Herald* (13 September 1865): 4.

<sup>46</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (16 September 1865): 5.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Dwight's* 25/14 (30 September 1865): 111–12.

<sup>49</sup> *The Round Table* 3 (23 September 1865): 45.

In 1866 Carl Wolfssohn moved temporarily from Philadelphia to New York. In a series of matinees he organized in the city, he performed the complete cycle of Beethoven's piano sonatas, a remarkable feat never before attempted in America, but not, regrettably, the "Chopin series" he had tried in Philadelphia. Wolfssohn was immediately recognized as a pianist of the "intellectual type," an interpreter rather than a virtuoso. The *Times* described him as "a pianist of fine taste, who has a large eclectic love of music apart from any consideration of its mere difficulty. He is one of the few who prefers to interpret an author rather than himself."<sup>50</sup> To Dwight, Wolfssohn was a "talented and progressive artist."<sup>51</sup> For his New York debut at one of Thomas's Symphony Soirées at Irving Hall, a large hall opened in 1860 at the corner of Irving Place and Fifteenth Street, Wolfssohn played Chopin's *Fantaisie*, op. 49.

Chopin's études were well represented in 1866. Mills played some of them on 7 April and again on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the same month, with "his" Étude in C-sharp minor (op. 25, no. 7) being heard in both programs. For a concert on 18 November, he performed what was announced as a "little etude" in the advertisements, perhaps the popular op. 25, no. 2. Pattison, always a champion of Chopin's études, played at least one on 7 October. Études were also heard at a concert on 24 November by one or more students of a music school that had been recently opened by the violinist Edward Mollenhauer.

Several public performances of some of Chopin's polonaises took place in 1866, most by soon-forgotten pianists, including Wehli, Joseph Poznanski, and a certain Groschurt (the last two were guests in two of Bergmann's Sunday sacred concerts). In addition, students of pianists such as Goldbeck, Mason, and Mills gave occasional

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<sup>50</sup> *The New-York Times* (16 January 1866): 5.

<sup>51</sup> *Dwight's* 25/25 (3 February 1866): 180.

concerts at first-class venues, including the Academy of Music and Steinway Hall. Some were semi-professional affairs, presumably arranged with the help of their teachers, but sometimes the students made official debuts for which they were unprepared. Critics often disapproved of these premature presentations and complained about the students' substandard performances of well-known works by Chopin. Emilie Knauss, a student of Mason and sometime composer, performed the popular Polonaise op. 53 on 7 April 1866. *The Times* reproached her decision to choose a work that was too well known for her lackluster debut.<sup>52</sup> Yet, the presentation to the public of an American pianist sometimes sparked considerable interest in the press. In December 1866, J. A. Dawson, an otherwise unidentified American pianist, returned to New York after having successfully completed his studies in Belgium. Announcements of his debut, where he performed the popular *Fantaisie-Improptu*, emphasized that Dawson had won "three first prizes in succession" at the Brussels Conservatoire.

It was in this atmosphere of new pianists that Richard Hoffman, a fixture on the stage in earlier times, made a rare appearance, playing an unidentified piece by Chopin on 16 December. Hoffman substituted for another pianist, Bernardus Boeckelmann, who would have played a nocturne, according to the advertisements.<sup>53</sup> In March 1865, *Dwight's* New York correspondent had already discussed the case of Hoffman, who had become an important teacher but was "nowadays seldom heard."<sup>54</sup> Dwight indirectly admitted that Hoffman had been unable to catch up with the new generation of pianists

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<sup>52</sup> "Why do young artists invariably overtax themselves on the important but trying occasion of their debuts?" *The New-York Times* (9 April 1866): 5.

<sup>53</sup> A Dutch pianist, Boeckelman was a prominent piano teacher in New York. The future conductor of the New York Philharmonic, Walter Damrosch (1862–1950), was one of his students.

<sup>54</sup> *Dwight's* 24/16 (18 March 1865): 413–14.

who succeeded him (especially Mills). There would be nonetheless another significant performance of Chopin's music by Hoffman in April 1869, the Nocturne op. 15 no. 2, played as an encore after a performance of the Concerto op. 11 with the Philharmonic Society. Fifteen years after his first performance of a Chopin work, most reviews still noted Hoffman's lack of empathy with the spirit of his music.

The case of Mason was not very different, his appearances on the stage having gradually diminished throughout the decade. His presence had been limited to the soirées of chamber music that were discontinued in 1868; while his status as pianist remained high, he was overshadowed by an ever-growing number of new pianists, as the critic of the *Musical World* realized.<sup>55</sup> But the tragic effect of the changing times on pianists of the "old school" was most painfully felt, in 1869, by no other than Leopold de Meyer. The virtuoso, who in 1845 had taken New York by storm, made another visit in 1867, which failed miserably. The fiasco is illustrative of the profound changes that the musical life in the city had undergone in the previous twenty years. The once-valued magnetism of the virtuosos was no longer enough for an increasingly discriminating audience. Besides, he was not as respected a composer as Gottschalk and Thalberg were. The latter had probably presaged the incoming changes when he decided to retire from the concert circuit in the early 1850s, a withdrawal he nonetheless interrupted for his 1856 American tour. In an attempt to adapt to the modern times, de Meyer programmed works by Schubert, Liszt, and Chopin—authors he entirely passed over in his first tour—along with his own array of fantasies and variations. On 7 December he played the Nocturne in E-flat major, op. 9 no. 2. De Meyer's own works sounded out of place, and the

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<sup>55</sup> *The Musical World* 47/5 (30 January 1869): 70.

“embellishments” he added to the nocturne were regarded as inadmissible by the correspondent to *Dwight’s*, who admitted that it was the duty of a faithful critic

to utter a few unpleasant but necessary truths. It would be far better if at such a concert that gentleman should play music of a classical character. His selections could scarcely be dignified by that name, with the exception of the Chopin Nocturne, and that was murdered outright by the insertion of flourishes and embellishments which were thoroughly meretricious and totally devoid of the Chopin spirit. It may, perhaps, be superfluous to remark that it is useless for Mr. De Meyer to attempt to improve upon the works of the author just mentioned; any such attempt must result in failure; if we are to hear Chopin let us hear him, and not somebody else.<sup>56</sup>

The practice of including *fioriture* to works suited to *bel canto* style (the E-flat Nocturne is perhaps the best example) was by no means unheard of; Chopin himself instructed his students to add runs of notes in some of the variations of the main melody, “in the style of [Giuditta] Pasta.”<sup>57</sup> Clearly, de Meyer was not the only performer who, in the 1860s—or much later—was “murdering” the nocturne with the “insertion of flourishes”; many listeners familiarized with the piece, less overzealous than Dwight, would have expected the embellishments.

In January 1868 de Meyer was announced as soloist with Theodore Thomas’s orchestra, but he was ultimately replaced for by Mills, who played two movements of Chopin’s Concerto op. 11. The same critic noticed that “there seemed to be a very general and lively satisfaction manifested, at the substitution of Mr. Mills, as soloist, for Mr. De Meyer.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Dwight’s* 26/15 (21 December, 1867): 158.

<sup>57</sup> Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*, 77–78.

<sup>58</sup> *Dwight’s* 27/22 (18 January 1868): 173. Although the practice of adding embellishments might be condemned by some, it was by no means unusual at the time; some of the recordings of Raoul Koczalski, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Vladimir Horowitz, to mention just three pianists, confirm that the habit of using what could be called “romantic freedom” in performance was still tolerated in the twentieth century.

Besides a performance of the Concerto op. 21 by Mills with the Philharmonic on 9 March, Pattison and Wolfssohn completed the performances of Chopin's music in 1867. On 26 May, Pattison, always an admirer of Chopin's early works, performed the *Rondo à la Krakowiak*, op. 14, probably the same rondo he had played on 12 January; he would repeat it on 3 January of the following year. In contrast with Chopin's early style, Wolfssohn chose a piece of great complexity and therefore little popular appeal. He presumably played the seldom-heard Polonaise in F-sharp minor, op. 44 on 6 April, announced erroneously in the press as "Polonaise in F minor."

The next performance of the complete F-minor Concerto in New York by Mills took place in January 1868. Not since the premiere, in 1861, had the concerto be heard in its entirety. Perhaps the greater immediate appeal of the second and third movements could explain the insistent neglect of the first. The nocturne-like second movement and the brilliancy of the third, complete with references to the rhythm of the mazurka, must have been recognized by the public as particularly Chopinesque. Praise for both of Chopin's concertos, with "originality" and "freshness" as leitmotifs, turned gradually less favorable after the mid-1860s, when preoccupation with an efficient handling of the form became a more important factor in judging a composition than its virtuosity or use of imaginative ideas.<sup>59</sup> Mills was once again the soloist in the first movement of op. 21, accompanied by Thomas's orchestra, on 21 May. The New York correspondent to *Dwight's* wrote what may have been the first negative review of Mills's early American

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<sup>59</sup> Rink, *Chopin Studies* 2, 27. Dwight's review of the *larghetto* was still described in terms such as "heavenly" and "exquisitely romantic." *Dwight's* 26/23 (18 January 18 1868): 173. However, after a performance of the first movement in May of the same year, also with Mills as soloist, the reviewer of the *Tribune* praised the pianist but wrote the first negative criticism of the composition, which he judged "singularly uninteresting." *The New York-Tribune* (22 May 1868): 7.

career, complaining that “there was a very unusual and incomprehensible ‘muddiness’ in his playing about many of the rapid passages and much of his phrasing was weak.”<sup>60</sup>

Other performances of Chopin’s music in 1868 included an off-season performance, on 1 June, of the Polonaise op. 22 (perhaps with the preceding *Andante spianato*), and an unidentified mazurka, on the 11<sup>th</sup>, both by the German pianist Egbert Lansing (1833?–1903?). An unidentified semi-amateur pianist, Miss N. Millet, gave a complimentary concert at Steinway’s Hall on 5 December 1868. She played badly a movement of Chopin’s Concerto in E minor. *The Sun* (the only newspaper that reviewed the concert) reported that nervousness had made her play “hard, cold, and heavy,” blaming the failure on his lack of judgment for selecting a work too difficult for a girl presumably still in her teenage years.<sup>61</sup> Obviously, Mills’s performance of the same piece a few weeks earlier was still resonating.

Two German pianists, August Arnold (1838–1939) and Ferdinand von Inten (1848–1918), made their American debuts in New York in 1869, settling in the city afterwards. Arnold played the Polonaise op. 53 at his debut, on 28 February, and days later he played the Nocturne op. 15, no. 2, a piece that seemed to be receiving considerable attention at that time. Never as admired in New York as he would be in Chicago, von Inten nonetheless left an important mark as a scholarly musician, specialist in chamber music, and an extraordinary teacher: his most famous student was Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler (1863–1927). On 28 January he played the Ballade op. 23. The correspondent to *Dwight’s* remarked that he had played without the score and as a result

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<sup>60</sup> *Dwight’s* 28/11 (June 6, 1868): 25.

<sup>61</sup> *The Sun* (7 December 1868): 1.

he had skipped several measures in the coda.<sup>62</sup> At a subsequent performance, von Inten performed a nocturne in E-flat (probably op. 9, no. 2) and a Fantasy on *Faust* by [Hugo?] Bussmeyer (1842–1914). The latter piece was described as “simply idiotic” by *Dwight’s* New York correspondent. The critic wrote that “Ferdinand von Inten [had been] most injudicious in coupling such trash with the exquisite Nocturne.”<sup>63</sup>

There was another performance of the Concerto op. 11 (arranged for two pianos) on 13 February 1869, by Josefina Filomeno, a visiting musician who was billed as a Chilean prodigy, equally proficient on the piano and the violin (she alternated on these two instruments in her concerts). Filomeno’s flawless technique did not impress the critic of the *Herald*, who remarked that phrasing, rather than virtuosity, was a quality indispensable for Chopin’s music.<sup>64</sup>

The ongoing arrival of new pianists throughout the decade of the 1860s translated into a broader exposure to little-played works of Chopin and new approaches to their interpretation. In sum, the standardized image of Chopin that had prevailed in earlier years expanded and became more complex as different perspectives were taken into account and were interpreted by a growing number of Chopin enthusiasts, more musically educated than before. Amidst this array of newcomers, Mills remained the unchallenged authority on Chopin. In the first five years of the following decade, some of the best living pianists came to New York and introduced new approaches to the performance of Chopin’s music. These are examined in the next chapter.

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<sup>62</sup> *Dwight’s* 28/27 (13 February 1869): 399.

<sup>63</sup> *Dwight’s* 29/4 (8 May 1869): 29.

<sup>64</sup> *The New-York Herald* (15 February 1869): 7.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *Performances, 1870–1876*

The 1870s reflected the establishment of the new musical priorities laid out in the previous decade, typified by the progressive abandonment of the bravura repertory and the re-assessment of the classical repertory as suitable for the concert hall. The continuing success of pianists like Alide Topp and Sebastian Bach Mills, plus new additions such as Anna Mehlig (1846–1928), Marie Krebs (1851–1900), Anton Rubinstein, Hans von Bülow, and Anna Essipoff (1851–1914), illustrated the emergence of the pianist-interpreter. Their progressive attitude was reflected in their programs, which tended to focus on complex works that demanded from the listener both a receptive disposition and a greater intellectual effort in order to be fully appreciated. In that regard, these pianists represented the culmination of a process that had started with Rakemann, Hoffman, Mason, and other pioneers whose aim was to establish a concert repertory based on works of musical quality. The set of conventions, attitudes, and aesthetic codes adopted in the 1870s outlined the contours of the musical taste which was destined to be maintained, with few modifications, until our times: that is perhaps the most important accomplishment achieved in the decade that puts an end to this study.

The full establishment of the solo recital as a successful concert format also materialized in the 1870s. In an attempt to dispel any potential accusations for being monotonous, programs were designed according to one principle: to display as much variety as possible. Combining long, abstract works (for example, a sonata, performed in its entirety) with sets of shorter character pieces and finishing up with one or more

virtuosic pieces, the success would be guaranteed—as long as the public was receptive enough. Initially, historical congruence was a matter of little concern among pianists, but soon they began to design their programs with regard to the chronological order in which the works were written. More specifically, the presence of Chopin’s music on the New York concert stage in the first half of the 1870s was marked by three occurrences: the incidence of his works in the programs of three female pianists, Topp, Mehlig, and Krebs; the continuance of the status of Mills as the unchallenged authority on Chopin (especially as interpreter of his concertos); and the visits of the two leading virtuosos of the time, Anton Rubinstein and Hans von Bülow in the 1872–73 and 1875–76 seasons, respectively.

In an increasingly heterogeneous musical scene, some pianists of waning fame like Richard Hoffman had fewer opportunities to shine. In the spring of 1872, he managed to organize a single matinee in which he played a waltz by Chopin as well as some piano solo and chamber music by Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Bach, among others. *The Tribune*, the only major newspaper that reported on the concert, dismissed Hoffman’s performance with a few vague remarks, arguing that his style had not “increased in precision and distinctness” from past years.<sup>1</sup> A year later, in the spring of 1873, Hoffman organized a short series of three chamber concerts at Chickering Hall with the cellist Frederick Bergner and J. Burke at the violin. To *The Sun*, the series were more “social gatherings of musical friends than formal concerts.”<sup>2</sup> In fact, Hoffman had relied on his students to fill the concert hall. In the course of the series, Chopin was represented by the *Andante spianato and Grand Polonaise* op. 22 (one of the rare

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<sup>1</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (26 February 1872): 8.

<sup>2</sup> *The Sun* (10 March 1873): 2.

occasions in which the piece was performed entirely), the Scherzo op. 31, two unidentified waltzes, and at least one mazurka. The critic of *The Orpheonist* lamented that some considered that Hoffman was by then past his prime.”<sup>3</sup> In the following years, Hoffman’s accomplishments would be often remembered, yet his appearances on the stage, while never entirely halted, became progressively sporadic.

### *Anna Mehlig*

With Alide Topp soon out of the race (she would return to Europe at the end of the 1869–70 season), Mehlig and Marie Krebs became, with Mills, the city’s most active and successful pianists until the arrival of Rubinstein.<sup>4</sup> On 19 January 1870, just days after her American debut in Boston, Mehlig was officially introduced to the New York public with a solo recital at Steinway Hall (she had assisted other performers before, but never had been the top biller) in which she played an unidentified nocturne by Chopin, discreetly placed in the middle of a program that included weightier works by Beethoven, Liszt, and Schumann, as well as a Bach prelude and fugue. The *New-York Post* labeled Mehlig a pianist of the “German School—a code to identify absence of excessive sentimentalism—and reported that her success was one of the most thunderous in the history of the city, with Ole Bull leading the public in round after round of applause.<sup>5</sup>

Mehlig’s exclusive concentration on the classic repertory helped stimulate a debate over the dichotomy of popular vs. cultivated entertainment. In the *Tribune*, Willis

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<sup>3</sup> *The Orpheonist and Philharmonic Journal* 9/60 (15 March 1873): 2.

<sup>4</sup> Before her departure, however, Topp gave some concerts; Chopin’s music was represented by an unidentified scherzo (probably op. 31, which was in her repertory) on at least three concerts, the last one on 3 May at the Union League, a small theater located far uptown, on Madison Avenue and Twenty-Sixth Street.

<sup>5</sup> *The New-York Post* (20 January 1870): 2.

complained that the program of her debut was addressed to musicians rather than to a general audience, and expressed the hope she would include some lighter pieces in her future concerts.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, her reliance on too heterogeneous a program could be seen as a handicap. While being able to play music by many composers was commendable, the public might still expect to hear a pianist devoted to a specific repertory. Another critic complained about the brusque transitions from one style to another. The diversity shown in her program was probably intended to show her mastery on the “different methods of the composers for the piano,” the critic wrote, adding that nothing could be more abrupt than “the transition from Chopin to Bach.”<sup>7</sup>

After her success, Mehlig and Mills soon established a fruitful collaboration, assisting each other on numerous concerts and occasionally playing together. *Hexaméron*, the work that Frederick Rakemann had introduced to New York audiences in 1842, enjoyed a revival in the early 1870s with four performances between March 1870 and January 1871, always with the two pianists playing Liszt’s two-piano arrangement (Mehlig allegedly used the manuscript of the piece that Liszt himself had given to her). Proving that some bravura pieces still remained appealing, the response of the public—in which the best of the German community was present, according to the *Post*—was enthusiastic.<sup>8</sup> After the first of the four performances, on 7 March 1870, Henry Watson, in the *Tribune*, wrote, perhaps a little exaggeratedly, that their joint concert had been “one of the best in years,”<sup>9</sup> while the reviewer of the *Orpheonist* claimed that Mills and

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<sup>6</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (20 January 1870): 4.

<sup>7</sup> *The Independent* 22/1104 (27 January 1870): 2.

<sup>8</sup> *The New-York Post* (3 March 1870): 2.

<sup>9</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (8 March 1870): 5. The remaining performances of *Hexaméron* in 1870 took place on 17 April (a Sunday concert at Steinway Hall) and once again the day after in a benefit for the Sheltering

Mehlig understood each other better than other musical couples, including Gottschalk and Harry Sanderson (1837?–1871), and Hoffman and Wehli.<sup>10</sup> *The Independent's* reviewer focused on Mehlig's playing, which he rated superior to “most of her male counterparts,”<sup>11</sup> while the correspondent to *Dwight's* emphasized the fact that she was as good as Clara Schumann and Arabella Goddard, the foremost female pianists of the time, and better than her male counterparts—with exception of Liszt . . . Rubinstein, and Tausig.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Marie Krebs***

By the time the nineteen-year-old Marie Krebs made her New York debut, on 24 October 1870, news about her success in England had been circulating for some time. In January 1871, Krebs organized a series of four matinees of solo recitals at Steinway Hall, which featured an astonishing selection of works by Baroque, Classic, and Romantic composers, including Rameau, Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Rubinstein, and Liszt. The correspondent to *Dwight's* described the audience at Krebs's first matinee as made of “critical” listeners, including “nearly all the pianists known in New York.”<sup>13</sup> By February, the critic of the *Independent* commented that in just a few concerts, Krebs had already achieved a great reputation among the musical elite of the city, while also being

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Arms, an asylum for destitute children. Finally, Mills and Mehlig played the piece again in January of the following year.

<sup>10</sup> *The Orpheonist and Philharmonic Journal* 6/41 (6 April 1870): 2. Those pianists had sometimes performed together, but never in any music by Chopin.

<sup>11</sup> *The Independent* 22/1111 (17 March 1870): 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Dwight's* 29/26 (12 March 1870): 207.

<sup>13</sup> *Dwight's* 30/24 (11 February 1871): 400.

able to sell out all the tickets promptly.<sup>14</sup> The program of Krebs's first matinee, on 14 January, included two Beethoven sonatas, a *Novelette* by Schumann, a Hungarian rhapsody by Liszt, and the always popular Impromptu op. 29 by Chopin, an undemanding and simple piece among the rest of the works. Krebs added to the program some music by his father, Carl Krebs (1804–1880). Critics censured Krebs's aloofness and stoic style of playing. The reviewer of the *Herald* wrote that her rendition of the Impromptu lacked “color, phrasing, and artistic feeling,” and that she did not “feel Chopin any better than Beethoven.”<sup>15</sup> The *Tribune* also noted that “her energy [was] not matched by her expressivity,”<sup>16</sup> while the *Independent* described Krebs's playing of Chopin's music as “healthy” and “warm,” but “too uniform.”<sup>17</sup> Despite being repeatedly criticized, Krebs maintained her commitment to the music of Chopin in her succeeding recitals. On her second matinee, on 21 January, Krebs played Chopin's Polonaise op. 53, which Watson dubbed, in truly nineteenth-century fashion, the “Reiter” polonaise, from the “imitation in the bass of the galloping of a horse” in the middle section.<sup>18</sup> To him, Krebs's playing was “vigorous . . . with a little deficiency sometimes of delicacy”; this time, however, the critic appreciated a “breadth of expression” that he had not heard in previous performances.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *The Independent* 23/1157 (2 February 1871): 2.

<sup>15</sup> *The New-York Herald* (15 January 1870): 7.

<sup>16</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (15 January 1871): 4.

<sup>17</sup> *The Independent* 23/1156 (26 January 1871): 2.

<sup>18</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (23 January 1871): 8. That same evening, Krebs's rival, Anna Mehlig, played Chopin's E-minor Concerto with the Thomas's Orchestra at Steinway Hall. Thus that day became the first one in which Chopin's music was heard in New York in one of its most important venues, by two of the best pianists.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

Other reviewers were still bewildered by Krebs's "unsympathetic" approach to Chopin. The critic of the *Herald* flatly declared that she could not play Chopin, arguing that her tempo had been too fast ("to play [the polonaise] *molto allegro* destroys it") and that she had maintained an inelegant level of *fortissimo* throughout the middle section.<sup>20</sup> He conceded that Krebs would overcome her "limitations" with time and experience; then, with "the qualities which she lacks at present in her interpretation of Beethoven and Chopin, it will be difficult to find her superior among artists."<sup>21</sup>

Krebs then took a short hiatus from her matinees, during which critics took another opportunity to assess her accomplishments.<sup>22</sup> The *Herald* admitted that she had "given unmistakable proofs of talent of a very high order, and her faults are but natural for a young pianist."<sup>23</sup> In the *Christian Union*, a reviewer wrote that the pianist was "quite unusual," lacking the contrast of delicacy and power that Mehlig possessed but not appearing to be a member of "any special school" or have a "distinct style of musical works, playing a miscellaneous selection . . . and being happily successful in nearly all that she attempts."<sup>24</sup> Krebs's adherence to a classical repertory was seen by the critic as an advantage which distinguished her from pianists still confined to a repertory made of crowd pleasers: around that time, James Wehli was still being condemned for primarily seeking the public's favor with programs of light, uninteresting works, instead of serious

<sup>20</sup> *The New-York Herald* (22 January 1871): 10.

<sup>21</sup> *The New-York Herald* (30 January 1871): 3.

<sup>22</sup> Krebs, however, kept a busy agenda elsewhere. On 4 February, Mills joined Krebs in Chopin's Rondo for two pianos, op. 73. She also played an étude in A minor and an unidentified nocturne by Chopin, probably as an encore, on 6 February, at a concert where she assisted the soprano Ms. Hallier-Dossy at Steinway Hall. A few days after his concert with Krebs, Mills again played *Hexaméron* with Anna Mehlig.

<sup>23</sup> *The New-York Herald* (5 February 1871): 3.

<sup>24</sup> *The Christian Union* 3/13 (29 March 1871): 198.

repertory for the consideration of his peers. After a matinee on 20 February, in which he played an unidentified étude by Chopin, the *Tribune* complained about Wehli's neglect of "classical music" while preferring "the brilliant but less substantial compositions which figure on the bills of miscellaneous concerts," the same remarks he had been receiving since his debut six years earlier.<sup>25</sup>

Krebs resumed her matinee recitals on 25 February.<sup>26</sup> By then, according to the *Independent*, she had played eighty works in nine recitals, a number that seems exaggerated by modern standards but which by no means was atypical at the time; in any case, the *Herald* admitted that there were few pianists in America who could boast of such a repertory.<sup>27</sup> On 4 March, Chopin was further represented by the Scherzo op. 31, the *Berceuse*, the Nocturne op. 37, no. 2, and the seldom heard étude in thirds, op. 25, no. 6. Krebs kept cementing her status among critics, some even recanting some negative comments they had made about her earlier in the season. It seems, however, that Krebs's appeal to the public gradually lost momentum: her last recital attracted only fifty people.

During the following season (1871–72), Krebs, still in New York, collaborated twice with Theodore Thomas in his "Symphony and Popular Concerts," a short-lived series which aimed to unite serious and entertaining music in the same concert, at popular ticket prices. Krebs performed a nocturne and a waltz by Chopin on 8 January 1872, and

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<sup>25</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (20 February 1871): 8. *Dwight's* denounced Wehli's poor taste on more than one occasion. Interestingly, Wehli programmed virtuosic pieces more often in Boston than in New York, the opposite of most pianists' practice.

<sup>26</sup> The program of the first recital included an unidentified étude and a waltz by Chopin as well as works by composers relatively obscure at the time, such as Rameau and Schubert. Critics admired her dedication to these authors: "Since Professor Ritter gave his short series of Historical Recitals, we have had no such uncovering of the dusty and half-forgotten treasures of the past, no such revelations of the works of the old masters who to most of us are little more than respectable names" (*The New-York Tribune* [27 February 1871]: 5).

<sup>27</sup> *The New-York Herald* (26 February 1871): 3.

an étude the day after, all of them unidentified by key or opus number; the lack of specific information, which would be taken for granted in a serious concert, was perhaps an indication of the “popular” nature of the event. The critic of the *Post* remarked that Krebs’s “supposed coldness of nature” seemed to have disappeared during her performance of the Chopin pieces.<sup>28</sup> On 13 May, she played an unidentified polonaise (probably op. 53) at a farewell concert offered to the Spanish violinist Pablo Sarasate (1844–1908). That would be Krebs’s last performance of a piece by Chopin during her long New York journey, which concluded at the end of the season.

***Ferdinand von Inten, Jerome Hopkins, Ranieri Vilanova, Teresa Carreño,  
Heinrich Bonawitz, and Other Pianists, 1870–1872***

On 26 March 1871 Ferdinand von Inten played Chopin’s Ballade op. 23, the same piece he had chosen for his New York debut two years before. Once again, he was censured for being unable to achieve the perfect *cantabile*—the essence of Chopin’s music; to the *Times*, von Inten had “the solid qualities of a classical pianist, but not a touch under which the keys are as vocal as they might be.”<sup>29</sup> In spite of his many attempts, von Inten never managed to engage fully the city’s critics. He would soon move to Chicago, where he enjoyed a much more fruitful and extended career, elevating the standard of piano-playing in that city with his comprehensive cycles of recitals devoted to the music of Beethoven, Schumann, and Chopin, organizing an astonishingly comprehensive series of historical recitals, and founding the choir of the Beethoven Society.

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<sup>28</sup> *The New-York Post* (9 January 1872): 2.

<sup>29</sup> *The New-York Times* (27 March 1871): 4.

Throughout the spring of 1871, some journals advertised a musical entertainment, perhaps imbued with some didactic pretense, by the pianist Jerome Hopkins, who organized a number of concerts at the city's YMCA, to take place on an unspecified day or days in May, which would supposedly combine sophistication and erudition with certain doses of extravagance. In the generally scholarly and serious *Orpheonist*, Hopkins, one of the founders of the journal, announced that he would play, from memory, any piece from a list of one hundred and three, at the request of any member of the audience. The impressive list included all types of pieces, from "preludes" and "caprices" to "miscellaneous pieces." In the advertisements, Hopkins was compared favorably with Thalberg (the comparison was probably the work of Hopkins himself). "Thalberg" the ad read, "used to boast that he had learned but twelve new pieces of piano music in fourteen years," a statement that, even though it was probably exaggerated, speaks eloquently about the approach to study practices at the time.<sup>30</sup> Hopkins, on the contrary, was "a self-taught Artist, without ever having been to Europe, without the advantage of boastfully announcing himself as 'the pupil of such and such'."<sup>31</sup> Chopin was represented by five pieces, which, depending on requests, might or might not have been played: the *Marche funèbre*, two waltzes (in A-flat major and B-flat major), the Scherzos opp. 31 and 54 (the latter had never been performed in New York), and two polonaises, op. 26, no. 1, and op. 40, no. 1 in A major, another hypothetical New York premiere should there be real evidence that Hopkins indeed played the piece.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *The Orpheonist and Philharmonic Journal* 7/48 (May 1871): 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> There is only one waltz by Chopin in the key of B-flat major, discovered in 1952. Hopkins might have programmed the waltz, op. posth. 69, no. 2 (published in 1855). Hopkins repeated the concerts of "100

Much more interesting was a concert by “Rivarde’s Musical Club,” an amateur music association, at Apollo Hall, on 25 February 1871.<sup>33</sup> Ranieri Vilanova, whose biography or list of accomplishments has remained frustratingly obscure, was announced in the *Herald* as an “eminent pianist.” That night, he gave the first documented public performance in New York of Chopin’s superb *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, op. 65, if we believe the information provided by the *Herald*, whose critic praised Vilanova’s playing but was cautious in his assessment of a work which certainly perplexed him. The piece was described as “*sui generis*” and as a “remarkable” composition, one which nonetheless lacked the recognizable features that the listener would expect from “the other polonaises of Chopin, beyond that powerful rhythm that distinguishes all of them from the pointed primness of the salon polonaise.”<sup>34</sup> Other sources pose additional obstacles for the correct identification of the piece. According to the *Times*, Vilanova had played “Chopin’s Third Polonaise”, which the critic identified as the *Grand Polonaise*, op. 22, an inexplicable statement since neither the *Polonaise-Fantaisie* nor the op. 22 correspond to that number on Chopin’s catalogue of polonaises. The inconspicuous category of the concert, including its participants and the concert hall where it took place must account for the lack of responses on other daily newspapers. The small repercussion of the event is in any case a regrettable fact since public performances of one of Chopin’s most forward-looking, strange compositions and a true precursor of the language of late romanticism were rare at the time and continued to be so throughout the remaining of the century.

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works, played from memory” in 1875, to which he added lectures on composers. He might have played one or more works by Chopin on another occasion, on 12 March of the same year.

<sup>33</sup> P.A. Rivarde was a French voice teacher of good reputation in New York. The American soprano Clara Louise Kellogg was one of his students. The Rivarde Musical Club consisted of students of Rivarde’s as well as an orchestra of thirty-five amateur players.

<sup>34</sup> *The New-York Herald* (26 February 1871): 3.

The last performer engaged on a series of matinee recitals before the arrival of Rubinstein was the American pianist John Henry Bonawitz (1839–1917). At a matinee on 24 April 1872, he played an unidentified piece by Chopin (he might have played additional works in of his other matinees). Bonawitz impressed neither the public nor the critics and the series was soon discontinued. His last documented performance in New York of a work by Chopin was an unidentified impromptu he played at an off-season concert on 15 July of that year.

An unconfirmed performance of Chopin's seldom-heard Ballade op. 38, took place right after the summer recess, on 18 September 1872. The performer was a still little known Teresa Carreño (1853–1917), the Venezuelan pianist who had made a great impression when she debuted at eight years old in the city in 1862. After spending six years in Europe, Carreño returned to New York appearing as assistant to the famous soprano Carlotta Patti (1835–1889), rather than as the top biller. Carreño's comeback did not seem to prophesy her later successes: almost unanimously, the press deemed her performance of the Ballade uneven at best. The *Herald* suggested that Carreño would likely shine to advantage in the parlor than in the concert hall,<sup>35</sup> while the *Times* rated her version of the "Ballade in A minor," as it was succinctly called, inferior to those of other pianists who had played it in the past. Since there is no evidence of any performances of the Ballade in A minor previous to Carreño's, one is inclined to presume that the piece she played was the more popular Ballade op. 47.<sup>36</sup> Carreño's other performance of Chopin included an unidentified polonaise, in October of the same year.

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<sup>35</sup> *The New-York Herald* (17 September 1872): 7.

<sup>36</sup> *The New-York Times* (19 September 1872): 5.

***Anton Rubinstein***

In the summer of 1874, Dwight signed an article rebuffing pianists “who have sought through the piano merely to astonish, where the proper end of music is to please, to give expression to the feelings. . . [found in] such works as Beethoven’s sonatas, Mendelssohn’s *Lieder ohne Worte*, [and] Chopin’s fiery inspirations and delicate dreams of sentiment.”<sup>37</sup> It is unlikely that Dwight was referring to Rubinstein, the sensational pianist who had just left the United States after a formidable eight-month tour (from September 1872 to May 1873), and whom Dwight genuinely admired. Rubinstein, who was recognized as both one of the best pianists and a superior composer by most of his contemporaries, had once contemplated the idea of moving permanently to the United States after the 1848 revolutions; twenty-five years later, the piano manufacturer Steinway offered him a \$40,000 contract to tour the country along with Henryk Wienawski (1835-1880), the world’s foremost violinist at the time.<sup>38</sup> Rubinstein ended up giving 178 concerts in total, including fifty in New York City alone (not counting Brooklyn, at the time an independent city), sometimes two on the same day; when not in New York or Boston, Rubinstein traveled to such far-away cities as New Orleans, Nashville, and Milwaukee. Compared to Thalberg in the mid-1850s, the audiences Rubinstein met in New York were more musically knowledgeable and versed in the piano literature of the first half of the century: a recent article in *Scribner’s Monthly* claimed that the presence of first-rate pianists in the city during the last seasons—Mills

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<sup>37</sup> Dwight’s 34/9 (8 August 1874): 278.

<sup>38</sup> Lott, *From Paris to Peoria*, 172. Both musicians were managed by Maurice Grau (1849–1907).

especially—was responsible for the increasing acceptance of “scholarly programs” among New York concertgoers.<sup>39</sup>

An aspect that distinguished Rubinstein from other pianists (more so than Mehlig or Krebs) was his lack of adherence to a particular repertory or group of composers. Centering on Chopin, while Gottschalk and Thalberg had customarily been associated with specific pieces (the Scherzo op. 31 and the *Marche funèbre*) or Mills with the concertos, the *Berceuse*, the Étude op. 25, no. 7..., Rubinstein was never attached to a particular group of Chopin’s works. His concerts, sometimes lasting four hours, gave him the opportunity to display his astonishingly large repertory, which included every type of genre favored by Chopin as well as the music of Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and his own compositions. A staunch anti-Wagnerite and a professed enemy of *Zukunftsmusik*, Rubinstein rarely programmed works by Liszt. With his refusal to yield to modern experimentalist, Rubinstein gave momentum to the development of the “interpreter” of the classics. With him, the inexorable demise of the old-style virtuoso was finally sensed in New York, as a critic reflected soon after the end of his tour:

“Rubinstein has not been accustomed to crowd the program with his own works. Lesser men like Gottschalk, de Meyer, and even Thalberg were in the habit of constantly putting before their audiences their own works. But with that modesty which in him is so fitly allied with genius, Rubinstein has preferred others before himself, and we have had from him more of Chopin and Schumann and Beethoven than of his own compositions.”<sup>40</sup>

Rubinstein’s debut took place on 23 September 1872, at Steinway Hall. He reserved Chopin’s music for a recital heard five days later. In addition to the doleful Nocturne in C minor (op. 48), Rubinstein received the greatest applause after his

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<sup>39</sup> *The Scribner’s Monthly* 4/1 (May 1872): 121.

<sup>40</sup> *The Sun* (22 May 1873): 4.

performance of the Polonaise op. 53, a success that prompted the *Herald* to wish he would play one of Chopin's polonaises in every one of his concerts, "since the Russian pianist has demonstrated his ability to grasp them in all their grandeur."<sup>41</sup> Yet Rubinstein was met with equal parts of admiration and disapproval by critics: the brilliancy of his playing (which was occasionally deemed exaggerated) was often shadowed by his notorious carelessness, as he allegedly missed notes, sometimes even whole passages (he always played from memory, like Krebs, a rarity at the time). Rubinstein's eccentricities (for example, his tempo fluctuations) and often erratic technique did not compensate his otherwise impeccable musicianship. On one occasion, *Dwight's* reproached his sloppy playing in the coda of the Ballade op. 23, in which he had "slurred and blurred to complete indistinctness the finale, which needs the utmost clearness to mean anything to most ears."<sup>42</sup> Negative responses to Rubinstein's slovenly playing intensified as his tour progressed; towards its end, they had become generalized.

By the end of 1872, Rubinstein had played Chopin's music at least eight times in New York alone, including the first documented performance of the Scherzo op. 54, at a matinee on 5 October. After a visit to the Midwest, Canada, and New England, Rubinstein resumed his concerts with Wieniawski at Steinway Hall on the last day of the year, the first of a series of collaborations at Theodore Thomas's Symphony Concerts. On that occasion, Rubinstein gave one of the few documented performances of Chopin's Scherzo op. 20; it is noteworthy that he tended to eschew the all-time favorite Scherzo op. 31. The seldom-heard preludes were also favored by Rubinstein: on one occasion, he

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<sup>41</sup> *The New-York Herald* (28 October 1872): 6.

<sup>42</sup> *Dwight's* 32/20 (11 January 1873): 365.

played an undetermined number of them, perhaps as encores, after a performance of his own Piano Concerto in D minor, op. 70 (1872).

In the spring of 1873, after a visit to the South and again to the Midwest, Rubinstein returned to New York for a series of farewell concerts. In the course of nine days, he gave seven grueling recitals in New York and three in Boston which were publicized as “historical reviews of masters from Bach and Handel to our time.”<sup>43</sup> To the critic of the *Herald*, the event constituted “the greatest work ever accomplished by a pianist on the shores of America. The composers represented included Scarlatti, Johann Sebastian and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, John Field, Weber, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, Henselt, Thalberg, and Liszt. Dwight, who attended Rubinstein’s similarly designed recitals in Boston, remarked that the pianist had wisely left out “such composers as Dussek, Cramer, Clementi, Hummel and Moscheles, who were heroes in their day;” Instead, “Rubinstein had kept himself to the most living and life-giving poetry in his selections, so that there might not be a moment’s dullness,” passing over “the authors who, however, meritorious, have nothing very interesting to add. It shows how well he understood his audiences, and knew that, with all the idle talk there is about our classical exclusiveness, it is not classical conventionalism, but only the live genius, that can satisfy us.”<sup>44</sup> Three of those recitals were dedicated to individual composers, including Beethoven, Chopin, and Schumann, and could last more than three hours each: the Chopin recital, for example, featured, depending on the source, between 35 and 45 works of diverse length, encores not

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<sup>43</sup> *New-York Herald* (21 May 1873): 8. The concerts were advertised as “historical reviews of masters from Bach and Handel to our time.” One of them, given on 21 May, was also entirely devoted to Chopin.

<sup>44</sup> *Dwight’s* 33/4 (31 May 1873): 30.

included. The exact number of pieces played by Rubinstein varies depending on the source: the journal *The Aldine* stated that Rubinstein played thirty-six.<sup>45</sup> According to the *Times*, Rubinstein played forty-three pieces, and the concert lasted two hours and fifty minutes, with only a short intermission.<sup>46</sup> *Dwight's*, however, reported only 35 works,<sup>47</sup> and the critic of the *Herald* counted forty.<sup>48</sup> Rubinstein probably added two polonaises and two waltzes, and omitted several études to the planned program (see Appendix 2).<sup>49</sup>

The most insightful review of the Chopin recital appeared in the *Times*, whose critic once again complained that Rubinstein's vigorous playing was ill-suited to Chopin's music:

[Rubinstein] is not always at his best in Chopin's music, and the vigor and dash of his execution are sometimes detrimental to the effect of the vaguely beautiful and ever-changing harmonies, and the elaborate arabesques of the Polish artist's writings. We have to be grateful to Mr. Rubinstein for not using to excess the tempo rubato, and his playing, yesterday, was marked by a less injudicious recourse to the pedal than we have sometimes had cause to complain of; on the other hand, though his most rapid passages were generally clear, they were often too deftly done for the ear to catch the composer's intentions, and they dazzled rather than charmed. The performer rendered very forcibly two of Chopin's best-known polonaises, and the ballads selected for the exposition were capitally recited; but we are inclined to single out as having been worthy of especial admiration, a little berceuse and the exquisite funeral march, with its theme, suggestive, as sounded by Mr. Rubinstein, of tears falling upon a cherished tomb. A more pathetic piano performance it is rarely one's fortune to listen to, than that having for its subject the number last named. It was the final one of the entertainment.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> In that recital, Rubinstein combined "strength, majesty, and fantastic grace . . . erasing any trace of the morbid sentimentality which so often disfigures the interpretations of Chopin" (the occasion was seized by the critic to remind his readers that Chopin's music *was* masculine. *The Aldine* 6/8 (August 1873): 167.

<sup>46</sup> *The New-York Times* (20 May 1873): 4.

<sup>47</sup> *Dwight's* 33/5 (14 June 1873): 40.

<sup>48</sup> *The New-York Herald* (23 May 1873): 7.

<sup>49</sup> Lott, *From Paris to Peoria*, 306.

<sup>50</sup> *The New-York Times* (20 May 1873): 4.

The *Herald* reported, perhaps exaggeratedly, that nine-tenths of the audience was made up of women. The review was more overtly positive:

It may appear a strange comment on history that a Russian pianist should be such a faithful interpreter of the sublime yearnings of a Polish composer . . . Chopin did not aim at the grandiose spirit of the epic poet; he portrayed his country in familiar colors. Upon each melodic figure, noble-like in melancholy beauty, are showered adornments like light drops of pearly dew, and without suspecting it he formed a new school of piano music, to which the exquisite poetry of his nature gave birth, and which will prove imperishable. The names are but poor exponents of even one idea in the works. Beneath the unpretending title, etude, impromptu, prelude or caprice, lie treasures of rich thought. How the strains of the 'Marche Funebre', to use the words of Liszt, 'breathe upon the ear like the rhythmical sighs of angels, the cry of a nation's anguish mounting to the very throne of God.' Then the self-sufficiency and haughty importance of the polonaise . . . Who can listen unmoved to the martial spirit and massive measures of the A-Major polonaise [op. 40, no. 2]? Passion, coquetry, anxiety, vanity, inclination and a thousand emotions of the mind are portrayed in the mazurkas in delicate, tender, evanescent shades. The belle of the Polish ball-room in this dance appears, half Odalisque, half Walküre and the sensuous beauty of the 'Arabian Nights' is wedded to the inspired devotion of Joan of Arc. The studies, at times, recall the 'Manfred' of Byron in their gloomy measures . . . Rubinstein's playing in these works was indescribably beautiful . . . Beneath his fingers trickled the melodic tears of the nocturne, sprang forth trumpet like tunes of the polonaise, thundered the stormy measures of the A-Minor etude, whispered the angelic thoughts of the berceuse, danced the sparkling tarantella and wept the mournful theme from the first sonata [*sic*]. He caressed the beautiful and tender idea as he grasped the bold and inspiring thought and the spirit of the dead composer seemed to hover over the audience. No such illustration of Chopin has been vouchsafed to a New-York audience before.<sup>51</sup>

Rubinstein left the country in May 1873. Several critics analyzed the impact of his tour. A. R. Parsons, then living in Indianapolis (one of Rubinstein's westernmost destinations) regarded Rubinstein's visit as a milestone in the history of American music: his greatest accomplishment had been, Parsons claimed, to enlighten the American public, bringing music to communities which, far away from any artistic circuits, could

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<sup>51</sup> *The New-York Herald* (20 May 1873): 6.

only aspire to be exposed to Negro minstrelsy; Rubinstein had never made the slightest alteration in the standard of his programs, regardless of the place where he was playing, whether it was a big, cosmopolitan city or a remote rural town.<sup>52</sup> The critic of *Scribner's Monthly* was right when he admitted that Rubinstein's greatest accomplishment had been to expose the complete history of piano music (his American repertory included "one hundred and fifty selections . . . of every school," according to that source) to American audiences.<sup>53</sup>

### *Other pianists, 1873–75*

Predictably, Rubinstein's presence in the city somehow altered the agendas of other New York pianists, who nonetheless tried to compensate whenever he was touring the country. Of all them, Mills gave the most interesting concerts. On 2 January 1873, he gave the first documented New York performance of Chopin's *Tarantelle*, op. 43 (the piece that had captivated Dwight in 1846, after studying the score) at a concert with the Philharmonic which would mark the first time the pianist collaborated with Leopold Damrosch. Days later, on 18 January 1873, Mills returned to the Philharmonic with the Concerto op. 21. Repeated performances of Chopin's two concertos, traditionally a guarantee of success for Mills, seemed to be giving way to hackneyed responses in the press; at the same time, the huge, more dramatic concertos—such as Rubinstein's—may explain certain weariness for two concertos that spoke differently to audiences in the

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<sup>52</sup> "Rubinstein as Interpreter and Composer," *Benham's Musical Review*. Reprinted *Dwight's* 33/8 (26 July 1873): 57–58. Parsons attended Rubinstein's all-Chopin concert in either New York or Boston, and had something to say about his rendering of the Polonaises, op. 40, no. 1 ("almost incomprehensibly faulty") and op. 53 ("phenomenal").

<sup>53</sup> *Scribner's Monthly* 6/3 (July 1873): 372.

1870s: the correspondent to *Dwight's* laconically dubbed the piece the “regular thing for [Mills] to play.”<sup>54</sup> The *Times*, meanwhile, acknowledged that the work had by then lost some of its original appeal; it no longer ranked, “in points of conception or treatment, with the classics of the piano or the violin.”<sup>55</sup> Exactly two weeks after Mills’s concert, Anna Mehlig played the same concerto with Thomas’s Orchestra. The correspondent to *Dwight's* found it inevitable to compare Mehlig’s performance with the recent one by Mills: Mehlig had “far more warmth and poetry, but less elegance of finish [than Mills].”<sup>56</sup>

Another two performances of Chopin’s Concerto op. 11 succeeded each other in the winter of 1874. On 24 January Mills played the last two movements at a concert organized by the German Liederkrantz Society in their own hall, then located on East Fourth Street. Mills played again Chopin’s F minor Concerto on 9 April 1874, this time with Thomas’s orchestra, revealing a tendency in the leaders of the two rival orchestras to overlap each other in the Chopin concertos, as had happened in the previous season with the performances by Mehlig and Mills.

New Yorkers heard the first public performance of the complete version of Chopin’s great Sonata op. 35, in B-flat minor, in 1873, thirty-three years after it was first published and eighteen since its third movement, *Marche funèbre*, was premiered in New York by Gottschalk. Mehlig played the sonata on 12 April, in the first of two matinees she gave at Steinway Hall. The press announced the work as the “pièce de résistance” and

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<sup>54</sup> *Dwight's* 32/21 (25 January 1873): 373. The reviewer referred to a performance by Mills with the Philharmonic Society on 18 January 1873.

<sup>55</sup> *The New-York Times* (20 January, 1873): 4. Mills played the second and third movements of the same work at the Brooklyn Academy on 30 January.

<sup>56</sup> *Dwight's* 32/22 (8 February 1873): 381.

acknowledged the importance of the premiere, but reviews eschewed it completely, yet again a probable sign of perplexity, mixed with reluctance, not dissimilar to how the work had been perceived by some of Chopin's contemporaries.

The number of piano concerts decreased during the 1873–74 and 1874–75 seasons. With Anna Mehlig in California, Rubinstein and Krebs back in Europe, and von Bülow still deciding whether to come to America or not, Mills retook the lead on the stage. His unfailing performances of Chopin's concertos, the *Berceuse*, and the Étude in C-sharp minor (op. 25, no. 7) were however halted by an accident he suffered in the summer in which he damaged badly one of his legs, keeping him away from the stage for a few months. Before the mishap, he again played Chopin's *Tarantelle* and the étude as his solos at a concert with the Philharmonic, now in its thirty-second season, on 17 January 1874. The *Philharmonic Journal* stated that the public would have preferred more imposing, such as “one of the grand polonaises, the one in A flat [op. 53] or in E flat [op. 22].”<sup>57</sup> Despite the fact that Chopin published five other polonaises during his lifetime, the identification of Chopin with the genre, and, therefore, with nationalistic elements, continued to rest solely on those two polonaises, some twenty years after their New York premieres.

In November 1874, John N. Pattison, who since his failed venture in 1865 had concentrated on teaching and composing, returned to the city concert scene with a series of “lectures on piano music with copious illustrations,” a step forward from the typical historical recital. The series took place at De Garmo Hall, a small theater located on Fifth Avenue and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Each concert and lecture was devoted to a specific composer, starting with Handel. Pattison's elucidations included curious analogies between music

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<sup>57</sup> *Philharmonic Journal and Orpheonist* 10/64 (1 February 1874): 2.

and the plastic arts (the seven prismatic colors corresponded to the seven notes of the diatonic scale) and music and language, explanations which sounded “logical and interesting” to the critic of the *New-York Herald*.<sup>58</sup> On a concert on 10 November, Chopin was represented by the Nocturne op. 37, no. 2, and the *Marche funèbre*. The *Tribune* hailed Pattison as the one who occupied “the position that Gottschalk once held, among the first of American pianists,” a flattering compliment to a pianist who had suffered unfriendly critics more than once.<sup>59</sup> Only the first concert of the series was well-attended, even though Pattison received encouraging words in the pages of the *Herald*, which described the series as “one that must interest every musician, combining instruction and amusement.”<sup>60</sup> Pattison eventually moved the series from New York to various up-state cities.

### ***Sophie Heilbron***

Encouraged by the successes of Krebs and Topp, another young pianist from Germany, Sophia Flora Heilbron (1857–?), came to New York in September 1874. She debuted on 8 October and, like her predecessors, followed it with a series of matinees at Steinway Hall. The program of a concert on 3 December was advertised as “illustrative, in serial form, all the most celebrated works of the greatest and best composers for the piano-forte;” Heilbron’s program, however, would have raised some eyebrows as it included composers such as Stephen Heller (1813–1888), William Wallace (1812–1865), and herself, none of whom would have been regarded as some of the best composers by

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<sup>58</sup>*The New-York Herald* (11 November 1874): 5.

<sup>59</sup>*The New-York Herald* (22 October 1874): 7.

<sup>60</sup>*The New-York Herald* (11 November 1874): 7.

most standards. Even before the first matinee, the *Tribune* derisively doubted that Heilbron could “illustrate all she intended,” since she probably did not understand “the precise meaning of [her] stupendous promise.”<sup>61</sup> The day after her concert, the same reviewer retracted his opinion a little, noting that the program was “a formidable undertaking for the young lady, yet she went through it unfalteringly and gave evidence of a versatile talent that is remarkable.”<sup>62</sup> On her second matinee, on 17 December, Heilbron performed an unidentified piece by Chopin. This time the same critic was harsher than before: “It is impossible to agree with her method of playing Chopin, as the poetry which is such an essential part of the great Polish composer’s works is entirely absent when he is consigned to the fingers of Miss Heilbron. Few young pianists can grasp the tenderness and sentiment of Chopin, united to his wonderful power and masculinity, and Miss Heilbron is not one of the fortunate ones.”<sup>63</sup> After that performance, the number of Heilbron’s appearances decreased sharply. She decided to remain in the United States and married a wealthy broker in 1876, an event that effectively put an end to her American concert career.

The 1875–76 season, revolved around Hans von Bülow, at the time recognized as one of Europe’s most versatile and comprehensive musicians (he was almost equally reputed as a pianist, conductor, and composer). While some resident pianists such as Mills wisely remained in the background during the first months of von Bülow’s tour, an impressively large number of visiting pianists, American newcomers, and well-known performers gave an unusual number of concerts—with the Philharmonic Society, in

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<sup>61</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (2 December 1874): 4.

<sup>62</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (4 December 1874): 4.

<sup>63</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (18 December 1874): 5.

recitals, and miscellaneous concerts, seemingly undeterred by the well-publicized arrival of von Bülow. These performers included Pattison, who resumed his concerts with lectures for a short period of time; Heilbron; Ignacio Cervantes (1837–1905); Arabella Goddard; Weikert; Nanette Falk-Auerbach (1826–1928); Amy Fay (1844–1928); and Frederick Boscowitz.<sup>64</sup>

In January, the German-American pianist Constantin Weikert played Chopin's Ballade op. 23, at one of Thomas's concerts at Steinway Hall on 18 January. The critic of the *Herald* opined that Weikert's vigorous playing was "not congenial to the idyllic music of the Polish poet," a fact that he attributed to Weikert's misguided training at the Leipzig Conservatory. The institution, according to the critic, favored "the mere mechanical study of technique," sacrificing "many essential points of touch, expression and poetical imagery."<sup>65</sup> Weikert's playing was compared, unfavorably, to Rubinstein's. Deliberately or not, the critic seemed to be suggesting differences of style based on national idiosyncrasies and didactic methods, an early sign of the recognition of schools of pianists—especially German and Russian—that was emerging then and would become established later in the century, with Rubinstein, von Bülow, and many others as paradigms. Unfazed by the negative reviews, Weikert would play the same piece on 20 December, at Steinway Hall.

On 25 February 1875, American pianist Anna Bock (1860–?) gave one of the few documented performances of Chopin's *Andante spianato and Grand Polonaise*, op. 22, at Steinway Hall. To the *Times*, the Andante "rather wanted in the calm and sustained

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<sup>64</sup> Neither Pattison or Heilbron played any music by Chopin during von Bülow's stay in New York.

<sup>65</sup> *The New-York Herald* (19 January 1875): 3.

eloquence its title implies, but the polonaise was satisfactory.”<sup>66</sup> Shortly after that concert, Bock, who had been a student of von Inten for a few years, announced that she was leaving for Germany to continue her studies.

The political involvement of Cuban pianist and composer Ignacio Cervantes in the insurgents’ quest for independence from Spain in the early 1870s, led him to seek refuge in the United States, like many of his compatriots at that time. In 1875 he settled in New York temporarily and gave a number of concerts at Steinway Hall. On 19 October of that year, Cervantes played some pieces vaguely described by the *Tribune* as “from the schools of Gottschalk and Chopin.”<sup>67</sup> The critic probably heard some of Cervantes’ own “Cuban Dances,” or *Contradanzas* (at the time, known outside Cuba as *Habaneras*), short character pieces infused with Afro-Cuban rhythmic and melodic patterns of dances from Havana and Matanzas, which indeed could be mistakenly interpreted as an amalgamation of Gottschalk’s syncopated rhythms and unequivocally Chopinesque harmonic and melodic mannerisms. The only evidence of Cervantes performing Chopin was at a concert he gave on 17 December, in which he played the G-minor Ballade. It was the first of a series of six “popular and classical concerts” at Chickering Hall, with the assistance of Teresa Carreño and other performers from several Latin-American countries (the series was surely attended by a large number of Spanish-speaking concertgoers). The *Tribune* criticized the inclusion of the word “popular” in an event which the reviewer deemed “strictly classical, and not at all popular.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *The New-York Times* (26 February 1875): 6.

<sup>67</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (20 October 1875): 5.

<sup>68</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (18 December 1875): 7.

Only the intense focus on Bülow's visit can explain the reasons behind the neglect, given her reputation, of Arabella Goddard in the New York press during her disappointingly inconspicuously reviewed American tour. Goddard, one of the most revered pianists of her time, was regarded as an outstanding interpreter of Beethoven's piano music, a reputation secured by her London premiere, in 1853, of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* sonata. Such status did not necessarily grant her unquestioned success in America. Indeed, she enjoyed a considerable success in Boston but her New York concerts went relatively unnoticed. After a concert on 21 October with the renowned soprano Thérèse Tietjens (1831–1877) at Steinway Hall, Goddard's playing was deemed too intellectual, lacking "the dreamy pathos necessary for the proper interpretation of Chopin's music."<sup>69</sup>

### ***Frederick Boscowitz***

Dwight once referred to Frederick Boscowitz, a Hungarian pianist who settled in Boston in 1873, as "one of the best of our resident pianists."<sup>70</sup> Boscowitz gave a series of afternoon recitals at Steinway Hall in November and December 1875, just as von Bülow was being acclaimed not far from there, at the newly built Chickering Hall. On 12 November 1875, Boscowitz presented an impressive, if improbable, program devoted integrally to works by Bach and Chopin, two composers that only a very perceptive nineteenth-century listener would have associated. The program included the *Berceuse*, the Waltz op. 18, the Mazurkas op. 33, nos. 2 and 4 (D major and B minor, respectively),

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<sup>69</sup> *The New-York Herald* (22 October 1875): 7.

<sup>70</sup> *Dwight's* 35/18 (11 December, 1875): 141. Also in 1875, Boscowitz had given a number of historical concerts in Boston. The programs featured works by Renaissance and early Baroque composers.

and, remarkably, the Ballade in F minor, op. 52, one of Chopin's most haunting late masterpieces. While the city's daily newspapers ignored Boscowitz's matinee, a critic for the *Orpheonist* (probably its editor, the peculiar Jerome Hopkins) wrote an overtly negative review. A frustratingly hasty remark, "poetic and weird," was all the critic had to say about the Ballade, one of the few of Chopin's greatest late works that had never been performed in public in New York. Otherwise, Hopkins review was shockingly harsh. Boscowitz had played

with about as much expression as there is generally to be discovered in the quacking of a duck. He used the harp pedal to an extreme degree, which showed a sameness of dynamics which could not otherwise be screened; and when he played chromatic passages, such, for instance, as those in Chopin's *Berceuse*, he was so much pre-occupied with his fingers as to forget his feet, and the result was a pedalic blur which quite neutralized the advantage of an excellent technique . . . Of the value of grandeur, deliberation, reserved impetuosity and unbridled climacteric brio, he has evidently not the remotest idea. In many passages his left hand might as well have been in his pocket as where it was, for all we heard from it. This gentleman has a stiff wrist, a hard and unsympathetic touch, and plays entirely from the elbow. He uses a very high stool which obliges him to bend over in an ungainly fashion, and suggests the idea of a man sitting on the top of a flag-staff . . . To balance these qualities, Mr. Boscowitz has a retentive memory, having played everything without book; and he certainly is very sure, a wrong note being rarely heard.<sup>71</sup>

Unperturbed, Boscowitz returned to Steinway Hall with another recital, on 1 December. This time, the program seemingly included only works by Chopin, thus constituting only the second of such recital ever given in New York up to that time. Boscowitz eschewed some of the works he deemed less appealing to the general public, such as the F-minor Ballade, and repeated many of the pieces he had played a few weeks before, including the *Berceuse*, the Waltz op. 18, and the Mazurka op. 33, no. 4, adding the always popular Nocturne in F-sharp major op. 15, no. 2, and, most likely, other works

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<sup>71</sup>The *Philharmonic Journal and Orpheonist* 12/76 (15 December 1875): 4.

not listed in the advertisements. In all, the program contained “some of Chopin’s best works,” according to the *Tribune*, whose critic deemed Boscowitz incapable of rendering the “wild, weird spirit which pervades all Chopin’s music . . . and the almost morbid sentimentality which much of [his music] demands for its proper interpretation.”<sup>72</sup>

The American pianist Amy Fay, known for her chronicles of Liszt’s circle in Weimar, published in *The Atlantic*, gave a matinee on 20 November. Fay played one of Chopin’s shortest études, op. 25, no. 8, and a piece identified as “Chant polonaise [*sic*] no. 5,” wrongly attributed to Chopin. Most likely, it was the fifth number of Liszt’s homonymous composition, written in 1860, a collection of six piano arrangements of some of Chopin’s songs. The fifth number, in the event Fay indeed played it, is based on one of Chopin’s most appealing songs, “Moja pieśniczotka” (“My Darling”).<sup>73</sup>

### ***Hans von Bülow***

Von Bülow reached Boston on 11 October 1875, making his debut in that city seven days later. He returned to Europe, sailing from New York, on 7 June 1876. In the space of those 237 days, von Bülow gave at least 139 concerts, a few less than the he and Bernard Ullmann, his manager, had stipulated. The pianist was sponsored by Chickering—just as Rubinstein had been promoted by Steinway—a confirmation of the increasing tendency to unite art and business as well as the expanding power of the piano

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<sup>72</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (2 December 1875): 6.

<sup>73</sup> Hardly any song by Chopin could be considered a first-class composition, especially if compared to the songs written by many other nineteenth-century composers. Chopin must have been aware of this, and that may be the reason he never intended to publish any of them. In any case, Fontana, in 1859, published seventeen of them, in their original Polish, which became Chopin’s op. 74. The songs had been written between 1828 and 1845.

manufactory industry.<sup>74</sup> Von Bülow was engaged to inaugurate the lavishly renovated, 1450-seat Chickering Hall, on Fifth Avenue and Eighteenth Street.

Von Bülow's reputation as a cultured, multifaceted musician, and a colleague of Liszt and Wagner, preceded him: for months, musical journals and daily newspapers had reported extensively on the success of his English tour and his imminent arrival (his commitment to a national tour was confirmed early in 1875). An anonymous pamphlet titled "Dr. von Bülow" was published and distributed in New York, a welcoming tradition for illustrious visiting artists from Europe and an effective system of generating buzz. The pamphlet recognized the pianist as a member of the "progressive and liberal school of music . . . which has been for some time working a revolution in lyric and instrumental art." A student of Liszt, von Bülow was soon identified as the opposite of Thalberg; placing "technique at the service of the highest art by an attempt to interpret the master works of all schools," von Bülow was the epitome of the modern interpreter, no longer a virtuoso but "a philosopher, poet, composer, maestro."<sup>75</sup> The labels "progressive" and "liberal" granted to von Bülow contained a hidden message to the emergent group of New York Wagnerites, whose idolized musical hero was, in 1875, at the pinnacle of his fame in Europe.

Bülow's adherence to the "new school" had caused some controversy in London, where he had been conducting right before coming to America. There, according to the pamphlet, he had expected to be "received as a virtuoso and condemned as a reformer;" In the United States, instead, there was "a widespread desire . . . to become better

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<sup>74</sup> Under contract he had to play Chickering pianos, even though he had expressed his preference for the Steinway's more powerful sound. Bülow had planned come in 1873 but his visit would have coincided with Rubinstein, so he changed his plans.

<sup>75</sup> Anonymous, *Hans von Bülow, A Biographical Sketch. His Visit to America* (New York: Cushing and Bardsua, 1875): 4.

acquainted with the school of which von Bülow is representative. The intense interest taken in Wagner's theories and compositions, adds to the feeling that the appearance here of a prominent master in the new school, able to speak and conduct with authority, will open an impetus to music that it has never before felt."<sup>76</sup>

Von Bülow was enthusiastic about America. On the day of his debut in New York, 15 November, he wrote to his mother: "Yes, truly, Europe is old and lame—there are only two countries, Russia and America . . . I belong *here*, as every hour these last eight weeks has shown me."<sup>77</sup> The open attitude of Americans might have played a role on Bülow's short-lived idea about settling in New York, as some of the letters he wrote to his mother reveal: in a letter from Boston, dated 24 October, he proclaimed that he had "never, now here, for so long, felt so well, I could say, happy . . . With horror I think back on the old rotten European world."<sup>78</sup>

Expectedly, comparisons between von Bülow and Rubinstein were inevitable. Their opposite approaches to Chopin were often singled out to illustrate the "schools," as they were then referred to, of either performer. In that regard, Rubinstein's attitude was generally recognized as closer to the true spirit of the composer than von Bülow's, which explains the lukewarm responses that the latter pianist generally received whenever he played Chopin's music. While Rubinstein was still remembered for his passionate and poetic interpretations (if

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<sup>76</sup> Anonymous, *Hans von Bülow, A Biographical Sketch*, 10.

<sup>77</sup> Lott, "A Continuous Trance: Hans von Bülow's Tour of America," *Journal of Musicology* 12/4 (Fall 1994): 531.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

occasionally uneven), von Bülow often left his hearers unmoved by his scholarly, intellectual interpretations; not in vain, his name was always preceded by the title of “Professor” or “Doctor” in the press. On the other hand, his accuracy could be regarded as a sign of carefulness, a quality Rubinstein lacked, but being faithful to the score was not necessarily viewed as the ultimate goal at the time: in Chopin, the qualities to seek out included individuality, feeling, and imagination rather than accuracy and faithfulness to the text. An article in the *Tribune* written halfway in von Bülow’s tour gives an eloquent idea of how the styles of both pianists were compared and rated:

[Rubinstein has an] extraordinary and passionate eloquence . . . in nearly every variety of expression he was superior, we think, to all other performers now living, Liszt perhaps excepted . . . the fire that burned in his soul communicated itself at once to his audience, so that he was unquestionably the most magnetic player ever heard in this country. But the strong individuality which asserted itself in his playing made him an imperfect interpreter of other men’s creations . . . Von Bülow has no moments of inspired madness. It is a singular fact is that while his temperament is fiery and excitable, in his playing he is always self-possessed. He has no thought but to interpret what he finds in the composition before him, and his comprehension of it is not regulated by his individual taste, or colored in any degree by the feelings of the moment, but it is an intellectual process, the fruit of long and careful study. In the expression of the idea which he has thus conceived he aims at nothing but the stern truth . . . Because he is not swayed by the impulse it is sometimes thought that he is insensible to emotion. That is a great error. His interpretation is always well balanced. His intellectual grasps of the music firm and comprehensive; his feeling and his fancy are under strict control; but is never mechanical; never cold . . . In mere beauty of touch . . . Von Bülow does not excel. Here Rubinstein certainly surpassed him.<sup>79</sup>

Von Bülow’s pianistic style could also be evaluated against Mills’s. The *Herald*, for example, consistently preferred Mills’s interpretations to any of von Bülow’s, a statement that showed how the capacity of discernment and judgment of American critics

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<sup>79</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (8 January 1875): 5.

had grown to the point of not being anxious to rate a New York pianist above one of the foremost virtuosos from Europe.<sup>80</sup>

Von Bülow played Chopin for the first time in New York on 17 November 1875. The program included the *Berceuse*, the Waltz op. 42, and the Nocturne op. 37, no. 2. In addition, he played the piano transcription by Liszt of one of Chopin's songs, the *Chant polonaise*, which some critics referred to as a composition by Chopin.<sup>81</sup> The *Times* grieved over von Bülow's unemotional reading of Chopin's "exquisite little poems."<sup>82</sup> To the critic of the *Herald*, von Bülow's intellectual—"positivist" as he put it—approach to Chopin's music was incorrect, especially if compared to Rubinstein's freer attitude:

Von Bülow is not to be admired in his interpretation of Chopin . . . Rubinstein, with all his faults as an interpreter of classical works, and those faults consisted of the intrusion of his individuality in his playing, showed more real tenderness and accord with the delicacy of Chopin than ever Von Bülow can hope to attain. The nocturne was played without flaw, as far as technique and attention to the marks of expression given in the score are concerned; but it was destitute of the spark of poetry. The *Chant Polonais* is not particularly interesting as a Chopin work, even with the clever transcription of the irrepressible Liszt . . . The lovely *Berceuse*, which one would think had been first given to the world by angelic chorus over the cradle of Bethlehem, did not receive from the pianist the tender, childlike treatment it deserved. Few pianists have lived who could interpret this most delicate of tone poems satisfactorily. In the waltz the pianist was more successful, but yet too ponderous in style for the work. Chopin is a dangerous author for piano illustration unless the player is entirely filled with the spirit of poetry. Von Bülow is not in accord with this spirit.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> *The New-York Herald* (13 February 1876): 12.

<sup>81</sup> As stated above, Amy Fay may have given the first public performance of the piece in The New-York. Liszt's transcriptions of works by Chopin include a mazurka, two preludes from op. 28, and the *Marche funèbre*.

<sup>82</sup> *The New-York Times* (18 November 1875): 7.

<sup>83</sup> *The New-York Herald* (18 November 1875): 7.

Yet von Bülow seemed to want to prove his critics wrong, and continued to add Chopin's music to his New York programs. For his concert on 4 December, he repeated the *Berceuse* and the Waltz op. 42, and added the *Tarantelle*. In addition, he gave the second documented New York performances of Chopin's Impromptu op. 36 (after Saar's in 1863), and the first of the Scherzo op. 39, two works consistently overshadowed by the more popular counterparts, the Impromptu op. 29, and the Scherzo op. 31, respectively.

On 3 January 1876, von Bülow played the three waltzes from Chopin's op. 34—the first time a complete collection of waltzes from a single opus was performed—the Nocturne op. 9, no. 3, and the Ballade op. 23, pieces he repeated in a matinee on 8 January. The *Times* admired his “clean and vigorous force of execution” but deemed inappropriate his idea of combining Chopin's music with selections by Scarlatti, Bach, and Gluck. Some were surprised that von Bülow included those authors in a high-profile evening concert intended to the general public, instead of a classical matinee or a “historical concert” like those of Pattison.<sup>84</sup>

Like Rubinstein, von Bülow organized, as a farewell treat, a series of concerts devoted to individual composers, which included Beethoven, Schubert (still a surprising choice at the time), Schumann, Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Chopin. The program of the Chopin recital, on 27 March, which appears to have included fifteen works, was designed to offer a complete view of Chopin's various periods and styles. The concert started with the Sonata in B minor, op. 58 (1844), the first documented public performance in New York of one of Chopin's greatest and most ambitious works. The program also included the Variations on the air “Je vends des scapulaires” from Hérold's opera *Ludovic*, op. 12 (1833, another New York premiere); the Nocturne op. 27, no. 2, the Ballade op. 23, and

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<sup>84</sup> *The New-York Times* (4 January 1876): 8.

the Nocturne op. 9, no. 3; a selection of mazurkas—probably five, including two from op. 50; the *Berceuse*; either the Polonaise in A-flat major, op. 53, or, less likely, the seldom heard Polonaise in F-sharp minor, op. 44; the first New York performance of the *Allegro de concert*, op. 46 (published in 1841, it was drawn from material Chopin had written for an unfinished piano concerto in 1834), the Impromptu op. 36, and the Waltzes op. 34.<sup>85</sup>

Partly because the pianist was reportedly ill (he did not play with his usual impeccable correctness), and partly because the idea that von Bülow's lack of empathy for the lyrical side of Chopin's music had by then been settled, the Chopin recital was not a complete success. The only overtly positive review was penned by the critic of the *Tribune*, who commended von Bülow for not drowning in the “puddle of weak sentimentalism” that other pianists indulged—perhaps a reference to Rubinstein.<sup>86</sup> For the correspondent to *Dwight's*, the recital devoted to Chopin had been the most interesting of the series of historical concerts. The success of the improbable affinity between von Bülow and Chopin could be explained, the critic claimed, by their mutual proximity to Liszt, who would have acted as a nexus. “We do not [believe] that Dr. Von Bülow really is inspired by the fitful and erratic genius of Chopin's music; but the companionship of Liszt, who is a player after Chopin's own heart, must have left its mark on his performance.”<sup>87</sup> In turn, the most negative review came from the critic of the *Herald*—rather surprisingly, since he was the only local critic who had otherwise showed a consistently favorable attitude towards von Bülow since the beginning of his tour.

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<sup>85</sup> Another all-Chopin recital was planned for 30 April 1876 (a matinee), but there is no evidence that it took place.

<sup>86</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (28 March 1876): 4. A new critic had replaced Watson, who had died in 1875.

<sup>87</sup> *Dwight's* 36/2 (29 April 1876): 224.

Acknowledging that the pianist was indisposed, the critic declared that he should, during his remaining recitals in America, entirely eschew Chopin.<sup>88</sup> He would indeed: after that recital, von Bülow would not again play Chopin's music in New York or elsewhere in America. He hastily took his tour to a close, physically and mentally drained. He sailed back to Europe on 7 June, in time to recover and attend the world premiere of the *Ring des Nibelungen* that summer in Bayreuth, an event that received an unusual amount of coverage in the New York press (both the *New York Times* and the *New York Tribune* sent staff correspondents to cover the festival).<sup>89</sup> Von Bülow would return to America in 1889, this time appearing exclusively as a conductor. During his stay, he made a cylinder recording for Thomas A. Edison's company of a nocturne by Chopin—perhaps the first such recording in history.

The effect of von Bülow's visit on the musical climate of New York was manifold. He was the first virtuoso who devoted his programs exclusively to the music of other composers. More so, he gave priority to music written before 1850, a novelty that must have surprised the public of New York, accustomed to more variety. Ullman asked him to include some bravura pieces, to no avail: for von Bülow "the whole repertoire of the period of Thalberg will find no place in my programs," even though, he presumed, such music was "indispensable for the Yankees."<sup>90</sup> It was attitudes like these for which von Bülow was recognized, along with Rubinstein, as the pianist who effectively

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<sup>88</sup> *The New-York Herald* (28 March 1876): 3. The critic also noted that all the recitals devoted to one composer had been poorly attended.

<sup>89</sup> Wagner's music had been introduced to America, first to the German community, through The New-York-based conductors like Bergmann, Leopold Damrosch, and Thomas since before the Civil War. Wagner, however, was never as controversial in the United States as in Europe: by the time von Bülow arrived in New York, Wagner's music was being played all year round without much fuss.

<sup>90</sup> Lott, *From Paris to Peoria*, 236.

introduced the figure of the interpreter in America: never mind that performers such as Mehlig, Topp, and Krebs had *de facto* preceded him. His scholarly, un-individualistic, and deliberately anti-virtuosic reading of the score was the result of an effort to be as faithful as possible to the supposed intention of the composer.

Von Bülow's philosophy represented the keystone in a mission aimed at making a distinction between entertainment and enlightenment, a mission insinuated twenty-five years earlier by performers such as Bergmann and Mason. He symbolized the definitive closure to the age of the virtuosos of the old school, and confirmed the successful establishment of the solo piano recital. His interest in Chopin's less accessible pieces, like the Sonata op. 58, reflected his determination to reveal an image of the composer detached from those who correlated him with the salon, projecting one that many would have understood as "Germanic": intellectual and unsentimental. In this regard, von Bülow's contribution to Chopin's access to a German-centered canon of nineteenth-century music was decisive.

### ***Epilogue: Annette Essipoff***

The celebrated Russian pianist Annette Essipoff toured the United States between November 1876 and June 1877.<sup>91</sup> Still in her early twenties, Essipoff's playing had been celebrated by Tchaikovsky, Liszt, and by all who heard her in Russia, Germany, and England, the previous stages of her world tour. Even though her arrival had not been "heralded by the amount of trumpeting and puffing that is usually deemed essential to the

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<sup>91</sup> The name Anna Yesipova is commonly used nowadays. Other variants of her name include Anna Essipoff, Anna (or Annette) Essipova, and Annette von Essipow.

introduction of an artist who visits us for the first time,”<sup>92</sup> as Dwight remarked, it was in America where Essipoff primarily forged her worldwide reputation.

According to some chroniclers, Essipoff’s repertory included more than 200 works, which she played, like her compatriot and mentor Rubinstein, from memory. Her repertory included little-known works by Scarlatti, Bach, Gluck, Schubert, and Saint-Saëns, but Chopin occupied a prominent position in her programs. In addition to the expected nocturnes, waltzes, and concertos, Essipoff favored many of the late works of Chopin, such as the *Barcarolle*, op. 60 or some of the late nocturnes, still commonly neglected by most pianists. A critic immediately acknowledged her concentration on “the strange, almost morbid genius of Chopin,” which was best represented by those “utterly different” pieces from his late years.<sup>93</sup> In December 1876 Essipoff played the Ballade op. 52 in Brooklyn; unfortunately, there is no evidence of any performance of the piece in New York City.<sup>94</sup> Only the critic of the *Herald* reviewed the concert, describing the ballade cryptically, as had always been the norm whenever Chopin surprised with a complex, heterogeneous work, describing it as “one of those fugitive poems that are so idealized, rendered so fragile . . . that they scarcely seem to belong to human nature.”<sup>95</sup> Besides the *Barcarolle*, Essipoff might have given the first New York performances of two late nocturnes: op. 55, no. 2, (a piece that seems to anticipate Wagner’s concept of *unendliche Melodie*), and op. 62, no. 2, one of the two Waltzes, op. 69 (published posthumously in 1855), and at least one of mazurkas of op. 63.

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<sup>92</sup> *Dwight’s* 36/17 (25 November 1876): 343.

<sup>93</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (16 November 1876): 5.

<sup>94</sup> The concert took place at an unidentified church at the corner of Clinton and Pierrepont Streets, the current location of the Brooklyn Historical Society, in Brooklyn Heights.

<sup>95</sup> *The New-York Herald* (5 December 1875): 10.

Critics recognized Essipoff's connection with Chopin, which was often rated superior to Rubinstein's and von Bülow's—the best compliment a new pianist could receive. Her secret, according to the critic of the *Tribune*, was her ability to unite both the intellectual detachment of von Bülow and the “Slavic excitement” of her compatriot Rubinstein: she had “not the intellectuality of von Bülow, nor yet the dazzling genius of Rubinstein, yet a curious combination of both.”<sup>96</sup> But Essipoff's playing was also compared to the women who had led the list of great performers of Chopin's music in the past few years; the *Times* settled an imaginary dispute among them, positioning Essipoff at the top of a list that included Mehlig, Krebs, Carreño, and Goddard:

She is undoubtedly the most skilled piano player of her sex that has ever visited the United States, and, in respect of both technical merit and charm, we are inclined to pronounce her the superior, with a single exception, of every artist who has been here during the past ten years [Rubinstein?]. Mme. Essipoff playing resembles more closely Dr. Von. Bülow's than that of any familiar performer we can name. She lacks, indeed, music of the power of that eccentric, not to say insane, virtuoso, but she is quite as elegant and as correct—often more correct, in truth, for Dr. Von Bülow occasionally lost his precision simultaneously with his self-control, and her work is infused with a sentiment and a warmth the more muscular player very seldom evinces. Mme. Essipoff's execution is wonderfully clean and brilliant; she has a perfect command of tone, and strength far in excess of any of her feminine rivals. Her style is a happy medium between the old-fashioned school—lately represented by Mme. Arabella Goddard—and the impassioned and sometimes rather uncertain method typified by Mr. Rubinstein. Occasionally . . . [she] may appear a trifle cold; but the coldness, and it is only relative, does not impress one as the coldness of a mechanist, but rather as the outgrowth of a taste somewhat too chaste and severe . . . Her execution is accomplished with so much grace and apparent ease, that it is well-nigh as pleasant to see her as to hear her play.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (16 November 1876): 2.

<sup>97</sup> *The New-York Times* (15 November 1876): 5.

Following the examples of Rubinstein and von Bülow, Essipoff gave three recitals devoted to Chopin (though significantly shorter than those of her predecessors) in November and December, which were not advertised as historical but as regular recitals.

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In the thirty-seven years that separated the first American performance of a nocturne and some mazurkas by Chopin by Rakemann in 1839 from Essipoff's performances of the *Barcarolle* and some of Chopin's great, late nocturnes in the fall of 1876, the whole of Chopin's oeuvre, minus a few minor works, had at least one public performance in New York. There is no evidence, however, that a few significant works, such as the Polonaise in C minor, op. 40, no. 2, and the Third Impromptu (op. 51), may have been played. Some shorter pieces, though, including études, preludes, and mazurkas, and perhaps some of the waltzes and nocturnes, must have remained unheard by then. Not for long, though: in the remaining twenty-four years of the century, public performances of Chopin's music had burgeoned to the point that a concerto, nocturne, waltz, or polonaise was never absent from a program for more than a few days, even during the off-season. To the ever increasing list of American pianists, professional and semi-professional, many European performers continued to come to New York. Some were as prestigious as Rubinstein and von Bülow, and some built their reputations in America. Germany, Austria, Russia, and Poland, continued to be the quarry from where the best performers of Chopin came. A list of the most important European pianists who played Chopin's music in the last quarter of the nineteenth century includes the following: Leopold Godowsky, who visited New York in 1884; Joseph Hofmann (1876–1957) in 1887; Moritz Rosenthal (1862–1946) in 1888; Eugène d'Albert (1864–1932) in

1889; Vladimir de Pachmann, in 1890 (who also gave a number of all-Chopin recitals);  
and Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924) and Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941) in 1891.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *Editions*

#### *Editions of Chopin's Works in The United States, c. 1839–1875*

In his 1889 essay on Chopin, Finck wrote that “according to [New York’s] leading music dealer,” editions of Chopin’s music sold “three times more than any other romantic or classical composer.”<sup>1</sup> To modern scholars, early editions of Chopin’s music pose major challenges because of their lack of uniformity: to this day, the production of an “Urtext” is nearly impossible because the printed copy does not necessarily reflect the final version of a work. The composer continued to make revisions until the last minute, when copies needed to be sent to his publishers; as a result, first editions sometimes contained discrepancies, some substantial. Some early admirers of Chopin were also aware of the extent of misprints and the variety of versions that plagued the early editions of Chopin. Robert Schumann, in his 1841 review of the newly published *Tarantelle*, op. 43 (1841), wrote that “the first comprehension of this piece is unfortunately rendered very difficult by the misprints with which it is really swarming.”<sup>2</sup> This comment was echoed by Dwight in his 1846 review of the piece (see chapter 2).

Chopin’s editors in the nineteenth century, like those of today, faced many difficulties because of the variety of primary sources (mostly first editions, copies of manuscripts by Chopin or by his assistants, etc.). Manuscripts and first editions may be taken as the most authoritative sources, but, with Chopin, further editorial work and

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<sup>1</sup> Henry T. Finck, *The Greater Chopin*, 3.

<sup>2</sup> George C. Ashton Jonson, *A Handbook to Chopin's Works*, Books for Libraries Press (1905; reprint Freeport, New York: 1972), xxxiii.

subjective interpretation is needed in order to present a text that may be regarded as “authentic,” or closest to the original intentions of the composer.<sup>3</sup>

Starting with the *Four Mazurkas* op. 6 (1830), most of Chopin’s works appeared almost simultaneously in Paris (published by Pleyel, Troupenas, and M. A. Schlesinger, son of Adolf Moses Schlesinger, founder of the Berlin firm), London (Wessel), and Leipzig (first by Kistner, and, after 1833, by Breitkopf und Härtel). His posthumous works were published in Paris in 1855 (Meissonier, opp. 66–74) and in Berlin in 1859 (A. M. Schlesinger). The duration of copyright for Chopin’s works in France and Britain expired in October 1859 (exactly ten years after the composer’s death; in Germany, it lasted until 1879). As the century progressed, editions of Chopin’s works were in high demand as conservatories around the world increasingly made his music part of the ordinary curriculum. Publishing companies took advantage of lax copyright laws and flooded the market with new editions. The earliest collected editions were issued in Paris, both in 1860, by Schonenberger (Fétis was the editor) and by Richault. Then came the first critical editions, some directed by Chopin’s own students (including George Mathias and Karol Mikuli, among others), or by other important pianists and pedagogues (Klindworth, Kullak, Jossely, Riemann, etc.). Most of them felt qualified to make editorial contributions thanks to the various nuances which, they claimed, their teacher had taught them. For example, Mikuli, who edited Kistner’s 1879 critical edition, used first French and German editions plus his recollections and annotated scores by Chopin himself: these included tempo markings, dynamics, pedaling, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> Following this approach, a new critical edition, directed by Jim Samson, John Rink, and Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, is currently in preparation.

The first complete edition of Chopin's works was issued in Warsaw in 1864 by Gebethner and Wolff. Charles Klindworth, a pupil of Liszt, edited another set of Chopin's complete works, published by Jurgenson in Moscow between 1873 and 1876. The first volume was available in New York in 1875, in a reprint by the publisher Edward Schuberth, who continued issuing the remaining volumes in the following years.

As stated in Chapter 2, Gustave Schirmer, a German-born music publisher who opened his business in New York in 1861, asked James Huneker to add analytical and historical comments to Mikuli's edition. Issued between 1894 and 1898, Schirmer's became the first "American" edition of Chopin's complete works; for many years, it was one of the most popular editions among American piano students and amateurs.

The pieces that the publishers saw as most marketable were those of limited technical difficulty and short length (the nocturnes) as well as dance-inspired pieces (waltzes and mazurkas). These types of scores made up the bulk of commercially successful pieces that publishers targeted for private, amateur consumption. By the time Chopin's music was first heard in New York, sheet music was becoming a lucrative business in the city. Around 1843, the cost of sheet music started to decline sharply, and, with it, domestic music making boomed.<sup>4</sup> H. Wiley Hitchcock has remarked that home music making soon was an integral part of the daily life among affluent and middle-class families, becoming a bourgeois commodity "derived from . . . the cultivated tradition rather than the vernacular . . . it actually represented a subdivision of the cultivated tradition that may be termed 'household music . . . because it indicates the destination of such music, but also because it suggests an analogy with the other household artifacts of

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Crawford, *American Musical Life*, 232.

the period such as silverware.”<sup>5</sup> The association of Chopin’s music with sophistication and elegance and the genres he cultivated, especially the waltz, the nocturne, and the mazurka, made it a favorite in the parlor and kept it always in demand. Europe was initially the provider of such music to the American public.

In the 1850s, firms from Boston, Philadelphia, and New York replaced the foreign publishers, resulting in an ever-increasing number of American editions of Chopin’s music, for the most part reprints of European publications, especially from Wessel.<sup>6</sup> The practice of pirating European editions, which was not illegal at the time, was common among American publishers throughout the nineteenth century. However, amateur pianists recognized and esteemed Chopin’s music before it reached the stage. As early as 1853, Dwight had observed that “the republication of Chopin’s music will go on indefinitely, for it is the dearest of all music in the foreign copies.”<sup>7</sup> Some of the waltzes and nocturnes, and the *Marche funèbre*, constituted the composer’s best sellers in the United States. It was through the sale of these pieces, deemed unsophisticated from a technical point of view, that the early recognition of the music of Chopin in the United States was made possible. The popularization of Chopin among amateur pianists had an unsuspected effect, which proved to be harmful; as discussed in chapter 2, Finck lamented that biased opinions of Chopin were attributable to the fact that his easier pieces were customarily exposed to substandard performances.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> H. Wiley Hitchcock, *Music in the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1969), 64–65.

<sup>6</sup> In 1840 Wessel announced that a complete edition of Chopin’s music was in preparation. In truth, he was simply continuing the publication of music that arrived from Chopin himself and at the same time reprinting some earlier works. The copyright expired in England in 1856.

<sup>7</sup> *Dwight’s* 3/1 (9 April 1853): 7.

<sup>8</sup> “Chopin’s reputation has been constantly growing, and yet many of his deepest and most poetic compositions are almost unknown to amateurs, not to speak of the public at large. A few of his least

In 1853, a compilation of piano pieces titled “The Pianist’s Album” was published in Boston by G. P. Reed. Dwight celebrated the works included in the album because they offered music of high quality, independent from the repertory cultivated by the virtuosos. To him, the album was “to contain some of these finer modern classics of the instrument, which have become endeared by the real poetry there is in them, rather than by their adaptation to the display of brilliant feats of execution.”<sup>9</sup> Dwight listed, in the same article, the works by Chopin that were, to his knowledge, already available in the United States. They included the *Marche funèbre*, which he recognized as an established favorite, and “a creation almost as remarkable in its kind (which is not orchestral) as the two funeral marches of Beethoven,” and the Five Mazurkas op. 7. One of them was “*the well-known one for years past, which everybody has played to us, in all sorts of time, from andante molto to prestissimo. . . That is the boldest of the five, but the others are as interesting, and the second has more of the delicate reverie of Chopin.*”<sup>10</sup> Dwight’s remark could indicate that these were the mazurkas that Rakemann played in 1839 (he may have played only one).

It has been observed that as the figure of the interpreter evolved in the 1830s and beyond, writers of piano methods started to acknowledge the particularities of each style and each composer. Until then, methods had simply taught how to play the piano. Carl Czerny, for example, in his method *Die Kunst des Vortrags des ältern und neuen Claviercompositionen*, published in Vienna in 1846, offered alternative ways of playing,

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characteristic pieces are heard in every parlor, generally in a woefully mutilated condition. Finck, “Chopin, the Greatest Genius of the Pianoforte,” 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Dwight’s* 3/1 (9 April 1853): 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* The set has been described as “aesthetically—and almost morally—shocking in 1830–1,” when it was published. Weinstock, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 185.

depending on the style of the composer, acknowledging that the music of Beethoven and Chopin, for instance, needed to be played differently. Czerny was thus reflecting the new appreciation for new composers and the specialization of pianists, a direct consequence of the emergence of the piano recital and the pianist-interpreter. The collections published by Reed and others after him reflected that preoccupation.

In 1854, the Boston publisher Oliver Ditson published a translation of a famous piano method, “Guide for Teachers of Music on the Piano-Forte,” by the German pianist Julius Knorr (1826–1881). The book itself did not feature any music of Chopin (or any other major composer of piano music), but it contained a “catalogue raisonné” of compositions (including several by Chopin, as well as Schumann, Liszt, and Thalberg) which, according to Dwight, “ought to enter into the musical reading of a pianist who would be at home in the whole history of his Art.”<sup>11</sup> Some editions appeared in the form of compilations (for example, assorted works by European composers “of the modern school”). In the summer of the same year, another album published by Ditson in Boston included piano music by modern composers. Chopin was represented by a “Grand Valse Brillante,” the seldom-heard-in-public *Tarantelle*, and the *Marche funèbre*, arranged for two pianos. In 1853, Chopin’s music appeared for the first time in a method intended for piano students. Nathan Richardson (1827–1859), a pianist, publisher, and pedagogue published an album titled *The Modern School for the Piano-Forte composed and compiled from the works of the most eminent modern and classical authors and teachers*, well publicized in musical journals. Chopin was represented by his Waltz op. 64, no. 1 (1847).

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<sup>11</sup> Dwight’s 5/14 (8 July 1854): 118.

In April 1861 Ditson issued the complete mazurkas and waltzes in one volume. These relatively accessible pieces soon became popular among amateurs, encouraging Ditson to publish the complete polonaises and nocturnes three years later.<sup>12</sup> Ditson's edition of the mazurkas included the puff written by James Davison in 1847 as well as some extracts from Liszt's biography of Chopin. News about the publication of the mazurkas was acknowledged in some periodicals, notably *Dwight's Journal*.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, another journal, *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*, announced the availability of yet another edition of the complete mazurkas by Chappell, a London firm.<sup>14</sup> Starting in 1872, Novello issued a series of "cheap editions of pianoforte classics," which include several of Chopin's waltzes, ballades, preludes, nocturnes, and polonaises, with prices ranging from \$1.20 to \$2.

### **Works by Chopin published 1825–1876**

Op. 1. Rondo in C Minor (1825) [1825, Warsaw]

Op. 2. Variations on "Là ci darem la mano," from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1827)  
[1830, Vienna]

Op. 3. *Introduction et Polonaise brillante* for Cello and Piano (1829) [1831,  
Vienna]

Op. 4. Piano Sonata no. 1 in C Minor (1828) [1851 (posthumous), Paris]

Op. 5. *Rondo à la Mazur* in F Major (1826) [1828, Warsaw]

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<sup>12</sup> Since the early 1860s, Dwight occasionally printed a mazurka or two in the pages of his *Journal*.

<sup>13</sup> *Dwight's* 19/22 (31 August 1856): 171–72. "A Letter about Chopin," reprint from *The London Musical World*.

<sup>14</sup> *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* 62 (June 1861): 571.

Op. 6. 4 Mazurkas (1830) [1833, Paris, London, and Leipzig].<sup>15</sup>

No. 1 in F-sharp Minor

No. 2 in C-sharp Minor

No. 3 in E Major

No. 4 in E-flat Minor

Op. 7. 5 Mazurkas (1830–31) [1833]

No. 1 in B-flat Major

No. 2 in A Minor

No. 3 in F Minor

No. 4 in A-flat Major

No. 5 in C Major

Op. 8. Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano in G Minor (1829) [1833]

Op. 9. 3 Nocturnes (1830–31) [1833]

No. 1 in B-flat Minor

No. 2 in E-flat Major

No. 3 in B Minor

Op. 10. 12 Etudes (1829–32) [1833]

No. 1 in C Minor (1830)

No. 2 in A Minor (1830)

No. 3 in E Major (1832)

No. 4 in C-sharp Minor (1832)

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<sup>15</sup> Starting with this opus, all of Chopin's compositions published during his lifetime were printed simultaneously, or within days, weeks, or few months of each other, in Paris (chiefly, but not only, by Maurice Schlesinger), London (mostly by Wessel and occasionally by Cramer, Addison & Beale), and Leipzig (initially by Kistner, then by Breitkopf & Härtel).

No. 5 in G-flat Major (1830)

No. 6 in E-flat Minor (1830)

No. 7 in C Major (1832)

No. 8 in F Major (1829)

No. 9 in F Minor (1829)

No. 10 in A-flat Major (1829)

No. 11 in E-flat Major (1829)

No. 12 in C Minor (1830)

Op. 11. Concerto for Piano and Orchestra no. 1 in E Minor (1830) [1833 (London 1834)]

Op. 12. *Variations brillantes* on “Je vends des Scapulaires” from Hérold’s

*Ludovic* in B-flat Major (1833) [1833 (London 1834)]

Op. 13. *Fantasy on Polish Airs* in A Major (1828) [1834]

Op. 14. *Rondo à la Krakowiak* in E-flat Major (1828) [1834]

Op. 15. 3 Nocturnes (1831–33) [1833 (1834 Leipzig and London)]

No. 1 in F Major (1830–31)

No. 2 in F-sharp Major (1830–31)

No. 3 in G Minor (1833)

Op. 16. *Rondo* in E-flat Major (1832) [1834]

Op. 17. 4 Mazurkas (1832–33) [1834]

No. 1 in B-flat Major

No. 2 in E Minor

No. 3 in A-flat Major

No. 4 in A Minor

Op. 18. *Grande Valse brillante* in E-flat Major (1831) [1834]

Op. 19. *Boléro* (1833) [1834]

Op. 20. Scherzo no. 1 in B Minor (1831) [1835]

Op. 21. Concerto for piano and Orchestra in F Minor (1829–30) [1836]

Op. 22. *Andante spianato et grande polonaise brillante* for Piano and Orchestra in  
G Major/E-flat Major (1830–31; piano solo version, 1834) [1836]

Op. 23. Ballade no. 1 in G Minor (1831–35) [1836]

Op. 24. 4 Mazurkas (1834–35) [1836]

No. 1 in G Minor

No. 2 in C Major

No. 3 in A-flat Major

No. 4 in B-flat Minor

Op. 25. 12 Etudes (1832–36) [1837]

No. 1 in A-flat Major (1836)

No. 2 in F Minor (1836)

No. 3 in F Major (1832–34)

No. 4 in A Minor (1832–34)

No. 5 in E Minor (1832–34)

No. 6 in G-sharp Minor (1832–34)

No. 7 in C-sharp Minor (1836)

No. 8 in D-flat Major (1832–34)

No. 9 in G-flat Major (1832–34)

No. 10 in B Minor (1832–34)

No. 11 in A Minor (1834)

No. 12 in C Minor (1836)

Op. 26. 2 Polonaises (1834–35) [1836]

No. 1 in C-sharp Minor

No. 2 in D-flat Major

Op. 27. 2 Nocturnes (1834–35) [1836]

No. 1 in C-sharp Minor

No. 2 in D-flat Major

Op. 28. 24 *Préludes* (1836–39) [1839 (London 1840)]

No. 1 in C Major (1839)

No. 2 in A Minor (1838)

No. 3 in G Major (1838–39)

No. 4 in E Minor (1838)

No. 5 in D Major (1838–39)

No. 6 in B Minor (1838–39)

No. 7 in A Major (1836)

No. 8 in F-sharp Minor (1838–39)

No. 9 in E Major (1838–39)

No. 10 in C-sharp Minor (1838–39)

No. 11 in B Major (1838–39)

No. 12 in G-sharp Minor (1838–39)

No. 13 in F-sharp Major (1838–39)

No. 14 in E-flat Minor (1838–39)

No. 15 in D-flat Major (1838–39)

No. 16 in B-flat Minor (1838–39)

No. 17 in A-flat Major (1838–39)

No. 18 in F Minor (1838–39)

No. 19 in E-flat Major (1838–39)

No. 20 in C Minor (1838–39)

No. 21 in B-flat Major (1838–39)

No. 22 in G Minor (1838–39)

No. 23 in F Major (1838–39)

No. 24 in D Minor (1838–39)

Op. 29. Impromptu no. 1 in A-flat Major (1837) [1837]

Op. 30. 4 Mazurkas (1836–37) [1837 (1838 Leipzig)]

No. 1 in C Minor

No. 2 in B Minor

No. 3 in D-flat Major

No. 4 in C-sharp Minor

Op. 31. Scherzo no. 2 in B-flat Minor (1837) [1837 (1838 Leipzig)]

Op. 32. 2 Nocturnes (1837–38) [1837 (1838 Leipzig)]

No. 1 in B Major

No. 2 in A-flat Major

Op. 33. 4 Mazurkas (1837–38) [London 1837 (1838 Leipzig and Paris)]

No. 1 in G-sharp Minor

No. 2 in D Major

No. 3 in C Major

No. 4 in B Minor

Op. 34. 3 Waltzes (1831–38) [London 1837 (1838 Leipzig and Paris)]

No. 1 in A-flat Major

No. 2 in A Minor (1831)

No. 3 in F Major (1838)

Op. 35. Piano Sonata no. 2 in B-flat Minor (1839; third movement, “Funeral  
March”, 1837) [1840]

Op. 36. Impromptu no. 2 in F-sharp Major (1839) [1840]

Op. 37. 2 Nocturnes (1838–39) [1840]

No. 1 in G Minor (1838)

No. 2 in G Major (1839)

Op. 38. Ballade no. 2 in F Major/A Minor (1836–39) [1840]

Op. 39. Scherzo no. 3 in C-sharp Minor (1839) [1840]

Op. 40. 2 Polonaises (1838–39) [1840]

No. 1 in A Major (1838)

No. 2 in C Minor (1838–39)

Op. 41. 4 Mazurkas (1838-39) [1840]

No. 1 in E Minor (1839)

No. 2 in B Major (1838)

No. 3 in A-flat Major (1839)

No. 4 in C-sharp Minor (1839)

- Op. 42. Waltz in A-flat Major (1840) [1840]
- Op. 43. *Tarantelle* in A-flat Major (1841) [1841]
- Op. 44. Polonaise in F-sharp Minor (1841) [1841 (London, 1842)]
- Op. 45. *Prélude* in C-sharp Minor (1841) [Paris 1841 (London and Leipzig 1842)]
- Op. 46. *Allegro de Concert* in A Major (1832–41) [Paris 1841 (London and Leipzig 1842)]
- Op. 47. Ballade no. 3 in A-flat Major (1840–41) [Paris 1841 (London and Leipzig 1842)]
- Op. 48. 2 Nocturnes (1841) [Paris 1841 (London and Leipzig 1842)]
- No. 1 in C Minor
- No. 2 in F-sharp Minor
- Op. 49. *Fantaisie* in F Minor (1841) [Paris 1841 (London and Leipzig 1842)]
- Op. 50 3 Mazurkas (1841–42) [1842]
- No. 1 in G Major
- No. 2 in A-flat Major
- No. 3 in C-sharp Minor
- Op. 51. Impromptu no. 3 in G-flat Major (1842) [1843]
- Op. 52. Ballade no. 4 in F Minor (1842) [1843 (London 1844)]
- Op. 53. Polonaise in A-flat Major (1842) [1843 (London 1844)]
- Op. 54. Scherzo no. 4 in E Major (1842) [1843 (London 1844)]
- Op. 55. 2 Nocturnes (1843) [1844]
- No. 1 in F Minor
- No. 2 in E-flat Major

Op. 56. 3 Mazurkas (1843) [1844 (London 1845)]

No. 1 in B Major

No. 2 in C Major

No. 3 in C Minor

Op. 57. *Berceuse* in D-flat Major (1843) [1844 Leipzig, (London and Paris 1845)]

Op. 58. Piano Sonata no. 3 in B Minor (1844) [1844 Leipzig, (London and Paris 1845)]

Op. 59. 3 Mazurkas (1845) 1844 Leipzig, (London, 1845, Paris 1846)]

No. 1 in A Minor

No. 2 in A-flat Major

No. 3 in F-sharp Minor

Op. 60. *Barcarolle* in F-sharp Major (1845–46) [1846]

Op. 61. *Polonaise-Fantaisie* in A-flat Major (1845–46) [1846]

Op. 62. 2 Nocturnes (1846) [1846]

No. 1 in B Major

No. 2 in E Major

Op. 63. 3 Mazurkas (1846) [1847 (London 1848)]

No. 1 in B Major

No. 2 in F Minor

No. 3 in C-sharp Minor

Op. 64. 3 Waltzes (1840-47) [1847 (London 1848)]

No. 1 in D-flat Major

No. 2 in C-sharp Minor

No. 3 in A-flat Major (1840)

Op. 65. Sonata for Cello and Piano in G Minor (1845–46) [1847, Paris and Leipzig only]

[The following works were published posthumously]

Op. 66. *Fantaisie-Improptu* in C-sharp Minor (1835) [Paris and Leipzig 1855]

Op. 67. 4 Mazurkas (1835–49) [Paris and Leipzig 1855]

No. 1 in G Major (1835)

No. 2 in G Minor (1849)

No. 3 in C Major (1835)

No. 4 in A Minor (1846)

Op. 68. 4 Mazurkas (1827–49) [Paris and Leipzig 1855]

No. 1 in C Major (1829)

No. 2 in A Minor (1827)

No. 3 in F Major (1829)

No. 4 in F Minor (1849)

Op. 69. 2 Waltzes (1829–35) [Paris and Leipzig 1855]

No. 1 in A-flat Major (1835)

No. 2 in B Minor (1829) [Cracow 1852, London 1853 and 1854]

Op. 70. 3 Waltzes (1829–41) [Paris and Leipzig 1855]

No. 1 in G-flat Major (1833)

No. 2 in F Minor (1841) [Cracow 1852, London 1853 and 1854]

No. 3 in D-flat Major (1829)

Op. 71. 3 Polonaises (1825–28) [Paris and Leipzig 1855]

No. 1 in D Minor (1825)

No. 2 in B-flat Major (1828)

No. 3 in F Minor (1828)

Op. 72. 3 Pieces [Paris and Leipzig 1855]

No. 1. Nocturne in E Minor (1827)

No. 2. Funeral March in C Minor (1827)

No. 3. 3 Ecossaises, D Major, G Major, D-flat Major (1826)

Op. 73. Rondo in C Major (Versions for one and two pianos) (1828) [Paris and Leipzig 1855]

Op. 74. 17 Polish Songs (1829–1847) [Warsaw 1853]

Polonaise in G Minor (1827) [Warsaw 1827]

2 Mazurkas (G Major, B-flat Major) (1826) [Warsaw 1826]

*Grand Duo concertant* for Cello and Piano (written jointly with Auguste Franchomme) (1832) [Paris 1833]

Variation no. 6 from *Hexaméron*, on “Suoni la tromba” by Bellini’s *I puritani* (1837) [Milan and Vienna 1839]

*Trois Nouvelles Etudes* (F Minor, A-flat Major, D-flat Major) for Moscheles’ *La Méthode des méthodes* (1839) [1840]

Mazurka in A Minor, *Notre Temps* (1840) [Paris 1841]

Mazurka in A Minor, *Emile Gaillard* (1841) [Paris 1841]

Variations on the Air “Der Schweizerbub” (1826) [Paris, Vienna, and London 1851]

Polonaise in G-sharp Minor (1822) [Warsaw and Mainz 1864]

Waltz in E Minor (1830) [Warsaw and Mainz 1868]

Polonaise in G-flat Major (1829) [Warsaw 1869]

Mazurka in C Major (1833) [Warsaw 1869]

Waltz in E Major (1829) [Lvov 1861]

*Lento con gran espressione* (?) [Poznan 1875]

Mazurkas (G Major, B-flat Major, D Major) (1826) [Poznan 1875]

### **American reprints of Chopin's editions, c. 1839–1876**

A. Individual pieces and collections of works.

c. 1840–1842: Waltz in A-flat, op. 34, no.1 . L. Meignen (Philadelphia)

c. 1840: Impromptu in A-flat, op. 29. Klemm & Bro. (Philadelphia)

184?: Mazurka op. 7 no. 1. G. P. Reed. (Boston)

184?: Waltz op. 18. A. Fiot (Philadelphia)

1844?: Waltz op. 34, no.2. O. Ditson (Boston)

c. 1844: *The Esmeralda Polka* (false attribution) Fiot (Philadelphia) and W.

Dubois (New York)

1845: *Tarantelle*, op. 43. Ditson (Boston)

c. 1846: Funeral March. Ditson (Boston)

1847: Waltz op. 18. Ditson (Boston)

185?: Funeral March. Firth, Pond and Co. (New York)

185?: Funeral March. Beck & Lawton (Philadelphia)

1851: *Tarantelle*, op. 43. J. Schuberth (New York)

1852?: Funeral March. Reed (Boston)

- 1852: Mazurka in B-flat [op. 7, no. 1, op. 17, no. 1, or op. 24, no. 3]. Included in  
an album of diverse works for piano. Reed (Boston)
- 1853: Four Mazurkas op. 7. Reed (Boston)
- 1853: Grand Waltz in E-flat, op. 18. Reed (Boston)
- 1853: Waltz op. 64, no.1. Included in Nathan Richardson's *Modern School for the  
Piano-forte*. (Boston)
- 1854: Funeral March, arr. as a duet. Ditson (Boston)
- 1854: Waltzes op. 64. Richardson's "Correct Editions" (Boston)
- 1854: Polonaises op. 26. Richardson's "Correct Editions" (Boston)
- 1854: *Berceuse*, op. 57. Richardson (Boston)
- 1854: Waltzes op. 34. Richardson (Boston)
- 1855: Waltz op. 42. Ditson (Boston)
- 1858?: Mazurkas (complete). Ditson (Boston), [J. E. Gould (Philadelphia), J. C.  
Haynes (New York), Church (Cincinnati)]
- 186-?: Ballade op. 47. André (Philadelphia), Pond (New York)
- 186-?: Nocturne op. 9, no. 1. O. Ditson (Boston), C. H. Ditson (New York), Lynn  
and Healy (Chicago)
- 186-?: Waltzes (selection), arr. for violin and piano (Schulz). Schmidt (Boston)
- 186-?: Mazurkas (complete). Schmidt (Boston)
- 186-?: Nocturne op. 9, no. 2. André (Philadelphia), Pond (New York)
- 186-?: Four Preludes op. 28. André (Philadelphia), Pond (New York)

- 186-?: Polonaise op. 26, no. 1. André (Philadelphia), Metzertott and Co. (Washington D.C.), M. Gray (San Francisco), R. S. Poppen (St. Louis), Molter and Wurlitzer (Chicago); Weiss and Van Laer (Detroit)
- 186-?: Polonaise op. 26, no. 2. Ditson (Boston)
- 186-?: Nocturne op. 9, no. 2. F. A. North (Philadelphia)
- 186-?: Nocturne op. 55, no. 1. G. D. Russell (Boston)
- 186-?: Nocturne op. 37, no. 1. Russell (Boston)
- 1860: *Fantaisie-Improptu*, op. 66. Young and (Chicago)
- 1860: Funeral March. Beck and Lawton (Philadelphia)
- 1860: Scherzo op. 31. André (Philadelphia)
- 1860–69. Mazurkas and Waltzes (complete).<sup>16</sup> Ditson (Boston)
- 1862: Five Songs (from Seventeen Polish Songs, op. 74): “Two Lovers,” “The Little Ring,” “What a Young Girls Loves,” “The Maiden’s Wish,” and “Lithuanian Song”. Ditson (Boston)
- 1865: Nocturne op. 9, no. 1. Russell (Boston)
- 1866: Nocturne op. 15, no. 2. Ditson (Boston)
- 1867: Polonaise op. 40, no. 1. Schuberth (New York)
- 1867: Waltz op. 64, no. 2. Schuberth (New York)
- 1867–70: Waltzes op. 34 (complete). O. Ditson (Boston), Haynes (Boston), C. H. Diston (New York), C. W. A. Trumpler (Philadelphia), Church (Chicago); Lyon and Healy (Cincinnati)
- 1870: *Fantaisie-Improptu*, op. 66. Schuberth (New York)
- 1870: *Hexaméron*. Schuberth (New York)

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<sup>16</sup> Includes Dwight’s 1852 partial translation of Liszt’s biography of Chopin.

- 1870: Impromptu op. 29. Pond (New York)
- 1870: Polonaise op. 40, no. 2. Ditson (Boston)
- 1870: Polonaise op. 40, no. 2. Gordon (New York)
- 1870: Two *Écossaises*, op. 72. Ditson (Boston)
- 1870: Waltz op. 69 or op. 70. Prüfer (Boston)
- 1870-?: Polonaise op. 53. O. Ditson (Boston), C. H. Ditson (New York)
- 187-?: Funeral March. W. H. Oakes (New York). Included in the album  
 “Souvenirs of Celebrated Composers
- 187-?: Mazurkas (selection). Oakes (New York). Included in the album  
 “Souvenirs of Celebrated Composers”)
- 1870-?: Funeral March. J. L. Peters (New York). Included in one of the three  
 anthologies of music, ed. A. T. Hickey
- 1871-?: Nocturne op. 9, no. 2. Pond (New York)
- 1872: *Berceuse*, op. 57. North (Philadelphia), Metzertott (Washington D.C.), M.  
 Gray (San Francisco), R. S. Poppen (St. Louis), Molter and Wurlitzer  
 (Chicago); Weiss and Van Laer (Detroit)
- 1872: Mazurkas and Waltzes (selection). Boosey (New York)
- 1872: Waltz op. 18. North (Philadelphia); Pond (New York); Balmer and Weber  
 (St. Louis); Gray (San Francisco); R. Dorman (Nashville); W. C. Miller  
 (Baltimore)
- 1872: Waltz op. 64, no. 2. North (Philadelphia)
- 1873: Ballade op. 23 [1836]. Schuberth (New York), Jurgenson (Philadelphia)
- 1873: Waltz op. 64, no. 2. Heuser (New York)

1873-76: Complete works (six volumes; it does not include all the works of Chopin known to that date). Schuberth (New York)

c. 1873: Impromptu op. 29. Gordon and Son (New York)

1874: Polonaise op. 40, no. 1. Prüfer (Boston)

1875: *Berceuse*, op. 57. André (Philadelphia)

1875: *Études* op. 25. Russell (Boston)

1875: Preludes op. 28 (complete). E. Schuberth (New York and Philadelphia)

1875: Waltz op. 64, no. 2. Russell (Boston)

1875: Waltz op. 64, no. 1. Prüfer (Boston)

B. Nineteenth-Century New York Editions of Chopin's Complete Works.

Klindworth (editor) for Jurgenson (publisher, Moscow) 1873–76. 6 volumes.

Reprinted in New York by G. Schirmer (no date)

Klindworth for Bote & Bock (Berlin 1880). 16 volumes. Reprinted by New York publisher E. Schuberth (no date)

Kullak (editor) for Schlesinger (Berlin, 1880–85). 13 volumes. Reprinted by Schirmer (1880–85)

Mikuli (editor) for Kistner (Leipzig, 1879). Reprinted by Schirmer (1894–98).

With historical and analytical commentary by J. Huneker. 12 volumes.

## CONCLUSIONS

The variety of images that Chopin's music projected on the American musical landscape in the first forty-two years of its presence on the stage, with New York City as a paradigm, has constituted the basis of this study. In the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, New York was emerging as a musically competitive city. As a recipient of European immigrants, many of them professional musicians, New York assimilated the multiplicity of images that were circulating in Europe, and participated actively in the propagation of a universally recognized one—a highly improbable mission, as we have seen: attempts to conciliate the diversity of responses that Chopin's music provoked, some complementary and some clearly antagonistic, were not always successful. The writings of Finck and Huneker, for example, demonstrated that the significance of Chopin's music remained a query that yielded many different answers. Modern scholarship has shown that conflicting images of Chopin continued to be registered throughout the rest of the nineteenth century and during a great part of the twentieth, and while the debate on his position in the canon of "classical" composers appeared to be ended as soon as he was recognized by the dominant national culture—Germany—his status continued to be questioned by a minority who regarded him as a somehow "limited" composer with respect to some of his peers.

An examination of the large issues surrounding the early dissemination of Chopin's music in New York—including the development of the piano manufacturing industry; the rise of amateur piano playing and of piano concerts and recitals; the participation of women in concert life; the responsibility of the American critic in a maturing democracy; the role of visiting virtuosos; and the participation of a "New York

school of pianists,” as it were, represented by, among others, Richard Hoffman, William Mason, Robert Goldbeck, John N. Pattison, and Sebastian Bach Mills, performers who made the first attempts to introduce modern aesthetic codes to the city, a task that was completed by the likes of Anna Mehlig, Marie Krebs, Anton Rubinstein, Hans von Bülow, and Annette Essipoff—is also an assessment of the state of musical affairs in the United States at the time. The perception of Chopin’s music through the lens of New York audiences reflects the emergence and early development of characteristically American views, which were the result of the amalgamation of “pure,” unfiltered European thought—carried by the countless first-rate musicians who moved to the country after 1848, the majority of them to New York—and new ideas and perceptions that grew out of the particular musical framework that the city offered.

New York attracted not only impoverished Europeans but also literati and artists for whom the city became a haven of intellectual freedom (many were in fact fleeing political oppression in their native countries) and artistic independence. New York offered an extraordinary diversity of musical entertainment: around the end of the period examined by this study; such diversity was unmatched in any other large American city and not inferior to other European metropolises. Those newly-arrived musicians realized that, in Europe, certain prejudices and preconceived ideas regarding musical thought and performance practices were firmly entrenched—the result of years of traditions and conventions. In New York, instead, musical ideas and performance rituals, while obviously drawn from European models, were as diverse as its citizens: nowhere in the world did the aesthetics originally assigned to Chopin’s music (from France, modern-day

Germany, England, and Eastern Europe, Poland especially) converge and coexist as in New York.

In practice, many attempts to introduce to the New York public some of Chopin's more complex works initially failed to win the praise of the critics and the appreciation of the average concertgoer. That did not deter performers, who continued to try, driven by the force of their ambition and by the good predisposition of certain, more receptive New York audiences for whom the desire of being exposed to all kinds of music of quality and the insistence on attending all kinds of concerts, if not participating in some of them as amateurs, compensated for the fact that they were often perceived as inferior in musical refinement to their European counterparts.

The aesthetics associated with Chopin were universally recognized as quintessentially romantic by all who heard his music since the first performances of his works, and yet they were appreciated differently according to several factors. Depending on their social status or their national origin, listeners tended to emphasize a particular image of Chopin's music: its sentimental appeal; its nationalistic yearnings; its harmonic innovations; and even its classicizing conventionalities. Precisely because New York was becoming the crucible where individuals of all kinds congregated, reactions to Chopin were eclectic and multi-faceted. The responses examined in the years covered in this study reflect that situation, and are therefore elucidatory in the understanding of the cultural melting pot that New York was becoming: rather than a consistent, more or less unified understanding of Chopin's music, there was a multiplicity of responses which ranged from the trite to the highly original. Reviews of concerts, performance practices, program designs and repertorial choices reflect that variety of responses.

To the always persistent accusations that America was not ready to do justice to a composer of the stature of Chopin (especially in New York, a city where, some believed, audiences cared more for spectacle and frivolity than for serious entertainment), there are stories that can refute those claims: some of the most talented and cultivated European pianists chose to settle in New York, rather than in Boston or Philadelphia, where the dissemination of Chopin's music, including some of his later, more demanding compositions, constituted one of their priorities.

The case of Julian Fontana—the pianist whom Chopin had advised to settle in New York rather than in Havana—is one of the most significant examples of these unfortunate cases; the apathy with which his concerts were received and his early retirement from concert life is particularly disappointing because his close relationship with Chopin could have had important consequences for the appreciation of his music on this side of the Atlantic. Likewise, it should be remembered that no less an international figure than von Bülow once planned to move permanently to New York—not only because of financial incentives but because of the excellence and professionalism of the performers he encountered in the city and the enthusiasm of its music aficionados.

Along with multiculturalism, trade was the most important factor in making New York City a platform from which Chopin's music was disseminated. The growth of commerce and industry and the establishment of various important communities of European immigrants, who mingled with the earlier British settlers, made New York an exceptional case in the world. The inflow of money made possible the financing of theaters and concert halls and the funding of all types of musical entertainment. It facilitated the creation of orchestras (by the mid-1860s there were at least two full-

fledged symphony orchestras in the city), the establishment of choral associations and opera companies (sometimes there were simultaneous performances in a single day), the expansion of concert series and music schools—not to mention the rise of popular forms of musical entertainment, including minstrel shows and other such early variety spectacles, which contributed greatly to confirm the distinctive musical personality of the city.

In addition to the wide array of cultural attractions and the developing concert industry, the popularization of Chopin's music among amateurs was a consequence of the extraordinary development of two types of industries: piano manufacturing and music printing. Around mid-century, piano manufacturing moved from the craft shop to the factory. With the huge increase in production, which was more noticeable in New York City than anywhere else in the nation, sturdier and technically improved instruments became increasingly affordable. As more middle-class households became furnished with pianos, the demand for sheet music—the ideal form of dissemination of the “small form” that Chopin cultivated—meant that many of his works were well known by amateur pianists long before they were “premiered” in the concert hall, a situation that did not go unnoticed by the critics. Yet, the development of the printing industry was also responsible for the proliferation of a vast production of piano music of lesser quality. Chopin's music was often mixed with that unambitious music that had achieved a dubious status as consumer good, and it suffered their contagion. Thus, a new problem arose, as two antagonistic images of Chopin—the sublime and the kitschy—came to coexist. In fact, some Chopin scholars—again Finck and Huneker come to mind—noticed that his music, because of its absorption into the puddle of those poorly-crafted

salon compositions, had become trivialized. That Chopin's status in the canon of "classical" composers remained in a precarious position through much of the nineteenth century should be understood in this light. American critics such as Dwight and Hagen denounced that situation, while the writings of scholars such as Finck and Huneker revolved around the need to rid his image of the trivial connotations it had acquired and to reconcile the public with what they regarded as the "authentic" image of Chopin—that which reflected the progressive, bold, even aggressive and virile composer. Pianists like Wolfsohn, Mehlig, Krebs, Rubinstein, and von Bülow, to mention a few, also did their part in trying to restore the significance and the impact that Chopin's music had had during his lifetime, when he was unambiguously regarded as a modernist.

It is true that, in general terms, Chopin's music was generally well esteemed by most. However, only a rather limited percentage of the roughly 75 opuses known and published by 1870 made their way to the stage with regularity. It is often impossible to discern which of the 50-plus mazurkas, 27 etudes, or 24 preludes—to mention a few of Chopin's shorter compositions published in groups—were performed, since programs usually did not provide such detailed information. For New York concertgoers, Chopin's most appealing works included his early nocturnes, the impromptus opp. 29 and 66 (the *Fantaisie-Impromptu*), the polonaises, opp. 22 (usually performed without orchestra and without the preceding *Andante spianato*) and 53, the first and third ballades (opp. 23 and 47), most of the waltzes, the two concertos (opp. 11 and 21), the *Marche funèbre*, some of the études (including op. 25, no. 7, a favorite of Mills), the Scherzo op. 31, and a few of his mazurkas—all of them pieces which illustrated the quintessentially romantic spirit that audiences traditionally related to Chopin (sensitive, lyrical, and passionate); with the

exception of op. 23 and op. 31, short in length and usually framed within traditional structures: in sum, ideal representations of bourgeois good taste and conventionality. It should be noted that most of those pieces would make the list of “Chopin favorites” one hundred and fifty years later, proof that many pianists prefer, now as much as then, to play it safe.

Performances of some of Chopin’s boldest compositions of his later years were indeed programmed by the more courageous pianists, but only sporadically. Towards the end of the period examined in this study, the catalog of works expanded significantly, as Chopin’s intricate harmonic language became acceptable to audiences who were increasingly exposed to the more dissonant music of late romanticism.

The limited incidence of Chopin’s music in public performances during the 1840s and 50s (in some cases, no performances have been identified in whole seasons) can be explained by the dominance, at the time, of the bravura repertory. Chopin’s own early bravura compositions might have sounded thinner and much less imposing than the dazzling works by Liszt and Thalberg that the public identified as truly virtuosic and modern. Yet those early works by Chopin were generally well received by critics when pianists put them in their programs, probably on account of their superior quality in comparison to other bravura works by other composers.

The heyday of the virtuoso era started to show signs of stagnation as early as 1850, though old-school virtuosos continued to attract audiences many years afterwards. To some, virtuosity for its own sake had always been a questionable feature in music. By the following decade, the fascination that the virtuoso pianist once exerted was no longer enough compensation for an ever-increasing group of insightful concertgoers who

demanded a performer capable of *interpreting* a complex work. The transition from virtuosic playing to scholarly interpretation, and the evolution of the concert repertory as we know it today, can be explained by that change of attitude.

Virtuoso playing coincided with the days of the miscellaneous concert, the dominating type of concert during the 1840s and 50s. During that time, pianists used to play Chopin's music upon their arrival in New York, or immediately before their official presentation, as an effective way to establish an early reputation among the connoisseurs; in concert, however, they tended to play it only occasionally. Gottschalk followed this practice during his first American tour in 1853. Chopin's music really started to leave its mark as modern aesthetic codes applied to concert performance were introduced in New York, by Mason, who organized his first classical soirées and matinees in 1854 and 1855, respectively. They became fully established in the following years by Rubinstein and von Bülow, pianists who not only introduced the figure of the modern, specialized performer to American audiences, but also gave legitimacy to the solo piano concert, or recital, a format that some pianists had tried with limited success since the mid-1850s.

By the 1870s, in New York as in the rest of the world, Chopin's reputation as one of the greatest composers of piano music in history was established, evidenced by the presence of his music in concert programs and in the curricula of conservatories, and by the number of available editions. That status saved him from becoming irrelevant in a time in which massive orchestral and operatic works dominated the musical scene. Chopin's complete dedication to the piano and preference for small genres were the two main reasons why the recognition of his stature as a composer was sometimes problematic. There was a universal agreement that Chopin was best in small genres

(Finck would question that assumption in his 1889 essay, becoming one of the first scholars to do so), in “musical glimpses” like the preludes—pieces which, precisely because of their lack of adherence to classical models, had revealed Chopin’s innovative spirit when they were first heard.

The apparent carelessness with which Chopin’s music was sometimes treated in performance gives another indication of the fact it was not always measured with the same standards that serious pianists applied to composers who were unquestionably regarded as “classics.” The case of Chopin’s works for piano and orchestra is particularly illustrative. As late as 1876, when this study ends, there were more partial performances of the concertos (usually either the first movement or the last two) than complete ones. Pianists like Mills—who, in New York, had become the legitimate “owner” of the concertos since the early 1860s—and conductors like Thomas or Bergmann did not seem to mind what, to modern ears, would constitute nothing short of a mutilated performance of a work. While the practice of programming isolated movements of concertos, sonatas, or symphonies was habitual earlier in the century, by the 1870s many would have considered it outdated, if not frivolous, and so there were not nearly as many incomplete performances of piano concertos (or concertos adapted for piano) by J. S. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Grieg, Brahms, Rubinstein, Raff, or Tchaikovsky. The fact that Chopin’s concertos were treated more freely than those by other composers could be explained, in part, by the fact they demand very little participation of the orchestra (except in the opening *tutti*s). The thin orchestral palette and the assumption that, in Chopin’s music, only the piano part really mattered, might have contributed to the use of such relaxed performance practices—not that Chopin himself

would have objected, as he also singled out movements in his own performances. Yet, it could have contributed to the discredit of Chopin with respect to other composers, for whom respect for their hypothetical original intentions was always taken for granted.

Some critics nonetheless censured such practice. Their attitude seemed to correspond to the quest for “authenticity” in performance that kept growing as the century progressed. In 1874, the critic of the *Herald* criticized both the French pianist Émile Guyon and the Philharmonic for giving an incomplete performance of the Concerto op. 11, an idea which the critic judged unprofessional and “hardly in consonance with the true Philharmonic spirit.”<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, two years later, the same critic (presumably), in his review of a complete performance of the same work by Mills, also with the Philharmonic, wrote that the tuttis of the first movement were excessively long and full of “frequent and to some extent unnecessary” repetitions, evidence of the fact that in other performances of the work not only full movements but also sections of movements were omitted.<sup>2</sup> Could this indicate that, in the case of Chopin, the supposed integrity of the work did not play a role as important as in other composers? In defense of these pianists and conductors, it should be noted that the practice of shortening some of the tuttis in the concertos and the *Andante spianato et grande Polonaise* has continued throughout the twentieth century and is still habitual, as many modern recordings can attest.

The first complete public performance of the Sonata op. 35, by Anna Mehlig, took place in 1873. The fact that the third movement, the celebrated *Marche funèbre*, was

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<sup>1</sup> *The New-York Herald* (16 March 1870): 2. Only five days earlier Mills had played the last two movements with the Thomas orchestra, without provoking any reactions among that or any other reviewer.

<sup>2</sup> *The New-York Herald* (23 April 1876): 8.

always performed separately—before and after Mehlig’s complete performance—was however more justifiable under any standard, since Chopin had conceived it as an individual piece, later deciding to use it as the slow movement of the sonata (thus being responsible for the lack of unity that Schumann and others denounced). Yet performances of single movements of sonatas (or string quartets, or other multi-movement ensemble works) by a classic composer like Beethoven were rare and, by the 1870s, would certainly have been disapproved. Von Bülow, who gave the first New York performance of the Sonata op. 58 in 1876, would have never performed a “mutilated” version of the piece.

Fewer in number, female pianists concentrated on a repertory that rarely included their own works. Women were not expected to be professional composers; few had received as thorough an instruction in harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, etc., as their male counterparts had. The few women who had tried their hand at writing music (Clara Schumann and Fanny Henselt come immediately to mind) tended to focus on “lesser” genres: songs rather than arias, “character” pieces rather than sonatas, and ensemble works rather than symphonies. Bravura works were off limits, since they demanded a kind of physical prowess that would have been seen as undignified and lacking the decorum that a woman was expected to show onstage. Only on the operatic stage or in oratorio could women exert the kind of authority and histrionics or exhibit the bold, “unfeminine” behavior that would be accepted from a male pianist. Some women did play virtuoso works written by male composers. Krebs, for instance, played works by Thalberg, Liszt, and a composer of whom she could safely claim certain ownership—her father, Carl Krebs. The different standard that was applied to female pianists could be

explained in part by the fact that through most of the century, they could not claim the status of composer-performers as their male counterparts often could. If competition among female pianists existed, it was largely concealed; it too would have been regarded as improper. At the time, this played against the practices of critics, whose most common resource was to confront two or more pianists, especially regarding their technique. Von Bülow's performances of Chopin's music, for example, were systematically compared with those by Rubinstein and Mills.

The role of women in the dissemination of piano music in the nineteenth century is a recurrent issue in contemporary scholarship. In the case of Chopin, the topic has acquired a special relevance because of relationship between his music and "female sensitivity," an assumption that has remained largely undisputed, if problematic, until recent times. The connection between Chopin and women can be explained, according to nineteenth-century musical and social standards, by two factors. First, Chopin wrote almost exclusively music for solo piano, the preferred instrument for amateurs, most of whom were women. Second, it was assumed that women could understand the short pieces that Chopin favored better than structurally elaborate genres such as the sonata, which were perceived as masculine, by their aesthetic as much as by their complexity. As more women became professionals in a world dominated by men, new problems emerged. In their efforts to assess the merits of an increasing number of female piano performers, New York critics—all male—found themselves needing to develop a new rhetoric that could be efficiently applied to female performers. Comments about onstage appearance and demeanor were almost ineluctable (although the stage presence of certain colorful male pianists, such as Gottschalk, was also discussed). The performance itself

was judged through parameters which had unmistakable feminine resonances, including grace, elegance, and sensitivity, qualities which, if found in excess in a performance by a male pianist, could be taken as signs of affectation. With Chopin, that circumstance played in favor of women.

Similarly, if a woman excelled in a perceived masculine quality, responses could be either overtly negative or condescendingly positive. For example, “strength” was essentially an unfeminine attribute; intelligence could be another such quality. In 1858, Madeleine Graever-Johnson’s playing had been deemed too vigorous and thus “unfeminine” by Fry in the *Tribune*.<sup>3</sup> Years later, in February 1871, a critic noted Mehlig’s “rare intelligence,” which he associated with her “severe taste.”<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, Krebs’s playing was described by more than one critic as technically brilliant but rather cold and dispassionate. On one occasion, the reviewer of *The Independent* called Krebs’s approach to Chopin’s music “healthy,” while the fact that she always played from memory—still uncommon at the time—was for him a sign of “intelligence”:<sup>5</sup> a cerebral approach to Chopin’s music was regarded as essentially problematic, but more so if it came from a woman. According to nineteenth-century standards, “health” and “intelligence” were eminently masculine attributes and would have rarely been used to judge the artistic value of a female performer. Moreover, those terms would have found little place in discussions about Chopin’s music, which Liszt and many after him had occasionally referred to as “unhealthy” and “morbid,” and which was in general

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<sup>3</sup> *The New-York Tribune* (14 December 1858): 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Dwight’s* 31/23 (10 February 1872): 183.

<sup>5</sup> *The Independent* 23/1156 (26 January 1871): 2. Note that Mehlig and Krebs were performing around the same time that season.

associated with “emotionality” rather than “intelligence.” Thus Krebs’s performance had puzzled the reviewer: if technique and memory (intelligence) were regarded as subservient to power of feeling, then she had failed to do justice to music that required expressivity and sensitivity rather than intelligence. But even more problematic was the fact that she had betrayed the assumptions that the critic and the ordinary nineteenth-century music aficionado associated with her sex by critics and audiences alike. Yet another listener might have reached the opposite conclusion, sanctioning Krebs’s intellectual approach to Chopin as an effective way to reconcile the “masculine” qualities that his music undoubtedly possessed but that were systematically neglected in most “feminine” performances. Chopin’s music, by the mere fact of being categorized as feminine, risked being demeaned with respect to that of other composers whose musical “masculinity” was unquestioned. That is precisely the situation that Finck and Huneker so adamantly condemned later in the century, realizing that conspicuously mediocre performances of Chopin’s music by amateur pianists not only had had a detrimental effect on its just appreciation, but had contributed to the degradation of a great part of the piano repertory of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

In sum, it is true that Chopin remained problematic throughout the nineteenth century—and beyond—because of the multitude of images that his music projected. Limited to a single medium, the piano, his music had to struggle to find a voice in an era in which orchestral and operatic works dominated the public arena. His status as the most significant composer of piano music of the century, and his unquestionable originality, protected him from being excluded altogether from the developing canon of “great

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<sup>6</sup> Katharine Ellis, “Female Pianists and their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50/2-3 (1997): 361.

composers,” but his assimilation to that canon was not easy. Classicizing and modernistic, feminine and masculine, better in small forms than in large ones, it often seemed that no approaches to his music were entirely satisfactory. Rubinstein could be too careless in his playing; Krebs and Mehlig, too detached and distanced from the image expected from a female interpreter; von Bülow, too intellectual. Only Mills seemed to have captured the essence of Chopin’s music in a way that satisfied a majority of the New York listeners and critics over an extended period of time.

In America, as in Europe, responses reflected this multiplicity of perspectives. Yet New York offered its own perspective, unlike that of any European city: its desire to be exposed to all kinds of music, and its impatience to become a competitive artistic center, made it the place where that multiplicity converged more visibly than elsewhere. New York was a city in which pianists were freer to experiment, and where it was easier to deal with prejudice without apology. Therefore this study has not dealt merely with the ways in which the music of a romantic composer was perceived in a particular place and time. It has also reflected the circumstances through which New York City advanced towards the multicultural, heterogeneous cultural metropolis that it was becoming.

## **APPENDIX 1: *Personalia***

**Abel, Louise** (née Scheibel; dates unknown). French pianist. Child prodigy, Abel made her debut in Paris in 1844 and was admitted to the Conservatoire at the age of seven. In 1859, Abel settled in Boston, becoming a sought-after teacher. At the beginning of the Civil War, she moved to Europe, returning to the United States in the fall of 1865.

Works by Chopin performed: 11<sup>1</sup>

**Arnold, August** (Bremen, modern-day Germany, 1838–Bloomfield, New Jersey 1929). Pianist and conductor. He led the Germania Club and became director of the August Arnold Conservatory of Music, an institution that achieved some prestige in Brooklyn.

Works performed: 1

**Benziger, Wilhelmina or Carrie** (?–?) German soprano and pianist. Benziger was probably a member of the Liederkranz Society of New York. In 1869 she made her New York debut at Steinway Hall. Benziger alternated between concert singing and piano throughout the 1870s.

Works performed: 1

**Berti, Candido** (New York, 1834–1883). Italian-American pianist and composer. He was the son of a band leader of some reputation in New York, Anselmo Berti. He studied with Gottschalk, playing second piano at some of his New York concerts in 1856. After that, Berti appeared occasionally as soloist. He made his semi-official debut in 1867. Berti published some songs and became a sought-after music teacher. He performed an

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<sup>1</sup> Includes all documented performances of Chopin's works (some identified by title, some not) performed in public in New York during the period 1839–1876.

unidentified waltz by Chopin on 6 December, 1873, with the Amateur Philharmonic Society at Irving Hall. Berti committed suicide in New York in 1883.

Works performed: 1

**Bock, Anna** (1860–?). German-American pianist. She became a student of Ferdinand von Inten after she moved to New York. In 1875, she left for Germany to continue her studies at the Stuttgart Conservatory.

Works performed: 1

**Bonawitz Johann Heinrich (John Henry)** (Dürkheim, Rhineland, modern-day Germany, 1839–London, 1917). German pianist and composer of Polish origin. He moved to Philadelphia with his parents at an early age. While still a boy, he gave some concerts at the Musical Fund Hall of that city. In 1861, Bonawitz toured Europe with the German violinist Joseph Joachim (1831–1907). In the 1872–73 season, Bonawitz organized in New York a series of “Symphonic Concerts” with limited success. A year later, in Philadelphia, he had his two operas produced, *The Bride of Messina* and *Ostrolenka*. He then moved back to Europe, settling in Vienna and, later, in London, where he founded the Mozart Society. In that city, his recitals and piano music attracted considerable attention. On one occasion, Dwight compared him favorably with Hans von Bülow.

Works performed: 3

**Boscowitz, Frederick** (Pest, Hungary, ?–Denver? March 1903). Hungarian-American pianist. At the time of his death, he was believed to be the last living pupil of Chopin. He also received lessons from Liszt. He settled in Boston in 1873 and taught at the Conservatory of that city. Boscowitz gave a few piano recitals (mostly matinees) in New

York during the 1875–76 season, which drew little attention due to their concurrence with von Bülow's concerts. One of them was a recital entirely devoted to Chopin's music, the second such recital in New York, after Rubinstein's in 1874.

Works performed: 11

**Boulanger, Édouard** (France, *ca.* 1820–1863). French pianist. He might have studied with Chopin. In the mid-1850s he probably toured Australia. He was the accompanist of the renowned Irish soprano Catherine Hayes (1825–1861).

Works performed: 1

**Bülow, Hans Guido Freiherr von** (Dresden, 8 January 1830–Cairo, 12 February 1894). German conductor, pianist, and composer. Also editor, transcriber, and writer. He was a pupil of Friedrich Wieck. After meeting Liszt in Weimar in 1849 he became his favorite student and a champion of the new “German School,” led by Liszt and Wagner. Von Bülow married Cosima Liszt (1837–1930) in 1857, who would eventually divorce him and marry Wagner. With the Court Opera of Munich, he conducted the premieres of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. As a pianist, he played some notable first performances, including Liszt's Sonata in B Minor, S. 178 (1857), and Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto op. 23 (Boston, 1875). He was identified as an intellectual, scholarly pianist. Liszt supposedly claimed that von Bülow was not only his favorite student, but his heir and successor. He was appointed conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in 1887. Von Bülow returned to the United States two more times, in 1889 and 1890, but only as a conductor.

Works performed: 26

**Bussmeyer, Hugo** (1842–1912). German pianist and composer. He gave at least one “Historical Concert” in New York in 1869. His piano pieces enjoyed some popularity in the late nineteenth century. Bussmeyer first visited Brazil in 1861, and in 1874 he settled in Rio de Janeiro. He taught at that city’s Conservatory and became Kapellmeister at the Emperor’s court.

Works performed: 1

**Carreño, Teresa** (Caracas, Venezuela, 1853–New York City 1917). Venezuelan pianist, composer, and singer. A child prodigy, Carreño’s affluent parents moved with her to New York, where she studied with Gottschalk. She was later sent to Paris, becoming a student of George Mathias, himself a pupil of Chopin. While still an adolescent, Carreño toured Europe and Latin America. In the United States she often assisted the renowned soprano Carlotta Patti (1835–1889). In her late teens she became an opera singer, but her career as a singer was short (1872–1882). She was one of the leading pianists of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Carreño was nicknamed the “Valkyrie of the piano” by the American press because of her vigorous style of playing.

Works performed: 2

**Cervantes, Ignacio** (Havana, Cuba, 31 July 1837–29 April 1905). Cervantes was the most influential Cuban pianist and composer of the nineteenth century in Cuba and an early representative of Cuban musical nationalism. He befriended Gottschalk during the latter’s stays in the isle. Committed to the independent cause against the Spaniards, he was expelled from the country and spent some time in the United States, touring with the Afro-Cuban violinist José White (1836–1918).

Works performed: 2

**Copp, Aline** (1863?–?). American pianist. As a child, she gave some concerts in the mid-1870s.

Works performed: 3

**Dachauer–Gaspard, V. and D.** (?–?). French brothers, both pianists. They studied piano at the Paris Conservatoire, and formed a duo. One of them played two pieces by Chopin in New York in 1857.

Works performed: 2

**Dannreuther, Edward** (Strasbourg, Alsace, 1844–Hastings, England, 1905). English pianist and critic of German origin. In Leipzig, Dannreuther studied with Moscheles. Dannreuther visited New York in the mid-1860s, after which he settled permanently in London. He was for years a detractor of Liszt's and Wagner's music, although he eventually championed their music and founded the London Wagner Society in 1872. He hosted Wagner during his 1877 visit to London and wrote extensively about his music. He gave the first British performances of some of the most renowned piano concertos of the nineteenth century, including those by Chopin (op. 21, complete), Grieg, Liszt (A major, S. 125), and Tchaikovsky (op. 23). He also promoted concerts of chamber music. He wrote the entry "Frederick Chopin" in the encyclopedia *Famous Composers and Their Works*, edited by Theodore Thomas and John K. Payne, published in Boston in 1891.

Works performed: 4

**Dawson** (dates unknown)

Works performed: 1

**De (von) Meyer, Léopold** (Baden, Austria 1816–Dresden 1883). Pianist and composer.

His American tour of 1845–47, the first by a renowned European piano virtuoso, caused a sensation; he became known by the epithet “The Lion Pianist.” His repertory was then limited to his own virtuosic compositions, although he was reportedly fond of playing the “classics” at home. By the time he visited the United States again, in 1867, his flamboyant style had fallen out of favor with the American audiences, and the tour failed.

Works performed: 1

**De Roode Rice, Eugénie** (Rotterdam, Netherlands, 1842–?). American pianist of Dutch origin. She studied with Henri Herz in Paris, where she won a prize at the Conservatoire. Around 1856, De Roode settled in New York and became a sought-after teacher. In the 1860s she moved to the Midwest, remaining active as a pianist first in Cincinnati and then in Chicago. Her sister Marie was a famous singer.

Works performed: 1

**Eichberg, Pauline** (Stuttgart, modern-day Germany, 1839–Baltimore, 1874). German pianist. She appeared in public for the first time at the age of ten. At thirteen, she moved to Leipzig to study with Meyerbeer, then a teacher at Moscheles’ Conservatory.

Rubinstein asked Eichberg to be his assistant during a German tour in the mid 1850s. In 1859 she moved to New York, and shortly after she married in Baltimore and settled there. She always played from memory, a rarity at the time.

Works performed: 1

**Essipoff, Annette** (St. Petersburg, 1851–1914). Russian pianist, nowadays more often referred as Anna Yesipova. Student of the Polish pianist Theodor Leszetycki (1830–1915) at the Conservatoire of St. Petersburg, Essipoff was admired by Tchaikovsky and

Liszt. She toured the United States in 1876–77 with great success, being often compared to both Rubinstein and von Bülow. Rubinstein reportedly discouraged her from continuing her piano concert career and recommended that she become a professional singer. In 1885, Essipoff was appointed Royal Court Pianist of Prussia. Later, in St. Petersburg, she would become one of Sergei Prokofiev's teachers. She made some piano rolls in the early 1900s.

Works performed: 25

**Falk-Auerbach, Nanette** (Hamburg, 1835–Danzig, 1928). German pianist, student of Clara Wieck. In the early 1870s, she traveled to the United States, probably settling in Baltimore for a number of years. She gave the first American performance of Brahms' Piano Concerto in D minor, op. 15, with the Philharmonic Society in 1875.

Works performed: 1

**Fay, Amy** (Bayou Goula, Louisiana, 1844–Watertown, Mass., 1928). American pianist. In 1869, she moved to Berlin to study with Carl Tausig (1841–1871) in his Conservatory. She was also a pupil of Theodor Kullak (1818–1882) and Ludwig Deppe (1828–1890). In 1874, Fay's letters to her sister started to appear in *The Atlantic Monthly*. She wrote eloquently about the musicians she met, such as Liszt, whose famous master classes at Weimar she attended from 1873, and told about his unending fascination with Chopin's music; Theodor Kullak (1818–1892); Clara Wieck; and Tausig; and about the performances she attended. By the time she returned to America, in 1875, those letters had made her a celebrity of sorts. In 1880 they were compiled and published under the title *Music Study in Germany*. Fay also achieved considerable fame as a pianist, performing often in New York, Boston, and Chicago.

Works performed: 1

**Filomeno, Josefina** (dates unknown). Chilean pianist and violinist, member of a family of musicians. She enjoyed some success in Europe, the United States, and especially Latin America.

Works performed: 1

**Fontana, Jules** (Warsaw 1810–Paris 1869). Polish pianist and composer. Fellow student of Chopin at the Warsaw Lyceum, they met again in Paris in 1832. Fontana soon became Chopin's copyist and managed many of his affairs, including financial. They exchanged numerous letters, a valuable source of information about Chopin's life, creative processes, and personality. Fontana moved to New York in 1845, married a French widow, Camila Dalcour, in December 1850, and returned to Paris with her early in 1851. In 1848, Chopin wrote him a letter stating that he thought he had done well settling in New York instead of Havana, as Fontana had initially intended. After returning to France, and at the request of Chopin's family, he took care of a posthumous edition of unpublished works, against the wishes of the composer, who had expressed his desire to destroy them after he died. Victim of various debilitating illnesses, he committed suicide in 1869.

Works performed: 1

**Gilbert, Maria** (dates unknown)

Works performed: 1

**Gjertz, Sophie** (1820–?). Norwegian pianist. She arrived in New York in July 1843, and gave one concert in December of that same year.

Works performed: 1

**Goddard, Arabella** (Saint-Servant, Brittany, 1836–Boulogne-sur-Mer, Normandy, 1922). English pianist of French ancestry. A child prodigy, she studied with Kalkbrenner (1785–1849) in Paris and met Chopin and George Sand. After the 1848 Revolution, Goddard moved to London and took some lessons with Thalberg. From 1873 to 1876, revered as one of Europe’s foremost pianists, Goddard engaged in a world tour, including the United States, Australia, India, and China. While in New York, she gave concerts with the renowned soprano Thérèse Tietjens (1831–1877). She had a much greater success in Boston.

Works performed: 1

**Goldbeck, Robert** (Potsdam, Prussia, 1839–St Louis, Missouri, 1908). German-American pianist, composer and educator. A child prodigy, he was sent to study with Henry Litolff (1818–1881) in Braunschweig, Lower Saxony. Still an adolescent, he moved to Paris, where he befriended Herz, Berlioz, Offenbach, Halévy, and other important composers. He settled briefly in England, and, in 1856, he moved to the United States. In 1859 he founded Goldbeck’s Conservatory of Music. In 1867, Goldbeck opened the *New England Conservatory of Music* in Boston. A year later, he found another conservatory in Chicago. Finally, he settled permanently in St. Louis, where he founded the St. Louis College of Music in 1880. Goldbeck was a prolific composer, favoring large orchestral works, including a piano concerto and a symphony, and hundreds of piano works.

Works performed: 13

**Gottschalk, Louis Moreau** (New Orleans, 1829–Tijuca, Brazil, 1869). American composer and pianist, one of the most renowned and influential of the nineteenth century.

He moved to Paris in 1842, and tried to enroll at the Conservatoire but was not admitted. He then studied privately with Charles Hallé. Chopin, who was present at Gottschalk's Paris debut, in 1846, prophesized a great future for the sixteen-year-old pianist. Some of his early piano works were recreations of the dances and songs performed by slaves of his native Louisiana. Regarded as exotic, these works made him famous throughout Europe. The audacity of Gottschalk's harmonic language was revealed in works such as *The Dying Poet*. After spectacularly successful tours in Switzerland, France, and Spain, he came to New York in January 1853, where success proved elusive. In 1857 he began a long tour of the Caribbean and South America. In 1862 he returned to the United States and toured the war-ravaged country for three years, giving an estimated 1,100 concerts. In 1865 he traveled again to South America. He probably contracted malaria in Brazil, where he died in December 1869.

Works performed: 16

**Graever-Johnson, Madeleine** (Amsterdam, 1829–1868). Pianist and composer. She was a student of Henry C. Litolff (1818–1891) and Moscheles. After touring Europe, Graever-Johnson moved to New York, in 1857, where she established herself as an active concert pianist and teacher. At the onset of the Civil War she left the United States and settle in Paris. She wrote some salon piano pieces and virtuosic works.

Works performed: 2

**Groschurt** (dates unknown)

Works performed: 1

**Guyon, Émile** (dates unknown). French pianist. He studied at the Paris Conservatoire and for some time he was a student of Thalberg. Guyon was active in New York from

1857, assisting Thalberg and Gottschalk. With the Philharmonic Society, Guyon gave the first American performance of Mozart Concerto for Two Pianos, K. 365 (with William Mason), in 1867.

Works performed: 1

**Guzmán, Frédéric (Federico)** (*ca.* 1822–?). Chilean pianist. He settled in France, where he probably befriended Gottschalk.

Works performed: 1

**Hard** (dates unknown). Female amateur pianist. She might have performed a Chopin impromptu in New York in 1875.

Works performed: 1?

**Heilbron, Sophie Flora** (1857–?).

German pianist. As a teenager, she played for Queen Victoria, and, later, for President Ulysses S. Grant. She came to America in 1874 and that year she gave a series of solo piano recitals (matinees). She had good reputation as a pianist and composer in both sides of the Atlantic. In 1876 she married Frederick Salomon, a New York broker, and retired from concert life.

Works performed: 2

**Hoffman, Richard** (Manchester, England, 24 May 1831–Mount Kisco, N.Y., 17 August 1908). Pianist and composer. A child prodigy, he studied with many of the best pianists of the time, including de Meyer, Theodore Döhler (1814–1856), Pleyel, Moscheles, Rubinstein, Thalberg, and Liszt. In 1847, aged 16, he moved to New York, making his debut with the Philharmonic Society on 27 November, with Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto in G Minor, op. 25. After his initial success, he settled permanently in the city.

In March 1854, Hoffman was made an honorary member of the Society. After that, he appeared as soloist with the orchestra each year for sixteen consecutive seasons. Hoffman toured the country as solo pianist with the soprano Jenny Lind and with Gottschalk, who greatly admired him. In the 1880s, he played under the baton of von Bülow. In 1897 he was honored with a testimonial concert to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his New York debut. His wife published his memoirs, *Some Recollections of Fifty Years*, shortly after his death. A prolific composer, he wrote many piano pieces and over 100 songs.

Works performed: 17

**Hopkins, C. Jerome** (Burlington, Vermont, 1 April 1836–Clifton, New Jersey, 4 November 1898). American pianist, composer, and educator. Hopkins arrived in New York in 1854. In the 1860s, he established the *Orpheon Free Schools*, institutions where children learned to sight sing. In addition, Hopkins founded the *Orpheonist and Philharmonic Journal* (1864). By the late sixties he was giving piano recitals mixed with lectures, intended to enlighten as much as to entertain. Hopkins was an early champion of American composers.

Works performed: 2

**Jarvis, Charles H.** (Philadelphia 1837–1895), American pianist and teacher, son of pianist Charles W. Jarvis (1809–1871). He instituted a series of classical soirees and symphony concerts in Philadelphia in the 1860s, often programming Chopin's music. Jarvis was a soloist with both the New York Philharmonic Society and Thomas' Symphony Orchestra.

Works performed: 1

**Klauczek, Otilie J.** (dates unknown). Bohemian pianist. She studied in Vienna and moved to New York around 1870, debuting in the Liederkranz Festival of 1871. She played a few times at Steinway Hall and in Brooklyn. She eventually settled in Indianapolis and became a music teacher.

Works performed: 1

**Knauss, Emilie** (dates unknown)

Works performed: 1

**Krebs, Marie (Krebs–Brenning):** (Dresden, Dec. 5, 1851–June 27, 1900). German pianist. Daughter of composer Carl Krebs (1804–1880). A child prodigy, she gave her first public concert at the age of 9 with the Dresden Concert Society. In 1863, aged 13, she traveled to London under a contract to give a series of concerts at Covent Garden. She stayed there four years and gave about 170 concerts. Her repertory consisted of works by Beethoven, Weber, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann, and other classical composers. She also toured Great Britain regularly. Krebs toured the United States with great success in 1870–72.

Works performed: 17

**Krolikowska, Ludwika** (dates unknown)

Works performed: 1

**Inten, Ferdinand von** (Leipzig, 23 February 1848–New York, 15 January 1918).

German-American pianist, teacher, and composer. From 1862 he trained at the Conservatory of Leipzig, where he studied with Moscheles, Reinecke, and Hauptmann. He toured Germany for two years before moving to the United States and settling permanently in New York. In December 1868 he made a successful debut at one of

Theodore Thomas' Classical Soirees. Lacking the ambition to become a virtuoso, or simply because of disinterest in certain repertoires, he failed to secure himself a prominent position among other pianists who had also settled in New York at that time. He nonetheless retained prestige as a scholarly pianist. For the next four decades he appeared often as accompanist and in chamber music concerts, often collaborating with Thomas and Leopold Damrosch. Those concerts gave momentum to a form which was still rather unappreciated by general audiences. A sought after teacher, his pupils included the two sons of Leopold Damrosch, Frank (1859–1937) and Walter (1862–1950).

Works performed: 5

**Lansing, Egbert** (1833?–1903?). He is mentioned in some journals as an accompanist in the late 1850s.

Works performed: 1

**Lebrecht, R. V.** (dates unknown). German pianist. In the late 1850s she occasionally played at some concerts organized by Carl Bergmann.

Works performed: 1

**Liebling (1851–1914).** Perhaps Emil Liebling, German pianist and composer. Member of a prominent family of musicians. After debuting in Berlin at 12 years of age, he moved to the United States in 1867, settling in Kentucky. Liebling returned to Germany in 1871 and studied with Kullak in Berlin and, briefly, with Liszt in Weimar. He returned to the United States and settled in Chicago. He was a champion of Bach's works for the keyboard.

Works performed: 1

**Lilliendahl** (dates unknown). Probably an amateur performer, perhaps a student of Jerome Hopkins.

Works performed: 1

**Luckhardt, Lina** (dates unknown). Student of Mills, with whom she occasionally played second piano. She started her career in Cincinnati in the 1860s. She participated in some concerts in New York and Philadelphia in the 1870s, but her career was short.

Works performed: 3

**Mason, William** (Boston, 14 January, 1829–New York City, 14 July 1908). American pianist, composer, writer, and teacher, son of Lowell Mason (1792–1872), renowned composer of sacred music and educator. After debuting in Boston in 1846, he went to Europe (1849) where he studied with Moscheles and with Moritz Hauptmann (1792–1868) in Leipzig, Alexander Dreyschock (1818–1869) in Prague. In Weimar, Mason became the first American student of Liszt; many others would later travel to the German city to participate in the composer’s famous master classes. During the approximately five years he spent in Europe, Mason met such notables as Robert and Clara Schumann, Wagner, Meyerbeer, Brahms, and Berlioz. Mason’s appreciation for the music of Chopin grew during his stay in Europe. The influence of Chopin in Mason’s approximately forty works for piano (basically all character pieces) is evident in pieces like the *Rêverie Poétique*, op.24, the *Improvisation*, op. 51, the “Mazurka-caprice” included in his *Deux Humoresques de bal*, op. 23, and especially the *Ballade-Barcarolle*, in the lyrical and ornamental treatment of melody. He returned to the United States in 1855 and settled in New York. After a failed attempt to tour New England and parts of the Midwest giving solo recitals, he returned to New York and established the Mason/Bergmann Chamber

Music Soirees in 1855. In 1857, the series became the Mason/Thomas Classical Soirees. Also in 1855, Mason also organized series of matinees that brought many modern piano works to the New York public. After 1868 Mason devoted his efforts to composing and teaching, appearing occasionally on the stage. He wrote about 40 piano pieces, a method for piano and other didactic works. He wrote an autobiography, *Memories of a Musical Life* (1901).

Works performed: 15

**Mehlig, Anna.** (Stuttgart, July 11, 1846–Berlin, July 26, 1928). German pianist. She was a pupil of Liszt at Weimar. In 1866 she played for the first time with the London Philharmonic. After that, she toured England and Germany. She visited the United States, in 1869, returning to Europe in, or around, 1873. She settled in England. Like other female pianists of her generation, she played classical and modern works by composers such as Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Chopin, eschewing the fantasies and variations on operatic themes by other less renowned composers, common in the programs of the time.

Works performed: 14

**Millet, N.** (dates unknown). An amateur pianist, Millet played a movement of Chopin's E-minor concerto in 1868.

Works performed: 1.

**Mills, Sebastian Bach** (Cirencester, England, 13 March 1839–Weisbaden, Germany, 21 December 1898). English pianist, teacher, and composer. He was initially taught by his father, organist at Gloucester Cathedral, and then by Cipriani Potter (1792–1871) at the Royal Academy of London, debuting there in 1846. He was then sent to the Leipzig

Conservatory, where he studied with Moscheles, Louis Plaidy (1810–1874), Julius Rietz (1812–1877), and Hauptmann, and was influenced by Liszt's circle (he probably received some lessons from Liszt himself). In 1855 he returned to Britain and a year later he came to New York, where he settled, failing initially to attract much attention from managers and fellow musicians. His successful New York debut finally arrived at one of Carl Bergmann's Sunday Sacred Concerts, performing, for the first time in America, Schumann's piano concerto (20 February 1859; he played it again with the Philharmonic Society some weeks later). Mills was soon recognized as a representative of the school of Liszt and for the next thirty years he kept an astonishingly active agenda, performing with the Philharmonic during eighteen consecutive seasons (from 1859 to 1877), a near record in the history of the Society. He gave the American premieres of several concertos, including those of Chopin (F minor, op. 21), Ferdinand Hiller, Liszt (E-flat major, S. 124), and Mozart (C major, K. 503). Mills's preference for the new Steinway pianos contributed to the high reputation that the firm soon acquired. An eclectic pianist, Mills maintained the customary repertory of virtuosic pieces (his own and other composers') as well as the works of classic and contemporary authors. A well-regarded teacher, his pupils included Julie Rivé-King, among others. His piano works enjoyed some popularity, some still being published as late as 1913. Always keeping his ties with Germany, he toured that country in 1858, 1867 and 1877. He was a member of the Liederkranz and Arion Societies, and was made an honorary member of the Philharmonic Society in 1866. He remained committed to the music of Chopin, becoming one of the nation's most devoted champions to his music.

Works performed: 95

**Mills, William F.** Brother of Sebastian Bach Mills.

Works performed: 1

**Morgan, George Washbourne** (Gloucester, England, 9 April 1823–Tacoma, Washington, July 1892. English-born American composer, organist, and pianist. He was conductor of the Gloucester Philharmonic Chorus in 1845, and later became organist at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral in London. He moved to New York in or around 1853 holding posts as organist at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Grace Church, St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church, the Brooklyn Tabernacle, and Dutch Reform Church. He succeeded George F. Bristow as conductor of the famed *Mendelssohn Union*.

Works performed: 1

**Napoleão, Arturo.** (Oporto, Portugal, 6 March 1843–Rio de Janeiro, 12, May 1925).

Portuguese pianist and composer. The son of an Italian music teacher, he made his debut at the age of six. Mostly self-taught, he appears to have studied only with Hallé in Manchester. He had successes in Paris, where he was hailed by Herz, and London, reportedly playing before 30,000 people at the Crystal Palace (the number is probably exaggerated). He toured Brazil in 1857, and in 1858 arrived in New York, where he befriended Gottschalk. After a rather short stay in the city he moved back to Brazil. In 1868 he re-encountered Gottschalk in Rio de Janeiro, accompanying him during his last days. Around that time, Napoleão abandoned a successful concert career and became an instrument dealer. He wrote virtuosic piano pieces, hymns, and an opera.

Works performed: 3

**Pattison, John Nelson** (Niagara Falls, New York, 1845–New York City, 1905).

American composer and pianist. While studying in Europe, he received lessons from an

impressive list of teachers, including Thalberg, Liszt, von Bülow, Carl Reinecke (1824–1910), and Adolf von Henselt (1814–1889), among others. Around 1861 he moved to New York, making his official debut, with the Philharmonic Society, on 20 December 1862 (Mendelssohn’s *Capriccio Brillante*, op. 22, with orchestra). He was particularly fond of the music of Bach. He composed a symphony, *Niagara* (not to be mistaken with William Fry’s homonymous work), for orchestra and military band, a “Concerto–Fantasy” for piano and orchestra, as well as solo piano and chamber music works.

Works performed: 9

**Pinner, Max** (1851–?). American composer and pianist, born in New York. He studied in Leipzig and in Berlin (with Tausig). In 1868, he returned to New York but left again to Germany in 1872, where received lessons from Liszt at Weimar (he accepted Pinner after accepting his recommendation by Leopold Damrosch). In 1878, he settled permanently in New York City, becoming a sought-after teacher and performing on the stage on rare occasions. Walter Damrosch was one of his students.

Works performed: 1

**Poznanski, Joseph** (dates unknown). Brother of famous violinist Barrett Isaac Poznanski (*d.* 1896), with whom he gave some concerts in New York in the mid 1860s.

Works performed: 1

**Rakemann, Frederick** (Bremen?, 1821–1884). German pianist and composer, brother of Ludwig Rakemann. In the mid 1840s moved temporarily to Italy. In the late 1850s, Rakemann and his American wife moved back to the United States, settling in Lenox, Massachusetts.

Works performed: 3

**Rakemann, Ludwig** (Bremen, 1816–?). German pianist, violinist, and composer. He probably was a student of Hummel and Thalberg. Rakemann was one of the imaginary characters of Schumann’s critical essays (his pseudonym was “Walt”). A student of Friedrich Wieck, in or around 1838, Rakemann asked him for Clara’s hand, siding with Clara’s father against Schumann. In 1833 he had played Bach’s Triple Concerto with Clara and Mendelssohn in the Gewandhaus of Leipzig. Rakemann arrived to the United States in 1839, introducing the music of Chopin to New York and Boston audiences at a concert in that year. He seldom performed in public, although he was sought–after entertainer in private parties in New York and in New England. Rakemann’s American career was brief, despite the favorable reception he usually received in the press. By 1843 he had moved to London and gradually stopped performing in public.

Works performed: 2

**Rivé-King, Julia** (Cincinnati, 31 October 1857–Chicago, 24 July 1937). American pianist and composer. A child prodigy, she was taken to New York to study with William Mason and Sebastian Bach Mills. Later, she traveled to Germany and studied with Reinecke in Leipzig. She returned to her hometown in 1873, and debuted two years later in New York with the Philharmonic Society. Her repertoire was vast, and included works by Bach, Handel, Schumann, Chopin, and Liszt, among others. In 1877 she became associated with Thomas’ orchestra, touring with it on several occasions. She reportedly gave more than 4,000 concerts throughout her career.

Works performed: 1

**Rubinstein, Anton** (Vikhvatnets, Russia 28 November 1829–St. Petersburg, 20 November 1894). One of the greatest pianists of the nineteenth century and a prolific

composer. He was founder and director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. In 1872–73 he toured the United States, sponsored by the Steinway firm, giving 215 concerts across the country in eight months. In New York he gave the first solo recital devoted entirely to works by Chopin, a rare feat at the time. His repertory in America included works from Scarlatti to Liszt and his own. Unlike most virtuoso pianists, he wrote not only piano works but also symphonies, oratorios, chamber music, and no less than twenty operas. During his lifetime, Rubinstein enjoyed a great reputation as composer.

Works performed: 53

**Saar, William** (1840–1864). American pianist. Son of pianist and piano manufacturer Donat Saar. A child prodigy, he debuted at 10 years of age in New York. He died at 24.

Works performed: 5

**Satter, Gustave** (Rann, modern-day Croatia, 12 February 1832–Savannah, Georgia, 1879). A mostly self-taught pianist and composer, Satter moved to the United States in 1855. Hailed as one of the greatest pianists by some and put down by others, his eccentric character as well as some personal circumstances probably hampered his choices to leave a mark in the American stage. Dwight considered Satter a member of the “acrobatic school.” This led to a bitter confrontation between the editor and the pianist (the latter called Dwight “unpatriotic,” due to his disdain for the flamboyant paraphrases for piano of national songs). Satter gave the first American performances of Beethoven’s “Emperor” concerto (with the Philharmonic, in 1855), the Sonata op. 53, *Appassionata* (Boston 1855), several works by Mozart, and Schubert’s piano trio in E flat major, D. 929. Although he did not play Chopin’s music often, he felt indebted to him, claiming that the composer’s “refinement had added a new dimension to his art by revealing to

him the poetic nature of the instrument.”<sup>2</sup> Satter is believed to have died in Savannah, although other sources claim that he mysteriously disappeared and died somewhere in the South. Satter was also a prolific composer. Some of his most ambitious works include a “symphonic tone-poem,” *Washington*, two symphonies, the opera *Olanthe*, and the overtures *Lorelei*, *Julius Caesar*, and *An die Freude*.

Works performed: 7

**Schiller, Madeline** (London, 1845–New York City, 1911). English-born American pianist. She studied with Charles Hallé in London and with Moscheles in Leipzig. In 1872, Schiller married Marcus Bennett, a Bostonian, and moved with him to the United States, settling in New York. Schiller performed often with the Philharmonic Society. She gave the world premiere of Tchaikovsky’s second piano concerto, in New York, in 1881.

Works performed: 1

**Stamm, August Julius** (Hamburg, 1849–Los Angeles, 1937). German pianist, organist, and conductor. He moved to the United States in 1873, settling in Patterson, New Jersey, and later, in Amsterdam and Albany, New York. In 1885 he moved to Los Angeles, becoming a pioneer of orchestral music in the still diminutive city. In 1893, he and forty other musicians founded the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, of which he became its first conductor.

Works performed: 1

**Thalberg, Sigismund** (Geneva, 7 January 1812–Naples, 27 April 1871). Pianist and composer, one of the most legendary virtuosos of the nineteenth century, his virtuosity

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<sup>2</sup> H. Earle Johnson, “Gustave Satter, the Eccentric,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 16, 1 (Spring 1963): 61.

was often compared to Liszt's. He studied with Hummel. At 16, his first compositions were published, and in 1830 he gave his first tour, in Germany. In 1834, Thalberg was appointed court pianist in Vienna. He toured France, Belgium, England, Holland, Russia, and Spain. In 1855 he toured Brazil and in 1856 he came to New York. From November to that year to June of 1858 he gave an astonishing number of concerts throughout the country, sometimes two and even three concerts on the same day. He retired in 1864.

Works performed: 6

**Timm, Henry Christian** (Hamburg, 1811, Germany–Hoboken, New Jersey, 1892).

German-American pianist. He arrived in New York in 1835, making his debut in Park Theater in that year, and becoming one of the first competent pianists to settle in the United States. Timm had a long career as conductor and accompanist, appearing also as a soloist with the Philharmonic Society. He was one of the founders of the Philharmonic Society and served as president of the Society from 1848 to 1863. Timm occasionally played the trombone in the Philharmonic and was also a competent organist.

Works performed: 2

**Topp, Alida.** (dates unknown). German pianist. She was a pupil of von Bülow, who made an exception and taught her for free. In 1864 she played Liszt's B Minor sonata before the composer. Topp toured the United States for three years, from 1867 to 1870.

Works performed: 8

**Touhay, Adam** (dates unknown). English pianist. He graduated from Leipzig Conservatory and visited the United States in 1861. He probably gave only one public performance.

Works performed: 1

**Vilanova, Ranieri** (1827–1881). Catalan pianist and composer. After meeting Liszt in Barcelona during his tours in Spain and Portugal in 1844–45, he moved to Paris, where he was admitted to the Conservatory. In 1855 he moved to New York. A year later Vilanova introduced the “Orgue Alexandre” (a combination of piano and harmonium) to New York audiences with great success in 1856 at Dodworth’s Hall. He wrote some nocturnes and etudes, as well as operatic fantasies.

Works performed: 1

**Wehli, James** (New York City, 1843–?). American pianist and composer. His career seemed promising but was short. His first engagement with the Philharmonic was canceled because of his refusal to use a Steinway piano (he favored Chickering). Wehli “specialized” in works for the left hand.

Works performed: 3

**Weikert, Constantin** (dates unknown). German-American pianist. Born in upstate New York, he was sent to Leipzig to study with von Bülow. He returned to the United States with a recommendation from Reinecke, but his concert career was short. He was head of the music department at Dwight School and became preceptor of the *Ladies Amateur Quartette Club*.

Works performed: 4

**Wenige, Oskar** (dates unknown). German pianist. He appeared occasionally in the concerts organized by Bergmann in the late 1860s.

Works performed: 1

**Wilson** (dates unknown). Female amateur pianist. She might have performed a Chopin impromptu in New York in 1875.

Works performed: 1?

**Wolfssohn, Carl** (Alzey, Rhineland–Palatinate, 14 December 1834–Deal Beach, N.J., 30 July 1907). German-American pianist, teacher, conductor, and composer. He studied with Aloys Schmitt (1788–1866) in Frankfurt, debuting there in 1848. Later he toured Bavaria. He moved to the United States in 1854, settling in Philadelphia. A scholarly performer, for the next twenty years he gave annual series of chamber music concerts and piano recitals, introducing many classical works to American audiences. He gave recitals entirely devoted to Chopin’s and Schumann’s piano music. In 1866–67 he performed the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven in a series of matinees in New York. In 1873 he moved to Chicago, where he gave momentum to the musical life of the city, and founded the Beethoven Society choir. His goal being education through the works of the masters, he gave several series of “historical recitals” with programs designed chronologically, from Couperin to Brahms.

Works performed: 2

## **APPENDIX 2. Performances, 1839–1876: chronological**

### **1839**

1. Unidentified mazurkas 10/16/1839 L. Rakemann
2. Unidentified nocturne 10/16/1839 L. Rakemann

### **No identified performances 1840–1842**

### **1842**

3. *Hexaméron*, E Major 07/11/1842 F. Rakemann

### **1843**

4. Unidentified nocturne 04/26/1843 F. Rakemann
5. *Hexaméron*, E Major 04/26/1843 F. Rakemann
6. Unidentified waltz 12/12/1843 Gjertz

### **No identified performances 1844–1845**

### **1846**

7. Concerto op. 11, E Minor (movements II and III). 11/01/1846 Timm
8. Unidentified variations 10/15/1846 (perhaps *Fantaisie*, op. 49) Fontana

### **No identified performances 1847–1850**

### **1851**

9. Étude, A-flat Major (Op. 10, no. 10, or op. 25, no. 1, or no. 2 from *Trois nouvelles études*), 10/04/1851 Boulanger

### **No identified performances 1852–53**

### **1854**

10. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 03/04/1854 Hoffman

11. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 03/30/1854 Hoffman

12. Impromptu op. 29, A-flat Major 10/12/1854 Mason

13. Impromptu op. 29, A-flat Major 10/14/1854 Mason

**1855**

14. Sonata op. 35, B-flat Minor. Third movement only; hereafter, “Marche funèbre”. 02/20/1855 Gottschalk

15. Ballade op. 23 G Minor 3/23/1855 Satter

16. Impromptu op. 29, A-flat Major. 03/27/1855 Mason

17. Concerto op. 11, E Minor. 05/19/1855 Hoffman

18. *Fantaisie-Impromptu*, op. 66, C-sharp Minor. 11/27/1855 Mason

19. Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violoncello, op. 8, G Minor 11/17/1855

Hoffman

20. Ballade op. 47, A-flat Major (1840–41) 12/08/1855 Mason

**1856**

21. Unidentified polonaise (advertised as “op. 10,” nonexistent) 01/07/1856

Morgan

22. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor 02/14/1856 Gottschalk

23. Unidentified impromptu 02/22/1856 Gottschalk

24. Unidentified waltz(es) 02//22/1856 Gottschalk

25. Unidentified piece 03/16/1856 R V Lebrecht

26. Unidentified impromptu 03/20/1856 Gottschalk

27. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor 03/20/1856 Gottschalk

28. Unidentified waltz(es) 03/20/1856 Gottschalk

29. Impromptu op. 29, A-flat Major 03/25/1856 Mason
30. Waltzes from op. 64, unidentified number (D-flat Major, C-sharp Minor, A-flat Major), 03/25/1856 Mason
31. Étude op.10, no. 1 11/22/1856 Goldbeck
32. Unidentified nocturne 12/26/1856 Gottschalk

**1857**

33. Étude op. 25, no. 8, D-flat Major 02/02/1857 Goldbeck
34. Prélude op. 28, no. 15, D-flat Major 02/02/1857 Goldbeck
35. "Marche funèbre," B-flat Minor 02/18/1857 Thalberg
36. "Marche funèbre," B-flat Minor 02/20/1857 Thalberg
37. Unidentified mazurkas 02/24/1857 Thalberg
38. Unidentified mazurkas 02/26?/27/1857 Goldbeck
39. "Marche funèbre," B-flat Minor 02/28/1857 Thalberg
40. "Marche funèbre," B-flat Minor 03/16/1857 Thalberg
41. Concerto op. 11, E Minor (perhaps complete) 03/24/1857 De Roode  
(performed with string quintet accompaniment).
42. Unidentified mazurka Dachauer-Gaspard 05/03/1857
43. Unidentified nocturne Dachauer-Gaspard 05/03/1857
44. "Marche funèbre," B-flat Minor 10/30/1857 Thalberg
45. Concerto op. 11, E Minor (movements II and III) 12/12/1857 Hoffman  
(Brooklyn)

**1858**

46. Étude, F Minor (op. 10, no. 9, or op. 25, no. 2, or no. 1 from *Trois nouvelles études*), 01/16/1858 Goldbeck
47. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor 01/16/1858 Goldbeck
48. Étude op. 10, no. 7, C Major 01/30/1858 Mason
49. *Grand Polonaise brillante*, op. 22, E-flat Major (announced as “Polonaise Concertante;” possibly performed with the preceding *Andante spianato*, and possibly with orchestral accompaniment) 11/12/1858 Saar
50. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major. 11/23/1858 Napoleão
51. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major. 12/23/1858 Goldbeck
52. Unidentified nocturnes 12/23/1858 Goldbeck

### 1859

53. Concerto op. 11, E Minor (“fragment”). 01/15/1859 Abel
54. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 02/12/1859 Saar
55. Étude, A-flat Major (op. 10, no. 10, or op. 2,5 no. 1, or no. 3 from *Trois nouvelles études*) 02/15/1859 Abel
56. Mazurka, B Minor (op. 30, no. 2 or op. 33, no. 4), 02/15/1859 Abel
57. Waltz op. 34 no. 2, A Minor 02/15/1859 Abel
58. Étude op. 25, no. 3, F Major 02/15/1859 Abel
59. Nocturne op. 9, no. 2, E-flat Major 03/05/1859 Saar
60. Unidentified piece 03/13/1859 Mills
61. Unidentified piece 03/20/1859 Mills
62. *Grand Polonaise*, op. 22, E-flat Major 03/25/1859 Mills<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the polonaise, op. 26, no. 2 in E-flat Minor. Same for the two concerts on 05/19/1859 and 12/20/1859.

63. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 04/30/1859 Hoffman
64. Polonaise op. 22, E-flat Major 05/19/1859 Mills (Brooklyn)
65. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 06/26/1859 Mills
66. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 07/24/1859 Mills
67. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor 10/27/1859 Goldbeck
68. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor 10/29/1859 Goldbeck
69. Étude, A-flat Major (op. 10, no. 10 or op. 25, no. 1 or no. 3 from *Trois nouvelles études*) 11/17/1859 Abel
70. Waltz in A-flat Major (op. 34, no. 1, or op. 42, or op. 64, no. 3, or op. 69, no. 1) 11/19/1859 Napoleão
71. Étude op. 10 no. 3, E Major 12/10/1859 Goldbeck
72. Polonaise op. 22, E-flat Major 12/20/1859 Mills

### 1860

73. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 01/04/1860 Napoleão (doubtful)
74. *Fantaisie*, op. 49, F Minor 02/11/1860 Mills
75. Ballade op. 47, A-flat Major 03/03/1860 Mason
76. Scherzo op. 31 B-flat Minor 03/27/1860 Goldbeck
77. *Fantaisie*, op. 49, F Minor 04/10/1860 Mills
78. Ballade op. 47, A-flat Major 04/17/1860 Mills
79. Ballade op. 47, A-flat Major 05/01/1860 Eichberg
80. Rondo for Two Pianos op. 73, C Major 05/01/1860 Mills and Saar
81. Étude op. 25 no. 11, A Minor 10/30/1860 Mason

### 1861

82. Nocturne op. 9, no. 2, E-flat Major 02/19/1861 Satter
83. *Introduction et polonaise brillante* for Violoncello and Piano, op. 3, C Major 02/21/1861 Abel
84. Polonaise op. 26 no.1, C-sharp Minor 02/21/1861 Abel
85. Impromptu op. 29, A-flat Major 02/28/1861 Satter
86. Impromptu op. 29, A-flat Major, 03/07/1861 Satter (doubtful)
87. Waltz op. 34, no. 2, A Minor 03/08/1861 Satter
88. Nocturne op. 37, no. 1 or no. 2 (G Minor or G Major) 04/02/1861 Pattison
89. Waltz op. 34, no. 1, A-flat Major 04/05/1861 Satter
90. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 04/08/1861 Mills
91. Unidentified piece(s) 04/12/1861 Satter
92. Unidentified étude 04/23/1861 Graever-Johnson
93. Unidentified prélude 04/23/1861 Graever-Johnson
94. *Fantaisie-Impromptu*, op. 66, C-sharp Minor, 09/24/1861 Touhay
95. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 04/29/1861 Mills
96. Concerto op. 21, F Minor 11/09/1861 Mills
- 1862**
97. “Marche funèbre,” B-flat Minor, 03/18/1862 Gottschalk
98. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor, 04/22/1862 Abel
99. Waltz op. 34, no. 2, A Minor, 04/22/1862 Abel
100. Unidentified piece (advertised as “Caprice Schumann-Chopin”) 05/20/1862 Gottschalk

101. Waltz in A-flat Major (op. 34, no. 1, or op. 42, or op. 64, no. 3, or op. 69, no. 1) 05/24/1862 Gottschalk
102. Étude in F Minor (op. 10, no. 9, or op. 25, no. 2, or no. 1 from *Trois nouvelles études*) 05/24/1862 Gottschalk
103. Concerto op. 21, F Minor 06/23/1862 Mills
104. Prélude op. 28, no. 1, C Major 10/02/1862 Gottschalk
105. Prélude op. 28 no. 15, D-flat Major 10/02/1862 Gottschalk
106. Ballade op. 47, A-flat Major 11/08/1862 Mason
107. Unidentified piece 12/16/1862 Mills

### 1863

108. *Fantaisie-Improptu*, op. 66, C-sharp Minor 01/31/1863 Mills
109. Improptu op. 36, F-sharp Major 03/14/1863 Saar
110. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 04/25/1863 Hoffman
111. Polonaise op. 22, E-flat Major 05/09/1863 Mills
112. Prélude op. 28, no. 15, in D-flat Major 05/23/1863 Gottschalk
113. Waltz op. 34 no. 1, A flat-Major 11/28/1863 arranged for orchestra by Föppl
114. Unidentified pieces 12/03/1863 Krolikowska

### 1864

115. Waltz op. 64, no. 2, C-sharp Minor 03/05/1864 Mills
116. Étude op. 25, no. 7, C-sharp Minor 03/05/1864 Mills
117. Unidentified Polonaise 03/05/1864 Mills
118. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 03/05/1864 Mills

119. Concerto op. 21, F Minor (movements II and III) 12/03/1864 Mills
- 1865**
120. Sonata for Piano and Violoncello, op. 65, G Minor 01/25/1865  
Mason/Bergner
121. *Introduction et polonaise brillante* for piano and violoncello, op. 3, C  
Major 02/15/1865 Wehli
122. Unidentified étude 02/23/1865 Pattison
123. Étude op. 10, no. 12, C Minor 03/02/1865 Pattison
124. Unidentified Nocturne 03/07/1865 Mason
125. Étude op. 10, no. 5, G-flat Major 03/06/1865 Mason
126. Étude op. 25, no. 7, C-sharp Minor 03/06/1865 Mills
127. Rondo for Two Pianos, op. 73, C Major 03/06/1865 Mills and Luckhardt
128. “Marche funèbre,” B-flat Minor 03/30/1865 Gottschalk
129. Unidentified piece 05/13/1865 Mills
130. Concerto op. 21, F Minor 09/11/1865 Dannreuther
131. Nocturne op. 15, no. 1, F Major 09/15/1865 Dannreuther
132. Waltz op. 64, no. 2, C-sharp Minor 09/16/1865 Dannreuther
133. Waltz op. 64, no. 2, C-sharp Minor 09/18/1865 Dannreuther
134. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 10/07/1865 Mills
135. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor 11/02/1865 Abel
136. Étude op. 25, no. 7, C-sharp Minor Mills 11/04/1865
137. *Allegro de concert*, op. 46, A Major 11/11/1865 Mills
138. Scherzo op. 20, B Minor 12/02/1865 Mills

**1866**

139. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 01/06/1866 Mills
140. Unidentified waltz 01/06/1866 Mills
141. Polonaise op. 22, E-flat Major 01/17/1866 Wehli
142. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 01/23/1866 Mills
143. Unidentified étude 01/23/1866 Mills
144. *Fantaisie-Improptu*, op. 66, C-sharp Minor 02/17/1866 Poznanski
145. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 03/16/1866 Mills and Goldbeck (arr. two pianos)
146. Unidentified études 04/07/1866 Mills
147. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 04/07/1866 Knauss
148. Unidentified étude 10/07/1866 Pattison
149. Polonaise op. 22, E-flat Major 10/14/1866 Groscurth
150. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 11/11/1866 Mills
151. Unidentified étude (advertised as “Little study”) 11/18/1866 Mills
152. Unidentified étude 11/24/1866 Unidentified student of Mollenhauer’s Music School
153. Unidentified impromptu 12/12/1866 Dawson
154. Unidentified piece 12/16/1866 Hoffman

**1867**

155. Unidentified rondo 01/12/1867 Pattison
156. Unidentified pieces 01/13/1867 Students of Mollenhauer’s Music School
157. Unidentified étude 02/26/1867 Mills

- 158. Concerto op. 21, F Minor 03/09/1867 Mills
- 159. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 03/23/1867 Guyon
- 160. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 03/24/1867 Gilbert
- 161. Polonaise (possibly op. 44, F-sharp Minor) 04/06/1867 Wolfssohn
- 162. Unidentified song(s) 04/08/1867 Casiasa
- 163. Unidentified étude 04/20/1867 Mills
- 164. Unidentified impromptu 04/20/1867 Mills
- 165. *Rondo à la Krakowiak*, op. 14, F Major 05/26/1867 Pattison
- 166. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 11/14/1867 Topp
- 167. Nocturne op. 9, no. 2, E-flat Major 12/07/1867 De Meyer
- 168. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 12/07/1867 Topp

### 1868

- 169. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 01/11/1868 Mills
- 170. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 02/06/1868 Topp
- 171. Concerto op. 21, F Minor 03/15/1868 Mills
- 172. Unidentified piece(s) 04/15/1868 Hopkins
- 173. Ballade op. 47, A-flat Major 04/29/1868 Topp
- 174. Unidentified piece 04/29/1868 Topp
- 175. Unidentified étude 04/29/1868 Mills
- 176. Concerto op. 21, F Minor 05/21/1868 Mills
- 177. Étude op. 25, no. 7, C-sharp Minor 05/21/1868 Mills
- 178. Polonaise op. 22, E-flat Major 06/01/1868 Lansing
- 179. Unidentified mazurka 06/11/1868 Lansing

180. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 10/24/1868 Mills

181. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 12/05/1868 Millet

**1869**

182. *Rondo à la Krakowiak*, op. 14, F Major 01/03/1869 Pattison

183. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 01/28/1869 Inten

184. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 02/13/1869 Filomeno

185. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor 02/21/1869 Wenige

186. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 02/28/1869 Arnold

187. Mazurka op. 6, no. 1, F-sharp Minor 03/06/1869 Mills

188. Waltz op. 64, no. 2, C-sharp Minor 03/06/1869 Mills

189. Polonaise op. 22, E-flat Major 03/06/1869 Mills

190. Nocturne op. 15, no. 2, F-sharp Major 03/14/1869 Arnold

191. Unidentified mazurka 03/27/1869 Mills

192. Unidentified nocturne 03/27/1869 Mills

193. Nocturne op. 15, no. 2, F-sharp Major 04/10/1869 Hoffman

194. Étude op. 25, no. 7, C-sharp Minor 04/17/1869 Mills

195. Nocturne op. 27, no. 2, D-flat Major 04/17/1869 Mills

196. Mazurka op. 6, no. 2, C-sharp Minor 04/17/1869 Mills

197. Nocturne op. 9, no. 2, E-flat Major 04/24/1869 Inten

198. Unidentified piece 04/24/1869 Inten

199. Unidentified piece (perhaps the “marche funèbre” arranged for organ)

06/26/1869 Warren

200. Scherzo op. 31 B-flat Minor 10/23/1869 Topp

201. Unidentified concerto 11/11/1869 Mills

### 1870

202. Concerto op. 21, F Minor 01/08/1870 Mills

203. Waltz op. 64, no. 1, D-flat Major 01/08/1870 Mills

204. Unidentified Nocturne 01/19/1870 Mehlig

205. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 01/25/1870 Jarvis (Brooklyn)

206. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 02/02/1870 Lilliendahl (doubtful)

207. Unidentified impromptu 02/14/1870 Guzmán

208. Unidentified piece 02/26/1870 (advertised as “Romanza”) Bussmeyer

209. Unidentified polonaise 03/06/1870 Benziger

210. *Hexaméron*, E Major 03/07/1870 Mehlig and Mills

211. Unidentified piece 03/07/1870 Mehlig

212. Unidentified scherzo 04/12/1870 Topp (Brooklyn)

213. *Hexaméron*, E Major 04/18/1870 Mills and Mehlig

214. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 05/01/1870 Inten

215. Unidentified scherzo 05/03/1870 Topp

### 1871<sup>2</sup>

216. Impromptu op. 29, A-flat Major 01/14/1871 Krebs

217. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 01/21/1871 Krebs

218. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 01/26/1871 Krebs

219. Ballade op. 23, G Minor, 01/28/1871 Krebs

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<sup>2</sup> A concert (or concerts) by Jerome Hopkins' in May 1871, in which he encouraged the public to request any piece from a list of one hundred works, included the following pieces by Chopin: two waltzes (B-flat major and A-flat major); Polonaise op. 26 no. 1; Polonaise op. 40 no. 1; *Marche funèbre*,; and Scherzos opp. 31 and 54. We do not know whether any of these pieces were performed.

220. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 01/28/1871 Mehlig
221. *Hexaméron*, E Major, 01/28/1871 Mehlig and Mills (doubtful)
222. Rondo for Two Pianos op. 73, C Major 02/04/1871 Mills and Krebs
223. Étude in A Minor (op. 10, no. 2, or op. 25, no. 4, or op. 25, no. 11)  
02/06/1871 Krebs
224. Unidentified nocturne 02/06/1871 Krebs
225. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 02/16/1871 Mills
226. Unidentified étude 02/18 (19?)/1871 Wehli
227. Unidentified étude 02/25/1871 Krebs
228. Unidentified waltz 02/25/1871 Krebs
229. *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, op. 61, A-flat Major 02/25/1871 Vilanova
230. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor 03/04/1871 Krebs
231. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 03/04/1871 Krebs
232. Nocturne op. 37, no. 2, G Major 03/10/1871 Krebs
233. Étude op. 25 no. 6, G-sharp Minor 03/10/1871 Krebs
234. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 03/18/1871 Mills
235. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 03/26/1871 Inten
236. Unidentified Ballade, early June 1871, Mason
237. Unidentified mazurka, arr. for voice and piano by Pauline Viardot-Garcia  
10/25/1871 Maresi
238. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 11/25/1871 Mills (Brooklyn)

## 1872

239. Unidentified nocturne 01/08/1872 Krebs

240. Unidentified waltz 01/08/1872 Krebs
241. Unidentified étude 01/09/1872 Krebs
242. Unidentified nocturne 01/31/1872 Mehlig
243. *Andante spianato et Grand Polonaise*, op. 22 01/25/1872 Hoffman
244. *Grand Polonaise*, op. 22 01/27/1872 Mills
245. Unidentified Ballade 01/31/1872 Mehlig
246. Ballade op. 47, A-flat Major 02/01/1872 Mehlig (doubtful)
247. Rondo for Two Pianos op. 73, C Major 02/09/1872 Sebastian Bach and  
William Mills
248. Unidentified waltz 02/24/1872 Hoffman
249. Unidentified études 03/13/1872 Mehlig
250. Unidentified impromptu 03/14/1872 Mills
251. Unidentified nocturnes 03/18/1872 Mehlig
252. Unidentified waltzes 03/18/1872 Mehlig
253. Unidentified pieces 04/10/1872 Bonawitz
254. Unidentified piece(s) 04/24/1872 Bonawitz
255. *Fantaisie-Impromptu*, op. 66, C-sharp Minor 04/25/1872 Mills
256. Waltz op. 64, no.1, D-flat Major 04/25/1872 Sarasate (arr. violin)
257. Nocturne op. 9, no. 3, B Major 04/25/1872 Sarasate (arr. violin; perhaps  
accompanied by Mills)
258. Unidentified polonaise 05/13/1872 Krebs
259. Unidentified impromptu 07/15/1872 Bonawitz
260. Ballade op. 38, A Minor 09/18/1872 Carreño

261. Nocturne op. 48, no. 1, C Minor 09/27/1872 Rubinstein
262. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 09/27/1872 Rubinstein
263. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 10/01/1872 Rubinstein
264. Scherzo op. 54, E Major (doubtful) 10/05/1872 Rubinstein
265. Unidentified mazurka (any day between Oct 7–12 1872) Rubinstein
266. Unidentified ballade (any day between Oct 7–12 1872) Rubinstein
267. Unidentified nocturne (any day between Oct 7–12 1872) Rubinstein
268. Unidentified polonaise 10/08/1872 Carreño
269. Unidentified études 10/24/1872 Rubinstein
270. Étude op. 25, no. 7, C-sharp Minor 10/24/1872 Rubinstein
271. Unidentified polonaise 11/14/1872 Klauczek (Brooklyn)
272. Unidentified waltz 11/14/1872 Klauczek (Brooklyn)
273. Unidentified preludes 11/16/1872 Rubinstein
274. Unidentified waltz (arranged for strings) 12/05/1872 Damrosch
275. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 12/31/1872 Rubinstein
276. Nocturne op. 27, no. 2, D-flat Major 12/31/1872 Rubinstein
277. Scherzo op. 20, B Minor 12/31/1872 Rubinstein

### 1873

278. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 01/02/1873 Mills
279. *Tarantelle*, op. 43, A-flat Major 01/02/1873 Mills
280. Unidentified études 01/03/1873 Rubinstein
281. Étude op. 10, no. 3, E Major 01/11/1873 Rubinstein
282. Étude op. 10, no. 12, C Minor 01/11/1873 Rubinstein

283. *Fantaisie*, op. 49, F Minor 01/11/73 Rubinstein
284. Concerto op. 21, F Minor 01/18/1873 Mills
285. *Andante spianato and Grand polonaise*, op. 22, E-flat Major 01/25/1873  
Hoffman
286. Concerto op. 21, F Minor (movements II and III) 01/30/1873 Mills  
(Brooklyn)
287. Concerto op. 21, F Minor 02/01/1873 Mehlig
288. *Tarantelle*, op. 43 02/15/1873 Mills
289. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor 03/08/1873 Hoffman
290. Unidentified Waltz 03/08/1873 Hoffman
291. Unidentified mazurka 03/08/1873 Hoffman
292. *Andante spianato and Grand polonaise*, op. 22, E-flat Major 03/29/1873  
Hoffman (Brooklyn)
293. Unidentified études 04/01/1873 Rubinstein
294. Unidentified préludes 04/01/1873 Rubinstein
295. Unidentified ballade 04/02/1873 Rubinstein
296. Sonata op. 35, B-flat Minor (complete) 04/12/1873 Mehlig
297. Unidentified ballade 04/19/1873 Rubinstein

The following is a partial list of the pieces included in Rubinstein's all-Chopin "historical recital," given in a matinee on 19 May 1873. Reviews disagree on the exact contents of the program; Rubinstein probably added two polonaises and two waltzes, and omitted several études.<sup>3</sup> According to the *New York*

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<sup>3</sup> Lott, *From Paris to Peoria*, 306.

*Times*, Rubinstein played a total of forty-three works by Chopin performed. Another source (*Dwight's Journal*) claims thirty-five pieces. The titles and keys of some works also vary from a source to another. The concert lasted about three hours, and included several encores.

- 298. *Fantaisie*, op. 49, F Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 299. Prélude op. 28, no. 4, E Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 300. Prélude op. 28, no. 7, A Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 301. Prélude op. 28, no. 6, B Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 302. Prélude op. 28, no. 15, D-flat Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 303. Mazurka op. 59, no. 2, F-sharp Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 304. Unidentified mazurka (program reads “in E-flat”; there is no mazurka in such key. If E-flat Minor, it could be op. 6, no. 4) 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 305. Polonaise op. 40 no. 1, A Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 306. Polonaise op. 26 no. 1, C-sharp Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 307. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 308. Nocturne op. 15, no. 2, F-sharp Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 309. Nocturne op. 15, no. 3, G Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 310. Nocturne op. 32, no. 2, A-flat Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 311. Nocturne op. 62, no. 1, B Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 312. Nocturne op. 55, no. 1, F Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 313. Nocturne op. 27, no. 2, D-flat Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 314. Nocturne op. 48, no. 1, C Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
- 315. Impromptu op. 29, A-flat Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein

316. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
317. *Tarantelle*, op. 43, A-flat Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
318. Unidentified scherzo 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
319. Étude in A-flat Major (op. 10, no. 10 or op. 25, no. 1 or no. 2 from *Trois nouvelles études*) 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
320. Étude in F Minor (op. 10, no. 9 or op. 25, no. 2) 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
321. Étude op. 10, no. 12, C Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
322. Étude op. 10, no. 4, C-sharp Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
323. Étude op. 10, no. 11, E-flat Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
324. Étude in A Minor (op. 10, no. 2, or op. 25, no. 4, or op. 25, no. 11)  
05/19/1873 Rubinstein
325. “Marche funèbre,” B-flat Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
326. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
327. Ballade op. 38, F Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
328. Ballade op. 47, A-flat Major 05/19/1873 Rubinstein
329. *Tarantelle*, op. 43, A-flat Major 05/30/1873 Mills
330. Unidentified waltz 12/06/1873 Berti

### 1874

331. Étude op. 25, no. 7 C-sharp Minor 01/17/1874 Mills
332. *Tarantelle*, op. 43, A-flat Major 01/17/1874 Mills
333. Unidentified nocturne 01/18/1874 Luckhardt
334. Concerto op. 11, E Minor (movements II and III) 01/24/1874 Mills
335. Concerto op. 11, E Minor (movements II and III) 03/14/1874 Guyon

336. Concerto op. 21, F Minor (movements II and III) 04/09/1874 Mills
337. Unidentified mazurka 04/11/1874 Hoffman (Brooklyn)
338. Unidentified polonaise 04/11/1874 Hoffman (Brooklyn)
339. Unidentified waltz 04/11/1874 Hoffman (Brooklyn)
340. Unidentified piece 04/14/1874 Mills
341. Polonaise op. 26, no.1, C-sharp Minor 11/08/1874 Stamm
342. "Marche funèbre," B-flat Minor 11/10/1874 Pattison
343. Nocturne op. 37 (no. 1, G Minor or no. 2, G Major) 11/10/1874 Pattison
344. Nocturne op. 15, no. 2 F-sharp Major 11/23/1874 Luckhardt
345. *Tarantelle*, op. 43, A-flat Major 11/23/1874 Mills
346. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 11/23/1874 Mills
347. Étude op. 25, no. 2, F Minor 11/23/1874 Mills
348. Rondo for Two Pianos op. 73, C Major 11/23/1874 Sebastian Bach and  
William Mills
349. Waltz in A-flat Major (op. 34, no. 1, or op. 42, or op. 64, no. 3 or op. 69,  
no. 1) 12/03/1874 Heilbron
350. Unidentified piece 12/17/1874 Heilbron

### 1875

351. Ballade op. 23 G Minor 01/18/1875 Weikert
352. *Andante spianato et grande polonaise brillante*, op. 22, G Major- E-flat  
Major 02/25/1875 Bock
353. Unidentified piece(s) 03/12/1875 Hopkins
354. Unidentified piece (advertised as "Caprice"), 08/31/1875, Liebling

355. Unidentified piece(s) 10/19/1875 Cervantes (identified as works “from the Chopin school”)
356. Waltz op. 34, no. 2, A Minor 10/21/1875 Goddard
357. Ballade op. 52, F Minor 11/12/1875 Boscowitz
358. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 11/12/1875 Boscowitz
359. Mazurka op. 33, no. 2, D Major 11/12/1875 Boscowitz
360. Mazurka op. 33, no. 4, B Minor 11/12/1875 Boscowitz
361. Waltz op. 18, E-flat Major 11/12/1875 Boscowitz
362. Unidentified piece 11/13/1875 Falk-Auerbach
363. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 11/18/1875 Bülow
364. Waltz op. 42, A-flat Major 11/18/1875 Bülow
365. *Chant polonais* (Liszt’s piano arrangements of Chopin’s songs).  
11/18/1875 Bülow
366. Nocturne op. 37, no. 2, G Major 11/18/1875 Bülow
367. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 11/20/1875 Weikert
368. Étude op. 25, no. 8, D-flat Major 11/20/1875 Fay
369. Unidentified piece (advertised as “Chant polonaise no. 5”; it could be Liszt’s homonymous piece) 11/20/1875 Fay
370. Impromptu op. 29, A-flat Major 11/24/1875 Hard or Wilson
371. Nocturne op. 15, no. 2, F-sharp Major 12/01/1875 Boscowitz
372. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 12/01/1875 Boscowitz
373. Mazurka op. 33 no. 4, B Minor 12/01/1875 Boscowitz
374. Waltz op. 18, E-flat Major 12/01/1875 Boscowitz

375. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 12/04/1875 Bülow  
 376. *Tarantelle*, op. 43, A-flat Major 12/04/1875 Bülow  
 377. Waltz op. 42, A-flat Major 12/04/1875 Bülow  
 378. Impromptu op. 36, F-sharp Major 12/04/1875 Bülow  
 379. Scherzo op. 39, C-sharp Minor 12/04/1875 Bülow  
 380. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 12/17/1875 Cervantes

### 1876

381. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 01/03/1876 Bülow  
 382. Waltzes op. 34 (A-flat Major, A Minor, F Major) 01/03/1876 Bülow  
 383. Nocturne op. 9, no. 3, B Major 01/03/1876 Bülow  
 384. *Introduction et polonaise brillante* for Piano and Violoncello, op. 3, C Major 01/05/1876 Bülow  
 385. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 01/08/1876 Bülow  
 386. Waltzes op. 34 (A-flat Major, A Minor, F Major) 01/08/1876 Bülow  
 387. Nocturne op. 9, no. 3, B Major 01/08/1876 Bülow<sup>4</sup>  
 388. Unidentified étude 01/27/1876 Mills  
 389. Unidentified waltz 01/27/1876 Mills  
 390. *Tarantelle*, op. 43, A-flat Major 01/27/1876 Mills  
 391. Unidentified piece 02/11/1876 Klauczek  
 392. Étude op. 25, no. 7, C-sharp Minor 02/12/1876 Mills  
 393. Unidentified waltz 02/12/1876 Mills  
 394. *Tarantelle*, op. 43, A-flat Major 02/12/1876 Mills

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<sup>4</sup> Program of this matinee is identical to that of 01/03/1876.

395. Unidentified pieces 02/14/1876 Liebling
396. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 02/17/1876 Boscowitz
397. Unidentified waltz 02/17/1876 Boscowitz<sup>5</sup>
398. Rondo op. 16, C Minor 02/19/1876 Rivé-King
- Bülow's all-Chopin historical recital. As with Rubinstein historical recital in 1873, sources differ in the number of works performed.<sup>6</sup>
399. Sonata op. 58, B Minor 03/27/1876 Bülow
400. Variations on the air "Je vends des scapulaires," from Hérold's *Ludovic*, op. 12, B-flat Major 03/27/1876 Bülow
401. Nocturne op. 27, no. 2, D-flat Major 03/27/1876 Bülow
402. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 03/27/1876 Bülow
403. Nocturne op. 9, no. 3, B Major 03/27/1876 Bülow
404. Two mazurkas from op. 50 (the complete set contains three, in G Major, A-flat Major, and C-sharp Minor) 03/27/1876 Bülow
405. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 03/27/1876 Bülow
406. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major 03/27/1876 Bülow
407. *Allegro de concert*, op. 46, A Major 03/27/1876 Bülow
408. Impromptu op. 36, F-sharp Major 03/27/1876 Bülow
409. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 04/17/1876 Mills
410. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 04/22/1876 Mills
411. Nocturne op. 9, no. 3, B Major 04/22/1876 Copp

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<sup>5</sup> This concert was probably repeated on 02/18 and 02/19.

<sup>6</sup> Bülow perhaps repeated this concert at a matinee on 04/29.

412. Polonaise op. 26 no. 1, C-sharp Minor 04/22/1876 Copp
413. Waltz, A-flat Major (op. 34, no. 1, op. 42, op. 64, no. 3) 04/22/1876  
Copp
414. Unidentified pieces 05/14/1876 Pinner
415. Rondo à la Krakowiak, op. 14, F Major 10/04/1876 Schiller
416. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 10/16/1876 Timm
417. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 11/14/1876 Essipoff
418. Nocturne op. 27, no. 2, D-flat Major 11/14/1876 Essipoff
419. *Barcarolle*, op. 60, F-sharp Major 11/15/1876 Essipoff
420. Unidentified waltz 11/15/1876 Essipoff
421. Étude in F Major (op. 10, no. 8 or op. 25, no. 3) 11/15/1876 Essipoff
422. Nocturne op. 48, no. 1, C Minor 11/21/1876 Essipoff
423. Waltz op. 42, A-flat Major 11/21/1876 Essipoff (Brooklyn)
424. Mazurka op. 33, no. 4, B Minor 11/21/1876 Essipoff
425. *Fantaisie*, op. 49 11/22/1876 Essipoff
426. Unidentified Scherzo 11/22/1876 Essipoff
427. Unidentified waltz 11/22/1876 Essipoff
428. *Chant polonais* (Liszt-Chopin) 11/24/1876 Essipoff
429. *Fantaisie*, op. 49 11/25/1876 Essipoff
430. Unidentified Scherzo 11/25/1876 Essipoff
431. Ballade op. 23, G Minor 12/27/1876 Essipoff
432. Unidentified mazurka 11/27/1876 Essipoff
433. Unidentified waltz 11/27/1876 Essipoff

434. Polonaise op. 26 no. 1, C-sharp Minor 11/27/1876 Essipoff
435. Nocturne op. 62, no. 2, E Major 11/27/1876 Essipoff
436. *Tarantelle*, op. 43, A-flat Major 11/27/1876 Essipoff
437. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 11/27/1876 Essipoff<sup>7</sup>
438. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major 12/04/1876 Essipoff (Brooklyn)
439. Mazurka op. 33, no. 4, B Minor 12/04/1876 Essipoff (Brooklyn)
440. Waltz op. 42 (A-flat Major) 12/04/1876 Essipoff (Brooklyn)
441. Ballade op. 52 (F Minor) 12/04/1876 Essipoff (Brooklyn)
442. Concerto op. 11, E Minor 12/08/1876 Essipoff
443. Nocturne op. 55 (no. 1, F Minor or no. 2, E-flat Major) 12/09/1876  
Essipoff
444. Étude op. 10, no. 5, G-flat Major 12/09/1876 Essipoff
445. Waltz op. 69 (no. 1, B Minor or no. 2, A-flat Major) 12/09/1876 Essipoff
446. Mazurka op. 63 (no. 1, B Major, no. 2, F Minor, or no. 3, C-sharp Minor)  
12/09/1876 Essipoff
447. Unidentified impromptu 12/23/1876 Essipoff
448. Unidentified waltz 12/23/1876 Essipoff
449. Étude op. 10, no. 5, G-flat Major 12/23/1876 Essipoff

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<sup>7</sup> Essipoff's Chopin recital on 27 November was repeated on 2 and 12 December.

**APPENDIX 3. Performances, 1839–1876: alphabetical**

**1. *Allegro de concert*, op. 46**

11/11/1865 Mills

03/27/1876 Bülow

**2. *Ballade* op. 23**

03/23/1855 Satter

11/14/1867 Topp

12/07/1867 Topp

01/28/1869 Inten

01/28/1871 Krebs

03/26/1871 Inten

10/01/1872 Rubinstein

12/31/1872 Rubinstein

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

01/18/1875 Weikert

12/20/1875 Weikert

12/17/1875 Cervantes

01/03/1876 Bülow

01/08/1876 Bülow

03/27/1876 Bülow

11/27/1876 Essipoff

**3. *Ballade* op. 38**

09/18/1872 Carreño<sup>1</sup>

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**4. Ballade op. 47**

12/08/1855 Mason

03/03/1860 Mason

04/17/1860 Mills

05/01/1860 Eichberg

11/08/1862 Mason

04/29/1868 Topp

02/01/1872 Mehlig (doubtful)

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**5. Ballade op. 52**

11/12/1875 Boscowitz

12/04/1876 Essipoff (Brooklyn)

**6. Unidentified Ballade**

Mason, early June 1871

01/31/1872 Mehlig

Any day between 7–12 October 1872 Rubinstein

04/02/1873 Rubinstein

04/19/1873 Rubinstein

**7. Barcarolle, op. 60**

11/15/1876 Essipoff

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<sup>1</sup> Identified only as “A-Minor Ballade” in newspaper reviews. The piece is, in fact, in F Major *and* A Minor.

**8. *Berceuse, op. 57***

12/23/1858 Goldbeck

10/07/1865 Mills

01/06/1866 Mills

01/23/1866 Mills

02/06/1868 Topp

03/04/1871 Krebs

01/02/1873 Mills

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

11/23/1874 Mills

11/12/1875 Boscowitz

11/18/1875 Bülow

12/01/1875 Boscowitz

12/04/1875 Bülow

02/17/1876 Boscowitz

03/27/1876 Bülow

11/27/1876 Essipoff

12/04/1876 Essipoff

11/21/1876 Essipoff (Brooklyn)

**9. *Concerto op. 11***

11/01/1846 Timm

03/04/1854 Hoffman

05/19/1855 Hoffman

03/24/1857 De Roode (string quintet accompaniment)

12/12/1857 Hoffman (Brooklyn)

01/15/1859 Abel

02/12/1859 Saar

06/26/1859 Mills

07/24/1859 Mills

04/08/1861 Mills

04/29/1861 Mills

03/05/1864 Mills

03/16/1866 Mills/Goldbeck (arr. 2 pianos)

11/11/1866 Mills

03/23/1867 Guyon

03/24/1867 Gilbert

01/11/1868 Mills

10/24/1868 Mills

12/05/1868 Millet

02/13/1869 Filomeno

01/25/1870 Jarvis (Brooklyn)

05/01/1870 Inten

01/28/1871 Mehlig

02/16/1871 Mills

03/18/1871 Mills

11/25/1871 Mills (Brooklyn)

01/24/1874 Mills

03/14/1874 Guyon

04/17/1876 Mills

04/22/1876 Mills

10/16/1876 Timm

11/14/1876 Essipoff

12/08/1876 Essipoff

**10. Concerto op. 21**

11/09/1861 Mills

06/23/1862 Mills

12/03/1864 Mills

09/11/1865 Dannreuther

03/09/1867 Mills

03/15/1868 Mills

05/21/1868 Mills

01/08/1870 Mills

01/18/1873 Mills

01/30/1873 Mills (Brooklyn)

02/01/1873 Mehlig

04/09/1874 Mills

**11. Unidentified concerto**

11/11/1869 Mills

**12. Études (unidentified)<sup>2</sup>**

04/23/1861 Madeline Graever-Johnson

02/23/1865 Pattison

01/23/1866 Mills

04/07/1866 Mills

10/07/1866 Pattison

11/18/1866 Mills

11/24/1866 Student of Edward Mollenhauer's Music School

02/26/1867 Mills

04/20/1867 Mills

04/29/1868 Mills

02/18 (19?)/1871 Wehli

02/25/1871 Krebs

01/09/1872 Krebs

03/13/1872 Mehlig

10/24/1872 Rubinstein

01/03/1873 Rubinstein

04/01/1873 Rubinstein

01/27/1876 Mills

**13. Étude, A-flat Major** (Op. 1, no. 10, or op. 25, no. 1, or no. 2 from*Trois Nouvelles études*)

10/04/1851 Boulanger

02/15/1859 Abel

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<sup>2</sup> Includes groups of études.

11/17/1859 Abel

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**15. Étude, A Minor (op. 10, no. 2 or op. 25, no. 4 or op. 25, no. 11)**

02/06/1871 Krebs

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**16. Étude, F Minor (op. 10, no. 9 or op. 25, no. 2, or No. 1 from *Trois nouvelles études*)**

01/16/1858 Goldbeck

05/24/1862 Gottschalk

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**17. Étude, F Major (op. 10, no. 8 or op. 25, no. 3)**

11/15/1876 Essipoff

**18. Étude op. 10, no. 1, C Major**

11/22/1856 Goldbeck

**19. Étude op. 10, no. 3, E Major**

12/10/1859 Goldbeck

01/11/1873 Rubinstein

**20. Étude op. 10, no. 4, C-sharp Minor**

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**21. Étude op. 10, no. 5, G-flat Major**

03/06/1865 Mason

12/09/1876 Essipoff

12/23/1876 Essipoff

**22. Étude op. 10, no. 7, C Major**

01/30/1858 Mason

**23. Étude op. 10, no. 11, E-flat Major**

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**24. Étude op. 10, no. 12, C Minor**

03/02/1865 Pattison

01/11/1873 Rubinstein

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**25. Étude op. 25, no. 2, F Minor**

11/23/1874 Mills

**26. Étude op. 25, no. 3, F Major**

02/15/1859 Abel

**27. Étude op. 25, no. 6, G-sharp Minor**

03/10/1871 Krebs

**28. Étude op. 25, no. 7, C-sharp Minor**

03/05/1864 Mills

03/06/1865 Mills

11/04/1865 Mills

05/21/1868 Mills

04/17/1869 Mills

10/24/1872 Rubinstein

01/17/1874 Mills

02/12/1876 Mills

**29. Étude op. 25, no. 8, D-flat Major**

02/02/1857 Goldbeck

11/20/1875 Fay

**30. Étude op. 25, no. 11, A Minor**

10/30/1860 Mason

**31. Fantaisie, op. 49**

02/11/1860 Mills

04/10/1860 Mills

01/11/1873 Rubinstein

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

11/22/1876 Essipoff

11/25/1876 Essipoff

**32. Fantaisie-Impromptu, op. 66**

11/27/1855 Mason

09/24/1861 Touhay

01/31/1863 Mills

02/17/1866 Poznanski

04/25/1872 Mills

**33. Hexaméron**

07/11/1842 F Rakemann

04/26/1843 F Rakemann

03/07/1870 Mehlig and Mills

04/18/1870 Mehlig and Mills

01/28/1871 Mehlig and Mills (doubtful)

**34. Impromptu op. 29**

10/12/1854 Mason

10/14/1854 Mason

03/27/1855 Mason

03/25/1856 Mason

02/28/1861 Satter

03/07/1861 Satter (doubtful)

01/14/1871 Krebs

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

11/24/1875 Hard or Wilson

**35. Impromptu op. 36**

03/14/1863 Saar

12/04/1875 Bülow

03/27/1876 Bülow

**36. Unidentified impromptus**

02/22/1856 Gottschalk

03/20/1856 Gottschalk

12/12/1866 Dawson

04/20/1867 Mills

02/14/1870 Guzmán

03/14/1872 Mills

07/15/1872 Bonawitz

12/23/1876 Essipoff

**37. *Introduction et polonaise brillante* for Piano and Violoncello, op. 3**

02/21/1861 Abel

02/15/1865 Wehli

01/05/1876 Bülow

**38. Unidentified mazurkas**

10/16/1839 Rakemann

02/24/1857 Thalberg

02/26?/27?/1857 Goldbeck

05/03/1857 Dachauer-Gaspard

06/11/1868 Lansing

03/27/1869 Mills

10/25/1871 Maresi (unidentified mazurka, arr. for voice and piano by

Pauline Viardot-Garcia<sup>3</sup>

(Any day between Oct 7–12 1872) Rubinstein

03/08/1873 Hoffman

04/11/1874 Hoffman (Brooklyn)

11/27/1876 Essipoff

**39. Mazurka, B Minor (op. 30 no. 2 or op. 33 no. 4)**

02/15/1859 Abel

12/04/1876 Essipoff (Brooklyn)

**40. Mazurka, E-flat (wrong key; perhaps op. 6 no. 4, E-flat Minor)**

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

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<sup>3</sup> Viardot-García arranged a total of 12 mazurkas by Chopin.

**41. Mazurka op. 6, no. 1, F-sharp Minor**

03/06/1869 Mills

**42. Mazurka op. 6, no. 2, C-sharp Minor**

04/17/1869 Mills

**43. Mazurka op. 33, no. 2, D Major**

11/12/1875 Boscowitz

**44. Mazurka op. 33, no. 4, B Minor**

11/12/1875 Boscowitz

12/01/1875 Boscowitz

11/21/1876 Essipoff

**45. Mazurkas (2) from op. 50 (G Major, A-flat Major, C-sharp Minor)**

03/27/1876 Bülow

**46. Mazurka op. 59, no. 2, F-Sharp Minor**

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**47. Mazurka op. 63 (no. 1, B Major, no. 2, F Minor, or no. 3, C-sharp  
Minor)**

12/09/1876 Essipoff

**48. Unidentified nocturnes**

10/16/1839 L Rakemann

04/26/1843 F Rakemann

12/26/1856 Gottschalk

05/03/1857 Dachauer-Gaspard

12/23/1858 Goldbeck

03/07/1865 Mason

03/27/1869 Mills

01/19/1870 Mehlig

02/06/1871 Krebs

01/08/1872 Krebs

01/31/1872 Mehlig

03/18/1872 Mehlig

Any day between 10/07/1872 and 10/12/1872 Rubinstein

01/18/1874 Luckhardt

**49. Nocturne op. 9, no. 2, E-flat Major**

03/05/1859 Saar

02/19/1861 Satter

12/07/1867 De Meyer

04/24/1869 Inten

**50. Nocturne op. 9, no. 3, B Major**

04/25/1872 Sarasate (arr. violin and piano; perhaps Mills at the piano)

01/03/1876 Bülow

01/08/1876 Bülow

03/27/1876 Bülow

04/22/1876 Copp

**51. Nocturne op. 15, no. 1, F Major**

09/15/1865 Dannreuther

**52. Nocturne op. 15, no. 2, F-sharp Major**

03/14/1869 Arnold

04/10/1869 Hoffman

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

11/23/1874 Luckhardt

12/01/1875 Boscowitz

**53. Nocturne op. 15, no. 3, G Minor**

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**54. Nocturne op. 27, no. 2, D-flat Major**

04/17/1869 Mills

12/31/1872 Rubinstein

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

03/27/1876 Bülow

11/14/1876 Essipoff

**55. Nocturne op. 32, no. 2, A-flat Major**

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**56. Nocturne op. 37, no. 1, G Minor, or no. 2, G Major**

04/02/1861 Pattison

11/10/1874 Pattison

**57. Nocturne op. 37, no. 2, G Major**

03/10/1871 Krebs

11/18/1875 Bülow

**58. Nocturne op. 48, no. 1, C Minor**

09/27/1872 Rubinstein

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

11/21/1876 Essipoff

**59. Nocturne op. 55 no. 1, F Minor**

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**60. Nocturne op. 55, no. 1, F Minor, or no. 2, E-flat Major**

12/09/1876 Essipoff

**61. Nocturne op. 62, no. 1, B Major**

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**62. Nocturne op. 62, no. 2, E Major**

11/27/1876 Essipoff

**63. *Grand Polonaise Brillante*, op. 22** (with or without orchestral accompaniment and with or without orchestral accompaniment).

11/12/1858 Saar

03/25/1859 Mills<sup>4</sup>

05/19/1859 Mills (Brooklyn)

12/20/1859 Mills

05/09/1863 Mills

01/17/1866 Wehli

10/14/1866 Groscurth

06/01/1868 Lansing

03/06/1869 Mills

01/25/1872 Hoffman

01/27/1872 Mills

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<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the polonaise E-flat Minor, op. 26, no. 2. Same for the two following entries.

01/25/1873 Hoffman

03/29/1873 Hoffman (Brooklyn)

02/25/1875 Bock

**64. Polonaise op. 26, no. 1**

02/21/1861 Abel

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

11/08/1874 Stamm

04/22/1876 Copp

11/27/1876 Essipoff

**65. Polonaise op. 40, no. 1**

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**66. Polonaise op. 44 (possible)**

04/06/1867 Wolfssohn

**67. Polonaise op. 53**

03/31/1854 Hoffman

11/23/1858 Napoleão

04/30/1859 Hoffman

01/04/1860 Napoleão (doubtful)

04/25/1863 Hoffman

04/07/1866 Knauss

02/28/1869 Arnold

02/02/1870 Lilliendahl (doubtful)

01/21/1871 Krebs

01/26/1871 Krebs

09/27/1872 Rubinstein

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

03/27/1876 Bülow

**68. *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, op. 61**

02/25/1871 Vilanova

**69. Unidentified polonaises**

01/07/1856 Morgan

03/05/1864 Mills

03/06/1870 Benziger

05/13/1872 Krebs

10/18/1872 Carreño

11/14/1872 Klauczek (Brooklyn)

04/11/1874 Hoffman (Brooklyn)

**70. *Préludes*, op. 28**

Prélude in D-flat Major, no. 15 02/02/1857 Goldbeck

Unidentified prélude 04/23/1861 Graever-Johnson

Prélude in C Major, no. 1 10/02/1862 Gottschalk

Prélude in D-flat Major, no. 15 10/02/1862 Gottschalk

Prélude in D-flat Major, no. 15 05/23/1863 Gottschalk

Unidentified préludes 11/16/1872 Rubinstein

Unidentified préludes 04/01/1873 Rubinstein

Prélude in E Minor, no. 4 05/19/1873 Rubinstein

Prélude in A Major, no. 7 05/19/1873 Rubinstein

Prélude in B Minor, no. 6 05/19/1873 Rubinstein

Prélude in D-flat Major, no. 15 05/19/1873 Rubinstein

**71. *Rondo à la Krakowiak*, op. 14**

05/26/1867 Pattison

01/03/1869 Pattison

10/04/1876 Schiller

**72. *Rondo* op. 16**

02/19/1876 Rivé-King

**73. *Rondo* op. 73, for two pianos**

05/01/1860 Mills and Saar

03/06/1865 Mills and Luckhardt

02/04/1871 Mills and Krebs

02/10/1872 Sebastian Bach Mills and William Mills

11/23/1874 Sebastian Bach Mills and William Mills

**74. Unidentified rondo**

01/12/1867 Pattison

**75. *Scherzo* op. 20**

12/02/1865 Mills

12/31/1872 Rubinstein

**76. *Scherzo* op. 31**

02/14/1856 Gottschalk

03/20/1856 Gottschalk

01/16/1858 Goldbeck

10/27/1859 Goldbeck

10/29/1859 Goldbeck

03/27/1860 Goldbeck

04/22/1862 Abel

11/02/1865 Abel

02/21/1869 Wenige

10/23/1869 Topp

03/04/1871 Krebs

03/08/1873 Hoffman

**77. Scherzo op. 39**

12/04/1875 Bülow

**78. Scherzo op. 54 (doubtful)**

10/05/1872 Rubinstein

**79. Unidentified scherzo**

04/12/1870 Topp (Brooklyn)

05/03/1870 Topp

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

11/22/1876 Essipoff

11/25/1876 Essipoff

**80. Sonata op. 35; third movement only, *Marche funèbre*.<sup>5</sup>**

02/20/1855 Gottschalk

02/18/1857 Thalberg

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<sup>5</sup> Band and orchestral arrangements not included.

02/20/1857 Thalberg

02/28/1857 Thalberg

03/16/1857 Thalberg

10/30/1857 Thalberg

03/18/1862 Gottschalk

03/30/1865 Gottschalk

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

11/10/1874 Pattison

**81. Sonata op. 35 (complete)**

04/08/1873 Mehlig

**82. Sonata op. 58**

03/27/1876 Bülow

**83. Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, op. 65**

01/25/1865 Mason, Bergner

**84. Songs**

04/08/1867 Pauline Casiasa

**85. *Tarantelle*, op. 43**

01/02/1873 Mills

02/15/1873 Mills

05/19/1873 Rubinstein

05/30/1873 Mills

01/17/1874 Mills

11/23/1874 Mills

12/04/1875 Bülow

01/27/1876 Mills

02/12/1876 Mills

11/27/1876 Essipoff

**86. Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violoncello, op. 8**

11/17/1855 Hoffman

**87. Variations on the air “Je vends des scapulaires,” from Hérold’s**

*Ludovic, op. 12*

03/27/1876 Bülow

**88. Unidentified “Variations”<sup>6</sup>**

10/15/1846 Fontana 1846

**89. Unidentified waltzes**

12/12/1843 Gjertz

02//22/1856 Gottschalk

03/20/1856 Gottschalk

01/06/1866 Mills

02/25/1871 Krebs

01/08/1872 Krebs

02/24/1872 Hoffman

03/18/1872 Mehlig

11/14/1872 Klaucek (Brooklyn)

12/05/1872 Damrosch (arr. for strings)

03/08/1873 Hoffman

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<sup>6</sup> See entry on 10/15/1846.

12/06/1873 Berti

04/11/1874 Hoffman (Brooklyn)

01/27/1876 Mills

02/12/1876 Mills

02/17/1876 Boscowitz

11/15/1876 Essipoff

11/22/1876 Essipoff

11/27/1876 Essipoff

12/23/1876 Essipoff

**90. Waltz, A-flat Major (op. 34, no. 1, op. 42, or op. 64, no. 3, or op. 69,  
no. 1)**

11/19/1859 Napoleão

05/24/1862 Gottschalk

12/03/1874 Heilbron

04/22/1876 Copp

**91. Waltz op. 18, E-flat Major**

11/12/1875 Boscowitz

12/01/1875 Boscowitz

**92. Waltz op. 34 no. 1, A-flat Major**

04/05/1861 Satter

11/28/1863 arr. for orchestra by Föppl

**93. Waltz op. 34 no. 2, A Minor**

02/15/1859 Abel

03/08/1861 Satter

04/22/1862 Abel

10/21/1875 Goddard

**94. Waltzes op. 34 (complete)**

01/03/1876 Bülow

01/08/1876 Bülow

**95. Waltz op. 42, A-flat Major**

11/18/1875 Bülow

12/04/1875 Bülow

11/21/1876 Essipoff (Brooklyn)

12/04/1876 Essipoff

**96. Waltz op. 64, no. 1, D-flat Major**

01/08/1870 Mills

04/25/1872 Sarasate (perhaps with Mills at the piano)

**97. Waltz op. 64, no. 2, C-sharp Minor**

03/05/1864 Mills

09/16/1865 Dannreuther

09/18/1865 Dannreuther

03/06/1869 Mills

**98. Waltzes op. 64 (unspecified number)**

03/25/1856 Mason

**99. Waltz op. 69, no. 1, B Minor, or no. 2, A-flat Major**

12/09/1876 Essipoff

**Other works****100. *Chant polonais***

11/18/1875 Bülow

11/20/1875 Fay

11/24/1876 Essipoff

**101. Unidentified pieces**

03/16/1856 R V Lebrecht

03/13/1859 Mills

03/20/1859 Mills

04/02/1861 Satter

05/20/1862 Gottschalk (announced as “Caprice Schumann-Chopin”)

12/16/1862 Mills

12/03/1863 Krolikowska

05/13/1865 Mills

12/16/1866 Hoffman

01/13/1867 Student(s) of E. Mollenhauer

04/15/1868 Hopkins

04/29/1869 Topp

04/24/1869 Inten

06/26/1869 Warren (arr. organ)

02/26/1870 Bussmeyer

03/07/1870 Mehlig

04/10/1872 Bonawitz

04/24/1872 Bonawitz

04/14/1874 Mills

12/17/1874 Heilbron

03/12/1875 Hopkins

08/31/1875 (announced as “Caprice”) Liebling (arranged for orchestra)

10/19/1875 Cervantes (doubtful; pieces “from the Chopin School”)

11/13/1875 Falk-Auerbach

02/11/1876 Klaucek

02/14/1876 Liebling

05/14/1876 Pinner

#### APPENDIX 4. *Performances, 1839–1876: by number*

1. *Allegro de concert*, op. 46, A Major: 2
2. Ballade op. 23, G Minor: 16
3. Ballade op. 38, F Major: 2
4. Ballade op. 47, A-flat Major: 8
5. Ballade op. 52, F Minor: 2
6. Ballades, unidentified: 5
7. *Barcarolle*, op. 60, F-sharp Major: 1
8. *Berceuse*, op. 57, D-flat Major: 17
9. Concerto (unidentified): 1
10. Concerto op. 11, E Minor: 33<sup>1</sup>
11. Concerto op. 21, F Minor: 12
12. Étude in A-flat Major (probably op. 25, no. 1; otherwise, op. 10, no. 10 or no. 2 from *Trois nouvelles études*): 4
13. Étude, A Minor (op. 10, no. 2, or op. 25, no. 4, or op. 25, no. 11): 2
14. Étude, F Minor (op. 10 no. 9, or op. 25, no. 2 or no. 1 from *Trois nouvelles études*): 3
15. Étude, F Major (op. 10, no. 8 or op. 25, no. 3): 1
16. Étude op. 10, no. 1, C Major: 1
17. Étude op. 10, no. 3, E Major: 2
18. Étude op. 10, no. 4, C-sharp Minor: 1
19. Étude op. 10, no. 5, G-flat Major: 3
20. Étude op. 10, no. 7, C Major: 1

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<sup>1</sup> Includes partial performances (one or two movements), small ensemble accompaniment, and two-piano arrangements of the work.

21. Étude op. 10, no. 11, E-flat Major: 1
22. Étude op. 10, no. 12, C Minor: 3
23. Étude op. 25, no. 2, F Minor: 1
24. Étude op. 25, no. 3, F Major: 1
25. Étude op. 25, no. 6, G-sharp Minor: 1
26. Étude op. 25, no. 7, C-sharp Minor: 8
27. Étude op. 25, no. 8, D-flat Major: 2
28. Étude op. 25, no. 11, A Minor: 1
29. Études (unidentified): 18<sup>2</sup>
30. *Fantaisie*, op. 49, F Minor: 6
31. *Fantaisie-Improptu*, op. 66, C-sharp Minor: 5
32. *Hexaméron*: 5
33. Improptu (unidentified): 8
34. Improptu op. 29, A-flat Major: 9
35. Improptu op. 36, F-sharp Major: 3
36. *Introduction et polonaise brillante* for Piano and Violoncello, op. 3, C Major: 3
37. Mazurkas (unidentified): 12<sup>3</sup>
38. Mazurka B Minor (op. 30, no. 2 or op. 33, no. 4): 3
39. Mazurka in E flat (wrong key; perhaps op. 6 no. 4): 1
40. Mazurka op. 6, no. 1, F-sharp Minor: 1
41. Mazurka op. 6, no. 2, C-sharp Minor: 1
42. Mazurka op. 33, no. 2, D Major: 1

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<sup>2</sup> Includes unidentified groups of études.

<sup>3</sup> Includes unidentified groups of mazurkas.

43. Mazurka op. 33, no. 4, B Minor: 4
44. Mazurkas from op. 50 (G Major, A-flat Major, C-sharp Minor): 2
45. Mazurka op. 59, no. 2, F-sharp Minor: 1
46. Mazurka op. 63 (no. 1, B Major, or no. 2, F Minor, or no. 3, C-sharp Minor): 1
47. Nocturne op. 9, no. 2, E-flat Major: 4
48. Nocturne op. 9, no. 3, B Major: 5<sup>4</sup>
49. Nocturne op. 15, no. 1, F Major: 1
50. Nocturne op. 15, no. 2, F-sharp Major: 4
51. Nocturne op. 15, no. 3, G Minor: 1
52. Nocturne op. 27, no. 2, D-flat Major: 5
53. Nocturne op. 32, no. 2, A-flat Major: 1
54. Nocturne op. 37, no. 1, G Minor, or no. 2, G Major: 2
55. Nocturne op. 37, no. 2, G Major: 2
56. Nocturne op. 48, no. 1, C Minor: 3
57. Nocturne op. 55, no. 1, F Minor: 1
58. Nocturne op. 55, no. 1, F Minor, or no. 2, E-flat Major: 1
59. Nocturne op. 62, no. 1, B Major: 1
60. Nocturne op. 62, no. 1, E Major: 1
61. Nocturnes (unidentified): 14<sup>5</sup>
62. Polonaise (unidentified): 7
63. Polonaise op. 22, E-flat Major (includes performances with or without preceding *Andante spianato* in G Major, and with or without orchestral accompaniment): 14<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Includes one performance in arrangement for violin and piano by Sarasate.

<sup>5</sup> Includes unidentified groups of nocturnes.

64. Polonaise op. 26 no. 1, C-sharp Minor: 5
65. Polonaise, op. 40, no. 1, A Major: 1
66. Polonaise op. 44, F-sharp Minor (doubtful): 1
67. Polonaise op. 53, A-flat Major: 13
68. *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, op. 61, A-flat Major: 1
69. Prélude op. 28, no. 4, E Minor: 1
70. Prélude op. 28, no. 1, C Major: 1
71. Prélude op. 28, no. 15, D-flat Major: 4
72. Prélude op. 28, no. 6, B Minor: 1
73. Prélude op. 28, no. 7, A Major: 1
74. Préludes op. 28 (unidentified): 3
75. Unidentified rondo: 1
76. Rondo à la *Krakowiak*, op. 14, F Major: 3
77. Rondo op. 16, C Minor: 1
78. Rondo op. 73, C Major: 5
79. Scherzo op. 20, B Minor: 2
80. Scherzo op. 31, B-flat Minor: 12
81. Scherzo op. 39, C-sharp Minor: 1
82. Scherzo op. 54, E Major: 1 (doubtful)
83. Scherzos unidentified: 5
84. Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, op. 65, G Minor: 1
85. Sonata op. 35 (third movement, “Marche funèbre,” B-flat Minor): 11<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Includes three disputed performances (could be op. 26, no. 2).

<sup>7</sup> Orchestra, band, and organ arrangements are not included.

86. Sonata op. 35, B-flat Minor (complete): 1
87. Sonata op. 58, B Minor: 1
88. Songs, unidentified: 1
89. *Tarantelle*, op. 43, A-flat Major: 10
90. Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violoncello, op. 8, G Minor: 1
91. Unidentified variations: 1
92. Variations on the air “Je vends des scapulaires,” from Hérold’s *Ludovic*, op. 12: 1
93. Waltzes (unidentified): 20<sup>8</sup>
94. Waltz, A-flat Major (op. 34, no. 1, op. 42, or 64, no. 3): 4
95. Waltz op. 18, E-flat Major: 2
96. Waltz op. 34, no. 1, A-flat Major: 2<sup>9</sup>
97. Waltz op. 34, no. 2, A Minor: 4
98. Waltzes op. 34 (complete or unspecified): 2
99. Waltz op. 42, A-flat Major: 4
100. Waltz op. 64, no. 1, D-flat Major: 2
101. Waltz op. 64, no. 2, C-sharp Minor: 4
102. Waltzes op. 64 (unspecified number): 1
103. Waltz op. 69, no. 1, B Minor, or no. 2, A-flat Major 1
- 104.

**Other works:**

105. *Chant polonais* (Liszt’s piano arrangement of songs by Chopin): 3
106. Unidentified pieces: 27

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<sup>8</sup> Includes unidentified groups of waltzes.

<sup>9</sup> Includes one performance in orchestral arrangement by Föppl.

**Works not identified as having been performed in public, 1839–1876:**

*Boléro*, op. 19, C Major

Fantasy on Polish Airs, op. 13, A Major

Impromptu op. 51, G-flat Major

Polonaise op. 26, no. 2, E-flat Minor (Mills might have played it in 1859)

Polonaise op. 40, no. 2, C Minor

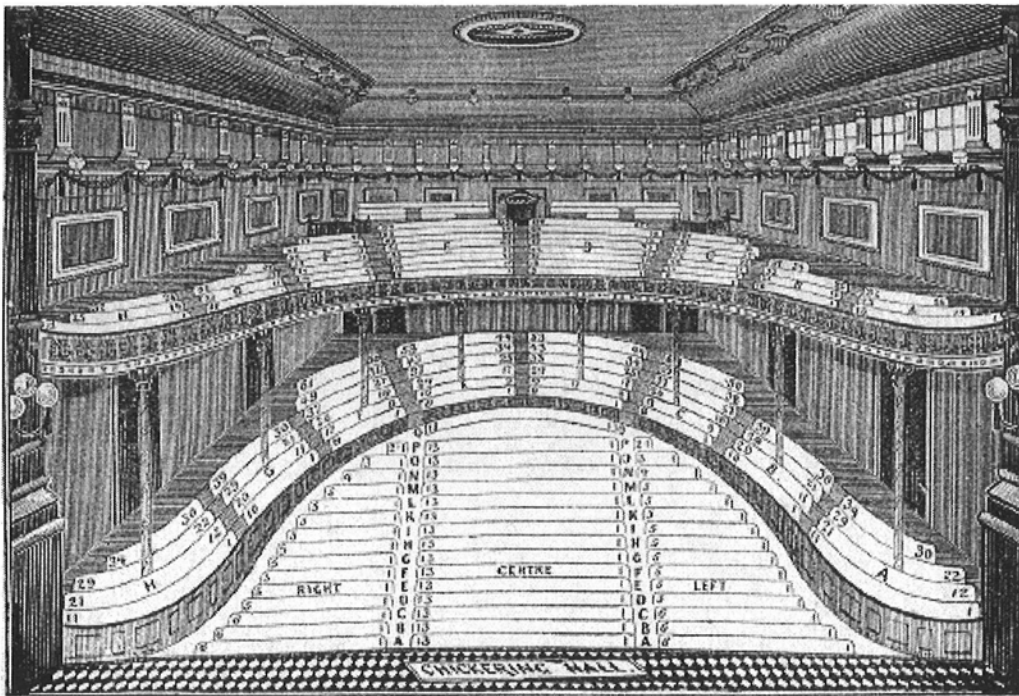
*Prélude*, C-sharp Minor, op. 45

Rondo op. 1, C Major

Rondo *à la Mazur*, op. 5, F Major

Piano Sonata op. 4, C Minor (published 1851)

Variations on “Là ci darem la mano,” from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, op. 2, B-flat Major



Chickering Hall



Steinway Hall



Henry T Finck



James Huneker



Richard Hoffman



William Mason



Leopold de Meyer



Sigismund Thalberg



Louis M. Gottschalk



Sebastian B. Mills



Henry C. Timm



Sophie F. Heilbron



Alida Topp



Edward Dannreuther



Anna Mehlig



Teresa Carreño



Anton Rubinstein



Hans von Bülow



Anne Essipoff

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