

Chopin

pianist and teacher

as seen by his pupils

Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger



C'est le seul de
Sirey. Il n'en faut
pas pour accompagner
la voix.

is Pupils

, F.)

Chopin: pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils

JEAN-JACQUES EIGELDINGER

University of Geneva

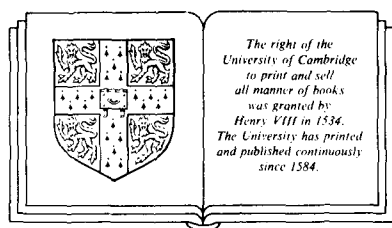
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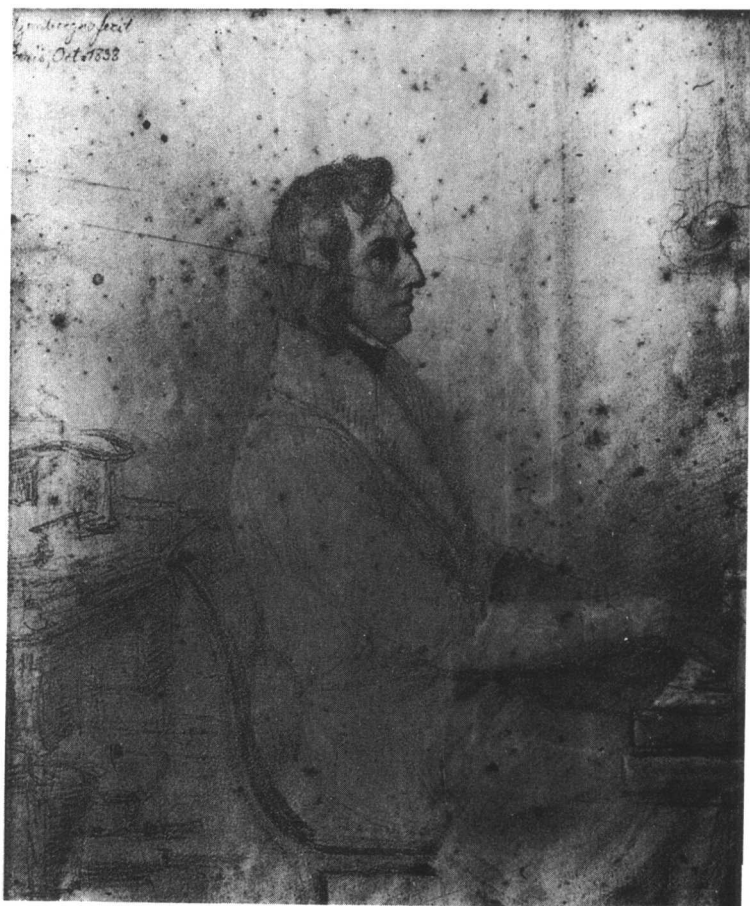
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Chopin at the piano. Pencil drawing by J. Götzenberger, Paris,
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JEAN-JACQUES EIGELDINGER

Quebec, March 1978

Geneva, July 1983

Explanation of references

In referring to bibliographic sources, whenever an author is represented in the present book by more than one work, the source in question is identified by an added abbreviation (e.g., Lenz, *B*; Lenz, *GPV*; etc.), which prefaces the source's full entry in the Bibliography. When source references consist of two or more names separated by oblique strokes, the first name is that of the originator of the information, the last name that of the author whose publication is our source. For example, 'Dubois/Niecks' means that Mme Dubois, Chopin's pupil, passed her reminiscence (orally or verbally) to Niecks, who reproduced it in his publication; 'Mikuli/Bischoff/Federhofer' means that Mikuli passed his information (orally) to Bischoff, who put it in writing in a text published by Federhofer; 'Czartoryska/Działyńska/Czartkowski-Jeżewska' means that the Princess Marcelina Czartoryska reported her information to a pupil, Cecylia Działyńska, who published it in an article reproduced in the book by Czartkowski and Jeżewska; and so on.

Note markers in the Introduction and Appendices refer to footnotes on the same page; those in the main part of the book (pages 23–89) refer to the body of notes on pages 90–159. Some notes are referred to more than once; note markers therefore do not always follow an exact numerical sequence.

Music examples have all been supplied by the author, except for those on pages 34, 37, 38, 39, 43, 79, which figure in the Kleczyński sources, those on pages 88 and 104 (note 45), present in Pugno's and Neuhaus's commentaries, those in note 127 on page 133, taken from Chopin's correspondence (various editions), and those in Appendix I.

Music examples quoting Chopin's works, including Appendix III, are given in *Urtext* form, based on autographs and the original French editions. Unless otherwise specified, all identifying references to Chopin's music follow the National Polish Edition of the Fryderyk Chopin Complete Works (CW; see Abbreviations below) as regards bar numbering and order of pieces within an opus – even though this latter order may differ from that in the original French editions, notably in the Mazurkas opp. 6, 7, 33 and 41. Some reprints of individual CW volumes have changed page numbering, so the

page references to CW in the present book, which follow the currently available editions of CW, may not apply to all editions. The contexts always make clear, however, where the reader can find the reference.

Pitch notation

The image shows a musical staff with a bass clef on the left and a treble clef on the right. The staff contains a series of notes, some of which are beamed together. Below the staff, the following pitch notation is written: C', B', C, B, c, b, c', b', c'', b'', c''', b''', c''', f'''. The notes on the staff correspond to these labels: C' (first line), B' (first space), C (second line), B (second space), c (third line), b (third space), c' (first line), b' (first space), c'' (second line), b'' (second space), c''' (third line), b''' (third space), c''' (fourth line), and f''' (fourth space). The notes for c''', b''', and c''' are beamed together. The note for f''' is also beamed together with the previous notes. The notes for C', B', C, B, c, b, c', b', c'', b'', c''', b''', and c''' are all marked with a 'va' (vibrato) symbol.

Editor's note

The first English edition is based on the second edition of *Chopin vu par ses élèves* (Neuchâtel, La Baconnière, 1979), supplemented by various author's revisions. In particular, Appendix I appears for the first time, and Appendix II has been largely reworked in the light of newly accessible sources.

All translations have been made directly from the original source languages. Some existing published English translations have been used (as indicated by the references); in these cases all passages quoted have been checked for accuracy of translation. The main examples are Hedley's translation of selected Chopin correspondence (SC) and the English editions of Kleczyński (CGW, FCI), issued during his life with his authorization. The English in the Kleczyński books has occasionally been tacitly modernized, and references to the old English fingering (+, 1, 2, 3, 4) have been changed to the modern system (1–5).

Abbreviations

General abbreviations

l.h., r.h.	left hand, right hand
<i>m.g., m.d.</i>	<i>main gauche, main droite</i>
ms, mss	manuscript, manuscripts
n.d.	no date
OEE	original English edition
OFE	original French edition
OGE	original German edition
op. no., opp.	opus number, opuses
op. posth.	opus posthumous

Bibliographical abbreviations

BWV	Schmieder, Wolfgang, <i>Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis</i> , Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1950
CFC	Chopin's correspondence, French edn (see Bibl., Chopin)
CGS	George Sand's correspondence (see Bibl., Sand)
CW	Chopin, Fryderyk, <i>Complete Works</i> , ed. Ignacy J. Paderewski, Ludwik Bronarski and Józef Turczyński, Warsaw and Kraków, PWM, 1949–, 21 vols
KFC	Chopin's correspondence, Polish edn (see Bibl., Chopin)
OXF	<i>The Oxford Original Edition of Frédéric Chopin</i> , ed. Edouard Ganche, London, Oxford University Press, [1932], 3 vols
PIW	Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy [(Polish) National Publishing Institute]
PM	Chopin's <i>Projet de méthode</i> (see p. 90, note 1)
PWM	Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne [Polish Musical Editions]
PWN	Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe [Polish National Scientific Editions]
RGMP	<i>Revue et gazette musicale de Paris</i>

SC	Chopin's correspondence, English edn (see Bibl., Chopin)
TiFC	Towarzystwo im. Fryderyka Chopina [Fryderyk Chopin Society (Warsaw)]

Library and museum sigla

F: France

<i>Pn</i>	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (Music Department unless otherwise specified)
<i>Po</i>	Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Opéra
<i>Ppo</i>	Paris, Bibliothèque Polonaise

PL: Poland

<i>Kj</i>	Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska
<i>Kjm</i>	Kraków, Muzeum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego
<i>Wn</i>	Warsaw, Biblioteka Narodowa
<i>Wtffc</i>	Warsaw, Towarzystwo im. Fryderyka Chopina [Fryderyk Chopin Society]

US: United States of America

<i>NYpm</i>	New York, the Pierpont Morgan Library, Robert O. (Lehman) Lehman deposit
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Individuality and independence of the fingers. Five-finger exercises for acquiring independence. Scales and arpeggios; passing the thumb; evenness. Evenness of sound and tranquillity of the hand as principles of fingering. Practice of trills. Octaves, double notes and chords.

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Spontaneity and range of interpretation. Dynamic scale; continuous gradation in nuances. Use of the pedal. Execution of

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Introduction

True science does not constitute a separate branch of knowledge from art. On the contrary, science, when envisaged like this and demonstrated by a man like Chopin, is art itself.

Delacroix

The authentically minded interpreter who wishes to do justice to masterpieces of the past faces a multitude of complex problems. Musicology, established now for a century as a positive science, has seen its objectives broaden and diversify. Performance practice, without being altogether a new sphere, is now a field in which musicology is proving itself to the greatest effect. In recent times musicological studies have contributed towards revitalizing or reconsidering the interpretation of gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony and concertante style, also shedding a clearer light on the realization of *continuo*, ornamentation and improvisatory elements of Baroque music. The combined efforts of organologists, instrument makers and performers enable us to-day to enjoy all the sumptuousness of Monteverdi's instrumental colouring; in Mozart the woodwind take on a new savour, emerging with unaccustomed clarity.

But with the music of the last century, and with Romantic piano music in particular, only recently have we begun to realise that they too present the performer with problems analogous to those encountered in the music of more remote periods. This new preoccupation arises from an awareness that our epoch, no longer comfortably attached to the end of the preceding century, has broken away from it altogether. The last bastion of post-Romanticism, the inter-war period, rediscovered the Baroque; a similar impulse is now urging us to rethink our relationship with the nineteenth century. As soon as a period becomes history, a resurgence of interest arises for its artists and their works, not necessarily restricted to its foremost figures. Those talents not blessed with genius nevertheless become a rich source of information, sometimes delight. In the field of Romantic piano, our knowledge of Weber, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin or Liszt is enhanced and placed in better perspective through familiarity with Alkan, Field, Heller, Henselt, Hummel and Moscheles, even Kalkbrenner or Thalberg. We are now better acquainted with these pianist-composers thanks to recent editions, studies and recordings. It is for this context of modern research into musical Romanticism that the present collection of annotated texts is offered.

The idea for this book arose from a desire to approach Chopin's pianistic and stylistic practices as closely as possible – a desire that entailed thorough study of his views on piano playing and teaching, as well as of their musical and aesthetic surroundings. The aim was not to write a historical essay, although historical perspective is rarely absent from the commentary. The interpretative, fragmentary and highly diversified nature of our sources does not lend itself to a straightforward historical treatment, which would in any case have stifled the subject in its cradle. It seemed preferable to adopt a somewhat didactic approach, letting the texts speak for themselves rather than using them as pretexts. The documents thus retain their own life, independent of their accompanying editorial notes.

The present volume may be seen as a critical synthesis of Kleczyński's two books with those written by Karasowski, Niecks and Hoesick: a synthesis elaborated in the light of various other texts, many of them not previously available in translation. The whole project has been based exclusively on documents whose weight and authenticity are undisputed.¹

We have the following main sources of information on Chopin's teaching activity and methods:

- Chopin's memoranda books for the years 1834, 1848 and 1849.
- His correspondence (CFC; KFC; SC) and, in addition, that of George Sand (CGS).
- A 'sketch for a method' (*Projet de méthode – PM*) in its two fragmentary versions, one an autograph draft (transcribed in full as Appendix 1 on pp. 190–7 below)² and the other a partial fair copy made by the composer's older sister.
- The annotated scores of pupils and associates.³
- The statements of Chopin's own students in diaries, letters and reminiscences, written, dictated or conveyed by word of mouth.⁴

¹ Among various examples of apocryphal testimonies there are the alleged reminiscences of Laura Rappoldi-Kahrer (pupil of von Bülow and Liszt) concerning a commentary, on the Preludes op. 28, supposedly emanating from Liszt, Lenz and Mme Kalergis (pupil of Chopin); Kapp (see Bibliography) quoted these reminiscences in an article, judging them as 'almost authentic'. Incidentally, the facsimile reproduced in Edvige Calza's monograph *Interpretazione letteraria dei Preludi di Chopin attribuita a Liszt* (Bologna, Editrice Compositori, 1968) is none other than an Italian translation of Kapp's text. Similar caution should be applied to Victor Gille's *Souvenirs romantiques*, in which imagination sometimes supplants reality (see Bibliography, and note 21 on p. 98 below). On the other hand some credit, albeit subject to caution, has been accorded here to some souvenirs of F.-H. Peru (see Bibliography); this is explained in the passage under his name in the *List of pupils*, pp. 174–6 below.

² See p. 90 below, note 1, for a full description of the sources of the *Projet* and their history.

³ See Appendices II and III, pp. 198–266.

⁴ Documents contemporary with their subject are traditionally regarded as the most trustworthy ones. In the case of Chopin's pupils, however, their correspondence and private diaries are not merely as rich or as vivid as their reminiscences set down at later dates; mundane details naturally dominate the former, and the pupil is often too overwhelmed by the revelation to be able or even wish to write it down. Even if the time lapse gives rise to inaccuracies of detail, it cannot detract from the authenticity of impressions which are profoundly anchored in the memory.