Frédéric Chopin
and
His Publishers

An exhibition in the
Department of Special Collections
on view
February 2 through April 10, 1998
Frederic Chopin and his Publishers

The 1830s have been called “the decade of the piano” because during that period the piano and the music written for it played a dominant role in European musical culture. The piano had, of course, already been popular for more than half a century. But by the third decade of the nineteenth century, changes in the instrument and its audience transformed the piano’s role in musical life. As the Industrial Revolution hit its stride, piano manufacturers developed methods for building many more pianos than had previously been feasible, and at lower cost. Pianos ceased to be the exclusive province of the wealthy; an expanding middle class could also aspire to own them and make music at home. Thousands of amateur pianists began to take lessons, buy printed music, and attend concerts. Virtuosos like Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Sigismund Thalberg, and Franz Liszt became the first musical superstars, touring Europe and astonishing audiences with music they had composed to display their piano technique.

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) rode the crest of the piano’s popularity. His piano playing was highly regarded even by other virtuosos, and his music—nearly all of it for the piano—was in great demand from professional and amateur musicians alike. Unlike the other composer-pianists of his time, however, Chopin rarely gave public concerts; his performing was generally confined to the salons of wealthy aristocrats and businessmen. Public awareness of Chopin’s music came about primarily through its publication, and the process of shepherding his works into print assumed great importance for him. However, this was not simply a matter of converting his manuscripts into printed form. Chopin felt that many performance details—such as phrasing, dynamics, pedaling, and articulation—were not fixed elements of his music, even though they have a substantial impact on the way it sounds. He was inconsistent about including performing instructions in his manuscripts, and when publishers asked him to supply them at the proof stage, he often changed his mind several times. Some musical changes also appeared first in proofs and were never copied into his manuscripts. Moreover, due to the inconsistencies of contemporary copyright law, nearly all of Chopin’s works had to be issued simultaneously by publishers in France, Germany, and England in order to discourage piracy. When he sent separate manuscripts to these publishers, each copy differed slightly from the last.
Chopin’s relationship to his musical texts has created an unusually complex situation for modern performers, editors, and musicologists. In order to understand what Chopin intended, it is necessary to compare an array of manuscript and printed sources that all form part of Chopin’s creative process. Determining which, if any, of these sources should be considered authoritative remains one of the most important challenges in Chopin scholarship. This exhibition draws from the University of Chicago Library’s distinguished collection of first and early editions of Chopin’s music to illustrate how its publication history affects the way we hear and understand Chopin’s music. The Library’s Chopin collection has been developed since the mid-1960s, principally through gifts of scores from George W. Platzman in memory of Rose K. Platzman, the donor’s mother. The Olga and Paul Menn Foundation, which supports musical activities in the University, has also provided funds for the acquisition of early editions of Chopin as well as scholarly works in music.

Unless otherwise specified, all materials in this exhibition are housed in the Library’s Department of Special Collections.

Standley Howell
1A.


Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection

1B.


This recently-published catalogue provides detailed bibliographical descriptions of the 288 items in the Library's Chopin collection.

1C.

Chopin, Sonate pour le piano, Œuv. 35. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, [after 1840]. Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection

1D

Chopin first achieved fame as a child prodigy in his native Poland, and a few of his works were published in Warsaw as early as 1817, when he was only eight years old. He continued to compose throughout his student years, but only a handful of these works were printed, in Polish editions that were not widely distributed and are now quite rare. When Chopin attained prominence in Paris during the early 1830s, he allowed a few of his early works (the Rondos, opp. 1 and 5) to be reissued by French, German, and English publishers, but he made no further effort to revive the other music he had composed before 1828. These works languished in manuscript until after his death and have been trickling into print from widely scattered sources ever since.
2A. background


2B.


The title page of Chopin’s first published work identifies him as “a musician aged eight years.”

2C.


Chopin’s Rondo, op. 1, was first published at Warsaw in 1825, then reissued in England, France, and Germany in the mid-1830s.

Composed in the early 1820s, this Polonaise was not published until fifteen years after Chopin’s death.
When Chopin graduated from the Warsaw Conservatory in 1829, the most obvious career option before him was that of a touring composer-pianist. With this in mind, he composed a number of virtuoso showpieces for piano and orchestra to display his talents: theVariations on Mozart’s “La ci darem la mano,” op. 2; the Fantasia on Polish Airs, op. 13; and the concert rondo on a Polish dance, Krakowiak, op. 14. In August 1829, he traveled to Vienna in hopes of having some of his music published there. Unexpectedly, he also had the opportunity to give two concerts. His music was well received and his playing was generally admired, but there were complaints that his tone was not powerful enough to make an effect in large halls.

Another year passed before Chopin embarked on his first real concert tour, which he hoped would take him to Vienna, Paris, London, and several Italian cities. Armed with two new piano concertos, he arrived at Vienna in November 1830 to find that only one of the works he had left with publisher Tobias Haslinger a year earlier, the op. 2 Mozart variations, was close to being issued and that the enthusiasm of Viennese audiences had waned. After eight fruitless months, he left for Paris, where it took another seven months to organize a concert. That performance, on 26 February 1832, was poorly attended, but served to establish Chopin’s reputation among professional musicians as both pianist and composer. Nonetheless, persistent criticisms of his small piano sonority and his own distaste for traveling made it clear to Chopin that the life of a touring virtuoso was not for him.

This concert, originally announced for January 15, 1832, did not take place until February 26. It featured Chopin playing his Piano Concerto in E minor and the “La ci darem la mano” Variations.


Chopin's autograph manuscript, which is exceptionally neat compared to most of his later manuscripts, contains a canceled fourth variation that does not appear in Haslinger's printed edition. This work inspired Robert Schumann's comment, "Hut ab, ihr Herren, ein Genie!" ("Hats off, gentlemen, a genius!").

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At the turn of the nineteenth century, there were two basic types of piano in Europe. The so-called Viennese piano had a light, clear sound, lacking in sonority but with a very flexible keyboard action. The English type possessed a richer sound, but its action was sluggish compared to the Viennese. Over the next several decades, manufacturers sought to make instruments that incorporated the best features of both types, but the differences between them had not wholly disappeared by the time Chopin appeared on the scene. Chopin initially favored the Viennese piano, which was well suited to the brilliant passagework and clear textures of the display pieces he wrote for his public performances. After he settled in Paris, his preference was for instruments built by the Pleyel firm, whose highly responsive action, reminiscent of the Viennese instruments, permitted finely nuanced playing.

Technical improvements made during the same period significantly increased the sonority and flexibility of the piano, bringing it very close in most respects to the modern instrument. The introduction of iron bracing made it possible to hold the strings at higher tension (making them more resonant) and allowed players to use greater force without fear of damaging the instrument. After experimentation with a variety of other materials, manufacturers began to cover the piano’s hammers with felt, which gave players finer control over attack and tone. The Parisian manufacturer Sébastien Érard improved the efficiency of the keyboard by inventing the double-escapement action, which permitted the playing of extremely rapid repeated notes. Chopin’s music takes full advantage of the enhanced virtuosity and expressivity made possible by these alterations.


Library General Collection

This group portrait includes many of the most famous virtuoso pianists of the day: (bottom row) Edward Wolff, Adolf von Henselt, Franz Liszt; (top row) Jacob Rosenhain, Theodor Döhler, Chopin, Alexander Dreyshock, and Sigismund Thalberg.


In early piano actions, the hammers fell away from the strings as soon as a note was played. Sébastien Érard’s double-escalement action, perfected in 1821, held a hammer close to the strings as long as its key was depressed, making it possible to repeat notes much more rapidly.


4E. background


Music publisher and piano manufacturer Camille Pleyel opened this concert hall in 1830 as a venue in which virtuoso pianists could be heard playing Pleyel pianos. It was the site of Chopin's first Paris concert.
Public concerts were not the only performance venue for professional pianists in Paris. Equally important were appearances at the private salons of aristocrats and wealthy businessmen, who entertained lavishly and competed to attract the finest musicians to sing or play at their soirées. The elegance and refinement of Chopin’s music and his piano playing made him a welcome guest. Before the revolution of 1830, musicians who performed in private homes had been treated as hired help, but Chopin was quickly accepted into well-to-do social circles. Through contacts he made on these occasions, Chopin established himself before the end of 1832 as the favored piano teacher in Paris. Demand for his services was high enough that he could charge exceptionally high fees for lessons, and Chopin discovered that this income, combined with what he could realize from publishing his music, provided him with an alternative to the concert circuit.

Chopin’s music was extremely popular among both salon audiences and, in published form, middle-class amateurs. What attracted audiences more than the virtuoso showpieces Chopin had written for public display were his shorter dance pieces (especially the waltzes and mazurkas) and the lyrical nocturnes. The high level of musical invention and polish in these works immediately set them apart from the reams of piano music flooding the market at that time. They sold well, even though they were more difficult to play than most popular genre pieces.
5A. background


5B.

5C.


5D.


Copyright and "Simultaneous" Editions

During Chopin’s lifetime, no international copyright law protected the rights of publishers in France. A publisher who copyrighted a literary or musical work there could not prevent pirate editions from being published in other countries. To cope with this situation, French publishers routinely made arrangements with publishers in England and Germany or Austria for editions to be published simultaneously in all three countries. When all three publishers registered a work for national copyright on the same day, it became illegal for anyone else to publish it in those countries. Typically, composers sold their works outright to a single publisher, who then negotiated the rights for other countries with publishers of their choice. Composers with an international reputation were sometimes able to realize more profit from their music by selling directly to publishers in each country.

First editions of nearly all of Chopin’s mature works were issued in three different countries. Despite the best efforts of all concerned, these publications were not in fact simultaneous—some of the editions were separated in time by a year or more—, yet only a few pirated editions appeared. The first of Chopin’s works to be published “simultaneously” in France, Germany, and England were the Nocturnes, op. 9, which appeared over the period from December 1832 to June 1833. Maurice Schlesinger and Friedrich Kistner, the French and German publishers, cited each other’s editions on their title pages, but not that of Christian Wessel, the English publisher. Wessel, in turn, almost never acknowledged his Continental counterparts on the title pages of his editions.

This portrait, the first published image of Chopin, was distributed with the January 1834 issue of the Album des pianistes, a music anthology series brought out by Schlesinger. The same issue contained the French first edition of Chopin’s Nocturnes, op. 15.


The day after his first Paris concert in February 1832, Chopin was approached by the music publisher Aristide Farrenc (1794-1865). He signed a contract selling Farrenc copyright for a group of five works, including the right to negotiate their publication outside of France. However, Farrenc withdrew from the deal later that same year in frustration over what he considered Chopin’s laziness and the excessive technical difficulty of his music. By November, Chopin had made a new arrangement with Maurice Schlesinger (1798-1871), who was to remain his principal French publisher. German by birth, Schlesinger learned the publishing trade from his father in Berlin and established his own music business at Paris in 1821. His house organ, the Revue et gazette musicale de Paris, became the leading music journal in France, and Chopin benefited considerably from its sympathetic reviews of his music.

Chopin normally gave Schlesinger his original manuscript or a fair copy made from it to serve as the model for engraving. (Many surviving autographs bear engravers’ marks indicating where the breaks between systems would occur on the printed page.) Schlesinger sent proofs to Chopin for correction, but the composer also took this opportunity (perhaps at Schlesinger’s behest) to add pedaling and expression marks that were not in the autograph. Sometimes these changes were so extensive that second proofs had to be prepared (and corrected) before publication. The printed editions therefore represent a more advanced compositional stage than the composer’s manuscripts.


In preparing the Schlesinger edition of the Scherzo, op. 31, from this manuscript, the engraver wrote arabic numbers on selected barlines to indicate where line breaks would occur in the printed score.


As early as 1831, the Leipzig music publisher Heinrich Probst had written to Chopin about publishing some of his works. By the time Chopin began serious negotiations with publishers the following year, however, Probst had sold his business to Friedrich Kistner. Chopin showed Probst’s letter to Farrenc in Paris, who thereupon offered Kistner the German rights to the works he had bought from Chopin. When Schlesinger took over Farrenc’s interest, he honored the agreement already made with Kistner.

Schlesinger provided Kistner with copies of proofs corrected by Chopin beginning in November 1832. Kistner wasted no time at all rushing this music into print, so that his editions appeared several months ahead of Schlesinger’s. Kistner’s dependence on Schlesinger’s proofs is apparent in the physical layout of the editions: the number of measures per system and the placement of slurs, dynamics, and other expression marks is virtually identical, to an extent that would be highly unlikely if engravers at each firm worked from manuscript copies. There are, however, occasional musical differences between the French and German publications, suggesting that Chopin may have sent last-minute revisions to Schlesinger that are not reflected in Kistner’s editions.

Chopin was courting Maria Wodzińska when she painted this portrait of him in her private album.


Kistner first issued Opus 7 with only four mazurkas, omitting the mazurka in C major, which was first included in the edition displayed here.
After selling his publishing business to Kistner, Heinrich Probst moved to Paris, where he managed Camille Pleyel's piano showroom. In mid-1833, he also became the Paris sales agent for another Leipzig music publisher, Breitkopf und Härtel. Within a short time, he convinced Chopin to abandon Kistner and take up with his new firm. Chopin never published with Kistner again, and Breitkopf became his principal German publisher. Breitkopf, one of the largest and most venerable music houses in Europe, offered Chopin not only higher fees but an international distribution system that made Chopin's music more widely known than Kistner (or Schlesinger, for that matter) could have done.

The appearance of Breitkopf's early Chopin editions confirms that they, like Kistner's, were closely based on proofs supplied by Schlesinger. In the Variations on "Je vends des Scapulaires" displayed here, Breitkopf's edition closely parallels Schlesinger's up to the third system on the left-hand page. At that point, the French engraver had changed the prevailing notational pattern—designed to clarify which hand was supposed to play which notes—in order to squeeze as many notes as possible onto a single system. The German editor made the notational pattern of this passage consistent with what had come before and spread a single measure over two systems. From that point on, the layout of the Breitkopf edition is independent of its French model.
9A. background
Chopin considered this drawing by novelist George Sand, his lover for nine years, to be the truest likeness of him.

9 B.


9C.

Raymond Härtel (1810-1888) and his brother Hermann (1803-1875) ran the Breitkopf & Härtel firm throughout Chopin’s publishing career.


These variations were based on the aria “Je vends des Scapulaires” from the opera *Ludovic*, left unfinished at his death early in 1833 by Ferdinand Hérold and completed by Fromental Halévy.

Late in 1835, Chopin began sending manuscripts of his works—his own autographs or copies made under his supervision—directly to Breitkopf instead of letting Schlesinger send corrected proofs. Some of these manuscripts survive, marked with engravers' annotations that correspond to the German first editions. This change in the way Breitkopf received Chopin's music makes the already murky hierarchy of source material still more complex. In most cases, the manuscripts given to Schlesinger in Paris seem to have been the first ones to be written. The scores sent to Germany were not mere copies, however, but often included alterations that did not appear in the French autographs. This would suggest that the German versions were more finished and hence authoritative. On the other hand, once Chopin sent his music to Breitkopf or another foreign publisher, he had no further control, so that engravers' errors or misreadings of his notation went uncorrected. For the French editions, he had the opportunity to make corrections and changes up to the last minute. As a result, the French editions are most often considered the principal sources for Chopin's music, but the German versions must be carefully considered as well.

The French and German first editions of Chopin's Scherzo, op. 31, illustrate the range of variants that could arise from this publishing practice. Even in the opening bars, there are differences in dynamics (the crescendo in measure 1), phrasing (treatment of the sustained top note in measures 2-4), and ornamentation (mordent versus grace note on the second beat of measure 3) that affect the way the music sounds. Neither edition matches the autograph, even though this manuscript was used as a model by Schlesinger's engraver.

Chopin, Ballada, As-dur, op. 47, wstętem opatrzył Władysław Hordyński. Cracow: Polskie wydawnictwo muzyczne, 1952. Facsimile of an autograph manuscript (since destroyed), 1842. Olga and Paul Menn Foundation


Chopin, Ballade pour le piano, op. 47. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, [1842]. German first edition. Olga and Paul Menn Foundation
Within a few months after Chopin's music began to appear at Paris under Schlesinger's imprint, Christian Wessel started issuing parallel editions in London. Wessel, another German, founded his business in England with the intent to concentrate on publishing music from the Continent. It is not known how he became Chopin's English representative, although Schlesinger probably approached him. For many years, music historians assumed that Wessel's editions were copied from Schlesinger's printed scores and that Chopin had no hand in them. More recently, however, it has become apparent that Wessel received Chopin's music in much the same way that Breitkopf did. At first, Wessel dealt with Schlesinger, who sold him the English copyright and sent him copies of corrected proofs. Later, perhaps after Chopin visited London in 1837, the composer began to negotiate directly with Wessel and send him manuscripts. Unfortunately, none of these proofs or manuscripts has survived.

By 1839 Chopin became unhappy with Wessel, because the publisher was often sluggish about sending Chopin his fee and because Wessel insisted on adding flowery romantic titles to Chopin's works, despite repeated complaints from the composer. In later years, Chopin avoided dealing personally with Wessel, preferring to work through a variety of intermediaries or to sell the English rights to a French publisher. For these later works, Wessel once again received corrected proofs rather than manuscripts. Nonetheless, it is now clear that Wessel was an equal partner in the international distribution of Chopin's works, and scholars are still evaluating the importance of these English editions relative to the French and German ones.


Chopin’s Dedications

Like other young composers, Chopin dedicated his early Parisian publications to well-known composer-pianists or well-to-do patrons of the arts, who were in a position to provide recommendations, commissions, or employment opportunities. More generally, by associating himself with famous musicians and wealthy lovers of music, Chopin enhanced public estimation of his own music. Publishers recognized the value of these associations for their sales and prominently displayed the names of dedicatees on title pages.

After Chopin became famous, however, most of his dedications were to personal friends. Many of these were still members of high society, since that was the circle in which Chopin moved, but there is little to suggest that he felt the need to court favor. In many cases, he seems to have been very casual about selecting dedicatees, often making up his mind or changing it at the last minute. Chopin dedicated a significant number of works to his students, ranging from aristocratic ladies to professional pianists like Friederike Müller.

It is curious that Chopin did not dedicate published works to either of the two known loves of his life, Maria Wodzińska (1819-1896) and George Sand (1804-1876). Chopin had known the Wodziński family since childhood and fell in love with Maria in 1835, when she was sixteen. He proposed, but her family did not approve, probably because of his chronic ill health. He inscribed a manuscript of the Waltz, op. 69, no. 1 to Maria during their courtship, but the work was not published during his lifetime; in later years he did not hesitate to dedicate copies of it to other ladies. Chopin lived with novelist George Sand for nine years (1838-1847) and their relationship was common knowledge among members of Paris society, but Chopin may have felt that a public dedication to her stretched the bounds of propriety.

Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785-1849) was the reigning piano virtuoso in Paris when Chopin arrived in 1831. Chopin admired him greatly and briefly considered becoming his student.

12B. background also


12C.


Charlotte de Rothschild (1825-1899), daughter of the banker James de Rothschild, took piano lessons with Chopin in her youth. However, it was only after she married her cousin Nathaniel de Rothschild in 1842 that Chopin dedicated the Ballade, op. 52, and the Waltz, op. 64, no. 2, to her.


Friedericke Müller (1816-1895) was a highly-regarded professional pianist and one of Chopin’s favorite pupils during the year and a half she studied with him (1839-1841). After Chopin dedicated the Allegro de concert, op. 46, to her, Franz Liszt gave her the nickname “Mademoiselle opus quarante-six.”

Chopin's reputation as a composer was principally that of a miniaturist who achieved great melodic and harmonic richness within brief and simple musical forms. Once firmly established in Paris, however, Chopin began to experiment with more complex musical structures, most notably in his scherzos, ballades, and polonaises. As titles for independent piano pieces, scherzo (Italian for "joke") and ballade (usually a lyrical vocal work) had no specific meaning for nineteenth-century audiences, so Chopin was free to define these genres himself. His scherzos adhere loosely to a ternary (A-B-A) structure, while the ballades use principles of sonata form, but he turned both genres into virtual tone poems that explore a remarkably wide expressive range. Chopin wrote many simple polonaises in his youth, but he avoided the genre after he left Poland. When he turned to the polonaise again in the mid-1830s, he invested it with a heroic scale and character far removed from its dance origins.

Chopin's large-scale works were not among his most popular ones. They were difficult to learn and their musical form and content puzzled contemporary musicians. It is a measure of Chopin's stature, that publishers not only printed these pieces but paid substantial sums for them, even though they were unlikely to reap an immediate profit.

Chopin owned both Pleyel and Érard pianos, but he preferred Pleyel instruments. He acquired this piano in 1847.

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German first edition. Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection

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French first separate edition. Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection

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Chopin, *Deux polonaises pour le piano, op. 26*. Paris: Maurice Schlesinger, [1836].

French first separate edition. Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection
Chopin’s music sold so well that publishers were obliged to reprint his works frequently in order to keep up with demand. Most of these reissues used the plates from the first editions; and since printed scores of this period almost never bore publication dates, later printings are often distinguished only by changes on the title pages, such as the price or the publisher’s address. However, there are frequently alterations in the music as well. In Paris editions, some of these variants may be corrections or second thoughts originating with the composer, although it is rarely possible to document his responsibility for them.

The most conspicuous changes are in Breitkopf und Härtel’s reissues, and there is little chance that Chopin had any part in them. Rather, they seem to represent an editor’s attempt to rectify what he considered omissions or flaws in the first editions. Dynamics, pedaling, and phrasing are added, and passages that Chopin provided with different expression marks, harmonizations, or rhythms when they recurred later in the piece are altered so that each appearance of the passage is the same. Imposing such regularization removes a distinctive characteristic of Chopin’s music, so it is particularly important for modern scholars and editors to identify which edition they are using.


By the late 1830s, Chopin was so popular that he was able to demand extremely high fees for his works from publishers. Eventually, Schlesinger and Breitkopf began to balk at his escalating prices, and Chopin responded by negotiating with other publishers who were eager to break the hegemony established by Schlesinger, Breitkopf, and Wessel. It did not take his regular publishers long to recognize that in the long run it would be profitable to have as many Chopin works in their catalogues as possible, regardless of their initial cost. Most of Chopin’s music continued to appear through these publishers, but Chopin did not hesitate to take his business elsewhere whenever he encountered resistance or inconvenience at their hands.

Chopin’s concern to obtain larger fees for his music was motivated in part by a marked decline in his productivity during the 1840s. His deteriorating health, caused by chronic pulmonary tuberculosis that he had from his teenage years, left him fewer and fewer periods when he felt able to compose. He also became increasingly self-critical as the years passed and was unwilling to publish works that did not meet his high standards. The acrimonious end of his relationship with George Sand in 1847 left his personal life in turmoil, and the Revolution of 1848, which forced most of his aristocratic students to flee Paris, left him without his primary source of income. During his final decline, he was unable to compose at all.


15D

Chopin, 2 *nocturnes pour le piano*, op. 62. Autograph manuscript. On loan from the Newberry Library

This manuscript preserves visible evidence of Chopin’s revisions and corrections, as well as engraver’s markings (red arabic numerals over selected barlines) that correspond with line breaks in the first French edition. “B[randus] et Cé 4611” in the lower margin indicates that this work received Brandus’s plate number 4611. Displayed here are the opening of the first nocturne from op. 62 (right-hand page) and the end of the second nocturne (left-hand page).

Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection

In 1846, Maurice Schlesinger sold his business to Gemmy Brandus, who continued to reissue Schlesinger’s stock of Chopin’s music and assumed Schlesinger’s role as Chopin’s primary French publisher.


Chopin published his Polonaise, op. 3, with Pietro Mechetti (1777-1850) in 1831, while he was resident in Vienna, but it was not until the early 1840s that he offered Mechetti any of his other works.
Some of Chopin’s works made their first appearance outside the music publishing mainstream. Maurice Schlesinger frequently offered subscribers to his Revue et gazette musicale score supplements featuring new additions to his firm’s catalogue in advance of their general publication. Six of Chopin’s opuses were issued in this manner. Technically they are first editions, but they seem to have been rushed into print before Chopin could make final corrections. For instance, the Gazette publication of the Impromptu, op. 51, transposed pages 3 and 5, making nonsense of the musical structure.

Publishers occasionally persuaded Chopin to participate in collaborative efforts with other leading composers. For example, he contributed a mazurka to an album of piano music sponsored by another Paris music journal, La France musicale; and he was one of six composers who each wrote a single variation on a march from Vincenzo Bellini’s I puritani for a publication entitled Hexameron after the number of composers involved.

In 1840, music educator François Joseph Fétis and composer Ignaz Moscheles published the first historical piano method book, the Méthode des méthodes de piano, which provided instruction for playing in both historical and contemporary musical styles. Excerpts from Chopin’s music were used to illustrate virtuoso techniques. A supplementary volume featured études by modern composers, many of them written specifically for the Méthode, including Chopin’s Trois nouvelles études.


A note on the title page indicates that this edition accompanied the Gazette musicale for July 9, 1843.


La France musicale sponsored this album, which includes Chopin’s Mazurka in A minor and works by Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Henri Bertini, Edward Wolff, George Alexander Osborne, and Antoni Katski.

Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection

A set of variations on a march from Vincenzo Bellini’s I puritani, with variations contributed by Franz Liszt, Sigismund Thalberg, Johann Peter Pixis, Henri Herz, Carl Czerny, and Chopin.


Library General Collection


This collection includes Chopin’s Trois nouvelles études and studies by Ignaz Moscheles, Sigismund Thalberg, Felix Mendelssohn, Franz Liszt, and others.
Chopin's Teaching

Chopin took his piano teaching very seriously. In the early 1840s, he even sketched the beginnings of a method for playing the instrument, but this project was never completed. Chopin taught music written by a variety of composers, of whom Johann Sebastian Bach was particularly prominent, but his students cherished most the opportunity to study the master's own works with him. During lessons, he and his students frequently wrote instructions concerning performance in the students' printed copies of his music. Most of these were fingerings, with occasional details of dynamics, articulation, and phrasing. The markings were primarily didactic and tailored to the needs of individual students. From time to time, however, Chopin also altered pitches, redistributed chords, and even completely rewrote ornamental passagework, changes that are not found in any other early sources. Controversy continues over whether these annotations reflect Chopin's final revisions of his music or spur-of-the-moment changes that were never intended to have any permanent validity.

The most important of the surviving annotated scores are the ones that belonged to Jane Stirling, a Scottish lady who studied with Chopin between 1843 and 1849 and assembled French editions for nearly all of the composer's works into seven bound volumes. The fact that Chopin assisted Stirling in compiling a thematic index of her scores has resulted in speculation that he intended this collection to serve as the basis for a revised collected edition of his music. However, the nature of some of his markings belies this possibility. For example, the change in tempo from Allegro to Largo in the Prelude in E-flat Minor, op. 28, no. 14, probably indicated that Chopin wanted Stirling to practice the work slowly, not that he had changed his mind about the music's expressive character. Annotated scores may provide us with valuable clues to the way Chopin preferred his music to be played, but their significance relative to other authentic source material is still uncertain.

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**17B. background**


Chopin is saying “Ça c’est le jeu de ‘Listz!’ Il n’en faut pas pour accompagner la voix” (“That’s the ‘Listz’ [sic] style of playing! That shouldn’t be used when accompanying the voice”). Pauline Viardot (1821-1910), a well-known singer and sister of the legendary diva Maria Malibran, was already a professional pianist when she met Chopin in 1840. He did not give her formal lessons, but played and discussed a wide range of music with her.

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**17C.**


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In Stirling's copy of the Second Piano Concerto, op. 21, Chopin rewrote the left-hand part in the second movement to fill in the harmony so that the movement could be played without orchestral accompaniment.


Chopin's uncompleted draft for a piano method, early 1840s?. Reproduction. From Chopin, Esquisses pour une méthode de piano. Edited by Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger.

Chopin published 159 works distributed among sixty-five opus numbers, but he also composed more than seventy other works that he chose not to publish. In some cases, he may have decided that the music was not up to his standards or that it needed further revision. Other works had been presented as personal gifts to close friends, and Chopin may have considered it inappropriate to publish them. On his deathbed, he asked that all his unpublished manuscripts be destroyed, but that wish was not honored, and in 1853 his mother and sisters asked Julian Fontana, Chopin’s friend and amanuensis, to select from among them works that he considered worthy and edit them for publication. He selected twenty-three piano pieces, which he grouped into eight opus numbers (66-73).

From the time Fontana’s edition appeared in 1855, musicians suspected that he had added many expression marks and possibly even made changes to the music. Unfortunately, the autograph manuscripts he used were subsequently destroyed, so it is not possible to determine the extent of his editorial intervention. Some of these works survive in other copies that preserve substantially different versions of the music. However, these were all presentation copies that Chopin gave to friends and may lack revisions that Chopin made later to the scores that remained in his possession. Therefore Fontana’s posthumous edition, whatever its shortcomings, remains the most important source for these twenty-three works.


This copy once belonged to Pauline Viardot and is inscribed

“Hommage à Mme. P. Viardot. J. Fontana, 1857.”


The manuscript reproduced here of Chopin’s Waltz, op. 70, no. 1, presented to the French author Eugene Sue in 1833, preserves a version of the work that differs in many respects from the edition printed by Fontana.

Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection

The manuscript reproduced here of Chopin’s Waltz, op. 70, no. 1, presented to the French author Eugene Sue in 1833, preserves a version of the work that differs in many respects from the edition printed by Fontana.
Beginning in 1840, Wessel began to issue Chopin's works, both new ones and reprints of earlier ones, with collective title pages that advertised a "complete edition" of the piano music. Since Wessel had been the English publisher for nearly all of Chopin's music, this collection was in fact the most complete edition available for many years. In 1851 and 1852, respectively, Brandus (Schlesinger's successor) and Breitkopf und Härtel began to reissue the Chopin works from their catalogues in collected editions, although neither of these was as comprehensive as Wessel's.

In the third quarter of the century, Breitkopf und Härtel undertook monumental complete-works editions of great composers, among them Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Schumann, Mozart, and Palestrina. In 1878, a distinguished editorial committee that included Johannes Brahms and Franz Liszt turned to Chopin as well. The importance of this first critical edition, based primarily on the manuscripts and German early editions in Breitkopf's archives, has less to do with the accuracy of its musical text, which is variable, than with the effect it had on Chopin's stature. By including his works in this series, Breitkopf elevated Chopin, who even in France had been considered a refined but lightweight composer of salon music, into a pantheon previously reserved for the greatest representatives of the Austro-German musical tradition. German musicologists undertook serious studies of Chopin's life and his music such as were then accorded to few non-German musicians, and pianists and audiences began to take note of Chopin's more serious, large-scale works, which had previously been neglected.
Chopin, {\textit{Souvenir de la Pologne: 7\textsuperscript{th} set of mazurkas, op. 41}}. London: Wessel & C\textsuperscript{o}, [1840].
English first edition. Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection
This edition formed No. 44 of "Wessel & C\textsuperscript{o}:s complete collection of the compositions of Frederic Chopin for the piano forte."

Chopin, {\textit{Deuxi\`eme impromptu en fa di\`ese majeur, op. 36}}. Édition originale œuvres complètes pour le piano de Frédéric Chopin. Paris: Brandus et C\textsuperscript{e}, [ca. 1851].
Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection
Brandus advertised this series as "the only authentic edition, without changes or additions, published according to proofs corrected by the author himself."

Chopin, {\textit{Deux nocturnes pour le piano, op. 48}}. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, [after 1851]. Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection
Breitkopf's collection comprised "the Chopin piano works that were published with proprietary rights by the firm of Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig."

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Leichtentritt’s two-volume study was one of the first monographs devoted to the comprehensive analysis of a single composer’s works.

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**19E: Background**

Copyright on Chopin's music expired for England in 1856, for France in 1859, and for Germany in 1869. Not long after these dates, a variety of publishers, eager to profit from Chopin's continuing popularity, hired well-known pianists to edit his music for contemporary performers. Pianists of the later nineteenth century expected many details of expression to be explicit in the music, so these performer-editors added phrasings, dynamics, articulations, and fingerings that were absent in the editions supervised by Chopin.

Although these editions do not derive directly from Chopin, some of them preserve a link with traditions of performance that can be traced back to the composer. Two editions, in particular, command attention because they were prepared by professional pianists who had studied with Chopin: Thomas Tellefsen (1823-1874) and Karol Mikuli (1821-1897). Using early French editions as a starting point, they inserted expression marks based on their notes and recollections of remarks Chopin made during piano lessons. Tellefsen had been Chopin's favorite student, but his edition, published in 1860, was afflicted with many errors and had little impact. On the other hand, Mikuli's edition appeared in 1879 and has been popular with pianists ever since. His musical text is more faithful to the early published scores than any other late-nineteenth-century edition.

20B. background

Salon at the home of Princess Marcelline Czartoryska, 1847 (?). Reproduction of pencil sketch by Cyprian Kamil Norwid. From Władysław Duleba, Chopin, Cracow: Polskie wydawnictwo muzyczne, 1975. Library General Collection

Norwid, a distinguished Polish poet, was a friend of Chopin.
This sketch was probably made after Chopin’s death in recollection of a soirée in 1847. From left to right, Thomas Tellefsen is depicted at the piano, with Albert Grzymała, Stanisław Szumański, and Chopin listening.

20C.


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Chopin, *Bolero pour le piano, op. 19*. Paris: S. Richault, [ca. 1860]. Edited by Thomas Tellefsen. The publisher's note reproduced here assures the potential buyer that Tellefsen's credentials as pianist and former Chopin student guarantee the most accurate possible edition of Chopin's works.
20F.

Chopin, 2 nocturnes pour le piano, op. 55. Paris: Maurice Schlesinger, [1844].
French first edition. Rose K. Platzman Memorial Collection

20G.

Edited by Karol Mikuli. Library General Collection
Several editors who had no personal connection with Chopin prepared editions from printed copies of the music that Chopin had annotated for his students. The German pianist Hermann Scholtz (1845-1918), a prominent teacher and exponent of Chopin’s music, was the first, relying for his 1879 edition on scores that had belonged to Mlle. R. de Königreitz and Georges Mathias. These annotated sources have not survived, so it is difficult to assess how much in Scholtz’s edition actually originated with Chopin. Some musical variants may indeed stem from these student copies, but the range of expression marks goes well beyond what is found in other annotated scores and probably reflects Scholtz’s personal tastes.

In 1932, Edouard Ganche (1880-1945) brought out a scholarly edition based on a selection of autograph manuscripts and Jane Stirling’s collection of annotated French editions. He was convinced that the Stirling scores represented Chopin’s final, systematic revision of his music, and so did not take other primary sources into consideration. Musicians and scholars respected Ganche’s edition for its stated intent of adhering to the chosen source material without additions or modifications. Unfortunately, recent analysis of the Stirling copies has revealed that Ganche did not always represent accurately what he found there.


Ganche incorporates fingerings (in the ante-penultimate measure and elsewhere) and phrasings (extension of a slur from the third bar to the fourth bar of the second system) from Stirling's copy. However, he ignores the musical changes written into that score in the sixth and eighth bars from the end.
Most Chopin editions of the later nineteenth century were prepared by performers who were renowned either as teachers or interpreters of Chopin. Their priority was not fidelity to the authentic sources of the music, but conveying through musical notation the way they thought the music should sound. These editions do not help to discover Chopin’s intentions, but they reveal how Chopin’s music was heard and understood in the late-Romantic period. Antoine François Marmontel (1816-1898), who was for many years professor of piano at the Paris Conservatory and wrote a number of books on contemporary pianists and piano technique, produced a fairly restrained edition in 1867. In contrast, Karl Klindworth (1830-1916), one of Franz Liszt’s most brilliant pupils, made free use of phrasing, articulation, dynamic, and pedaling to communicate his personal conception of the music. His edition, originally published between 1873 and 1876, was widely used for several generations.

The three men in this picture, Hans von Bülow, Carl Tausig, and Karl Klindworth, were Liszt's favorite piano students.

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22B.


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22C.


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22E.

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22F.

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22G. background also

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Steps Toward a Critical Edition

In the early part of this century, editors of Chopin began to exhibit greater respect for original manuscript and printed sources. Raoul Pugno (1852-1914), the most brilliant French pianist at the turn of the century, based his 1901 edition on what he called “original traditions,” which probably reflected his background as a student of Chopin’s pupil Georges Mathias. He did not hesitate to supply fingerings, pedalings, and dynamics where he thought they had been omitted in the early editions, but his additions are quite restrained compared to editions by earlier performers.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Alfred Cortot (1877-1962), one of the leading Chopin interpreters of his generation, prepared editions designed for teaching students to play Chopin. His didactic approach required him to be more prescriptive about certain mechanical details of performance, but he confined his interpretive opinions to footnotes, where he discussed stylistic problems at considerable length.

The edition undertaken in 1935 and completed in 1963 by the Fryderyk Chopin Institute of Warsaw under the leadership of Ludwik Bronarski (1890-1975) was the first to acknowledge the principle of examining all the available primary sources. Unfortunately, Bronarski and his coeditors chose whatever readings suited them across a wide range of manuscript and printed material, creating a conflation that sometimes does not accurately reflect any of the original sources.


In these two photographs from the 1920s, Alfred Cortot is seen performing with violinist Jacques Thibaud and in Hollywood with actor Buck Jones.


Since the mid-twentieth century, scholarly approaches to editing nineteenth-century music have been dominated by the ideal of an Urtext, or primary source text. The goal has been to edit music according to the final form in which it was left by the composer, on the assumption that this represents the most finished concept. All earlier sources are examined and major variants recorded in separate critical notes, but their readings are not included in the edition itself unless they correct obvious errors in the final version.

Chopin’s music does not lend itself easily to this approach. Even when the chronology of sources can be established, there is often no evolutionary progression from one state of the music to the next. It is even debatable whether Chopin ever considered his works completely finished. Ewald Zimmermann has been preparing Urtext editions of Chopin for G. Henle Verlag since 1961. Zimmermann favors German first editions or the manuscripts on which they were based because the manuscript copies sent to Germany were often the last ones copied, even when the French first editions contain later revisions that Chopin made at the proof stage. Moreover, Zimmermann sometimes silently adopts readings that he considers superior from sources other than his principal text.

The most recent attempt at a critical edition, the Polish “National Edition,” has been appearing since 1967 under the editorial supervision of Jan Ekier. It illustrates further the difficulties inherent in Urtext editions of Chopin, as recent scholarship has already challenged some of the source chronology that Ekier relied on for selecting his base texts. Scholars have come to realize that a definitive edition of Chopin’s music may not be possible or even desirable. Nonetheless, new editions will continue to be produced as long as music lovers play, study, and listen to Chopin, and the primary sources for his music will always be the early printed editions.

Monica Steegman, In Quest of the Composer's Last Will: Günter Henle's Urtext Editions, Munich: G. Henle Verlag, [1970s.] Library General Collection

Chopin, Ballade pour le piano, op. 52. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, [1843]. German first edition. Olga and Paul Menn Foundation


24 background
