



CHOPIN

PRELUDI

REVISIONE CRITICO-TECNICA DI
ALFREDO CASELLA



EDIZIONI CURCI

F. CHOPIN

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*TESTO ITALIANO
TEXTE FRANCAIS
ENGLISH TEXT*

EDIZIONI CURCI - MILANO

PREFAZIONE

Non è senza alquanto titubanza che mi sono deciso ad accogliere l'onorifico invito della Casa « Edizioni Curci », di curare per essa una nuova edizione della *opera omnia* pianistica di Chopin. Sono molte infatti le edizioni già esistenti, e parecchie fra queste illustri. Era quindi legittimo il chiedersi se una nuova revisione fosse comunque necessaria, e tanto meno utile.

Tuttavia, la grande conoscenza che ho di quasi tutte quelle edizioni, mi ha indotto finalmente a pensare che vi è — oggi più che mai — l'urgenza di dare alla luce una edizione chopiniana che — pur essendo debitamente corredata di tutto quanto occorre per guidare il professore e l'allunno sul terreno didattico come su quello estetico — ristabilisca nondimeno in tutta la sua caratteristica purezza il testo originale dell'autore. Nessun compositore infatti è stato mai quanto Chopin vittima dei revisori. Nel caso suo, sembra essersi accesa una vera gara fra i maggiori di quelli nell'alterare totalmente la grafia dei manoscritti, sovraccaricando il testo con una quantità di « perfezionamenti » i quali sembrerebbero voler benevolmente dimostrare che Chopin — genio che fosse — non sapeva nondimeno scrivere correttamente la sua musica. Sono nate così edizioni sovrassature di indicazioni di ogni genere dinamiche ed agogiche e di modificazioni grafiche e strumentali, le quali nulla hanno a che vedere col testo di Chopin, che ci appare — dagli autografi e dalle prime edizioni da lui controllate — di una semplicità e di una *nudità* che talvolta fa pensare a quelli di Bach.

Non è facile impresa il ritrovare le prime edizioni di Chopin (e meno ancora gli autografi, oggi sparsi per ogni dove nel mondo). Esiste però un documento di eccezionale autorità: la grande edizione pubblicata da Edouard Ganche nel 1932 a Londra presso la *Oxford University Press*, per la quale l'editore si è valso di una copia pervenutaci di tutta l'opera pianistica di Chopin (con annessovi un minuzioso catalogo tematico redatto da Chopin stesso) nella prima edizione francese; copia che già appartenne alla pianista scozzese Jane Stirling, discepola del Maestro, e che fu interamente da lui annotata e

AVANT - PROPOS

Ce n'est pas sans quelque hésitation que je me suis décidé à accepter la flatteuse invitation de la Maison « Edizioni Curci », de mettre au point pour son catalogue une nouvelle édition de l'opera omnia pour piano de Chopin. Les éditions existantes sont en effet très nombreuses et plusieurs parmi elles sont célèbres. Il était donc légitime de se demander si une nouvelle révision était nécessaire et tout au moins utile.

Pourtant, la grande connaissance que j'ai de toutes ces éditions m'a amené finalement à penser qu'il y a, aujourd'hui plus que jamais, urgence de présenter une édition des œuvres de Chopin qui, tout en étant dûment enrichie de tout ce qui est nécessaire à guider le professeur et l'élève sur le terrain didactique aussi bien que sur celui de l'esthétique, puisse rétablir en même temps, dans toute sa caractéristique pureté, le texte original de l'auteur. Aucun compositeur, en effet, n'a été autant que Chopin victime des réviseurs. A propos de son cas, il semble qu'une vraie rivalité se soit déclarée parmi les meilleurs de ces réviseurs pour altérer totalement la graphie des manuscrits, surchargeant le texte d'une quantité de « perfectionnements » qui sembleraient vouloir bénévolement démontrer que Chopin, aussi génial qu'il fût, ne savait cependant pas écrire correctement sa musique. Des éditions ont ainsi vu le jour bourrées d'indications de tous genres dynamiques et agogiques et de modifications graphiques et instrumentales, qui n'ont rien à voir avec le texte de Chopin, lequel nous apparaît, à travers les autographes et les premières éditions qu'il a lui-même contrôlées, d'une simplicité et d'une nudité qui font parfois penser aux textes de Bach.

Ce n'est pas une entreprise facile de retrouver les premières éditions de Chopin (et encore moins les autographes, aujourd'hui épars un peu partout dans le monde). Il existe cependant un document d'une exceptionnelle valeur: la grande édition publiée par Edouard Ganche en 1932 à Londres par les soins de l'Oxford University Press pour laquelle l'éditeur s'est servi d'un exemplaire qui nous est parvenu de toute l'œuvre pianistique de Chopin (avec l'adjonction d'un minutieux catalogue thématique rédigé par Chopin lui-même) dans la première édition française, exemplaire qui appartenait jadis à la pianiste écossaise Jane Stirling, disciple du Maître et qui fut entièrement annoté

PREFACE


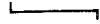
It was not without a certain amount of hesitation that I decided to accept the flattering invitation of the firm « Edizioni Curci » to supervise the bringing out of a new edition of the entire works of Chopin for the pianoforte. As a matter of fact many editions already exist, and several of these are very well known; so that I was quite right to ask myself whether a new edition of his works was necessary or could even be useful.

Nevertheless the profound knowledge I have of almost all these editions, finally induced me to think that there is — to-day more than ever before — the need to publish an edition of Chopin which — while being well-provided with everything for the guidance of both professor and pupil in regard to didactic as well as aesthetic qualities, yet re-establishes the characteristic purity of the original text of the author. No composer, in fact, has ever been so much the victim of censors as Chopin. In his case a regular rivalry seems to have started among the greatest of these, to entirely spoil the writing of the manuscripts, loading the text with a quantity of « improvements » which seem as though they wish kindly to demonstrate the fact that Chopin — great genius though he was — nevertheless did not know how to write his music correctly. This has given rise to editions absolutely replete with indications of every dynamic and agogic kind, and of modifications, both graphic and instrumental, which have nothing at all to do with Chopin's text, which appears to us — from the autographs and the first editions of his works superintended by himself — to be so simple and unadorned that it sometimes reminds us of Bach.

It is not an easy task to get hold of the first editions of Chopin (and still less of the autographs, now scattered all over the world). But there does exist an exceptionally important document: the great edition published in London (1932) by Edouard Ganche at the *Oxford University Press*, for which the publisher made use of a copy, which has come down to us, of all Chopin's works for the pianoforte (joined to which is a tiny thematic catalogue edited by Chopin himself) in the French edition; a copy which already belonged to the Scotch pianist Jane Stirling, a pupil of the great Master, and the whole of which has notes and

corretta. Non tutto, a dir vero, è accettabile in questa edizione, dove si riscontrano correzioni e modificazioni di pugno chopiniano, che sono evidentemente errori o frutti di momentanee distrazioni. Ma, accanto a queste sviste (del resto facilmente identificabili), abbondano rivelazioni interessanti, talvolta sorprendenti, e soprattutto si può finalmente ammirare la scarna, spoglia notazione grafica di Chopin, il quale senza dubbio faceva grande affidamento sulla intelligenza e la sensibilità dell'interprete per essere « inteso fra le righe ».

È dunque su quel prezioso documento che viene condotta la presente edizione, la quale intende offrire allo studioso un testo di sicura autenticità, liberato da ogni precedente arbitrio, e strettamente conforme, nella sua grafia, all'originale del Maestro. Il poco che il revisore ha creduto indispensabile di dover aggiungere è facilmente identificabile e non nuoce mai alla trasparenza del testo autografo. I coloriti originali, come pure il sistema di legature di Chopin, sono stati scrupolosamente conservati, anche se talvolta queste indicazioni dinamiche e codeste legature hanno qualcosa di singolare e di impreciso. Ma sono però così caratteristiche della personalità libera e capricciosa del loro autore, che mi sarebbe apparso sacrilego l'arrecare loro qualsiasi « miglioramento ». Di Chopin sono pure le indicazioni metronomiche. Il pedale è qui segnato colla notazione moderna:



notazione vecchia:  *
notazione nuova: 

Per quanto riguarda le diteggiature, ho conservato quasi integralmente quelle originali, tra le quali ve ne sono numerose tipiche del modo di suonare del grande Maestro.

Il problema della ricostituzione della edizione autentica dei testi chopiniani è reso particolarmente difficile dal fatto — risultante da numerose testimonianze — che Chopin, genio fra i più audaci e spregiudicati che mai abbia conosciuto la storia della musica, era di una timidezza incredibile di fronte ai pedanti ed ai « professori ». E così, quando qualche amico (primo fra i quali quel Fontana, su cui pesa una gran parte di responsabilità) gli faceva osservare che qualche dissonanza oltrepassava i limiti della « convenienza », egli si abbassava sino a tollerare certe attenuazioni di linguaggio che talvolta nuocevano gravissimamente al pensiero suo, come ad es. quella che per tanti anni ha trasformato il mirabile espressivo accordo dissonante che termina l'introduzione della prima *Ballata* in una poverissima « quarta e sesta ». Ma ritengo che di tali « attentati » contro la personalità del Maestro non rimarrà traccia nella presente edizione.

et corrigé par lui. Tout, à vrai dire, n'est pas à accepter dans ce document, où l'on rencontre des corrections et des modifications de la main de Chopin qui sont évidemment des erreurs ou des résultats de distractions momentanées. Mais à côté de ces méprises (du reste facilement reconnaissables), des révélations intéressantes abondent et qui sont parfois surprenantes. On peut pardessus tout admirer enfin la vraie notation graphique de Chopin, qui sans aucun doute avait grande confiance en l'intelligence et en la sensibilité de l'interprète pour être « compris entre les lignes ».

C'est donc sur ce précieux document que se trouve basée la présente édition, qui entend offrir à l'étudiant un texte d'une sûre authenticité, dépouillé de toute erreur ainsi que de toute altération précédente et exactement conforme, dans sa graphie, à l'original du Maître. Le peu que le réviseur a cru indispensable de devoir ajouter est facilement visible et ne nuit jamais à la transparence du texte autographe. Les coloris originaux, comme aussi le système de liaison de Chopin ont été scrupuleusement conservés, même si parfois ces indications dynamiques et ces liaisons ont quelque chose de singulier et d'imprécis. Mais ils sont cependant si caractéristiques de la personnalité libre et capricieuse de leur auteur, qu'il m'eût semblé commettre un sacrilège que d'y apporter une quelconque « amélioration ». De Chopin sont aussi les indications métronomiques. La pédale est ici indiquée avec la notation moderne:


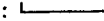
*notation ancienne:  *
notation nouvelle: *

Pour ce qui est du doigté, j'ai conservé presque intégralement les indications originales, parmi lesquelles de nombreuses sont typiques de la manière de jouer du grand Maître.

Le problème de la reconstitution de l'édition authentique des textes de Chopin est rendu particulièrement difficile par le fait, résultant de nombreux témoignages, que Chopin, génie cependant des plus audacieux et dépouillé de tout préjugé qu'ait connus l'histoire de la musique, était d'une timidité incroyable devant les pédants et les « professeurs ». C'est ainsi lorsque quelque ami (Fontana tout le premier, sur lequel pèse une grande partie de cette responsabilité) lui faisait observer que mainte dissonance outrepassait les limites des « convenances », il s'abaissait jusqu'à tolérer certaines attenuations de langage qui parfois nuisaient fort gravement à sa propre pensée, comme par exemple celle qui pendant tant d'années a transformé l'admirable et expressif accord dissonant qui termine l'introduction de la première Ballade en une plate « quarte et sixte ». Mais je crois que dans la présente édition on ne retrouvera nulle trace de tels « attentats » contre la personnalité du Maître.

corrections made by himself. It is true that we can not accept everything in this edition, where we meet with corrections and modifications in Chopin's own handwriting, which are evidently mistakes, or the result of momentary absent-mindedness. But beside these slips (which we can easily recognise as such) it is full of interesting and sometimes surprising revelations and, above all, we are able to admire the plain, bare, graphic notes by Chopin himself, who doubtless placed great confidence in the intelligence and sensibility of the interpreter to be « understood between the lines ».

So it is on this precious document that the present edition is based, which is intended to offer to the studios a text which is absolutely authentic and free from every error, as well as from every preceding caprice, and which is absolutely in conformity with the handwriting of the original by the Master. That small amount which the editor has thought it absolutely necessary to add, can easily be identified, and does not spoil the clearness of the autographic text. The original colouring, as well as Chopin's slurring manner have been scrupulously maintained, even though these dynamic indications and these slurs have something strange and uncertain about them. But they are, nevertheless, so characteristic of the free and capricious personality of the Author, that it would have seemed to me almost sacrilegious to attempt any « improvement ». The metronomic indications are also by Chopin. The use of the pedal is here given in the modern way:

old way:  *
new way: 

In regard to fingerings I have kept almost entirely to the original ones, many of which are typical of the great Master way of playing.

The problem of reconstructing an authentic edition of Chopin's texts is rendered exceptionally difficult, by the fact — resulting from numerous proofs — that Chopin, one of the most audacious and unprejudiced geniuses ever known in the history of music, was incredibly timid when confronted with pedants and « professors ». And thus, when one of his friends, (the first among whom was that Fontana, upon whom rests a great part of the responsibility), pointed out to him the fact that certain dissonances went far beyond the limits of what is suitable, he even stooped to the point of giving way to certain attenuations of language that sometimes seriously damaged his meaning, as, for example, that which for so many years transformed the admirable and expressive dissonant chord at the end of the introduction to the first *Ballad* into a miserable « fourth and sixth ». But I feel sure that no trace of such « outrages » against the personality of the Master will be left in the present edition.

Poco o nulla valgono però le edizioni, anche ottime, quando lo studio non sia animato dal fuoco sacro dell'arte, dall'entusiasmo, dal gusto e dalla cultura. E — nel caso specifico di Chopin — è anche necessaria una profonda conoscenza della sua vita e dell'ambiente nel quale egli visse e operò. Perchè Chopin — per un capriccio singolare del destino — fu apparentemente quello che si chiama (quasi sempre in senso spregiativo) un compositore da « salotto ». Egli conobbe assai di rado il vero grande pubblico, e scrisse unicamente per i salotti parigini dell'epoca, nei quali però il pubblico era formato da uditori fra i quali figuravano Liszt, Paganini, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Delacroix, Balzac, Victor-Hugo, Lamartine, De Musset, H. Heine, Lamennais, Sainte-Beuve (... e George Sand) per non citare che pochi nomi. Fu a questa élite intellettuale che Chopin offerse la primizia della sua miracolosa musica. Ma fu anche questa — forse — la ragione per la quale egli fu considerato sino a ieri — malgrado la sua enorme popolarità e diffusione — come un compositore « minore » di fronte a certi colossi che occupavano maestosamente tutti i primi posti dell'Olimpo musicale. Ma passano i decenni, e coi nuovi tempi si compiono inattese revisioni di valori, revisioni che assumono talvolta le proporzioni di sorprendenti rivelazioni. E così avviene oggi per Chopin, al quale si possono applicare le parole che Mazzini scrisse (1841) su Dante: « Gli stranieri più malevoli s'arretrano quasi con terrore davanti a quel nome che nè secoli, nè vita di servaggio, nè tirannia alcuna hanno potuto o potranno mai cancellare ». Perchè tutto si può soffocare e distruggere, ma non la fiamma dello spirito eterno di un popolo.

ALFREDO CASELLA

Les meilleures éditions pourtant ne valent que peu ou rien quand l'étude n'est pas animée par le feu sacré de l'art, de l'enthousiasme, du goût et de la culture. Et, dans le cas spécifique de Chopin, une profonde connaissance de sa vie et du milieu dans lequel il vécut et travailla est nécessaire. Car Chopin, par un caprice singulier de la destinée, fut apparemment celui qu'on appelle (presque toujours dans un sens péjoratif) un compositeur de « salon ». Il ne connut que très rarement le vrai grand public et n'écrivit uniquement que pour les salons parisiens de l'époque dans lesquels (il faut cependant ajouter) le public était formé d'auditeurs comme Liszt, Paganini, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Delacroix, Balzac, Victor-Hugo, Lamartine, De Musset, H. Heine, Lamennais, Sainte-Beuve (... et George Sand) pour ne citer que quelques noms. Ce fut à cette élite intellectuelle que Chopin offrit les prémices de sa miraculeuse musique. Mais ce fut sans doute aussi la raison pour laquelle il fut considéré jusqu'à nos jours encore, malgré son énorme popularité et sa grande diffusion, comme un compositeur secondaire devant certaines colosses qui occupaient majestueusement toutes les premières places de l'Olympe musical. Mais les années passent, et les temps nouveaux amènent des révisions inattendues de valeurs, révisions qui assument parfois les proportions de surprenantes révélations. C'est ainsi qu'il en advient aujourd'hui pour Chopin, auquel on peut appliquer les paroles que Mazzini écrivit en 1841 sur Dante: « Les étrangers les plus malveillants s'arrêtent avec une sorte de terreur devant ce nom que ni les siècles, ni la lâcheté de l'esclavage, ou n'importe quelle tyrannie n'ont pu et ne pourront jamais effacer ». Parce que tout peut être étouffé et détruit sauf la flamme de l'esprit éternel d'un peuple.

ALFREDO CASELLA

But even the best editions fall short of their aim, if the study is not animated with the sacred fire of art, enthusiasm, taste and culture. Especially in the case of Chopin it is necessary to have a profound knowledge of his life and also of the surroundings in which he lived and worked. Because Chopin — by a strange caprice of destiny — was apparently what people call (generally in a disparaging sense) a « drawing-room » composer. He had extremely little to do with real great audiences, and he wrote solely for the Paris drawing-rooms of his time, in which, however, such listeners as Liszt, Paganini, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Delacroix, Balzac, Victor Hugo, Lamartine, De Musset, H. Heine, Lamennais, Sainte-Beuve (... and George Sand) to quote only a few names, were to be found among the audience. It was to this intellectual élite that Chopin offered the first-fruits of his miraculous music. But perhaps this may have been the reason why he was considered, until quite recently — in spite of his enormous popularity and wide-spread publicity — to be a « minor » composer in comparison with certain colossi, who majestically occupied all the chief places of the musical Olympus. But with the passing of decades and the coming of new times, there arise different and unexpected points of view in regard to values, points of view which, sometimes, assume surprising proportions. And this has happened to-day in regard to Chopin, to whom the following words of Mazzini, written in 1841 in regard to Dante may be applied: « The most malevolent foreigners recoil almost terrified before that name which neither centuries nor the baseness of servitude, nor any kind of tyranny have ever been able — and will never be able — to cancel ». Because anything else may be suffocated and destroyed, but not the flame of the eternal spirit of a people.

ALFREDO CASELLA

NOTA PER I PRELUDI

Questi preludi, pubblicati nel settembre 1839, furono cominciati nell'estate del 1838, e terminati in gennaio 1839 all'isola Majorca, dove Chopin, accompagnato dalla Sand e dai suoi figliuoli, si era recato nel novembre 1838 colla speranza che quel clima mediterraneo potesse giovare a combattere il terribile male che già minava la sua esistenza. Egli dedicò questa serie di pezzi al suo amico Camille Pleyel, in parte perchè questi aveva dimostrato calda ammirazione per questa nuova creazione chopiniana, ma anche — purtroppo — perchè i 2000 franchi mediante i quali l'editore si assicurava il possesso del capolavoro dovevano servire alla vita materiale del Maestro. Secondo le consuetudini dell'epoca, contemporaneamente all'edizione francese ne usciva una tedesca, dedicata a J. Kessler, l'autore di quei celebri 24 studi che tutti i giovani pianisti studiano e detestano cordialmente. Ma questa seconda dedica non sembra aver eccessivamente turbato Camille Pleyel, il quale ripeteva sempre: « ce sont mes préludes ».

Va citato qui un importante frammento tolto dall'*Histoire de ma vie*, nel quale George Sand — pur facendo la debita parte delle preoccupazioni letterarie che stanno alla base di questa romanticissima prosa — traccia nondimeno un quadro vivo ed efficace delle circostanze e dell'ambiente ove nacquerò e si fissarono in forma definitiva molti di questi preludi.

«... Supportant la souffrance avec assez de courage, il ne pouvait pas vaincre l'inquiétude de son imagination. Le cloître était pour lui plein de terreurs et de fantômes, même quand il se portait bien. Il ne le disait pas, et il fallait le deviner. Au retour de mes explorations nocturnes dans les ruines avec mes enfants, je le trouvais à dix heures du soir, pâle, devant son piano, les yeux hagards et les cheveux comme dressés sur la tête. Il lui fallait quelques instants pour nous reconnaître. Il faisait ensuite un effort pour rire, et il nous jouait des choses sublimes qu'il venait de composer, ou, pour mieux dire, des idées terribles ou déchirantes qui venaient de s'emparer de lui, comme à son insu, dans cette heure de solitude, de tristesse et d'effroi. C'est là qu'il a composé les plus belles de ces courtes pages qu'il intitulait modestement des « *Préludes* ».

NOTE POUR LES PRÉLUDES

Ce fut pendant l'été 1838 que Chopin commença à composer ces préludes, qu'il acheva en Janvier 1839 à l'île de Majorque, où l'Auteur — accompagné de George Sand et de ses enfants — s'était rendu dans l'espoir que le climat Méditerranéen pût l'aider à combattre la terrible maladie qui minait déjà son existence.

L'oeuvre complète parut en Septembre 1839. Chopin dédia ce recueil à son ami l'éditeur Camille Pleyel; soit parce que ce dernier avait manifesté la plus vive admiration pour cette nouvelle création du Compositeur, soit parce que les deux mille francs moyennant lesquels l'éditeur s'était assuré tous les droits sur ce chef-d'oeuvre, étaient malheureusement indispensables au Maître, pour subvenir à ses besoins matériels.

Suivant les habitudes de l'époque, une édition allemande parut en même temps que l'édition française: elle était dédiée à J. Kessler, auteur des célèbres 24 études que tous les jeunes pianistes travaillent et détestent de tout leur coeur. Cette seconde dédicace ne paraît pas avoir choqué Camille Pleyel qui — en parlant des préludes — disait toujours: « ce sont mes préludes ».

Il convient de citer ici un fragment important du livre « Histoire de ma vie » de G. Sand. Tout en faisant la part, comme il se doit, des préoccupations littéraires qui sont à la base de la prose ultraromantique de l'Auteur, il faut reconnaître que ce dernier a su nous présenter un tableau vif et efficace des circonstances et du milieu dans lequel naquirent et prirent leur forme définitive bon nombre de ces préludes.

*«... Supportant la souffrance avec assez de courage, il ne pouvait pas vaincre l'inquiétude de son imagination. Le cloître était pour lui plein de terreurs et de fantômes, même quand il se portait bien. Il ne le disait pas, et il fallait le deviner. Au retour de mes explorations nocturnes dans les ruines avec mes enfants, je le trouvais à dix heures du soir, pâle, devant son piano, les yeux hagards et les cheveux comme dressés sur la tête. Il lui fallait quelques instants pour nous reconnaître. Il faisait ensuite un effort pour rire, et il nous jouait des choses sublimes qu'il venait de composer, ou, pour mieux dire, des idées terribles ou déchirantes qui venaient de s'emparer de lui, comme à son insu, dans cette heure de solitude, de tristesse et d'effroi. C'est là qu'il a composé les plus belles de ces courtes pages qu'il intitulait modestement des « *Préludes* ».*

NOTE ON THE PRELUDES

These preludes, published in September 1839, were begun in the summer of 1838, and ended in January 1839 in the Island of Majorca, where Chopin, accompanied by George Sand and her children, had gone in November 1838, hoping that the Mediterranean climate might help him to fight that terrible disease which was already undermining his existence. He dedicated this series of pieces to his friend Camille Pleyel, partly because the latter had shown such warm admiration for this new creation of his, but also — unfortunately — because the 2000 francs, by means of which the publisher secured for himself the possession of this master-piece, had to serve as a means of livelihood for the Master. According to the custom of that period, a German edition was brought out at the same time as the French one, and this was dedicated to J. Kessler, the author of those 24 Studies which all young pianists practise and cordially detest! But this second dedication does not seem to have troubled Camille Pleyel excessively, as he always repeated: « These are my preludes ».

Here we give an important fragment of the « History of my life », in which George Sand, whilst giving their due to the prior literary claims, which form the basis of this romantic novel, nevertheless traces a lively and effective picture of the circumstances and the atmosphere which gave rise to many of these *Preludes* and in which they assumed a definite form.

«... Although he bore his sufferings courageously enough, he could not conquer the restlessness of his imagination. The cloister was full of terrors and of phantoms for him, even when he was well. He did not say so, but one could guess it. On my return from my nocturnal explorations of the ruins with my children, I found him, at 10 o'clock at night, sitting with a pale face before his piano: his eyes were haggard, and his hair seemed to be standing on end. It took him several minutes to recognise us. Afterwards he forced himself to laugh, and he played us some sublime things which he had just composed; or, rather, some terrible and heartrending ideas which had just seized him, almost without his knowledge, in this hour of solitude, of sadness, and of terror.

It was there that he composed the most beautiful of those short pages which he modestly called « *Préludes* ». They are

Ce sont des chefs-d'œuvre. Plusieurs présentent à la pensée des visions de moines trépassés et l'audition des chants funèbres qui l'assiégeaient; d'autres sont mélancoliques et suaves; ils lui venaient aux heures de soleil et de santé, au bruit du rire des enfants sous la fenêtre, au son lointain des guitares, au chant des oiseaux sous la feuillée humide. D'autres encore sont d'une tristesse morne, et, en vous charmant l'oreille, vous navrent le cœur. Il y en a un qui lui vient par une soirée de pluie lugubre et qui jette dans l'âme un abattement effroyable. Nous l'avions laissé bien portant ce jour-là, Maurice et moi, pour aller à Palma acheter des objets nécessaires à notre campement. La pluie était venue, les torrents avaient débordé... Nous nous hâtions en vue de l'inquiétude de notre malade. Elle avait été vive, en effet; mais elle s'était comme figée en une sorte de désespérance tranquille, et il jouait son admirable prélude en pleurant. En nous voyant entrer, il se leva en jetant un grand cri, puis il nous dit d'un air égaré et d'un ton étrange: « Ah! je le savais bien que vous étiez morts! ». Quand il eut repris ses esprits et qu'il vit l'état dans lequel nous étions, il fut malade du spectre rétrospectif de nos dangers; mais il m'avoua ensuite qu'en nous attendant il avait vu tout cela dans un rêve, et que, ne distinguant plus ce rêve de la réalité, il s'était calmé et comme assoupi en jouant du piano, persuadé qu'il était mort lui-même. Il se voyait noyé dans un lac; des gouttes d'eau pesantes et glacées lui tombaient en mesure sur la poitrine... Sa composition de ce soir-là était bien pleine des gouttes de pluie qui résonnaient ».

(Liszt credeva che il preludio al quale allude la Sand fosse l'ottavo; altri hanno invece pensato che potesse essere il quindicesimo, oppure — sembra il più verosimile — il sesto in si minore).

È difficile — in una opera così ricca di capolavori come quella di Chopin — di stabilire un ordine « qualitativo », che finirebbe poi col somigliare ad una impossibile graduatoria, la quale viene esclusa dalla legge che ogni opera d'arte, in quanto tale, non è paragonabile che a se stessa. Tuttavia, si resiste difficilmente alla tentazione di scorgere, in questi preludi, il momento più singolare e perfetto del genio chopiniano. Undici anni appena dopo la morte di Beethoven, allorchè quella totale libertà formale della musica, alla quale il rigorismo deduttivo, giunto alle sue estreme conseguenze della *Nona sinfonia*, già spalancava le porte, incontriamo qui un modello compiuto e rimasto a tutt'oggi insuperato, di quella « musica libera » che tanto auspicava Busoni. Una

Ce sont des chefs-d'œuvre. Plusieurs présentent à la pensée des visions de moines trépassés et l'audition des chants funèbres qui l'assiégeaient; d'autres sont mélancoliques et suaves; ils lui venaient aux heures de soleil et de santé, au bruit du rire des enfants sous la fenêtre, au son lointain des guitares, au chant des oiseaux sous la feuillée humide. D'autres encore sont d'une tristesse morne, et, en vous charmant l'oreille, vous navrent le cœur. Il y en a un qui lui vient par une soirée de pluie lugubre et qui jette dans l'âme un abattement effroyable. Nous l'avions laissé bien portant ce jour-là, Maurice et moi, pour aller à Palma acheter des objets nécessaires à notre campement. La pluie était venue, les torrents avaient débordé... Nous nous hâtions en vue de l'inquiétude de notre malade. Elle avait été vive en effet; mais elle s'était comme figée en une sorte de désespérance tranquille, et il jouait son admirable prélude en pleurant. En nous voyant entrer, il se leva en jetant un grand cri, puis il nous dit d'un air égaré et d'un ton étrange: « Ah! je le savais bien que vous étiez morts! ». Quand il eut repris ses esprits et qu'il vit l'état dans lequel nous étions, il fut malade du spectre rétrospectif de nos dangers; mais il m'avoua ensuite, qu'en nous attendant il avait vu tout cela dans un rêve, et que, ne distinguant plus ce rêve de la réalité, il s'était calmé et comme assoupi en jouant du piano, persuadé qu'il était mort lui-même. Il se voyait noyé dans un lac; des gouttes d'eau pesantes et glacées lui tombaient en mesure sur la poitrine... Sa composition de ce soir-là était bien pleine des gouttes de pluie qui résonnaient ».

(Liszt croyait que le prélude auquel fait allusion G. Sand, fut le huitième; d'autre ont pensé au quinzième; ou encore — ce qui paraît le plus vraisemblable — au sixième en si mineur)

Il est difficile de classer par ordre de valeur un ensemble de chefs-d'œuvres, tel que le recueil des compositions de Chopin.

La loi qui établit que toute œuvre d'art considérée comme telle n'est comparable qu'à elle-même, exclut la possibilité d'un pareil classement. Il est toutefois difficile de résister à la tentation d'apercevoir, dans ces préludes, le moment le plus original et le plus parfait du génie de Chopin. Onze ans à peine après la mort de Beethoven, alors que la complète liberté formelle de la musique — à laquelle le rigorisme déductif de la IX.ème Symphonie, poussé à ses conséquences extrêmes, ouvrait toutes grandes ses portes — nous trouvons ici un modèle achevé et inégalé jusqu'à ce jour, de cette « libre musique » que Busoni souhaitait si ardemment. Nous

masterpieces. Some present to one's mind the vision of dead monks and the sound of funeral chants which haunt him; others are melancholy and sweet; they came to him in sunny hours and when he was in good health, to the sound of children's laughter below the window, to the distant song of guitars, and to the song of birds under the damp branches. Others again are of a mournful sadness, and whilst they charm your ear they rend your heart. There is one of them which came into his mind on a dismal rainy evening, and which cast his soul into a terrible state of prostration. Maurice and I had left him quite well that day when we went to Palma to buy some things we needed in our camp. The rain had come, the streams had overflowed... we hastened back for fear of our patient's uneasiness. This had, in fact, been very great, but it had, as it were, become congealed into a sort of quiet despair, and he wept as he played. On seeing us enter, he got up, uttering a loud cry, then he said to us with a wandering air and in a strange tone: « Ah! I knew very well you were dead! » When he had calmed down and saw the state in which we were, the retrospective vision of the danger we had been in made him ill; but he afterwards confessed to me that, while waiting for us, he had seen all that in a dream, and distinguishing no more the dream from the reality, he had calmed down and grown, as it were, dazed, while playing the piano, and felt sure that it was he himself who was dead. He seemed to see himself drowned in a lake; heavy, frozen drops of rain were falling on his breast in quantities... His composition of that evening was full of raindrops which could be heard ».

(Liszt thought that the prelude to which G. Sand alluded was the 8th; others, on the contrary, have thought that it might be the 15th, and others again — and this seems the most likely — the 6th in B minor).

It is difficult in a work so rich in masterpieces as that of Chopin — to establish a « qualifying » order, which would at last resemble an impossible graduated list and that is excluded by the law that every work of art, as such, can be compared with nothing but itself. Nevertheless, it is difficult to resist the temptation to notice in these preludes the most unique and perfect moment of Chopin's genius. Scarcely eleven years had elapsed since the death of Beethoven — who in his *Ninth Symphony* had reached the utmost limit of « deductive rigour » — when the doors were already thrown open to that complete liberty of form in music, of which these preludes are a finished model and have remained unsurpassed until the present day; a model of that « free music » what was so much favoured by Busoni.

volta ancora, scorgiamo la profonda venerazione che univa Chopin a Giovanni Sebastiano Bach, constatazione che, questa volta, non è solamente suggerita dalla presenza — a traverso i 24 preludi — di tutte le tonalità maggiori e minori in uso sul pianoforte, precisamente come nel *Clavicembalo ben temperato* (questa volta però senza finalità didattiche), ma è ancor maggiormente palese per mezzo della assoluta indipendenza di ogni preludio (ad eccezione di quello n. 15 in re bemolle maggiore, che adotta la forma di *Lied*) verso ogni forma musicale esistente. « Schizzi »: furono definiti per lunghi anni codesti brani, ed infatti sono piccole le loro dimensioni. Ma abbiamo qui una dimostrazione eloquente della prerogativa accordata a certi genî di dire molto con pochi mezzi. Vediamo in fatti questi 24 preludi contenere tutte le più varie sfumature del sentimento umano: ingenuità, tenerezza, passione, gioia, eroismo, disperazione, ecc., sino alla visione di quella Morte che a Chopin si presentava sempre sotto un aspetto terrificante. Volendo tacere poi della grandiosità che raggiunge talvolta Chopin in taluni di questi numeri (es. lo stupendo inno funebre n. 20 in do minore) con una sobrietà di linguaggio che si potrebbe davvero definire « mozartiana », e che dimostra — qualora ce ne fosse ancora bisogno — che non si deve confondere la grossezza colla vera grandezza, la quale è una cosa ben diversa.

Abbiamo già ripetute volte alluso al « salottismo » dell'arte di Chopin, carattere speciale dovuto alle particolari circostanze nelle quali egli viveva ed operava. Salottismo dal quale egli seppe però sempre — nei momenti più solenni ed impegnativi — liberarsi totalmente. Ma in questi preludi troviamo un Chopin tutto sciolto da ogni lontano ricordo sociale, e che lavora eroico e solitario, collo sguardo sicuro proteso verso le nebbie del futuro avvenire impressionistico...

A. C.

y voyons, encore une fois, la vénération profonde que Chopin nourrissait pour J. S. Bach. Cette constatation n'est pas suggérée seulement par la présence — dans les 24 préludes — de toutes les tonalités majeures et mineures en usage sur le piano, précisément comme dans le « Clavecin bien tempéré » (cette fois pourtant sans finalités didactiques); mais elle se manifeste encore plus nettement par l'indépendance absolue de chaque prélude, à l'égard de toutes les formes musicales existantes (exception faite pour le N. 15 en ré bémol majeur, qui adopte la forme du Lied).

Pendant de longues années ces morceaux furent dénommés « Esquisses »; leurs dimensions sont en effet exigües. Mais nous avons ici une démonstration éloquent de la prerogative accordée à certains génies, de beaucoup exprimer par des moyens limités. Ainsi voyons-nous que ces 24 préludes contiennent les nuances les plus variées des sentiments humains: naïveté, tendresse, passion, joie, héroïsme, désespoir, etc., jusqu'à la vision de cette Mort que l'imagination de Chopin lui montrait toujours sous un aspect terrifiant. Sans parler du caractère grandiose que Chopin atteint parfois dans quelques-unes de ces pièces (par exemple l'admirable hymne funèbre N. 20, ed do mineur); avec une sobriété de langage que l'on pourrait dire « mozartienne »; et qui démontrerait, s'il en était besoin, que l'on ne doit jamais confondre l'œuvre massive avec l'œuvre véritablement grande: deux choses fort différentes entre elles.

Nous avons fait allusion, à plusieurs reprises, à un caractère particulier de l'art de Chopin, dû aux circonstances particulières de son existence et de son milieu, et qui pourrait le faire juger parfois un « musicien de salon ». Mais dans les moments les plus solennels et les plus conscients de son Oeuvre, il sut toujours s'en libérer totalement.

Et nous apercevons dans ces préludes, un Chopin complètement dégagé du souvenir de tout lien social, et qui — héroïque et solitaire — travaille, le regard assuré fixé sur les brumes du prochain avenir impressioniste...

A. C.

Once more we notice the profound veneration which Chopin felt for Johann Sebastian Bach, a constatazione which, this time, is not only suggested by the presence — in the 24 preludes — of all the major and minor tonalities in use for the piano, just as in the « *Well tempered Harpsichord* » (this time, however, without didactic finality), but it is still more evident on account of the absolute independence of every prelude (with the exception of N. 15 in D flat major, which uses the form of *Lied*) to every existing musical form. These pieces went under the name of « *Sketches* » for many years, and as a matter of fact they are small in size. But here we have an eloquent demonstration of the prerogative granted to geniuses, to say much with small means. In fact we see that these 24 preludes contain all the varied shades of human sentiment: ingenuity, tenderness, passion, joy, heroism, despair etc., even including the vision of Death, which always presented itself to Chopin under a terrifying aspect, not to mention the grandeur to which Chopin sometimes attains in some of these numbers (for instance, the stupendous Funeral Hymn N. 20 in C minor) with a sobriety of expression that really might be defined as « mozartian », and which demonstrates — if there is still need to do so — that we must not confuse the size with the greatness, which is a very different matter.

We have already alluded many times to Chopin's « drawing-room » manner in his art, a special characteristic, owing to the peculiar circumstances under which he lived and worked, a drawing-room manner, however, from which he was always able to free himself entirely in all the most solemn and engaging moments. But in these preludes we find a Chopin entirely exempt from even the most distant remembrance of society, and who works heroically and in solitude, with his steady glance fixed upon the mists of the impressionistic future before him...

A. C.

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25 PRELUDI

I. Opus 28

F. CHOPIN

Op. 28/45

Dedicati all'amico Camille Pleyel.

1

Agitato

f

Ped. simile sempre

cresc.

PRELUDIO N. 1. — Ritroviamo qui come già nel primo Studio op. 10, quella volontà di glorificazione della maestosa tonalità di do maggiore che Chopin evidentemente aveva già allora appreso dal primo preludio del *Clavicembalo ben temperato*, ma espressa questa volta per mezzo di uno slancio ardente e passionale ben diverso dalla solenne grandiosità di quello studio.

Occorre dare per tutto il pezzo il dovuto risalto alla melodia del pollice la quale deve avere una sonorità piena e potente. Il pedale deve essere rinnovato ad ogni battuta colla massima precisione, in modo che la nota del basso (prima di ogni battuta) sia sempre sola e non accompagnata da residui della battuta precedente. In questo modo si assicurerà pure la declamazione continuamente spezzata ed « ansante » della melodia superiore.

PRÉLUDE N. 1. — Dans ce prélude nous retrouvons, ainsi qu'il nous était arrivé déjà dans la première Étude N. 10, la volonté de Chopin de glorifier la majestueuse tonalité de do majeur. L'influence, sur l'Auteur, du premier prélude du *Clavicécin bien tempéré*, est évidente; mais cette glorification est exprimée, cette fois-ci, par un élan ardent et passionné, bien différent de la grandiosité solennelle qui caractérise l'étude mentionnée ci-dessus.

Au cours de l'exécution de tout le morceau, il faut avoir soin de rehausser dûment la mélodie confiée au premier doigt et qui exige une sonorité pleine et puissante. La pédale doit être changée à chaque mesure, avec une grande précision, de sorte que la note de la basse — première de chaque mesure — vibre isolément, et ne soit jamais accompagnée par des résidus de son de la mesure précédente. On assurera ainsi aussi la déclamation continuellement brisée et « hale-tant » de la mélodie supérieure.

PRELUDE N. 1. — Here, as in the first Etude op. 10, we find that will to glorify the majestic tonality of C major, which Chopin had evidently already learned from the first Prelude of the *Well tempered harpsichord*. But this time it is expressed in an eager, passionate form quite different from the solemn grandiosity of that etude.

It is necessary to give due relief to the thumb melody throughout the whole piece, imparting to it a full and powerful tone. The pedal must be changed at each bar with the utmost precision, so that the bass note (the first of each bar) be always alone and not accompanied by any echo of the preceding bar. Thus the broken and « panting » declamation of the upper melody will also be assured.

stretto

This system contains the first two staves of music. The upper staff features a melodic line with slurs and fingering numbers 5 and 7. The lower staff provides a bass accompaniment with slurs and a 7. The tempo marking "stretto" is placed between the staves.

(f molto)

This system contains the second two staves of music. The upper staff includes slurs, fingering numbers 5 and 3, and a 7. The lower staff continues the bass accompaniment with slurs and a 7. The dynamic marking "(f molto)" is placed between the staves.

p

This system contains the third two staves of music. The upper staff features slurs, fingering numbers 5 and 3, and a 7. The lower staff has slurs and a 7. The dynamic marking "p" is placed between the staves.

(più p)

This system contains the fourth two staves of music. The upper staff includes slurs, fingering numbers 3 and 7, and a 7. The lower staff has slurs and a 7. The dynamic marking "(più p)" is placed between the staves.

(pp)

This system contains the fifth two staves of music. The upper staff features slurs, a 7, and a fermata. The lower staff has slurs and a 7. The dynamic marking "(pp)" is placed between the staves.

Lento *(mf sonoro e vibrato)*

2 *una Corda sino alla fine*

p

Ped. sempre simile

PRELUDIO N. 2. — Questo brano per la sua prodigiosa arditezza, fu per lunghi anni incompreso e criticatissimo dagli stessi ammiratori di Chopin.

A noi — che siamo assuefatti a ben altre dissonanze — appare invece oggi come un mirabile poema di sconsolata mestizia, l'atmosfera del quale — se pur con mezzi fonici totalmente dissimili — lascia già intravedere con impressionante analogia quella del preludio alla seconda parte del *Sacre du printemps* di Stravinsky e più precisamente in questo punto:

PRÉLUDE N. 2. — *Ce morceau, à cause de sa prodigieuse audace, resta incompris pendant de longues années; et fut l'objet d'une sévère critique de la part même des admirateurs de Chopin. Mais à notre goût, habitué désormais à bien d'autres dissonances, il se révèle, au contraire, comme un admirable poème musical d'une tristesse désolée. Son atmosphère, malgré la différence totale des moyens phoniques, fait déjà pressentir par une analogie frappante, celle du prélude à la seconde partie du Sacre du Printemps de Stravinsky, particulièrement à ce passage:*

PRELUDE N. 2. — This prelude was misunderstood and criticized for many years, even by Chopin's admirers, for its prodigious daring. To us — accustomed to far bolder dissonances — it appears nowadays as a wonderful poem of desolate sadness whose atmosphere — though using entirely different phonic means — already foreshadows with striking analogy that of the second part of Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*, and more precisely that of this passage:

Largo

(Trombe con sordina) *p*

dove i due musicisti raggiungono, per vie diverse, la medesima sensazione di notte fonda e di afa irrespirabile. Da notarsi, fra le molte audacie del pezzo, che la tonalità di la minore non si delinea che alla 15ª battuta.

Per le mani piccole è da tenersi presente il consiglio di Kullak, di affidare cioè alla mano destra certune delle note superiori della mano sinistra, come ad es.:

où les deux musiciens atteignent, par des voies différentes, la même sensation de nuit profonde et d'air étouffant et irrespirable.

À remarquer parmi les fréquentes hardiesses du morceau, que la tonalité de la mineur n'apparaît que à la 15.ème mesure.

Pour les petites mains, on peut suivre le conseil de Kullak: c'est-à-dire, confier à la main droite quelques-unes des notes supérieures de la main gauche, exemple:

were the two musicians reach, by different ways, the same sensation of deep night and suffocating sultriness. Among the many other audacities of this piece, it should be noted that the tonality of A minor only begins at the 15th bar.

For small hands, Kullak advises that some of the higher left hand notes be played with the right hand, as for instance:

(quarta battuta) (quatrième mesure) (fourth bar)

(id. alle battute 9, 13, 14, 15 e 16)

(id. aux mesures 9, 13, 14, 15 et 16)

(id. at measures 9, 13, 14, 15 and 16)

Ma questa suddivisione richiede una eccezionale abilità di tocco, che non possiedono certo gli esecutori meno agguerriti. Perciò la modificazione di Kullak è da adottarsi con molta riserva.

Mais cette subdivision exige un toucher particulièrement habile, que seuls des exécuteurs aguerris peuvent posséder. Les modifications de Kullak doivent être adoptées, par conséquent, avec la plus grande prudence.

But this separation requires an exceptionally skilful touch, which less practiced executants certainly do not possess. Therefore, this modification of Kullak's is to be adopted with much prudence.

(mf)

(p sempre)

(mf)

dim.

p

p molto

slentando

senza Ped.

pp (morendo)

(Molto rall.)

(più p)

sostenuto

Vivace

3

leggermente

p

Ped. simile

PRELUDIO N. 3. — La grazia viva e spontanea di questo pezzo può evocare un levarsi di allodole nel cielo terso di un chiaro mattutino. Questo senza voler menomamente « far della letteratura », nè tanto meno voler imporre ad una musica un significato al quale l'autore non ha probabilmente mai pensato.

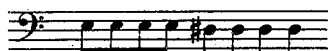
PRÉLUDE N. 3. — La grâce vive et spontanée de ce morceau, peut faire songer à une envolée d'alouettes dans l'azur d'un clair ciel matinal. Ceci sans vouloir nullement « faire de la littérature » ni imposer, en aucune façon, à un morceau de musique un sens auquel l'Auteur n'a, probablement, jamais pensé.

PRELUDE N. 3. — The bright and spontaneous grace of this piece can evoke the flight of larks in the serene sky of a clear morning. We say this without wanting to « make literature » and much less to give to a piece a meaning of which the author probably never thought.

Largo

PRELUDIO N. 4. — Cortot sottolinea — giustamente — l'analogia pianistica di questo preludio coll'*Arioso* dell'op. 110 di Beethoven. Secondo me codesta analogia non si limita solamente alla disposizione strumentale, ma si ritrova anche nella dolorosa nobiltà della stupenda melodia elegiaca, anche se quella di Chopin è meno « controllata » della beethoveniana, la quale maggiormente si avvicina a quel « dolore contemplato » che i classici penetrano più profondamente dei romantici.

Ho creduto di dover spostare due battute e 1/2 più oltre il *diminuendo* della battuta 18, parendomi che esso debba coincidere colla risoluzione della parte interna:

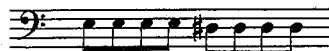


Non sempre i Maestri, nella loro notazione dinamica, seguono le leggi dell'armonia, che in tanti casi determinano i coloriti.

PRÉLUDE N. 4. — Cortot souligne, de plein droit, les analogies pianistiques existantes entre ce prélude et l'*Arioso* de l'op. 110 de Beethoven.

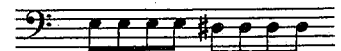
À mon avis cette analogie n'est pas bornée à la disposition des instruments; mais on la vérifie aussi dans la douloureuse noblesse de la magnifique mélodie élégiaque; quoique celle de Chopin soit moins « contrôlée » que celle de Beethoven, qui s'approche davantage à cette « douleur contemplée » que les Classiques pénètrent plus profondément que les Romantiques.

J'ai cru devoir déplacer de deux mesures et demie plus loin le *diminuendo* de la mesure 18: il m'a semblé qu'il doit s'accorder avec la résolution de la partie intérieure:



Les Maîtres ne suivent pas toujours, dans leur notes dynamiques, les lois de l'harmonie qui déterminent, dans maints cas, les coloris.

PRELUDE N. 4. — Cortot rightly points out the pianistic analogy between this prelude and the *Arioso* of Beethoven's op. 110. In my opinion, this analogy is to be found not only in the instrumental disposition, but also in the sorrowful nobility of the splendid elegiac melody, even if that of Chopin is less « controlled » than Beethoven's, which approaches nearer to that « contemplated » sorrow which classic composers penetrated more deeply than did the romantics. It seemed to me advisable to displace the *diminuendo* of bar 18th two bars and a half further, as I think it should coincide with the solution of the middle part:



In the expression marks, Masters do not always follow the laws of harmony, that in so many cases bring about the tone colour.

(Poco agitato)

f espress. molto

(Grave)

mp *poco espress.* *pp* **Coda**

Molto allegro

5 *p* *cresc.*

PRELUDIO N. 5. — Uno dei rari momenti dove Chopin raggiunge la vera felicità, la luminosa gioia di vivere nella freschezza della natura ed in pace cogli uomini. Uno però dei più difficili come esecuzione, appunto perchè la realizzazione della atmosfera leggera e giocosa di questa musica presuppone il superamento totale di ogni sua difficoltà pianistica.

PRÉLUDE N. 5. — Voici un des rares moments où Chopin atteint le vrai bonheur et la rayonnante joie de vivre dans la fraîcheur de la nature, finalement en paix avec les hommes.

Ce prélude est cependant un des plus difficiles à exécuter, précisément parce que le pianiste doit être affranchi de toute préoccupation technique, pour être à même de rendre l'atmosphère légère et badine de ce morceau.

PRELUDE N. 5. — It is one of the rare moments in which Chopin attains real happiness, the luminous joy of living in the freshness of nature, and in peace with men. But this prelude is one of the most difficult to execute precisely because to realize the light and gay atmosphere of this music, all pianistic difficulties must be completely overcome.

The musical score is divided into five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes various dynamics such as *f* (forte), *dim.* (diminuendo), and *cresc.* (crescendo). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the last system.

Lento assai

6

pp sottovoce
una Corda

p espress. e legatissimo

simile

Ped. come sopra

(armonioso)
(la m. d. sempre pp)

p cresc.

PRELUDIO N. 6. — Si può avvicinarlo — per il suo carattere di elegia profondamente dolorosa, ma non pessimistica — allo studio in do diesis minore dell'op. 25. Conservare sempre uno stile di alta, nobile dignità, rifuggendo rigorosamente da ogni accenno — sia pur minimo — ad atteggiamenti enfatici, che sono sempre fuori di luogo nell'arte del Polacco.

Osservare scrupolosamente — per tutto il pezzo — l'accento originale:



che conferisce a tutto il preludio quel senso di grave *spleen*. Accento che lascia già intravedere quelli del famoso pedale (si bemolle) nel *Le gibet* di Ravel.

PRÉLUDE N. 6. — On peut le rapprocher, à cause de son caractère élégiaque, profondément douloureux mais point pessimiste, à l'étude en do dièse mineur de l'op. 25.

On doit maintenir un style de haute et noble dignité, et éviter de la manière la plus rigoureuse jusqu'au moindre soupçon d'attitude emphatique, toujours déplacée dans l'art du Maître Polonais.

Il faut observer scrupuleusement, dans tout le morceau, l'accent originel:



qui donne à tout le prélude ce sens de spleen aigu. Accent qui permet d'entrevoir ceux de la célèbre pédale (si bemolle) de la pièce « Le gibet » de Ravel.

PRELUDE N. 6. — For its deeply sorrowful but not pessimistic elegiac character, this prelude may be compared to the etude in C sharp minor of op. 25. A style of high, noble dignity should be always followed, strictly avoiding any — even the slightest — hint of emphatic attitudes, which are always out of place in the art of the Polish Master.

All through the piece, the original accent:



should be scrupulously maintained, as it imparts to the whole prelude a deep feeling of spleen, foreshadowing that of the famous pedal (B flat) in Ravel's *Le gibet*.

sostenuto *(p)* *pp*

Ped. come sopra

(poco espress.) *pp morendo*

Andantino *p dolce*

p

p *più p* *pp*

m.s.

PRELUDIO N. 7. — Fino alla pubblicazione dei *Sechs kleine Klavierstücke* di Schönberg, questo pezzo vantava il primato mondiale della brevità musicale. Si tratta in realtà di una mazurka eseguita molto *au ralenti*, così come usava anni fa René Clair in certi suoi films.

PRÉLUDE N. 7. — Ce prélude pouvait prétendre à la primauté mondiale de la brièveté musicale, jusqu'au jour où furent publiés les *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke* de Schönberg. Il s'agit, en réalité, d'une Mazurka exécutée au grand ralenti, ainsi que René Clair en faisait usage, il y a quelques années, dans quelques-uns de ces films.

PRELUDE N. 7. — Till the publication of Schönberg's *Sechs kleine Klavierstücke* this piece hold the world record for musical brevity. It is a *Mazurka* executed *au ralenti*, as, years ago, René Clair used to do in some of his films.

Molto agitato

8

p *espress.*

24

Ped. simile

(*più f*)

PRELUDIO N. 8. — È alquanto lisztiano, ed ha evidentemente servito più volte di modello pianistico all'Ungherese, il quale tanto assimilò da Chopin. Troviamo poi — nelle battute 20, 21, 22 — una progressione armonica di sapore piuttosto « tristaneggiante », e che Wagner certamente conobbe. Per contro, le battute da 27 a 30 incluse presentano un contrasto fra minore e maggiore di innegabile provenienza schubertiana.

La composizione va condotta con grande impeto, facendo sempre risaltare colla dovuta energia la melodia del pollice della mano destra.

PRÉLUDE N. 8. — *Ce morceau qui, d'une manière évidente, a servi maintes fois de modèle pianistique à Liszt, grand assimilateur de l'art de Chopin, rappelle bien souvent à l'esprit le Maître hongrois. Mais dans les mesures 20-21-22, nous rencontrons une progression harmonique qui fait songer au « Tristan » de Wagner et que ce Maître connut sans doute. D'autre part, les mesures 27-28-29-30, présentent un contraste entre mineur et majeur qui ressent, indiscutablement, de l'influence de Schubert.*

Cette composition doit être exécutée avec beaucoup d'entrain, et la mélodie du premier doigt de la main droite doit toujours ressortir très énergiquement.

PRELUDE N. 8. — This prelude is reminiscent of Liszt, and has evidently, more than once, been made use of by the Hungarian Master, who assimilated so much of Chopin. In the bars 20, 21 and 22, we find a harmonic progression that reminds us of the music of « Tristan and Isolde » and that Wagner certainly knew. On the other hand, the bars from 27 to 30 included, present a contrast between the minor tonality and the major, that derives undoubtedly from Schubert.

The composition is to be played with great impetus always bringing out with due energy the melody of the thumb of the right hand.

First system of a piano score. The right hand features a complex, rapid sixteenth-note pattern. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *cresc.* (crescendo) instruction. The system concludes with two measures marked with a '4' below the staff.

Second system of the piano score. The right hand continues with the intricate sixteenth-note texture. The left hand accompaniment remains consistent. A *cresc. sempre* (crescendo sempre) instruction is present. The system ends with two measures marked with a '4' below the staff.

Third system of the piano score. The right hand's sixteenth-note pattern is maintained. The left hand accompaniment is steady. The dynamic level increases to *f* (forte). The system concludes with two measures, the second of which is marked with a '3' below the staff, indicating a triplet.

Fourth system of the piano score. The right hand continues with the sixteenth-note texture. The left hand accompaniment is steady. The dynamic level increases to *ff* (fortissimo). The system concludes with two measures.

Poco rit.

p subito

3

This system contains two staves of music. The upper staff features a complex, rapid melodic line with many sixteenth notes, while the lower staff provides a steady accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *p subito* is placed above the first measure. A fermata is positioned over the final measure of the system, which includes a triplet of eighth notes.

Molto agitato e stretto

(mp) *cresc.*

This system continues the piece with two staves. The tempo and mood are indicated as *Molto agitato e stretto*. The dynamic marking *(mp)* is placed above the first measure, and *cresc.* is placed above the final measure. The music is characterized by dense, fast-moving passages in both hands.

ff

3

3

This system features two staves. The dynamic marking *ff* is placed above the first measure of the right hand. The left hand contains two triplet markings over eighth notes. The music is highly rhythmic and intense.

dim.

2 2

This system concludes the page with two staves. The dynamic marking *dim.* is placed above the first measure of the right hand. The right hand features two double-measure rests (marked '2') over eighth notes. The left hand continues with a steady accompaniment.

musical score system 1, first system. Treble and bass clefs. Key signature: two sharps (F# and C#). The system is divided into two measures. The first measure has a *marc.* marking. The second measure has a *dim. molto* marking. The music consists of a continuous sixteenth-note pattern in the treble and a similar pattern in the bass.

musical score system 2, second system. Treble and bass clefs. Key signature: two sharps. The system is divided into two measures. The first measure has a *p* marking. The music continues with the same sixteenth-note patterns as in the first system.

musical score system 3, third system. Treble and bass clefs. Key signature: two sharps. The system is divided into two measures. The first measure has a *pp (dolciss.)* marking. The music continues with the same sixteenth-note patterns.

musical score system 4, fourth system. Treble and bass clefs. Key signature: two sharps. The system is divided into three measures. The first measure has a *pp* marking. The second measure has a *perdendosi* marking. The third measure has a *Poco rall.* marking. The music concludes with a final chord in the treble and a fermata in the bass. A small inset of the final measure is shown below the main system.

Largo

9

f (nobilmente)

ff

(p) *cresc.*

ff *decresc.* *p*

Rit. *cresc.* *ff*

13

PRELUDIO N. 9. — Qui pure possiamo trovare una profonda analogia con Wagner, e più precisamente coll'inizio della ouverture del *Tannhäuser* (per quanto la qualità musicale del presente preludio sia indiscutibilmente superiore a quella del celebre brano wagneriano). Occorre quindi conferire alla melodia un carattere nobile ed una sonorità metallica e solenne, ma sempre senza durezza. Le armonie sottostanti sempre piene ma senza pesantezza. Finire con un clima di grande esaltazione e sempre crescente.

PRÉLUDE N. 9. — Même ici, une analogie profonde avec la musique de Wagner est à remarquer; notamment avec le début de l'ouverture du *Tannhäuser*, quoique la qualité musicale de ce prélude soit indiscutablement supérieure à celle du célèbre morceau wagnérien. Il importe donc de donner à la mélodie un caractère noble et une sonorité métallique et solennelle, mais toujours sans dureté. Les harmonies au dessous de la mélodie doivent être pleines, mais sans pesanteur. Terminer dans un climat de grande et toujours croissante exaltation.

PRELUDE N. 9. — Here again we can find a deep analogy with Wagner, and more precisely with the beginning of *Tannhäuser's* ouverture (though the musical quality of this Prelude is undoubtedly superior to that of the famous Wagnerian passage). It is therefore necessary to give this melody a noble character and a metallic and solemn sonority, but always without harshness. The lower harmonies must be full but not heavy. It must finish in an atmosphere of great and ever increasing exaltation.

Allegro molto

10

p *leggero*

p

tr

p

più p

(*Senza rall.*)

PRELUDIO N. 10. — Carattere leggero e fantastico. Con un breve disegno discendente, ripetuto 4 volte, ed alternato con accordi imprecisi e misteriosi, Chopin crea un brano di una mirabile perfezione formale. Si potrà osservare che la tonalità di do diesis minore offriva ben altre possibilità espressive, ed è indubbiamente per questa ragione che Chopin aggiunse più tardi il preludio n. 25 op. 45, dove il lato elegiaco e «lunare» di questa tonalità trova allora la sua piena giustificazione (vedi nota al predetto preludio n. 25).

PRÉLUDE N. 10. — Il est de caractère léger et fantastique. Par un court dessin descendant, répété quatre fois, et s'alternant avec des accords vagues et mystérieux, Chopin a créé là un morceau dont la forme est d'une perfection admirable. On pourrait remarquer que la tonalité de do dièse mineur offrait des possibilités expressives bien plus vastes. C'est sans doute à cause de cette considération, que Chopin ajouta plus tard le prélude N. 25, op. 45, dans lequel le côté élégiaque et «lunaire» de cette tonalité trouve alors sa pleine justification. (Voir la note au dit prélude N. 25).

PRELUDE N. 10. — Light and fantastic character. Chopin has created a piece that has wonderful perfection of form, with a short descending design, repeated four times, and alternating with indefinite and mysterious chords. It may be remarked that Chopin added, later on, the prelude very much greater expressive possibilities, and it was undoubtedly for this reason that Chopin added, later on, the Prelude n. 25 op. 45 in which the elegiac and «lunar» side of this tonality finds its full justification (see note of the aforesaid prelude n. 25).

Vivace

11

PRELUDIO N. 11. — Dopo il preludio n. 5, ritroviamo nuovamente quella gioia così rara in Chopin ed a lui così personale, la quale si irradia luminosa ed assume un volto di pudicizia e di intimità che esclude ogni intemperanza ed ogni volgarità.
 Il *Vivace* va in realtà inteso come un *Allegro moderato* dato il carattere espressivo del pezzo.

PRÉLUDE N. 11. — Après le prélude N. 5, Chopin retrouve ici, encore une fois, cette joie qui lui est si rare et si personnelle, et dont le rayonnement intime et pudique ne saurait admettre aucune intempérance, ni aucun effet vulgaire dans l'exécution.
 Étant donné le caractère expressif du morceau, le *Vivace* doit être joué comme un *Allegro moderato*.

PRELUDE N. 11. — After prelude n. 5, we find here again that so rare and personal joy of Chopin's, a joy of luminous radiance clothed in a chastity and intimacy which excludes all excess and all vulgarity.
 The *Vivace* should indeed be understood as an *Allegro moderato*, considering the expressive character of the piece.

12 **Presto** *simile sempre*

f (*energico*) *cresc.*

(p) *(a)*

f *(b)*

ff

Ped. simile

Per mani piccole:
 (a) Pour moyennes mains:
 For smaller hands:

(b) id.

PRELUDIO N. 12. — « Cavalcata tragica », fu sovente definito questo preludio, ed il titolo si giustifica da sè. Ma non è necessario ricorrere ad « illustrazioni » del genere (che hanno poi, nel caso presente, l'inconveniente di ricordare certune altre celebri « cavalcate » del repertorio teatrale, alle quali Chopin non avrebbe certo desiderato star vicino) per scorgere il carattere drammatico e violento di questo pezzo, ove un basso ostinato di danza sostiene una serie di « raffiche » sonore affidate alla m. d., creando così un insieme nervoso e veemente di una rara potenza.

Inutile dire che il raggiungimento di questo alto clima drammatico è subordinato alla preventiva soluzione dei più difficili problemi tecnici.

PRÉLUDE N. 12. — Ce prélude a été souvent défini: « Cavalcade tragique ». Ce titre se justifierait fort bien, s'il n'avait pas l'inconvénient de rappeler d'autres « Cavalcades », bien connues, du répertoire opéristique, auxquelles Chopin n'aurait sans doute pas aimé à être rapproché.

Il n'est d'ailleurs nullement nécessaire d'avoir recours à de pareilles « illustrations » pour faire ressortir le caractère dramatique et violent de ce morceau. Une basse obstinée de danse y soutient une série de « rafales » sonores, confiées à la main droite, et crée, ainsi, un ensemble nerveux et véhément, d'une rare puissance.

Inutile d'ajouter, que pour atteindre un climat dramatique aussi élevé, il faut avoir préalablement surmonté et résolu, au point de vue de la technique, les plus ardues difficultés.

PRELUDE N. 12. — This prelude was often described as a « Tragic Ride », and this title justifies itself. But it is not necessary to have recourse to « illustrations » of this kind (which in the case in point have the drawback of reminding us of certain famous « rides » of the Opera repertoire, with which Chopin would certainly not have wished to be compared) to perceive the dramatic and violent character of this piece, where a « basso ostinato » of dance supports a series of sonorous « gusts » intrusted to the right hand, thus creating a nervous and vehement whole of extraordinary power.

Needless to say, this highly dramatic atmosphere can only be attained when all the most difficult technic problems have been solved.

5
4
2

Ped. simile

(mf) (f) (mf) (f) (mf) cresc.

senza Ped.

(f)

5 2

dim. f subito

cresc. f (energico)

First system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff with a key signature of three sharps and a 7/8 time signature. The melody in the treble staff consists of eighth-note runs, while the bass staff provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes.

Second system of musical notation, showing a change in dynamics from forte (*f*) to mezzo-forte (*mf*) and the introduction of a triplet in the bass staff.

Third system of musical notation, marked *espress.* and *(non troppo f)*, featuring a triplet in the treble staff.

Fourth system of musical notation, marked *Poco rit.* and *Meno mosso*, with a *dim.* instruction and a complex fingering pattern in the bass staff.

Fifth system of musical notation, marked *Poco rall.* and *(Vivace)*, with a *ff subito* instruction.

Lento
dolce e sostenuto assai

13

p

legato 1 2 3

5

Ped. simile

(a)



PRELUDIO N. 13. — Per opposizione al genio di Bach che sapeva valersi del *minore* per evocare un senso di robustezza allegra, quello di Chopin riusciva a conferire al *maggiore* un colore di dolce, tenera malinconia, come ne abbiamo uno stupendo esempio in questo preludio. Per quanto l'arte di Chopin sia consueta a meravigliarci incessantemente colle sue ricchezze musicali, tuttavia pochi brani suoi raggiungono la eccezionale raffinatezza sonora di codesto pezzo, nè riescono ad uguagliare questa espressione di indicibile dolcezza, che culmina nella mirabile modulazione in do diesis maggiore (battuta 21).

Le note superiori della seconda melodia che si sovrappone alla prima dalla 30^a battuta in poi, vanno così eseguite:



cercando di dare a questa nuova melodia una sonorità eterea e dolcissima quasi come un « vibrafono ».

PRÉLUDE N. 13. — *En opposition au génie de Bach, qui au moyen de la tonalité mineure, sait évoquer le sens d'une saine gaieté, Chopin parvient à teinter la tonalité majeure d'une douce et tendre mélancholie. Nous en avons un exemple merveilleux dans ce prélude.*

Quoique les richesses intarissables de la musique de Chopin soient telles qu'elles nous frappent d'un étonnement sans cesse renouvelé, les morceaux où l'on retrouve les finesse sonores exceptionnelles de ce prélude, ne sont pas nombreux, et n'arrivent jamais à exprimer cette douceur infinie, qui atteint son apogée à l'admirable modulation en do dièse majeur de la 21^{me} mesure.

Les notes supérieures de la seconde mélodie, superposée à la première, à partir de la 30^{me} mesure, doivent être exécutées comme cela:



Il faut tâcher de donner à cette nouvelle mélodie une sonorité éthérée, très douce, quasi « vibraphone ».

PRELUDE N. 13. — In contrast with the genius of Bach who knew how to use the minor tonality to evoke a feeling of robust mirth, Chopin's succeeded in giving to the major tonality the colour of a sweet, tender melancholy of which we have a stupendous example in this prelude. Though Chopin's art surprises us continually with its musical wealth, few of his pieces, however, reach the exceptional refinement of sonority of this one, nor do they succeed in equalling this expression of unspeakable gentleness, which culminates in the wonderful modulation in C sharp major (21st bar).

The higher notes of the second melody which superposes itself on the first one from the 30th bar on, are to be executed as follows:



trying to give this new melody an ethereal and very sweet sonority, almost as of a « vibraphone ».

p sempre legato
Ped. simile

Ped. simile

Più lento
dolcissimo
sostenuto
(più p)
una. Corda

2 4

7 4

Tempo I.

p

(la parte sup. ppp)

espress.

Rit.

perdendosi

pp

ppp

3 4 5 4 3

Allegro
pesante

14

pp sottovoce

PRELUDIO N. 14. — La copia di Miss Stirling che ha servito di base all'edizione principe della « Oxford University Press » reca, autografa di Chopin, l'indicazione *Largo* che sostituisce quella primitiva di *Allegro*. Questa indicazione agogica — che parrebbe a prima vista incomprendibile ed inaccettabile — va, a mio avviso, intesa come definizione di un carattere generale del pezzo, il quale esige dunque tempo moderato (molto più moderato del finale della *Sonata in si bemolle minore*, al quale il presente pezzo è legato da una somiglianza assai superficiale), una sonorità massiccia e pesante ed un colore cupo e grandioso. Così può essere preziosa questa correzione di Chopin, della quale è nostro dovere di precisare il recondito significato.

Non si può segnare, nemmeno approssimativamente, una pedalizzazione adatta a questo preludio. Il pedale dovrà essere rinnovato incessantemente con una specie di « tremolo » continuo. Per chi non possedesse sufficiente agilità di piede, si potrà adottare il mutamento ad ogni quarto quattro volte per battuta, ciò che conviene d'altronde all'indicazione *Largo* soprammenzionata.

PRÉLUDE N. 14. — Dans la copie de Miss Stirling, sur laquelle se base l'édition-princeps de la Oxford University Press, se trouve — autographe de Chopin — l'indication « *Largo* » à la place de celle originaire de « *Allegro* ». Cette indication agogique qui, à première vue semble incompréhensible et inacceptable, doit être interprété, à mon avis, comme une définition du caractère général du morceau, qui esige, par conséquent, un mouvement modéré, (bien plus modéré que celui du « *Finale* » de la *Sonata en si bémol mineur*, auquel le morceau ne se rapproche que très superficiellement), une sonorité lourde et massive, et une couleur sombre et grandiose.

La modification apportée par Chopin peut donc être très utile et nous avons cru de notre devoir d'en préciser le sens caché.

Il est impossible d'indiquer, même approximativement, l'usage de la pédale dans ce prélude. Elle doit être changée sans cesse, en une sorte de « tremolo » continu. Les exécuteurs qui ne possèdent pas une suffisante agilité du pied, pourront se contenter de la changer à chaque temps (quatre fois par mesure), ce qui s'accorde, d'autre part, avec l'indication « *Largo* » mentionné ci-dessus.

PRELUDE N. 14. — Miss Stirling's copy, which was used as a basis for the « first » edition of the *Oxford University Press*, has the indication *Largo* — in Chopin's handwriting — which substitutes the previous indication *Allegro*. In my opinion, this leading indication — which at first sight seems incomprehensible and unacceptable — should be understood as the definition of the general character of the piece, which requires a moderate tempo (much more moderate than the *Finale* of the *Sonata in B flat minor* to which the present piece has a superficial resemblance), a massive and heavy sonority and a deep and grandiose colour. That correction of Chopin may thus be precious, and it is our duty to define its hidden meaning.

It is impossible to mark, even approximately, the suitable pedalling for this prelude. The pedal must be changed incessantly with a sort of continuous « tremolo ». Those who do not possess sufficient agility in their foot, may change the pedal at each beat (four times in each bar). This pedalling is in keeping with the indication *Largo* above mentioned.

First system of musical notation. The upper staff contains a melodic line with fingerings 5, 4, 5, 4, 4. The lower staff contains a bass line with fingerings 4, 2.

Second system of musical notation. The upper staff contains a melodic line with fingerings 1, 3, 5. The lower staff contains a bass line with a 'cresc.' marking.

Third system of musical notation. The upper staff contains a melodic line. The lower staff contains a bass line with a 'ff (ma non troppo)' marking.

Fourth system of musical notation. The upper staff contains a melodic line. The lower staff contains a bass line with a '5' fingering at the end.

Fifth system of musical notation. The upper staff contains a melodic line with fingerings 2, 1, 5, 2, 1. The lower staff contains a bass line with fingerings 3, 4, 4, 5, 1, 2.

Sixth system of musical notation. The upper staff contains a melodic line with fingerings 4, 3. The lower staff contains a bass line with fingerings 3, 5, a 'p' marking, and a 'pp' marking. The system ends with the instruction '8^a bassa'.

Sostenuto (Andantino)

15

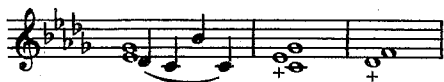
p cantabile

(pp) *(p)*

(più p) *(p)*

PRELUDIO N. 15. — Questo celebre preludio è troppo noto perchè sia il caso di tentarne una illustrazione qualsiasi. Come abbiamo già rilevato nella prefazione, è l'unico dei 24 che abbia una forma definita (quella del notturno-lied). La parte centrale (minore) va eseguita senza eccessiva agitazione, e senza uscire mai da uno stile solenne ed imponente, nel quale — ancora una volta — qualsiasi atteggiamento enfatico sarebbe fuor di luogo.

Alla fine, non si dimentichi di mettere in rilievo la melodia principale la quale è:



PRÉLUDE N. 15. — Ce prélude est trop connu pour qu'il soit question d'en essayer une illustration quelconque. Comme nous venons de le remarquer dans la préface, il est le seul, parmi les 24, qui ait une forme arrêtée (celle du nocturne-lied). La partie centrale, en mineur, doit être exécutée sans agitation excessive, et sans jamais quitter un style imposant et solennel; sans tomber, toutefois, dans le genre emphatique qui, nous le répétons, serait absolument déplacé.

Il ne faut pas négliger de faire bien ressortir, à la fin du morceau, la mélodie principale, qui est la suivante:



PRELUDE N. 15. — This famous prelude is too well known to need illustration. As we have already remarked in the preface, it is the only one of the 24 that has a definite form (that of a nocturne-lied). The central part (minor) must be executed without excessive agitation, and without overstepping a solemn and imposing style, in which — once again — any emphatic attitude would be out of place.

At the end, it must not be forgotten to bring out the principal melody that is the following:



First system of musical notation. Treble clef, bass clef, key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with a fermata over the final measure, which contains a 7-measure rest. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Second system of musical notation. Continuation of the first system. The right hand melodic line concludes with a fermata. The left hand accompaniment continues. The system ends with a *m.d.* (morendo) marking and a 3-measure rest in the bass line.

Un poco più mosso

Third system of musical notation. Key signature changes to three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked *Un poco più mosso*. The right hand plays a triplet of eighth notes, marked *sottovoce*. The left hand features a bass line with fingerings 1, 3, 4, 1, 2 and a 5-measure rest.

Fourth system of musical notation. Continuation of the triplet eighth-note pattern in the right hand. The left hand accompaniment continues. A *cresc.* (crescendo) marking is present in the right hand.

Fifth system of musical notation. Continuation of the triplet eighth-note pattern. The right hand is marked *ff (largamente)* and *dim.* (diminuendo). The left hand accompaniment continues.

p
Ped. come la prima volta

cresc.
1/2

ff
stacc.

fz
p

stacc.
Volo
stacc.
stacc.
stacc.

First system of musical notation. Treble clef, key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), 3/8 time signature. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth notes and a trill. The left hand provides a bass line with eighth notes. A *dim.* (diminuendo) marking is present in the left hand. The system concludes with a forte (*f*) dynamic.

Second system of musical notation. Treble clef, key signature of three sharps. The right hand continues with a melodic line, featuring a *Rall.* (Ritardando) marking. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano). The left hand has a bass line with a *dim.* marking. The system ends with a key signature change to three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab).

Third system of musical notation. Treble clef, key signature of three flats. The piece returns to *Tempo I.* The right hand starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. A *Rall.* marking is placed above the final measure, which contains a triplet of eighth notes. The left hand has a steady eighth-note bass line. A *smorzando* (diminuendo) marking is present in the right hand.

Fourth system of musical notation. Treble clef, key signature of three flats. The right hand begins with a melodic line marked *a Tempo*. Dynamics include *slentando* (ritardando), *f* (forte), and *p* (piano). The left hand has a bass line with a *dim.* marking.

Fifth system of musical notation. Treble clef, key signature of three flats. The right hand starts with a melodic line marked *molto espress.* (molto espressivo) and *ten.* (tenuissimo). The system concludes with a *Ritenuito* (ritardando) marking and a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. The left hand has a bass line with a *morendo* (diminuendo) marking.

Presto con fuoco

16

PRELUDIO N. 16. — Cortot chiama questo preludio « La course à l'abîme », ed è infatti permesso di scorgere nell'inesorabilità del basso, nella diabolica mobilità della parte superiore, nell'impeto tragico infine che anima tutta questa fantastica « allucinazione » musicale, un parallelo col celebre pezzo berlioziano che chiude « La Damnazione di Faust ».

Il pezzo è — tecnicamente parlando — il più difficile dei 24, e richiede una accurata e profonda preparazione onde raggiungere la sicurezza necessaria per finalmente « slanciarsi verso l'ignoto ».

PRÉLUDE N. 16 — Cortot a surnomé ce prélude « La course à l'abîme ». En effet il est permis d'apercevoir dans l'inesorabilité de la basse, dans la mobilité diabolique de la partie supérieure et enfin dans l'élan tragique qui anime toute cette fantastique « hallucination » musicale, un parallèle avec le célèbre passage qui conclut « La Damnation de Faust » de Berlioz.

Au point de vue de la technique, ce prélude est le plus difficile du recueil. Il exige une préparation profonde et soignée, qui donnera au pianist l'assurance et l'autorité qui lui permettront, enfin, de « se lancer vers l'inconnu ».

PRELUDE N. 16. — Cortot calls this prelude « La course à l'abîme » and one can perceive indeed in the inexorability of the bass, in the diabolical mobility of the higher part, and finally in the tragic impetus which animates this fantastic musical « hallucination » a parallel to the famous piece of Berlioz, that closes the *Damnation of Faust*.

This piece is — technically speaking — the most difficult of the 24, and requires a careful and through preparation in order to attain the assurance needed to be able finally « to fling oneself towards the unknown ».

The musical score consists of seven systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature is three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The right hand contains intricate, rapid passages with numerous slurs and fingerings (1-5). The left hand provides harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. Dynamics include *ff* (fortissimo) and *p* (piano). A repeat sign with a first ending bracket is present in the third system.

Stretto

2 1 4 5 3 4 1 3 4 4 5

f

Sempre più animato

4 5 4 5 1 5 1 2 1 4 2 3 1 4 1 5 1 2 1 4 1 4

p

1 1 2 1 1 5 5 4 1 5 1 1 4 4

5 1 4 4 1 1 1 1 1 5 1 1 5 1 5 3 1

f

2 1 4 4 5 4 4 5 4 4 5 4 5 3 5 4 5 4 5

p *cresc.*

5 4 4 5 8 4 3

molto cresc. *(a) ff*

Oppure:
 (a) Ou bien:
 Or:

Allegretto

17

Ped. sempre come sopra

PRELUDIO N. 17. — Lo stacco melodico di questo preludio mi ricorda sempre imperiosamente la famosa romanza di Siebel nel *Faust* di Gounod:

Allegretto agitato

Faites-lui mes a - veux,

Dobbiamo tuttavia guardarci — fatta questa constatazione — di cadere in una interpretazione troppo sentimentale e « sciropposa ». Una felicità suprema, una tenera esaltazione rappresentano il sentimento che anima codesto pezzo, e quindi non è il caso davvero di abbassare Chopin al livello di Gounod (senza voler per questo diminuire il bellissimo, così piacevole talento del Maestro francese).

Il pedale segnato per la Coda, per quanto possa parer arrischiato, è l'unico che permette di tenere senza interruzione il la bemolle basso. Un esecutore abile troverà modo, in mezzo ai rinnovamenti totali di ogni la bemolle, di ricorrere a mutamenti parziali per attenuare la imprecisione superiore, pur tenendo la nota bassa.

PRÉLUDE N. 17. — *Le début mélodique de ce prélude me rappelle toujours impérieusement la romance bien connue de Siebel, dans le Faust de Gounod:*

Allegretto agitato

Faites-lui mes a - veux,

Mais, cette constatation à part, il faut absolument éviter de tomber dans une interprétation trop sentimentale et douceuse. Ce morceau exprime surtout un bonheur suprême et une tendre exaltation; ce n'est donc pas le cas de rabaisser Chopin au niveau de Gounod. (Ceci est dit sans la moindre intention de déprécier l'agréable et beau talent du Maître français).

Aussi risquée qu'elle puisse paraître, l'indication de la pédale marquée pour la « Coda », est la seule qui permette de tenir sans interruption le la bémolle de la basse. Un exécutant habile, au milieu du changement total de la pédale, à chaque la bémolle, saura avoir recours à des changements partiels, qui lui permettront d'atténuer la confusion de la partie supérieure, et de continuer à tenir la note de la basse.

PRELUDE N. 17. — The beginning of the melody of this prelude always reminds me of the famous romance of Siebel in Gounod's *Faust*:

Allegretto agitato

Faites-lui mes a - veux,

After noting this, we must however avoid falling into a too sentimental and « mankish » interpretation. A supreme happiness, a tender exaltation are the feelings that animate this piece, and therefore we must be careful not to lower Chopin to the level of Gounod (though we have no intention on that account to diminish the beautiful and pleasing talent of the French master).

The pedal marked for the « Coda » however risky it may seem, is the only one which allows of holding without interruption the low A flat. A clever executant will find a way to change partially the pedal between the total changes on each A flat, attenuating thus the imprecision of the higher part, while holding the low note.

First system of musical notation, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and a fourth note, and is marked with a fermata over the final measure.

Second system of musical notation, featuring a grand staff. It includes the dynamic marking *(p) cresc.* and a fermata over the final measure.

Third system of musical notation, featuring a grand staff. It includes the dynamic marking *dim.* and a fermata over the final measure.

Fourth system of musical notation, featuring a grand staff. It includes a fermata over the final measure.

Fifth system of musical notation, featuring a grand staff. It includes the dynamic marking *cresc. molto* and a fermata over the final measure.

First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with a slur over the first four measures, marked with a '4' above it. The bass clef staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment of chords. The dynamic marking *ff* is present in the first measure.

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line with a slur over the first three measures, marked with a '3' above it. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment. The dynamic marking *p dolce* is present in the fourth measure.

Third system of musical notation. The treble clef staff has a slur over the first two measures, marked with a '2' above it. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff has a slur over the first three measures, marked with a '3' above it. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment. The dynamic marking *mf* is present in the fourth measure, and *dim.* is present in the fifth measure.

Fifth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff has a slur over the first four measures. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment. The dynamic marking *f* is present in the fourth measure.

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and some slurs. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains dense chordal textures, primarily consisting of triads and dyads, with some eighth-note accompaniment.

The second system continues the musical piece. The upper staff has a melodic line with some slurs. The lower staff features dense chordal textures. A dynamic marking *fz* is placed above the first measure of the lower staff. In the third measure of the lower staff, the instruction *pp sottovoce, come lontano* is written. The system concludes with a fermata over the final note of the lower staff.

The third system consists of two staves. The upper staff has a melodic line with slurs. The lower staff contains dense chordal textures. The dynamic marking *fz* appears three times in the lower staff, marking the beginning of measures 1, 3, and 5.

The fourth system consists of two staves. The upper staff has a melodic line with slurs. The lower staff contains dense chordal textures. The dynamic marking *fz* appears three times in the lower staff, marking the beginning of measures 2, 4, and 6.

The fifth system consists of two staves. The upper staff has a melodic line with slurs. The lower staff contains dense chordal textures. The dynamic marking *fz* appears twice in the lower staff, marking the beginning of measures 1 and 3. In the fourth measure of the lower staff, the instruction *sempre più p e lontano* is written. The system concludes with a fermata over the final note of the lower staff, which is also marked with *(meno fz)*.

Rall.

Molto allegro

18

PRELUDIO N. 18. — È un vero recitativo, che si potrebbe anche definire « teatrale ». Si stacca dal Chopin consueto per un evidente carattere orchestrale (la melodia dell'inizio ed i passi delle battute 3-4 e 7-8 lasciano già chiaramente intravedere Tschaikowsky e R. Strauss). L'interpretazione richiede molta forza e violenza, onde — a traverso l'ordine di una arte supercosciente — giungere a dare l'impressione del geniale « disordine » che costituisce il fondo del pezzo.

PRÉLUDE N. 18. — C'est un véritable récitatif que l'on pourrait même qualifier de théâtral. Il se détache du style de Chopin par son caractère éminemment orchestral. La mélodie du début et les passages des mesures 3, 4 et 7, 8, nous font déjà pressentir clairement Tschaikowsky et R. Strauss.

Son interprétation demande beaucoup de force et de violence: il s'agit donc de réussir, à travers l'ordre d'un art supercoscient, à donner l'impression de ce « désordre » génial, qui constitue l'essence du morceau.

PRELUDE N. 18. — It is really a « recitativo » which might also be described as « theatrical ». It is differentiated from the usual Chopin by the evidently orchestral character (the melody at the beginning and the passages of bars 3-4 and 7-8 already clearly foreshadow Tschaikowsky and R. Strauss). Its interpretation requires much power and violence, so as to succeed in giving — through the order of a supercoscient art — the impression of general « disorder » that forms the basis of this piece.

First system of musical notation. Treble and bass clefs. Key signature: two flats. The piece begins with a *cresc.* marking. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (2, 1, b4, 1, b, 1, b, 1, 4, 1, 1, 4). The left hand provides harmonic support with fingerings (2, 1, 1, 1, 3). A measure number '22' is indicated at the end of the system.

Second system of musical notation. It continues with a *cresc.* marking and includes a *fz* (forzando) instruction. The right hand has complex slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 5, 5, 5, 4, 3, 5, 5, 4, 1). The left hand features a rhythmic accompaniment with fingerings (1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 4, 5). A measure number '5' is indicated at the end of the system.

Third system of musical notation. It includes a *cresc.* marking and a *fz* instruction. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes and a slur with fingerings (1, 5, 1, 1, 1, 1). The left hand has a triplet of eighth notes with fingerings (1, 5, 1, 1, 1, 1). A measure number '17' is indicated in both staves. The system concludes with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a *cresc.* marking above it.

Fourth system of musical notation. It features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand with a *cresc.* marking above it. The left hand has a triplet of eighth notes with fingerings (1, 5, 1, 1, 1, 1). The system ends with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

Fifth system of musical notation. It begins with a *ff* (fortissimo) marking. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes with fingerings (5, 1, 4, 4, 4, 4). The left hand has a triplet of eighth notes with fingerings (1, 1, 3, 1, 4, 2, 4, 1, 3, 2, 5). A *tr* (trill) marking is present above the right hand. The system concludes with a *fff* (fortississimo) marking and a *tr martellato* instruction.

Vivace
legato

19 *p*

PRELUDIO N. 19. — Questo preludio si allinea accanto a quelli N. 5 e N. 11, per un identico senso di pura e luminosa gioia. L'interpretazione deve quindi orientarsi verso una analoga atmosfera di tenue vaporosità, nella quale melodia ed armonia costituiscono un tutto fluido ed immateriale e nondimeno espressivo.

PRÉLUDE N. 19. — *Ce morceau se rapproche des préludes N. 5 et N. 11 par l'analogie des sentiments de joie rayonnante et pure qui l'ont inspiré.*

L'interprétation doit donc être orientée vers une atmosphère délicate et vaporeuse, où la mélodie et l'harmonie constituent un ensemble fluide et immatériel, quoique expressif.

PRELUDE N. 19. — This prelude ranks with the preludes N. 5 and N. 11 for like sense of pure and luminous joy. The interpreter must therefore aim at getting a similar atmosphere of tenuous vaporosity, in which the melody and the harmony form a fluid and immaterial but nevertheless expressive whole.

First system of musical notation, consisting of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes, and various accidentals.

Second system of musical notation, continuing the piece. It includes a dynamic marking *(p)* in the bass staff. The notation continues with intricate rhythmic patterns and accidentals.

Third system of musical notation, featuring a *cresc.* marking in the bass staff. This system includes triplets and other complex rhythmic figures. The piece concludes with a fermata over the final note.

Fourth system of musical notation, starting with a *(p)* dynamic marking. The music continues with a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass staff. A pedal instruction *Ped. come sopra* is written below the bass staff.

Fifth system of musical notation, showing further development of the rhythmic and melodic themes. The notation includes various accidentals and rests.

Sixth and final system of musical notation on the page. It concludes with a double bar line and a final note in the bass staff.

First system of musical notation, consisting of a grand staff with two staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The music features a continuous eighth-note pattern in both hands.

Second system of musical notation, continuing the eighth-note pattern from the first system.

Third system of musical notation, including the instruction "Ped. come sopra" at the end of the system.

Fourth system of musical notation, continuing the eighth-note pattern.

Fifth system of musical notation, including the instruction "cresc." at the end of the system.

Sixth system of musical notation, including the instruction "ff" and a fermata over the final notes.

Largo

20

ff solenne

Ped. sempre simile

p

Rit.

a Tempo

pp

cresc.

rit.

p (subito)


una Corda

PRELUDIO N. 20. — Come ben disse James Huneker, questo preludio racchiude in tredici sole battute la sofferenza di tutto un popolo, di tutta una nazione. Mai l'«irredentismo» di Chopin ha raggiunto un culmine più alto di questa musica, alla quale non sono — una volta ancora — estranei ricordi bachiani, come, ad es., il basso cromatico delle battute 5-6 e 9-10.

È consigliabile, nelle battute da 5 ad 8 incluso, di accentuarè, con un tocco particolarmente sensibile, la parte superiore, e di fare invece risaltare, nella battuta 9 e metà di 10, la parte media:



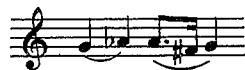
La sonorità di tutto il pezzo deve essere, secondo i momenti, potente (ma senza durezza), oppure dolce e nobile, ma sempre piena e profonda. Inutile il dire che il ritmo dovrà essere rigoroso per tutto il pezzo, e che gli accordi vanno tutti eseguiti senza il benchè minimo arpeggiando.

Il  che si trova nella presente edizione, in contrasto con quasi tutte le altre precedenti, all'ultimo quarto della terza battuta, risulta da una correzione autografa di Chopin che porta la copia di Miss Stirling.


PRÉLUDE N. 20. — « En treize mesures, ce prélude contient la souffrance de tout un peuple, de toute une nation » dit justement James Huneker. Jamais l'«irredentisme» musical de Chopin n'avait atteint de plus hauts sommets.

Des réminiscences de la musique de Bach ne sont pas étrangères à cette composition: par exemple, la basse chromatique des mesures 5, 6 et 9, 10.

Dans les mesures de 5 à 8 inclus, il est à conseiller d'accentuer, par un toucher particulièrement sensible, la partie supérieure. La partie moyenne devra, au contraire, être mise en relief dans la 9^{me} mesure et jusq'à la moitié de la 10^{me}:



La sonorité qui sera alternativement puissante (mais sans dureté), ou noble et douce, devra se maintenir pleine et profonde au cours de tout le morceau. Inutile de dire que le rythme devra être toujours rigoureux, et les accords devront être exécutés sans le moindre « arpeggé ».


Le  qui, dans l'édition présente, se trouve au dernier temps de la 3^{me} mesure — en contraste avec presque toutes les éditions précédentes — est la reproduction d'une correction autographique de Chopin, d'après la copie de Miss Stirling.

PRELUDE N. 20. — As James Huneker justly said, this prelude holds in only thirteen bars the suffering of a whole people, a whole nation. Chopin's «irredentism» has never reached a higher summit than in this music, which — once more — is reminiscent of Bach, as for instance, in the chromatic bass of bars 5-6 and 9-10.

It is advisable to accentuate with a particularly sensitive touch the higher part in the bars from 5 to 8 included, while in the 9th bar and half the 10th bar, it is the middle part:



which should be brought out. The sonority of all the piece must be, according to the passages, sometimes powerful (but without harshness), sometimes sweet and noble, but always full and deep. Needless to say, the rhythm must be rigorously observed through the whole piece, and the chords are to be executed without even the slightest arpeggiando.

The  that is found in this edition (contrasting with preceding ones) at the last beat of the third bar, is taken from an autographic correction of Chopin, in miss Stirling's copy.

Cantabile

21

PRELUDIO N. 21. — Troviamo in questo preludio alcuni riferimenti interessanti con altre musiche illustri. Anzitutto un bel *pedale dominante* tipicamente schumanniano alle battute 33 e seguenti. Alla battuta 41 e seguenti, scopriamo poi una discesa a due parti raddoppiate in ottave, la quale, a traverso:

Moderato assai

(M. Mussorgski "Senza sole,, N° 3)

doveva giungere finalmente sino a:

Moderato

(Cl. Debussy "Nuages,,)

PRÉLUDE N. 21. — Dans ce prélude nous trouvons des rapprochements intéressants avec d'autres musiques célèbres. D'abord, au mesures 33 et suivantes, une belle pédale dominante, du style caractéristique de Schumann. À la mesure 41 et suivantes, nous rencontrons une descente à deux parties, doublées d'octaves, qui, à travers:

Moderato assai

(M. Mussorgski "Sans soleil,, N° 3)

devait finalement arriver jusqu'à:

Moderato

(Cl. Debussy "Nuages,,)

PRELUDE N. 21. — We find in this prelude some interesting references to other well known pieces. Above all, a beautiful *dominant pedal* typically Schumannian at bar 33rd and the following ones. At bar 41st and the following ones we find a descent in two parts redoubled in octaves which through:

Moderato assai

(M. Mussorgski "Without sun,, N° 3)

was destined finally to reach:

Moderato

(Cl. Debussy "Nuages,,)

First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a series of chords with a fermata over the first measure. The bass clef staff contains a sequence of chords with a fermata over the first measure. The dynamic marking *f* is present. Fingering numbers are shown below the bass staff: 1 3, 1 2, 1 3, 2 5, 1 3.

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a series of chords with a fermata over the first measure. The bass clef staff contains a sequence of chords with a fermata over the first measure.

Third system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a series of chords with a fermata over the first measure. The dynamic marking *pp dolce* is present. The bass clef staff contains a sequence of chords with a fermata over the first measure. The instruction *Ped. come prima* is written below the bass staff.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a series of chords with a fermata over the first measure. The bass clef staff contains a sequence of chords with a fermata over the first measure.

Fifth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a sequence of chords with a fermata over the first measure. The dynamic marking *cresc.* is present. The bass clef staff contains a sequence of chords with a fermata over the first measure. Fingering numbers are shown below the bass staff: 2, 2, 2, 1, 2, 1 3, 1 3, 1 4, 1, 2 3.

Più mosso

The first system of the musical score is marked "Più mosso" and "ff". It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The treble staff features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3). The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3). A dynamic marking of "ff" is placed between the staves.

Calmando

The second system is marked "Calmando" and "dim.". It consists of two staves. The treble staff has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (2, 2). The bass staff has a more complex accompaniment with slurs and fingerings (4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 5, 2, 3). A dynamic marking of "dim." is placed in the treble staff.

Tempo I.

The third system is marked "Tempo I." and "p". It consists of two staves. The treble staff has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (5, 2). The bass staff has a simple accompaniment with slurs and fingerings (1, 3, 4, 1). A dynamic marking of "p" is placed in the bass staff.

The fourth system consists of two staves. The treble staff features a triplet of eighth notes with slurs and fingerings (3, 4, 3). The bass staff has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1). A dynamic marking of "p" is placed in the bass staff.

The fifth system consists of two staves. The treble staff has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (3, 4, 3). The bass staff has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1). A dynamic marking of "cresc." is placed in the treble staff, and "f" is placed in the bass staff. The system ends with a double bar line.

Molto agitato

22

f *energico*

il basso sempre espress. e legato

PRELUDIO N. 22. — La difficoltà di questo preludio consiste nel conferire al basso tutto il suo valore espressivo e appassionato, senza per ciò attenuare l'impulso grandioso, il senso di collera violento e tumultuoso che travolge tutto il pezzo. Nè, d'altra parte, va svalutato l'ufficio dinamico della m. d., la quale tutto è, fuorchè un semplice « accompagnamento ». Crescere senza posa, in un parossismo sempre crescente sino alla improvvisa drammatica conclusione finale.

PRÉLUDE N. 22. — Dans ce prélude toute la difficulté est d'arriver à donner à la basse sa complète valeur expressive et passionnée, sans atténuer toutefois l'élan irrésistible, et le sentiment de colère violente et tumultueuse qui entraîne tout le morceau. D'autre part, il ne faut pas déprécier le rôle dynamique de la main droite, qui est loin d'être un simple « accompagnement ». Augmenter sans trêve, dans un paroxysme toujours croissant, jusqu'à la subite et dramatique conclusion finale.

PRELUDE N. 22. — The difficulty of this prelude consists in giving to the bass all its expressive and passionate value, without attenuating the grandiose impetus, the violent and tumultuous sense of anger that pervades the whole piece. On the other hand, the dynamic effect of the right hand, that is anything but a mere « accompaniment » must not be underrated. The interpreter must make a continual « crescendo » in an ever growing paroxysm, till the sudden dramatic conclusion is reached.

First system of musical notation, featuring piano accompaniment with chords and arpeggios in both hands.

Second system of musical notation, including dynamic markings *f* and *ff*.

Third system of musical notation, continuing the piano accompaniment.

Fourth system of musical notation, starting with the instruction *Più animato*.

Fifth system of musical notation, including instructions *(stringendo)*, *Largamente*, and dynamic markings *cresc.*, *fz*, and *ff*.

Moderato

23 *p* *delicatissimo*

PRELUDIO N. 23. — Questo preludio ricorda assai quello N. 3, ma ne differisce tuttavia per il tempo più moderato e per un senso più tranquillo. Cercare di dare al disegno della m. d. la sonorità «liquida» di un clarinetto. Non dimenticare poi di porre in rilievo, nella penultima battuta, l'enigmatico interrogativo *mi bémolle* della m. s.

PRÉLUDE N. 23. — Ce prélude ressemble assez au prélude N. 3. Il en diffère pourtant par son mouvement plus modéré et par un sens de plus grand apaisement. Il faut tâcher de donner au dessin de la main droite la sonorité «liquide» d'une clarinette; et ne pas oublier de mettre en relief, dans l'avant-dernière mesure, l'enigmatique *mi bémolle* interrogatif de la main gauche.

PRELUDE N. 23. — This prelude reminds prelude N. 3, but it is different from it for the «tempo» more «moderato» and for a sense of quiet. The pattern of the right hand should be given the liquid sonority of a clarinet. One should not forget to bring out in the last bar but one, the enigmatic interrogative *E flat* of the left hand.

Poco rit.

Musical notation for the first system, featuring a treble and bass clef. The treble staff contains a melodic line with fingerings 1, 2, 3, and 8. The bass staff contains a supporting line with a triplet of 3s.

a Tempo

espress.

Musical notation for the second system, marked 'a Tempo' and 'espress.'. The treble staff has fingerings 1, 1 3 2 1, 1 3 1, and 1 4 1 3 2 1. The bass staff has a triplet of 3s and fingerings 5, 2, 1.

Poco rit. *a Tempo*

pp

Musical notation for the third system, with 'Poco rit.' and 'a Tempo' markings. The treble staff has a '1' fingering. The bass staff has a 'pp' dynamic marking and a dotted line connecting to the treble staff.

p *dim.*

Musical notation for the fourth system, featuring a 'p' dynamic marking and a 'dim.' marking. The treble staff has fingerings 4, 5, 3, 4, 2, 1, 4. The bass staff has a 'pizz.' marking.

e *smorz.*

Musical notation for the fifth system, marked 'e' and 'smorz.'. The treble staff has a '1' fingering. The bass staff has fingerings 3, 4, 1 2 1, and 1 3. A dotted line is above the final measure.

Allegro appassionato *molto f*

24

PRELUDIO N. 24. — Questo brano conta indubbiamente fra le più straordinarie creazioni di Chopin, e merita un posto accanto agli Studi N. 12 dell'op. 10 e N. 12 dell'op. 25, per il suo carattere di disperazione visionaria e fantastica, per la ferezza audace della sua declamazione, per la grandiosità infine del suo effetto pianistico.

La scala in terze cromatiche discendenti alla m. d. va fatta con somma energia, ma senza nessun carattere «bravuristico». Le ultime tre note basse che chiudono il pezzo, come tre colpi di gong.

È consigliabile, onde ottenere la sonorità dura e metallica che occorre quasi sempre per la melodia della m. d., di ricorrere alla «non diteggiatura» che adoperava così efficacemente Liszt per il tema del finale nella Sonata in si minore del medesimo Chopin, e cioè $\underline{123}$ (oppure $\underline{13}$) su ogni nota.

PRÉLUDE N. 24. — Ce morceau doit absolument être classé parmi les créations les plus extraordinaires de Chopin. Il a le droit d'être placé auprès des Études N. 12 de l'op. 10, et N. 12 de l'op. 25, par son caractère de désespoir visionnaire et fantastique, par la fierté audacieuse de sa déclamation, et enfin, pour la grandiosité de son effet pianistique.

La gamme en tierces chromatiques descendantes, de la main droite, doit être exécutée avec la plus grande énergie, mais sans qu'elle en acquière le caractère de «bravoure». Les dernières trois notes de la basse qui terminent le morceau, doivent être frappées comme trois coups de gong.

Pour obtenir la sonorité dure et métallique que la mélodie de la main droite exige presque constamment, on peut conseiller d'avoir recours au système dont Liszt se servait avec d'excellents résultats dans le thème du final de la Sonata en si mineur de Chopin même; c'est-à-dire, $\underline{123}$ (ou bien $\underline{13}$) sur chaque note.

PRELUDE N. 24. — This piece is undoubtedly among the most extraordinary creations of Chopin, and it deserves a place near Etude n. 12 of op. 10 and n. 12 of op. 25, for its character of visionary and fantastic despair, for the bold pride of its declamation, for the grandure of its pianistic effect.

The descendant scale in chromatic thirds at the right hand must be played with the greatest energy, but without any character of «bravura». The three low notes that close the piece must be like three beats of a gong.

To obtain the hard and metallic sonority that is almost always needed for the melody of the right hand, it is advisable to have recourse to the system used by Liszt for the theme of the *Finale* of Chopin's Sonata in B minor, that is to say to play each note with the first, second and third finger, or the first and third one.

First system of musical notation. The right hand features a long melodic line with a slur and an 8-measure rest. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Performance markings include *francamente* and *f sempre*.

Second system of musical notation. The right hand continues the melodic line with slurs and rests. The left hand accompaniment remains consistent. An 8-measure rest is indicated in the right hand.

Third system of musical notation. The right hand has a melodic phrase with slurs and rests. The left hand accompaniment continues. Performance marking: *(sempre f)*.

Fourth system of musical notation. The right hand features a melodic line with a slur and an 8-measure rest. The left hand accompaniment continues. Performance markings include *con forza* and *cresc.*

Fifth system of musical notation. The right hand continues the melodic line with slurs and rests. The left hand accompaniment continues.

(p) p

ff

cresc.

ff (risoluto) simile

cresc.

Stretto

8
7
ff

(a Tempo)

8
4 4 5 5 5 3

5 4 3

Stretto

8
5 5

a Tempo

8
fff
4 4 4
3
m.s.

II. Opus 45

Dedicato a Mademoiselle la Princesse Elisabeth Czernicheff.

Sostenuto

25

p *legatissimo*

una Corda

Ped. simile

m. d.

morendo

sempre legato ed armonioso

PRELUDIO N. 25 (op. 45). — Stando ad una lettera di Chopin, questo preludio fu scritto nella primavera del 1841 dietro suggerimento dell'editore Schlesinger che lo pubblicò in Francia, mentre Mechetti ne curava un'altra edizione a Vienna. Il pezzo fu dedicato alla Principessa Elisabetta Czernicheff, della quale Chopin asseriva, scherzando, di non essere capace di pronunciare il nome.

Per quali ragioni (a parte quelle materiali sempre impellenti nella vita di Chopin, che aveva bisogno di guadagnare molto) il Maestro ha creduto opportuno di cedere all'invito di Schlesinger e di aggiungere — senza apparente necessità — codesta « appendice » ad una raccolta che era miracolosamente perfetta e che non dimostrava davvero nessuna urgenza di aggiunte? Io ritengo che la ragione essenziale sia stata di ordine puramente musicale. Parve probabilmente a Chopin che la tonalità di do diesis minore non fosse stata convenientemente sfruttata nel piccolo preludio N. 10 dell'op. 28 e che un bis di quel numero potesse meglio porre in luce le speciali qualità elegiache e spettrali di quella misteriosa tonalità (vedi commento al preludio 10). Nacque perciò questo preludio che — come ben disse Niecks — non ha la perfezione formale degli altri 24 e sembra piuttosto una improvvisazione del Maestro in qualche ora di sconforto, ma tuttavia occupa un posto importante nel catalogo chopiniano.

PRÉLUDE N. 25 (op. 45). — D'après une lettre de Chopin, ce prélude fut écrit en printemps du 1841 sur conseil de l'Éditeur Schlesinger, qui le publia en France en même temps que Mechetti en soignait une autre édition à Vienne. Le morceau fut dédié à la Princesse Elisabeth Czernicheff, dont Chopin prétendait, en plaisantant, de ne pas pouvoir arriver à prononcer le nom.

On se demande quelle est la raison qui peut avoir poussé Chopin à céder à l'invitation de Schlesinger, et à ajouter cette « appendice » à ce recueil déjà si miraculeusement parfait, à part les questions matérielles, toujours urgentes dans la vie du Maître, qui avait toujours besoin de beaucoup d'argent.

Selon mon avis, la raison essentielle doit avoir été d'ordre purement musical. Chopin eut probablement l'impression que la tonalité de do dièse mineur n'eût été suffisamment exploitée dans le petit prélude N. 10 de l'op. 28, et que un bis de ce numéro eût pu mieux révéler les qualités particulièrement élégiaques et fantomatiques de cette mystérieuse tonalité. (Voir le commentaire au prélude N. 10). Voilà comment naquit ce prélude qui, selon la critique de M. Niecks, est loin de la forme parfaite des autres 24, et fait plutôt penser à une improvisation du Maître, exprimée dans un moment de découragement, mais qui néanmoins occupe une place importante dans le catalogue des musiques de Chopin.

PRELUDE N. 25 (op. 45). — According to a letter by Chopin, this prelude was written in the Spring of 1841, on the suggestion of the publisher Schlesinger, who published it in France, while Mechetti made another edition in Vienna. The piece was dedicated to the Princess Elisabeth Czernicheff, whose name Chopin playfully asserted he was unable to pronounce.

For what reasons part from material ones always impelling in the life of Chopin, who needed to earn much) did the Master deem it advisable to cede to Schlesinger's invitation and to add — without any apparent necessity — this « appendix » to a collection that was miraculously perfect and showed no need of any addition? I think that the essential reason was a purely musical one. Chopin probably thought that the tonality of C sharp minor had not been adequately used in the little prelude n. 10 of op. 28, and that an « encore » of that number might better bring to light the special elegiac and ghostly qualities of that mysterious tonality (see comment to prelude N. 10). Thus was this prelude born. As Niecks rightly said, it has not the perfection of the other 24 and it looks rather like an improvisation of the Master in an hour of discouragement, but it occupies, anyhow, an important place in the catalogue of Chopin's works.

First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a series of chords and melodic fragments, with a fermata over the first measure. The bass clef staff features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, with fingerings 2 and 4 indicated. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#).

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues with melodic lines and chords. The bass clef staff shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings 1, 3, 1, and 1. The key signature remains two sharps.

Third system of musical notation. The treble clef staff begins with a measure marked '23' and contains melodic lines. The bass clef staff continues with eighth notes and quarter notes. The key signature is two sharps.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff features chords and melodic lines. The bass clef staff has a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings 5, 4, 1, 4, and 4. The key signature changes to one sharp (F#).

Fifth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains chords and melodic lines, with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte). The bass clef staff has eighth notes with fingerings 1, 4, 1, 2, 1, 5, 1, 1, 4, and 4. The key signature is one sharp.

First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with a *cresc.* marking and dynamic markings of *mf*, *p*, and *pp*. The bass clef staff features a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes. The system concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes. The bass clef staff has a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes. The system concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

Third system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line. The bass clef staff has a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes and a fingering sequence of 5, 3, 1, 4. The system concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line. The bass clef staff has a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes. The system concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

Fifth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line. The bass clef staff has a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes and a fingering sequence of 1, 2, 3, 4. The system concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

First system of musical notation. Treble and bass staves. Treble clef has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/8 time signature. Bass clef has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The system contains two measures. The first measure has a *cresc.* marking. The second measure has a *cresc.* marking.

Second system of musical notation. Treble and bass staves. Treble clef has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/8 time signature. Bass clef has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The system contains two measures. The first measure has a *dim.* marking. The second measure has a *m.d.* marking. Fingering numbers are present: 3, 1, 4, 2, 1, 4, 2, 1, 3, 2, 1, 4, 2.

Third system of musical notation. Treble and bass staves. Treble clef has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/8 time signature. Bass clef has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The system contains two measures. The first measure has a *cresc.* marking. The second measure has a *m.d.* marking. Fingering numbers are present: 3, 7.

Fourth system of musical notation. Treble and bass staves. Treble clef has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/8 time signature. Bass clef has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The system contains two measures. The first measure has a *p* marking. Fingering numbers are present: 5, 2, 1, 4, 2.

Fifth system of musical notation. Treble and bass staves. Treble clef has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/8 time signature. Bass clef has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The system contains two measures. Fingering numbers are present: 3, 2.

Musical score system 1, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The system includes a *Rit.* (Ritardando) marking and a *m. d.* (mezza dolce) marking. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. A *m. s.* (mezza sostenuto) marking is present in the bass line.

Musical score system 2, labeled *Cadenza*. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature has two sharps. The system includes a *p leggerissimo* (pianissimo) marking and a *stringendo* (accelerando) marking. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. A *Ped. simile* (pedal) marking is present.

Musical score system 3, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature has two sharps. The system includes a *dim. e allarg.* (diminuendo e allargando) marking. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Musical score system 4, labeled *Tempo I.* It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature has two sharps. The system includes a *f largamente* (fortissimo largamente) marking and a *p* (piano) marking.

Musical score system 5, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature has two sharps. The system includes a *smorz.* (smorzando) marking and a *ppp* (pianississimo) marking.

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