Chopin
pianist and teacher
as seen by his pupils

Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger

Chopin: pianist and teacher

Chopin at the piano. Pencil drawing by J. Götzenberger, Paris, October 1838.

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JEAN-JACQUES EIGELDINGER
University of Geneva

Translated by
Naomi Shohet
with Krysia Osostowicz and Roy Howat

Edited by
Roy Howat

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JEAN-JACQUES EIGELDINGER

Quebec, March 1978
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Explanation of references

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

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

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

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

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

Pitch notation

8va

C′ B′ C B c b c′ b′ c″ b″ c‴ b‴ c⁗ f⁗

Editor's note

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

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

Abbreviations

General abbreviations

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

Bibliographical abbreviations

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

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

Library and museum sigla

F: France

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

PL: Poland

Kj Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska
Kjm Kraków, Muzeum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego
Wn Warsaw, Biblioteka Narodowa
Wtifc Warsaw, Towarzystwo im. Fryderyka Chopina [Fryderyk Chopin Society]

US: United States of America

NYpm (Lehman) New York, the Pierpont Morgan Library, Robert O. Lehman deposit

Introduction

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

Delacroix

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This last category, providing our main source, comprises over twenty names, including the best authorities on the subject (Princess Czartoryska, Mme Dubois-O'Meara, Emilie von Gretsch, Gutmann, Lenz, Mathias, Mikuli, Mme Peruzzi, Mme Rubio, Jane Stirling, Friederike Streicher-Müller, Tellefsen, Pauline Viardot). Supplementing these are documents supplied by the pupils of Chopin's pupils or by friends, pianists and composers, music critics and journalists who heard Chopin play;[5] for Chopin the teacher is logically a reflection of Chopin the pianist. These people's reminiscences have been edited to omit anecdotes and opinion, retaining only the musical indications given by Chopin or originating from him, as well as passages describing his teaching and occasionally his playing. These fragments are reassembled in two main sections here, one concerned with the technical and stylistic principles of piano playing in general, and the other with Chopin's indications for performing and interpreting his own works.

The first section, *Technique and Style* – two notions inseparable in Chopin's mind – arranges these fragments in an order intended to reconstruct Chopin's own order of approach. Passages on the same topic by different authors have been juxtaposed; some fragments appear unashamedly in more than one place when they apply to more than one topic. As for the documents whose views are not corroborated by other sources, they figure in this book only where their authenticity appears beyond doubt; otherwise they are relegated to the notes or rejected entirely. In the second section, *Interpretation of Chopin's Works*, works are arranged by alphabetical order of their titles, rather than by chronological order (or opus number), for easier reference and so that each genre (Mazurka, Nocturne, etc.) can be dealt with as a whole.

The book thus takes on the aspect of a sort of handbook to Chopin's teaching methods, and consequently to his aesthetic beliefs. Its interest and novelty reside undoubtedly in the juxtaposition of original and partly unpublished documents which, illuminating one another with some remarkable correspondences, offer a coherent, if inevitably still incomplete, picture of Chopin's piano teaching. The chronological diversity of these testimonies does not detract from their agreement, since Chopin's teaching principles did not so much change with time as increase in refinement – as did his playing and his compositions.

How can we account for the scarcity of comprehensive documents? Why is

[5] These documents are gathered mainly in Appendix IV, but some fragments appear in the main text. To avoid confusion, here is the list – in order of appearance – of the *non-pupils* of Chopin whose reminiscences are quoted in the main text: Liszt, Hipkins, Schelling, Franchomme, Kleczyński, Karasowski, Moscheles, Marmontel, Mendelssohn, Hallé, Berlioz, Schumann, Schindler, Seligmann, Fontana. Chopin's pupils may be identified by references to the *List of pupils* (pp. 161–89 below), devoted exclusively to the 23 pupils whose reminiscences have been quoted in the main text.

the available coverage so fragmentary in character? The reasons may be summarised in two general points:

1. Chopin, by nature a pure musician, was always shy of committing ideas to paper: 'The pen burns my fingers,' he would say by way of excuse. We know what a chore it was for him to write even a simple letter, be it in Polish or in French. It is therefore hardly surprising that his correspondence, so reserved with regard to his work as a composer,[6] carries scarcely any mention of his activities as a teacher, and is completely silent as to the tenor of his teaching. Nor is it surprising that he never completed his long-term project of writing a piano method, for which only a few initial sketches survive; even had he lived longer, he would probably have recoiled from the constraint of such a task. Besides, Chopin did not like to express himself on matters close to his heart except through music. He hardly ever spoke of his own aesthetic, pianistic or pedagogical views outside the narrow circle of his pupils and a few close friends (notably Franchomme and Delacroix). Gifted with the lightning lucidity of momentary insight, he had no patience with reasoned explanations, still less with manifestos. George Sand noted:

> Chopin speaks little and seldom about his art; but when he does, it is with a wonderful clarity, a soundness of judgement and of intent that could annihilate quite a few heresies were he to speak his mind openly.
>
> But even in private he is reserved, and only at the piano does he really open his heart. Still, he has promised to write a *method* in which he will deal not only with technique, but also with theory [*non seulement du métier, mais de la doctrine*]. Will he keep his word?
>
> (Sand, *Impressions et souvenirs*, p. 88)

2. Unlike Clementi, Hummel, Kalkbrenner or Czerny, Chopin did not create a school or institute a set tradition. It was not in his nature to impose his personality on pupils, in the way that the Liszt of Weimar did. Too much of an aristocrat and poet to become a leader, Chopin was content to suggest and imply, winning devotion without any attempt to convince. Such an attitude could hardly be conducive to an analytic approach on the part of his disciples. And then it has its corollary: with the exception of a very few professionals,[7] the core of Chopin's clientèle consisted of ladies of the Faubourg-St-Germain or of the Slavonic aristocracy exiled in Paris. Talented

[6] One could hardly be more laconic than Chopin in his references (in letters) to two of his most daring inspirations: the finale of the Sonata op. 35 is described as follows: 'The left hand and the right hand gossip in unison after the March' (*SC*, p. 181), and the Prelude op. 45 – a constantly shifting vision tinted successively with all the colours of the harmonic spectrum – merely as 'well modulated'. As for the *Berceuse* op. 57, it is designated by the term 'variants'.

[7] 'Professionals' here refers to those who took up careers as concert artists or teachers in official musical establishments. Nevertheless it is well to remember that in the nineteenth century there was much less of a gap between the categories of professional and amateur. The latter included some highly accomplished musicians who contributed actively to the dissemination of new music.

as they may have been (many of them were), their social status effectively forbade them to perform in public except for charity functions. Princess Marcelina Czartoryska, generally recognized as Chopin's most faithful disciple, fits the description exactly. And people of this category rarely communicated anything more than anecdotal reminiscences – by no means without value! – and fragmentary indications of the training received.[8]

Questioned once on the subject of Chopin's pedagogical posterity, Liszt replied, 'Chopin was unfortunate in his pupils' (Niecks, II, 174). This remark is confirmed in many cases. Three of Chopin's most promising young talents died young (Filtsch, Caroline Hartmann, Paul Gunsberg). Among the most brilliant of his students, two renounced their careers at a very early stage (Emilie von Gretsch, Friederike Streicher), another two confined themselves to private teaching (Mme Dubois, Mme Rubio); while Pauline Viardot, a pianist of repute, had already taken to a singing career by the time she received any musical ideas from Chopin. We are left with about ten students, all men, who eventually embraced a serious professional career. Apart from Tellefsen (who balked at the task of completing Chopin's 'Sketch for a Method', and produced instead an inaccurate edition of his works), two important names emerge in the teaching profession: Mathias in the West, and Mikuli in the East. Koczalski, Mikuli's heir, represents the last link in the chain of direct descendants.

In fact, all the evidence indicates that Chopin's teaching was not oriented towards the concert platform. Did he not declare to a female student that 'concerts are never real music; you have to give up the idea of hearing in them the most beautiful things of art' (Grewingk, p. 19.)? Such words reveal the aesthetic of a chamber musician – an aesthetic that must inevitably have influenced his conception of teaching. Add to this a certain confidential atmosphere in Chopin's lessons, and one understands better why their contents are recorded so incompletely.

The diversity of context and provenance of the documents assembled here may give the text an impression of bittiness. Here Chopin speaks or plays, there the pupil relates personal impressions; now a lightning sketch carries us into the intimacy of the salon where the lesson is taking place; or again, a

[8] The accounts in the Countess Elizavieta Cheriemietieff's *Journal* are typical in this respect, never entering into detail. More lamentable is the complete silence of Mme Kalergis – of whom Chopin notes that she 'plays very well' (*CFC*, III, p. 312) – in her letters to her daughter (see La Mara, *Marie von Mouchanoff-Kalergis . . . in Briefen an ihre Tochter*, Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911, 2nd edition); Liszt and von Bülow both considered her one of the best interpreters of Chopin's works. On the other hand, the silence of Princess Czartoryska on the subject may well have been due to a scrupulous sensitivity to the memory of the master whose music she recreated perhaps best of all. She nevertheless did communicate some indications through her teaching and agreed to pass on some fragments of information to Kleczyński and Michałowski.

discursive passage will take us out of the immediacy of the moment. In one place Chopin proclaims a general truth; in others his comments are tailored to the precise needs of a pupil with a particular problem to overcome. In their gradual unfolding, our texts suggest the aspect of a mosaic, tempered by the ravages of time and reconstructed by the archaeologist, in unavoidably abbreviated form, but always using the original pieces and respecting the main outlines of the composition. It is left to the present-day interpreter, whether pianist or musicologist, to complete the blanks with the aid of his restorative intuition and his musical culture. My own contribution to this task is to be found in the notes accompanying the texts (pp. 90–159 below).

If Chopin was persuaded to give some lessons in the years before leaving Warsaw, it was against his will and only as a special favour to friends.[9] His real teaching career began only after his establishment in Paris, and occupied the latter part of his life, from 1832 to 1849. During this period he divided his time equally between composing and teaching, dedicating himself to each in turn in summer and winter respectively; this at any rate was the norm after his return from Majorca until the time of his separation from George Sand.[10] For six months of the year, from October or November to May, Chopin received an average of five pupils daily.[11] Rising early, he would spend the morning and at least the first half of the afternoon teaching. Each lesson lasted theoretically between 45 minutes and an hour, but would sometimes stretch out over several hours in succession, particularly on Sundays, for the benefit of gifted pupils whom he particularly liked (see the memoirs of Mme Streicher, Emilie von Gretsch, Mikuli). Pupils would receive one lesson weekly or more often two or three,[12] depending on their teacher's availability, their own individual needs and their talents – and, secondarily, on the state of their finances. Some pupils maintain that Chopin unofficially

[9] See *CFC*, I, pp. 92–3, 104, 161, 184.

[10] Knowing how much his teaching and his Parisian obligations would fill his time, Chopin wrote from Nohant in 1845: 'I simply must finish certain manuscripts [opp. 60, 61, 62] before I leave here, for I cannot compose in winter' (*SC*, p. 254).

[11] The number may have been greater before Majorca: in 1847, Chopin deplores having to give seven lessons (*CFC*, III, p. 272); the pace eases up in 1848–9. For information on the outer facts of Chopin's teaching activity (periods of teaching, lists of daily lessons, times, duration, fees, etc.) the principal sources are: Chopin's pocket diaries for 1834, 1848, and 1849 (*PL-Wtifc*); *CFC*, II, pp. 84–5, 121, 131, 206–7, 254; III, pp. 183, 225, 265, 268–9, 270, 272, 273, 311–12, 313, 316, 328, 329, 342, 344, 346, 347, 348, 356, 401, 408; *CGS*, V, pp. 160, 522–3, 783; VI, p. 253; VIII, p. 470; Balzac, C, IV, p. 499; *LH*, II, p. 8; Hallé, pp. 209–10; Hiller, *BU*, pp. 149, 150; Karasowski, II, pp. 98–9; Karłowicz, pp. 136–42 and *passim*; Niecks, *passim*. See also the memoirs of the following students: Harder/Adelung; Roubaud/Ganche, *DSFC*; Gretsch/Grewingk; J. de Caraman/Hedley, *NUC*; Zaleska/Hordyński; Lenz, *GPV* 1872; Mikuli; Cheriemietieff/Niesmieyanova-Siemienowski; Streicher/Niecks; Tellefsen.

[12] Maria von Harder's assertion that she was given daily lessons (Adelung, p. 122) is isolated. Even Filtsch did not, in principle, receive more than three lessons per week.

1 Chopin's salon, Square d'Orléans. Unsigned watercolour, now destroyed.

taught them practically free of charge, or that they were offered numerous additional lessons.

Chopin's lessons were even more in demand than those of Liszt or Kalkbrenner; they were also expensive, since the fee was invariably fixed at 20 gold francs, the equivalent of a 'Louis d'or' (£1 sterling of that time), or 30 francs if Chopin was to teach at the pupil's home.[13] It is only fair to add that teaching was Chopin's main source of income – hence his talk of a 'treadmill' to describe the succession of lucrative hours. Publishers grasped exclusive rights-in-perpetuity of his compositions in exchange for a lump sum; as for his public concerts in Paris and Scotland, only six or seven of them brought him anything approaching a reasonable profit.[14]

How many pupils did Chopin have? This is difficult to assess with any degree of precision. If anyone who received his advice at some time is to qualify as a pupil, then the number of identified pupils to date is about 150.[15]

[13] See *CGS*, V, pp. 522, 523.

[14] Information on the material circumstances of Chopin's life may be found in the documents compiled by Suzanne and Denise Chainaye.

[15] In an article on the subject, Bronarski (*EC*) quotes about 100 names; these are reproduced and added to in Holland's thesis, which contains a total of 126 names. There is reason to discard about ten of these (either dubious or the result of errors) but then to add about another 30 new ones, listed

Elèves et leurs Parens

5 Melle Mueller
2 Made Rubio née Kologrivoff
2 Melle de Caraman
3 Melle C. de Rohan
2 Princesse Czernicheff
2 Baronne de Koenneritz
1 Made Kalergi
1 Marquise de Dalmatie
5 Baronne de Rothschild
1 Melle L. Duperré
1 Made Coignet
3 la Duchesse de Noailles
1 la Vicomtesse d'Haussonville née de Broglie
1 Melle Emilie de Flahault
1 Melle K. Maberly
2 Princesse Soutzo et Princesse
1 Made de la Roche
1 Melle de Leudre 1 Vicomtesse de L.
1 Melle Gavard
1 Gaillard

2 *Elèves et leurs Parens*, list of Chopin's pupils drawn up by Jane Stirling.

But this figure is certainly higher than the number of proper pupils; one also has to be sceptical of various biographers' claims regarding alleged 'pupils' of Chopin. In Chopin's life-time it was already fashionable and even advantageous to claim to be his pupil, and Chopin, aware of this, would respond, 'I never gave him lessons; but if it's of any use to him to pass as my pupil, then let him be. Let him remain one!' (Karasowski, II, p. 98). In addition, various categories of students may be distinguished: with the large majority made up of 'dilettantes' (in the positive eighteenth-century sense of the term), the number of professionals bordered on twenty. If a small number studied with Chopin for four or five years, others cannot have had more than four or five lessons in all – such as the 'Lady de Liverpool', who hastened down to London to be taught for just one week! (Chopin, *CFC*, III, p. 356; *SC*, p. 325).

In any case, Chopin saw straight through the motives of many of these. Some artists also came to him for advice on furthering their studies: we find even Moscheles and Kalkbrenner not above requesting an interview or some advice, one for his daughter, the other for his son. Finally one can add that Chopin devoted himself with particular care to his compatriot pupils, though this did not prevent him from taking under his wing various other pianists who travelled from all over Europe to study with him. His reputation as pianist and pedagogue reached far and wide: one finds his pupils coming not only from France and Poland but also from Lithuania, Russia, Bohemia, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, Sweden and Norway.

Chopin did not accept children or beginners. Nor was he easy to approach:

> Chopin was surrounded, adulated and protected by a small entourage of enthusiastic friends who defended him from unwelcome visitors or second-rate admirers. Access to him was difficult; as he himself told Stephen Heller, one had to make several attempts before one could succeed in meeting him

related Marmontel (*PC*, p. 9). This characteristic tale recurs in the memoirs of a good dozen pupils, and by no means the least significant, who at first regularly found themselves confronted with a polite refusal.[16] Talent or

by Jaeger, who also looks critically at the existing list and eliminates a few names erroneously taken for pupils.

Apart from other names still to be found, here are those figuring in Chopin's pocket diaries: Planat, Gaymüller (1834); Wedgwood, Cooper, Carter, and [the daughter of the Duchess of] Sutherland (1848); Champlatreux (1849). Two new names appear in the list drawn up by Jane Stirling (see also Fig. 2, page 8 opposite): [Mr] Gailloux [E. Gaillard?], and the Viscountess of Ludre (not Sudre, as printed by Karłowicz and Hoesick).

16 See Harder/Adelung, p. 122; Roubaud de Cournand/Ganche, *DSFC*, p. 85; Gretsch/Grewingk, p. 14; Anonymous Scottish lady/Hadden, p. 157; Zaleska/Hordyński, p. 157; Lenz, *GPV* 1872, pp. 333–5; Dubois/Niecks, II, p. 178; Peruzzi/Niecks, II, p. 339; Streicher/Niecks, II, p. 340; Gutmann/Stavenow, pp. 96–8; Tellefsen, pp. 142–3.

3 Cover page of Chopin's appointments diary for 1848 with autograph timetable of his lessons during his stay in London.

artistic personality would always serve to overcome these initial obstacles. Once the ice was broken, Chopin revealed personal qualities felt as exceptional by all his pupils. We should not underestimate the affectionate atmosphere suffusing many of the lessons given to the refined, talented and chastely enthusiastic young ladies of the aristocracy; doubtless these conditions stimulated progress by creating an intense state of receptiveness in the pupil. The special quality of these pupil–teacher relationships – demonstrated by numerous album pages and dedications of works – helps to explain why Chopin's teaching was not suited to mass popularization or to the establishment of a definite 'tradition'. Its character was more personal, to some extent initiatory. As a rule Chopin's lessons were private (some dubious testimonies present them as an occasion for social gatherings!). Sometimes certain pupils would be allowed to attend the lessons of a colleague: Mikuli and Lenz were both to benefit from these stimulating circumstances.

Exceptionally, Chopin once organized at his home a special dress rehearsal on two pianos for Filtsch, who was to perform the E minor Concerto op. 11 in society events and concerts. At certain times Chopin would employ an assistant – notably Mme Rubio, and occasionally Gutmann and Marie de Rozières.

It would be wrong to imagine that Chopin saw his teaching as a 'pensum' or a poor substitute for the concerts he no longer gave. On the contrary, he was highly aware of the importance of his task and presented himself for lessons with meticulous punctuality – which only ill health eventually impeded – and with the zeal of an apostle. Mikuli relates:

Chopin daily devoted his entire energies to teaching for several hours and with genuine delight [. . .] Was not the severity, not so easy to satisfy, the feverish vehemence with which he sought to raise his pupils to his own standpoint, the ceaseless repetition of a passage till it was understood, a guarantee that he had the progress of the pupil at heart? A holy artistic zeal burnt in him then, every word from his lips was stimulating and inspiring.
(Mikuli, p. 3).

Exactingness, fire, patience and firmness were united in Chopin; he wished for certain immediate results that would herald the future achievements towards which he tirelessly schooled the pupil's inner vision. The intensity of his concentration equalled that of his lucidity:

Chopin was a born teacher; expression and conception, position of the hand, touch, pedalling, nothing escaped the sharpness of his hearing and his vision; he gave every detail the keenest attention. Entirely absorbed in his task, during the lesson he would be solely a teacher, and nothing but a teacher

related Maria von Harder (Adelung, p. 122). Chopin preferred pupils to follow the text carefully rather than always play from memory, and he would mark the score as it lay on the music stand. Generally seated at his small upright *pianino* while the student played on the large Pleyel, he would tirelessly point out each error, each carelessness, each weakness – more profuse with examples than with words. 'Often the entire lesson passed without the pupil's having played more than a few bars,' related Mikuli (p. 4). Chopin's usual courtesy, even playfulness, could give way on days of illness or irritability to fits of anger, as violent as they were brief; the male pupils seem to have been more prone to these '*leçons orageuses*' than were the women. Then again, repeated negligence or careless playing would sometimes exasperate him, with positively glacial results.[17] But more often, without in any way relaxing his demands, Chopin showed a humane understanding of his students' personal, musical and technical problems. He knew how to inspire self-confidence and to find the right words of encouragement to free the pupil's inner resources at the right moment.[18] Then he was a subtle guide blessed with an absolute sureness of intuition and psychological penetration. This aspect of Chopin's teaching has not yet been given the attention it deserves. By way of compensation here is a passage from one of Emilie von Gretsch's letters, dated 30 April 1844:

[17] See quotation from Zaleska/Hordyński, p. 28 below.

[18] For instance, to Paul Gunsberg, a very talented pupil who died young: 'If you lose the present time, you'll never regain it!' (related in a letter from Jane Stirling to Ludwika Jędrzejewicz, Chopin's sister [5 March 1852]; quoted in Wróblewska-Straus, *LSJ*, p. 136). To Elizavieta Cheriemietieff: 'Perfect! Couldn't be played better' (Cheriemietieff, *Journal*, 30 December 1842). To Mme Peruzzi: 'What a good idea of yours that is!' (Niecks, II, p. 339). To Emilie von Gretsch: 'You'll soon be playing this [some Nocturnes] as I do; it's no trouble [*une bluette*] to you' (Grewingk, p. 13; see also *ibid.*, p. 10).

Yesterday at Chopin's I tried to play his Nocturnes. I knew, I still felt clearly within myself the way in which he had played them. But partly because of uncertainty with the notes, and partly through a certain inhibition which comes out in our bearing and our performance when we are anxious or unhappy, I found myself unable to express the music as I heard it in my head; I did not have the strength to realize it in sound. It is wonderful then to see how tactfully Chopin puts one at one's ease; how intuitively he identifies, I might say, with the thoughts of the person to whom he is speaking or listening; with what delicate nuances of behaviour he adapts his own being to that of another. To encourage me, he tells me among other things, 'It seems to me that you don't dare to express yourself as you feel. Be bolder, let yourself go more. Imagine you're at the Conservatoire, listening to the most beautiful performance in the world. Make yourself want to hear it, and then you'll hear yourself playing it right here. Have full confidence in yourself; make yourself want to sing like Rubini, and you'll succeed in doing so. Forget you're being listened to, and always listen to yourself. I see that timidity and lack of self-confidence form a kind of armour around you, but through this armour I perceive something else that you don't always dare to express, and so you deprive us all. When you're at the piano, I give you full authority to do whatever you want; follow freely the ideal you've set for yourself and which you must feel within you; be bold and confident in your own powers and strength, and whatever you say will always be good. It would give me so much pleasure to hear you play with complete abandon that I'd find the shameless confidence of the "*vulgaires*" unbearable by comparison.' (Grewingk, pp. 10–11)

Such testimony is by no means unique in Chopin's pupils' memoirs.[19]

In his lessons, Chopin worked simultaneously with music and words. Not content with demonstrating a few passages over the pupil's shoulders, he would often play the piece from beginning to end, even repeating it several times, constantly striving for greater perfection. And many a lesson was prolonged while he sat at the piano playing one piece after another, not only his own works but also those of other composers. Several of his pupils agree in saying that Chopin the pianist was never greater, never more complete and more ideal than in these transcending moments of grace. He did not, however, neglect to make the pupil analyse the formal structure of the works studied, and readily resorted to images or analogies to evoke the mood of a piece and to arouse the right musical impulse in the pupil. In order to obtain a particular expressiveness and sonority, for instance, he once suggested to Georges Mathias during a section of Weber's Sonata in A flat (op. 39) that 'an angel is passing over the sky' (first movement, bars 81ff). Where the young

[19] See Friederike Streicher-Müller's memoirs: 'At a *soirée* (20 December 1840) he made me play the Sonata with the "Funeral March" before a large assemblage. On the morning of the same day I had once more to play over to him the Sonata, but was very nervous. "Why do you play less well today?" he asked. I replied that I was afraid. "Why? *I* consider you play it well", he rejoined very gravely, indeed, severely. "But if you wish to play this evening as nobody has played before you, and nobody will play after you, well then!" . . . These words restored my composure. The thought that I played to his satisfaction possessed me also in the evening; I had the happiness of gaining Chopin's approval and the applause of the audience' (Niecks, II, p. 342).

Liszt in 1832, making use of his freshly acquired education, sought to stimulate the pupil's imagination by reading him a page of Chateaubriand or a poem by Hugo, Chopin achieved the same result with a single, concise image – so intensively was he imbued with the reality of his vision even as he translated it into words. These spontaneous creations of the mind, evoking here a legion of capricious spirits, there a house of the dead, elsewhere a dialogue between a tyrant and his victim, are the result not so much of a literary temperament as a visionary imagination and a feeling for poetry rooted in popular Slavonic legend.

Sometimes a pupil's sensitivity would meet with Chopin's recognition on a higher, privileged level, as is shown by this astonishing declaration to Juliette de Caraman: 'I give you *carte blanche* to play all my music. There is in you this vague poetry, this *Schwärmerei* that is needed to understand it' (Hedley, *NUC*, p. 8). We know Chopin was generally quite strict about the exact comprehension and performance of his works, and it required no less than the genial personality of the young Filtsch to make him admit: 'We each understand this differently, but go your own way, do as you feel, it can also be played like that.'[20] Professional or not, many pupils experienced a feeling of revelation and liberation through Chopin's teaching; his absolute novelty opened wide to them the doors of all music, not just of piano playing. Then it would not be long before they noticed radical changes in their playing, their listening and their mental attitude. Chopin for his part did point out these improvements to them. Emilie von Gretsch relates:

> During the last lesson [. . .] Chopin showed me how best to practise the *Etudes*. Some of them required no comment from him, 'since you understand them perfectly' – that was his opinion. It was a special joy to me to be able to play easily what had previously seemed to involve perilous difficulties, particularly when I was working on these *Etudes* with Henselt. Chopin (I think he can read hearts), at the precise moment when this agreeable discovery about my progress crossed my mind, told me: 'This seems perfectly easy to you now, doesn't it? – not like it was before. Well! In this short time you've made miraculous progress!' He told me that within a few months I'd be more aware of it, or, at any rate, he presumed that I would, since he had found this happened with his best students.[21]

The student could then forge ahead powered by creative energy, since his work was now based on a natural method, revealed by a poet who could turn his hand equally to dialectic.

What are the fundamental principles governing Chopin's technical instruction; how was he an innovator? It is hard to answer that without giving an outline of his musical aesthetic. His piano teaching is as closely bound up with stylistic views as it is with his contribution to the technique of the instrument.

[20] Denis (under the date 20 April 1843), p. 125.

[21] Dated 20 May 1844; Grewingk, p. 13.

For Chopin, as for most of the Romantics – but even more so the Baroque and Classical composers – music is a language. Through the specific medium of organized sounds it seeks to express a world of thoughts, feelings and sensations.[22] Even if Chopin seems to share Goethe's view of music as the language of the inexpressible, for him this does not make it any less subject to the principal laws of verbal language. There are revealing parallels on this subject which Chopin frequently established between the arts of oratory and musical interpretation, between the means and ends common to spoken declamation and musical discourse.[23] In both cases the purpose is to move and convince the listener by means of intonation and accentuation appropriate to the meaning of the text. Just like a piece of prose or verse, a score consists of an arrangement of sections, paragraphs, phrases, periods and clauses; a system of punctuation aims to ensure correct articulation, the general sense of direction and the main breathing points; prosodic laws determine the long and short syllables, accented or soft, and so forth.

It is hardly surprising, then, that Chopin was very early on attracted towards the art of singing, and particularly by its embodiment in *bel canto*. The great vocal school of the 1830s, in which the art of declamation and its dramatic expression in music were harmoniously united, represented for him the ideal and definitive model for interpretation. It was on the singing styles of Rubini, of Pasta,[24] that Chopin based his own style of *pianistic declamation*, the key to his playing and the touchstone of his teaching. We find him repeatedly exhorting his pupils to listen to the great dramatic artists, even to the extent of declaring: 'you must sing if you wish to play' (Niecks, II, p. 187). For Chopin, singing constituted the alpha and omega of music; it

[22] Among the tentative definitions of the art of music put forward by Chopin in his *Projet de méthode*, we find:

- The expression of thought through sounds.
- The manifestation of our feelings through sounds.
- The art of expressing one's thoughts through sounds.
- The expression of our perceptions through sounds.
- The undefinite (indeterminate) language [*parole*] of men is sound.
- We use sounds to make music just as we use words to make a language.
- The indefinite language [*langue*] music.
- One abstract sound doesn't make music, just as one word doesn't make language.

Many of these definitions appear already from Rameau: 'In a word [*sic*], the expression of thought, of feeling, of passion, must be the real object of Music' (*Code de musique pratique*, Paris, 1760, p. 170). Schumann-Florestan, the spokesman of German Romanticism, exclaims in his turn: 'It would be an insignificant art that consisted only of sounds, without language or signs to express states of the soul!' (Schumann, *GS*, I, p. 30) – this despite Chopin's musical aesthetic being in other ways diametrically opposed to Schumann's.

[23] The expression '*dire* un morceau de musique' (to 'tell' a piece of music) was current in French musical circles of the last century and even at the beginning of this one. Chopin uses it with eloquent insistence.

[24] See pp. 110–11, note 75.

formed the basis of all instrumental training, and the more piano playing drew its inspiration from vocal models, the more convincing it became.[25] Hence Chopin's art of transforming the piano into a leading tenor or a prima donna and creating the impression of human breathing; hence that pre-eminence given to broad *cantabile* style, that intense *legato*, that inimitable sense of line and phrasing, that fullness of sound, that 'cello-like quality which the piano can suddenly reveal. Even his particular conception of rubato is vocal and Baroque in essence, in that it seeks, wherever apt, to release the melodic part from all metrical fetters and let it expand with the perfect freedom of inflection found in singing.[26] Moscheles writes of Chopin's playing: 'So one does not miss the orchestral effects which the German school requires from a pianist, but allows oneself to be carried away as by a singer who, unpreoccupied by the accompaniment, gives full rein to his feelings' (Moscheles, II, p. 39). This predilection for vocal art may be put beside Chopin's abhorrence of all massive effects, and his insistence on naturalness and simplicity in piano playing. Nothing was more foreign to Chopin's nature than overemphasis, affectation or sentimentality: '"Je vous prie de vous asseoir", he said on such an occasion with gentle mockery' (Niecks, II, p. 341). But dry and inexpressive playing was equally unbearable to him, and in such cases he would implore the student: 'Put all your soul into it! [*Mettez-y donc toute votre âme!*]' (Karasowski, II, p. 91) – and what happiness he felt when innate musicality expressed itself spontaneously: 'She [Wanda Radziwiłł] has plenty of genuine musical feeling and you don't have to tell her *crescendo* here, *piano* there, quicker, slower and so on' (Chopin, *SC*, p. 37).

Piano technique should be no more than a means; and so it should come directly out of an imperative need for musical self-expression. There Chopin opens the way to a modern conception of music teaching, resolutely turning

[25] This is one of the fundamental traits linking Chopin to the Baroque aesthetic (for other points such as the *Affektenlehre*, *cantabile*, rubato, improvisation and execution of ornaments, the Bach cult, etc., see notes 70, 77, 82, 95, 103, 126, 128, 137 and 184 below). Seventeenth and eighteenth century treatises make constant reference to vocal models for instrumental playing. This '*cantable* Art', recommended by Bach in his introduction to the Inventions and Sinfonias, was particularly prominent in Germany in the first half of the eighteenth century. Forkel reports that Bach 'knew how to introduce such variety to his performance that each piece, under his fingers, sounded just like a speech' (*Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerk*, Kassel and Basel, Bärenreiter, 1950, p. 33). The same aesthetic ideal is extended to a different style and instrument in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's comment about a pianist: 'She plays wonderfully; only in the *cantabile* she lacks the real feeling of singing' (Mozart, III, p. 135 – 27 June 1781). We are almost at Chopin's *bel canto*.

[26] See pp. 118–19, note 95. We can understand this as *one* of the components of Chopin's rubato, as the expression of his musical personality: a natural flair for improvising together with a Slavonic flexibility that rounds off sharp corners.

his back on many piano professors of his time[27] – and after! – whose teaching is based on a mechanistic conception of instrumental playing. With the exception of pianists such as Cramer, Field, Hummel and Moscheles, the pedagogues descended from the Classical generation regarded the acquisition of virtuosity as a collection of recipes (catalogued in innumerable *Methods*) to obtain a well-determined position of the fingers, hand, forearm, etc. One concentrated on the physical act of producing the sound, forgetting that the desire to create a certain sonority engenders the appropriate movement and in this way contributes to the education of the fingers. So the presumed way to virtuosity lay in a daily regime consisting of long hours of digital gymnastics and stubborn repetition of *Etudes de mécanisme* like those of Czerny, Kalkbrenner, Herz and others prolific in the genre.[28] Galvanised into action by Paganini's enchanted violin, Schumann and above all Liszt helped to pull piano teaching out of this rut, drawing new resources out of the instrument with their adaptations and transcriptions of Paganini's *Caprices*.[29]

Chopin, on the contrary, self-taught (his only piano teacher, Żywny, was a violinist) and an outsider to all Schools, with no taste for transcribing, offered in place of the narrowly mechanistic views a new, artistic conception of technical work. In place of the mental numbness caused by mechanical repetition of exercises, he advocated an intense listening concentration, an element reflected in the work, and playing, of Leimer and Gieseking.[30] In this concentration reside the two complementary factors indispensable to a good sonority: refinement of the ear, and muscular control and relaxation. One can hardly overstress that in Chopin's definition of technique, sound production, or the art of touch, comes *before* the acquisition of virtuosity: 'One needs only to study a certain positioning of the hand in relation to the keys to obtain with ease the most beautiful quality of sound, to know how to play long notes and short notes and [to attain] unlimited dexterity' (*PM*). And further: 'A well-formed technique, it seems to me, [is one] that can

[27] Some years later, Stephen Heller reacted similarly with his *Etudes* opp. 16, 45, 46 and 47, studies in style and expression, concerned with musical problems rather than exclusively mechanical formulae. Though falling short of the transcendental character of Chopin's opp. 10 and 25, they are by no means musically negligible.

[28] Liszt himself in those days (1832) did not escape the mechanistic conception of technique inherited from Czerny, his former teacher. Mme Boissier's notes (see Bibliography) testify to this. On this subject see pp. 94 and 96–7 below, notes 14 and 18.

[29] Schumann, *Studien nach Capricen von Paganini*, op. 3 (1832); *Sechs Concert-Etüden nach Capricen von Paganini*, op. 10 (1833). Liszt, *Etudes d'exécution transcendante d'après Paganini* (1838), revised and published in 1851 under the title *Grandes Etudes de Paganini*. Contemporary with these (and of no less importance pianistically) are Liszt's transcription of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (1833) and his first forays into the Beethoven symphonies (1837).

[30] See p. 95, note 16.

control and vary [*bien nuancer*] a beautiful sound quality' (*ibid.*). This is really the fundamental article of Chopin's pianistic *credo*, illustrated equally well by an axiom attributed to Liszt: 'All technique originates in the art of touch and returns to it.'[31]

A maximum of suppleness ('*facilement*, *facilement*' he would repeat tirelessly), and a cultivation of sensitivity of hearing and touch – these were the purposes of the exercises he prescribed in the first lessons. Chopin's famous predilection for the black keys springs from his understanding of the keyboard's proper relationship to the physiognomy of the hand, as the black keys favour a natural, comfortable position of the longer second, third and fourth fingers. This is why he made his pupils begin with the scales of B, F♯, and D♭ (following the basic fingertips *1-2-3-1*, *2-3-4-1* and *2-3-1* respectively). Contrary to the pedagogues of the time, who sought to equalize the fingers by means of laborious and cramping exercises, Chopin cultivated the fingers' individual characteristics, prizing their natural inequality as a source of variety in sound: 'As many different sounds as there are fingers' (*PM*). In this way he would quickly develop a great variety of colours in his pupils' sound meanwhile sparing them much tedious labour in fighting their own physiognomy. As for evenness of fingers and the *jeu perlé*, that touchstone of Romantic pianists, Chopin achieved it by two original means: innovatory fingering conducive to producing a flowing succession of sounds, and, in scales and arpeggios, a light movement of the hand in the direction of the run.[32]

By making his students study his own compositions, Chopin communicated to them something of the secret of the innovations with which he had enriched the pianistic art. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Beethoven, Weber and Schubert, each in his own way, founded the Romantic piano style by bursting through the fetters of the eighteenth-century fortepiano. But it was left to the following generation, and principally to Chopin and Liszt, to explore the resources of the newly developed instrument (Erard, Pleyel) in the service of a new aesthetic. To draw up a detailed list of Chopin's pianistic innovations would exceed the purpose of this introduction; in any case, the process cannot be dissociated from Chopin's contribution to the techniques of composition and the development of musical language.[33] But one can aptly outline the general tendency of these innovations and define their main points.

[31] Quoted in Paul Locard and Rémy Stricker, *Le Piano*, Paris, P.U.F. 'Que sais-je', No. 263, 1974, 5th edition, p. 44.

[32] See Mikuli's text, p. 37 below, and p. 106, note 59.

[33] This idea emerges from comments by Liszt on the innovations brought about by Chopin: 'It is to him that we owe the extension of chords, whether struck together, arpeggiated or in whole successions; the chromatic and enharmonic meanderings of which his music offers such striking

'Everything is a matter of knowing good fingering [. . .] Just as we need to use the conformation of the fingers, we need no less to use the rest of the hand, the wrist, the forearm and the upper arm. One cannot try to play everything from the wrist, as Kalkbrenner claims' (*PM*).[34] With these innocuous-sounding phrases, Chopin indeed sums up his own contribution to piano technique, aimed essentially at increasing the suppleness in all senses of playing. He is no longer content, like most of his contemporaries, solely with finger articulation aided at best by the wrist. In Chopin's playing, the fingers activate the whole arm: all his technical innovations rest upon the feeling of perfect continuity from the shoulder to the tips of the fingers. Naturally, these innovations are reflected in his piano writing being substantially richer than that of his immediate predecessors, such as Hummel, Field and Weber, and of his contemporaries. The first of all his *Etudes*, op. 10/1, composed in 1829, illustrates this perfectly by extending over the entire length of Chopin's keyboard in its opening phrase. This reflects Chopin's particular physiological discovery: in covering distances on the keyboard, the central pivoting finger is not the third, but the index finger, leading finger *par excellence*. From that are largely derived the following innovations:

- Flexible extension of the right hand (*Etudes* opp. 10/1 and 10/8).[35]
- Extended left-hand writing (*Etude* op. 10/9; Nocturnes op. 27/1 and 2; Prelude op. 28/24).
- Simultaneous extensions in both hands (*Etudes* op. 25/1, Prelude op. 28/19).
- Elaboration of scale passages to patterns alternating stepwise motion with larger intervals (*Etudes* opp. 10/4 and 25/2).[36]
- Extension of broken chords to the whole length of the keyboard (*Etudes* opp. 10/1 and 25/12).
- Extended chords either struck together or rapidly arpeggiated (*Etude* op. 10/11, Nocturne op. 48/1).

examples; the small groups of added grace notes, falling like tiny drops of speckled dew over the melodic figure. To this kind of ornamentation, previously modelled solely upon the *fioritura* of the great old Italian school of singing, he gave an unexpectedness and a variety beyond the reach of the human voice, which had hitherto been slavishly copied by the piano in embellishments that eventually became stereotyped and monotonous. He invented those wonderful harmonic progressions which would enhance with a serious aspect even those pages which, considering the lightness of their subject, did not seem to aspire to such importance' (Liszt, pp. 14–15).

34 See pp. 95–6 and 108, notes 17 and 65.

35 The comparison with Cramer's *Etude* no. 18 (*84 Etüden*, Peters edition, I, pp. 40–1) is most telling with regard to Chopin's novelty. The same goes for the *Etude* no. 77 (IV, pp. 28–9), concerning the extension of the left hand.

36 From all the evidence Chopin avoids writing in scales. Among the rare works featuring scales are the end of the Impromptu op. 36 and the closing bars of the *Barcarolle* op. 60, both in F sharp and thus including a maximum of black keys. The same applies to the second theme of the finale of the Sonata op. 58, and to some extent to the end of the fourth Scherzo, op. 54.

- Writing in double octaves (*Etude* op. 25/10; Nocturne op. 48/1; Polonaise op. 44; Scherzo op. 39).
- Writing in double notes using all the intervals from the 2nd to the 7th (*Etude* op. 10/7).

Chopin's pianistic writing reveals two other innovations that involve the inspirational element – even improvisation – as much as technique. First, playing twos against threes, each in a separate hand, which requires perfect independence of the hands for the parts to fall harmoniously into place (Etude op. 25/2, *Nouvelles Etudes* nos. 1 and 3, [*Fantaisie-*]*Impromptu* op. 66, Waltz op. 42; see the fives against threes at the end of the Nocturnes opp. 32/2 and 55/2). Secondly, those 'small groups of added grace notes, falling like tiny drops of speckled dew over the melodic figure,'[37] something Chopin definitively transplanted into piano writing from *bel canto* (*Andante Spianato* op. 22, Concertos opp. 11 and 21, Impromptus opp. 29 and 36, Nocturnes, and elsewhere).

Those of Chopin's fingerings that have come down to us[38] are an indispensable guide to understanding his technical advances and originality. 'Everything is a matter of knowing good fingering', he wrote, as we have already seen (*PM*); he always adopted 'the easiest fingering, although it might be against the rules, that came to him', related Hipkins (p. 5) after having seen and heard Chopin play. From these two quotations, we see that Chopin was no slave to the traditions of fingering laid down by theoreticians and publishers. On the contrary, good fingering was a matter of finding the most comfortable succession of fingers, best suited both to the form of the hand and to conveying the musical discourse. So it was precisely by breaking many a Classical rule that Chopin opened new horizons with his revolutionary way of fingering.[39] His contribution in this field may be summed up in the following points:

- Emancipation of the thumb, which is allowed the freedom of the black keys (*Etude* op. 10/5) and entrusted with melodic fragments (*Etude* op. 25/7, *Nouvelles Etudes* no. 1).
- Letting the 3rd, 4th and 5th right hand fingers cross over one another in chromatic passages (*Etude* op. 10/2) and in singing legato lines (*Berceuse* op. 57, Nocturne op. 9/2, Prelude op. 28/15, and elsewhere).

[37] See note 33 above.

[38] These come through first editions, the manuscript or autograph copies used for making these editions, rough-draft autographs, proofs of the *Etude* op. 10/2 corrected by Chopin, and the principal printed scores with his annotations, formerly used by pupils and associates (Jane Stirling, Mme Dubois-O'Meara, Ludwika Jędrzejewicz and Franchomme). For these last sources, see Appendix II and III below.

[39] See in particular the texts of Kleczyński and Mikuli (pp. 38–40 below plus the relevant notes – 85, pp. 116–17; 91, p. 117–18), and also Appendix III.