

Opening and closing with discussion of Gustav Kobbé's novel *Signora*⁸, Steven Huebner's essay '*La princesse paysanne du Midi*' sensitises us to the relationship between the actress Eleonora Duse and the singer Emma Calvé, who shared a number of roles, from Santuzza to Carmen, and including Marguerite and Ophélie. We become aware of the almost ethnological work that the singer undertook to inhabit her *rôle* of gypsy. The serious care for authenticity is therefore equally evident here – even if Calvé did not hesitate to modify the scores! The author returns at the end of the article to *Signora*, underlining the Latin character of the heroines described, and thus closes this anthology. Essential to those who wish to understand nineteenth-century French lyrical art, *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830–1914* was recently justly awarded the American Musicological Society's Ruth A. Solie Award for best collection of essays in 2010.

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Halina Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). viii+330 pp. £30.00.

One of the enduring obstacles to Chopin scholarship outside Poland is the linguistic-cultural divide separating readers of major European academic languages (English, French and German) from a formidable body of primary and secondary source material in the Polish language. Despite notable efforts by Polish scholars in the last decade or so to provide easier access to such sources (the work of The Fryderyk Chopin Institute, comes to mind), Chopin's Polish letters and a vibrant historical record of early nineteenth-century Polish music criticism remain today only partially translated, and essential aspects of the composer's life and work little understood.

Indeed, it is hard to imagine another nineteenth-century composer with as wide a reach and lasting influence as that of Chopin, whose formative artistic and intellectual experiences are as neglected, or as obscured by misunderstandings. Yet this oversight persists, partly because the compositions of Chopin that most intrigue and captivate are products of the Paris years, partly because this early period demands engagement with a Polish history habitually consigned to the periphery of the great European musical tradition.

Then, too, the Cold War years contributed a layer of ideological confusion and rhetoric to Polish narratives of Chopin's youth that poses its own set of problems, even for those for whom a language barrier does not exist. Halina Goldberg's *Music in Chopin's Warsaw*, then, is a welcome study, one that redresses some of these scholarly lacunae, and provides Anglophone readers with a detailed portrait of the Polish culture and musical milieu that nourished Chopin's talents before he set off for his second Viennese tour in November of 1830.

Goldberg's book is organized into eight chapters, preceded by a thin introduction. In discussions ranging from instrument production, music publishing and musical education in early nineteenth-century Warsaw, to salon, theatre and concert life during the same period, the author identifies, summarizes,

⁸ Gustav Kobbé, *Signora: A Child of the Opera House* (New York: R.H. Russell, 1902).

translates and effectively brings to life through those efforts several exemplary studies produced in the last half-century by some of Poland's finest music historians. Goldberg reflects only mildly on this research, contributing little in the way of new scholarly insights (her original scholarship, which weaves it way throughout the study, previously has appeared elsewhere), though this does not necessarily diminish the book's value.¹ On the contrary, such a consolidation of Poland's most notable Soviet-era musicological efforts legitimizes a truly significant body of research that is all too easily dismissed as perpetuating myths of 'the communist political agenda', a summary judgment Goldberg herself curiously does not avoid making in her introduction (p. 5).

To be sure, Goldberg makes slightly more clear (on pp. 5–6) that it is not Communist-period scholarship, *per se*, that is objectionable but rather Polish nationalist narratives that overstate Chopin's relationship to the folk while overlooking the very real influence of Warsaw's urban musical offerings on the course of the composer's stylistic development. But an endlessly repeated boastful storyline about Chopin's *Polishness* doesn't really seem to be the issue either; indeed, this is the hidden heart of Goldberg's own project, albeit now with an emphasis on Chopin the Polish Romantic 'prophet-poet' (p. 176). Instead, it is both a negatively inflected and a narrowly conceived notion of Chopin's *Poland* that Goldberg finds problematic, one that fails 'to recognize that Chopin's formative years took place in the enlightened environment of a cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic and multi-religious European capital' (p. 6).

To overcome such misconception, Goldberg must wage battle on two fronts: the first, against a condescending, tenacious stereotype of Polish culture on the margins of western civilization sketched by Voltaire and his fellow *philosophes* as early as the second half of the eighteenth century. The second, against a Polish nativist exceptionalism, argued and defended tribally from within. Goldberg's project, then, is ultimately a war on outsiderly and insiderly claims alike.

Score a victory, then, for Goldberg, in the first confrontation wherein she details a rich Warsaw musical environment and flourishing Polish intellectual culture, revealing that the distance Chopin travelled between Warsaw and Paris was not far indeed. Chapters 5 and 6, on Warsaw's salon culture, and particularly the section concerning Princess Izabela Czartoryska's 'Proto-Romanticism', persuasively demonstrate just how naturally Romanticism took root in Poland, as it had in other congenial locales. Visiting and local virtuosi such as Angelica Catalani, Joseph Christoph Kessler and Franczyszek Lessel frequented Warsaw's array of refined salons, performing a repertoire of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Clementi, Weber and Hummel that could only be called 'European'. If one includes the discussions on Warsaw's musical theatre and concert life, in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively, readers of Goldberg's book cannot help but be left with the impression that Warsaw in the first three decades of the nineteenth century could be an abundantly stimulating and sophisticated place, featuring cultural offerings from abroad as readily as it served up locally-inspired varieties of music.

In her second campaign, however, Goldberg is markedly less successful, at times let down by her own rhetoric. She exaggerates the importance of Polish musical antecedents on Chopin's style, as when making the case for Kessler and Szymanowska's etudes and preludes being 'an important ancestry of Chopin's

¹ Halina Goldberg, 'Chopin in Warsaw's Salons', *Polish Music Journal* 2 (1999): www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/PMJ/issues.html; 'Chamber Arrangements of Chopin's Concert Works', *Journal of Musicology* 19 (2002): 39–84; *The Age of Chopin: Interdisciplinary Inquiries*, ed. Halina Goldberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

etudes and preludes' (p. 193). While it is certainly true that Kessler and Szymanowska's preludes have received only passing attention in most accounts concerning the stylistic precursors to Chopin's op. 28, closer scrutiny of Kessler's op. 31 *Préludes* as models for Chopin's work in the same genre yield no greater revelations than do the preludes of Cramer, Moscheles, Hummel or Kalkbrenner. That is because all of these preludes, including Kessler's and Szymanowska's, generically belong more to an earlier prelude tradition, one that Chopin draws from but ultimately transforms into something else entirely. (The two side-by-side examples Goldberg provides of Kessler and Chopin's preludes on pp. 197 and 199, taken without clear attribution from Ferdynand Gajewski's preface to his edition of Kessler's *Préludes*, exhaust the most fruitful comparisons possible.)²

Reading Goldberg's book, one is struck by the astonishing number of names associated with Warsaw's early-nineteenth-century musical life that divulge non-Polish origins: Soliva, Gresser, Elsner, Würfel, Lessel, Kessler, Weinert, Troschel, Buchholtz and so on. Dare we add to this list Chopin? But one is equally struck by the fact that the author fundamentally fails to answer one of the most obvious questions lurking behind nearly every one of them: what were all these ethnic Germans and Czechs and Italians and French doing in Warsaw? In Goldberg's telling, they are simply there, or just arriving, or returning. If ever there was an argument to do away with an image of Warsaw as culturally inhospitable, it is one that makes clear Europeans themselves did not maintain the prejudices of the *philosophes* and the condescension of Herder, energetically pursuing economic opportunity (and an escape from the Napoleonic wars) wherever it could be found. Perhaps primed by the overwhelmingly negative attitude towards foreign occupiers found in her Polish source material, Goldberg can't quite bring herself to say (other than faintly, on pp. 17–18) that an undeniable consequence of the partitions was the modernization of the Polish lands, which, to be sure, delivered one of the hardest psychic blows in Polish history, but which also brought the 'benefits' of empire: educational and social reform, new industries and markets, and tax incentives that attracted the settlers so abundantly represented in Goldberg's study.

Here, ultimately, is one of the great ironies of Polish history leading up to the November Uprising of 1830, by which time Chopin was no longer in Warsaw and when everything radically changed for the worse: precisely because of Poland's great political calamity, Warsaw's music culture steadily gained momentum. Moreover, it did so not because its members engaged in unusually and exclusively nationalist pursuits but rather because national and patriotic considerations came up against unmistakably cosmopolitan, external cultural contributions. Artists, intellectuals, and professionals from abroad, and not only in the realm of music, brought with them new ideas and aesthetic models (mostly German, but also French, English and Italian) that inspired decidedly indigenous iterations. It was such a marvellously diverse, vibrant dynamic of insider and outsider activity, in other words, that nurtured Chopin's intellect and curiosity. Unfortunately, Goldberg does little to assimilate this point thoughtfully into her narrative.

Finally, for a book so dense with information, it is perhaps understandable that there should be some infelicitous prose and facile swooning over Chopin's genius: 'Fryderyk did not think it beneath him to partake in bourgeois

² Joseph Christoph Kessler, *Twenty Four Préludes, Op. 31, For Piano*, ed. Ferdynand Gajewski (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1994).

entertainment...’ (p. 191). And Goldberg leaves herself open to charges of linguistic and cultural tone deafness when, without so much as a wink or a nudge, she cites Vogel’s opinion that Chopin’s attic piano ‘was most likely a French or an English giraffe’ (p. 49). Be that as it may, until such time as the scholarly world embraces a Polish language prerequisite, Goldberg’s book, which well lays the groundwork for understanding Chopin’s Polish musical environment, at least promises to be of help to students of Chopin, and inspire future academic inquiry.

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Christophe Grabowski & John Rink, eds., *Annotated Catalogue of Chopin’s First Editions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). lxxxiv+909 pp. £130.00.

This extraordinarily meticulous and detailed volume consists of four major sections: an introduction explaining the book’s purpose and how to use it; the Annotated Catalogue itself, comprising a mostly tabular correlation of successive printings of early Chopin editions (respectively French, German and English, as well as Polish and Austrian when relevant), from the first surviving prints until well after the composer’s death; Plates, comprising high-quality facsimiles of 218 title pages and four work lists; and Appendices that similarly correlate instrumental parts for chamber and concertante works, series title pages and publishers’ advertisements, and end with an index of libraries worldwide whose holdings form the basis of the catalogue.

Readers wishing to see any music should turn to pages lxxii–lxxiii, which contain the only musical examples in the entire book (seven single-bar facsimiles illustrating local variants in successive printings of the first English edition of the Nocturne op. 15/2). Not intended as a guide to musical variants in Chopin’s *œuvre* (as we’ll see, some associated websites are more suited to that), the book’s *raison d’être* needs some explanation – a matter readers are largely left to adduce – in terms of where Chopin research has gone during the last few decades. In my own undergraduate days Chopin’s status was still under debate, on the old basis his having written no symphonies or operas – a verdict countered over a century ago by Debussy, who reportedly called Chopin ‘the greatest of them all, for through the piano alone he discovered everything’.¹ Heinrich Schenker appeared to be thinking along similar lines when he admitted Chopin, along with Domenico Scarlatti, under his otherwise pan-Germanic umbrella.

A related quality, emphasised over a century ago by Paul Dukas (a pupil of Chopin’s student Georges Mathias), was Chopin’s unprecedented suppleness in terms of harmony, musical structure and tactility at the instrument.² Almost by default, that marks an effective base line for the various analytic, stylistic, performance-related and documentary studies by Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, Jeffrey Kallberg’s analytic probes into Chopin’s creative processes and compositional ideals, various multi-author surveys compiled by Jim Samson, and John Rink’s combinations

¹ Marguerite Long, *Au piano avec Claude Debussy* (Paris: Julliard, 1960): 74.

² ‘A propos du monument Chopin’, in *Les écrits de Paul Dukas sur la musique* (Paris: S.E.F.I., 1948): 514–5.