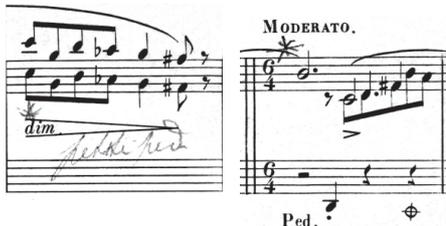


## Commentary

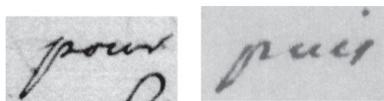
**Title page.** We propose the frontispiece of **FI**. The ones of **G1** and **E1** are given in *ACCFE* p. 658 Plate n. 72, and p. 659 Plate n. 73.

**1.** About the expression **LENTO** of **G** instead of **LARGO** of **F**, *v. supra* our hypothesis, p. v note 8.

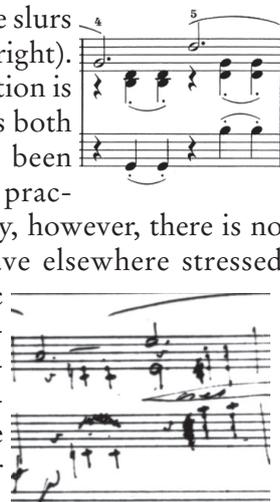
**3÷8.** In **G1<sup>Z</sup>** a note (*petite ped*) suggests the use of the soft pedal between  $\ast$ . The asterisk is not a figure used by Chopin, who, indeed, prefers a cross. Compare, secondly, the two



“*p*” with the ones drawn from the correspondence (on the right): “*pour*” comes from the letter of January 22, 1839 to Pleyel, while “*puis*” is drawn from a letter of May 1847 to Solange. There is no need to be expert in writing to realize that both the shape and the *ductus* are completely different. Zaleska bought her copy (**G1**) before the end of 1840, namely long before her lessons with the composer began. Therefore, a teacher who preceded Chopin probably wrote “*petite ped*”.



**9.** Here and in all analogous places all of editors, except Mikuli and Rudorff, add the slurs in l. h. (*see, ex. gr., UT*, on the right). Samson says, “Chopin’s convention is to use a single slur to encompass both RH and LH. LH slurring has been added to conform to modern practice.” (*cf. PE* p. 61). In philology, however, there is no “modern practice”, and we have elsewhere stressed the importance of the graphic preferences, especially in Chopin, who would not like unjustified modernizations, as evidenced by m. 99 of **A** (on the right), where he erases a slur written inadvertently.



**18, 20.** A part from **F** and **Mk**, most of the editions we have inspected, integrate from conjecture the intensive accents to  $C^4$ s. Nevertheless, such an integration, although sensible, is based on an analogy, which might not exist: in fact, the atmosphere is slightly changing and prepares the announcement expressed by mm. 22÷25. The reflection imposed by the intensive accents gives ground to a slight waiting tension. Therefore, in our opinion Chopin did not omit the accents through an oversight.

**26.** All editors omit the *staccato*-dot to second  $F^3$ , which is in **A**. The meaning of that dot is that that  $F^3$  must not be slurred to the following octave. So, the slur we find in **Mk**, **WN** (1997, here, on the left) and **PE** is a mistake from misunderstanding, which neither Rudorff (**BH<sup>cw</sup>**), nor Bronarski (**PW**), nor Müllemann (**HN**) made.



**63.** The German engraver’s error, accepted by **Mk**, **PW**, and **BH<sup>cw</sup>**, has strengthened a wrong tradition, which many pianists cannot abandon. But even more surprising is the comment of Bronarski: “By mistake the En. E. has a **C** instead of a **D** as the last quaver in this bar.” (**PW** p. 67), without realizing that **F**, too, has a **C**! Probably Bronarski trusted Mikuli.

**81.** We do not want to mention here the rubbish that many chopinologists, renowned and less renowned, poured out and do not stop doing it about the “Italianisms” in Chopin. We just wish to note that this measure is the clausula of a sentence, and Chopin, being a connoisseur and lover of *bel canto*, introduces a typical *bel canto* device you do not hear any longer, because the incompetent—and wanting to be the centre of attention—conductors claim that it is not “modern,” “it is no longer fashionable.” We are talking of the *coup de glotte*, which here falls on the second  $G^7$  that Chopin has unequivocally accented. The singers of the last century in the so-called *verist* operas overemphasized and distorted it in a kind of sob meant for effect, but the right performance is given by a held breathing in followed, after a suspense/hesitation, by an audible *coup de glotte*, which, however, should not become a sob. Almost all pianists, ignoring what means singing, neglect this important interpretative detail; some of them even get to slur the two  $G^7$ s, doing the exact opposite of what Chopin wanted and had written!

**103÷104.** Whereas Samson, without making any comment, proposes the reading of **A** as *varia lectio*, Ekier writes in his commentary: “We give the version Chopin introduced in the proofs of **FE1** ( $\rightarrow$ **GE** $\rightarrow$ **EE**).” Bronarski prefers to follow the reading given in mm. 102 and 202÷204, “which are similar. This rendering is to be found in Mikuli’s edition and the critical edition of Breitkopf and Haertel which is based on the autograph copy of this Ballade.” We add that Mikuli had no autograph at his disposal and, consequently, had to consult Marcelina Czartoryska and Friederike Streicher-Müller on this point.

Even if we had not any support, but only **FI**, many doubts about its reading would claim our attention. The above statement of Ekier is astonishing indeed; probably, when he examined these measures, had given his hearing a rest. The mistake of the engraver—this is the matter—does not improve the passage at all, but

worsens it in an awkward way. To ascribe straight away to Chopin this nasty ‘improvement’—as Ekier does—is really baffling. The observations of Rudorff, who had got the approval of Brahms, of course, are impeccable: “Here there must be an oversight of the copyist or engraver, because it is difficult to think that Chopin has later on added in the left hand the chords (we put in brackets), which are only a hindrance to a free execution and, moreover, are not in the parallel



passages on p. 9, mm. 9 and 10 [= *mm.* 203÷204]. In m. 3 on p. 5 [= *m.* 105], instead, where the autograph has in the lower staff a rest even on the sixth fourth, the chord, which has been also admitted in (our) new edition, must certainly have been added by the composer himself. Firstly, this addition is here musically relevant, because the coined chord introduces in a better way what follows; secondly, it is justified by the fact that the right hand plays the same time the chord *F-sharp/D-sharp/C* (while in both the preceding measures there is a rest on the sixth fourth); lastly, the vertical squiggle, which could hardly be ascribed to a proofreader, suggests the direct participation of Chopin.” There is nothing to be added. Müllemann (*HN*), without quoting Rudorff, summarizes what the latter thought.

110÷111. In order to avoid the difficulty, all the pianists we have heard are used to perform the octaves without the dotted whole note, which, instead, must be kept down.

119. Müllemann in a footnote (p. 6) wonders: “♯ with *g*<sup>2</sup> or *g*<sup>♯2</sup>? See *Comments*.” Then, in the *Comments* he specifies: “A lacks ♯ on ♯. Added in M 123 of F, but not in M 119,” but he does not resolve the doubt. Rudorff, rightly, follows F. Bronarski, instead, adds a ♯ here too, but he does not say a word about his choice. Samson summarizes what Ekier rightly maintains. In our opinion Chopin added a sharp on the mordent of m. 123 just to avoid a pianist could perform both the mordents in the same way; in other words, the addition of ♯ in m. 123 confirms that in m. 119 the mordent has to be played with a *G* natural.

128÷129. In the fingering suggested by us the missing numbers are the same you read in the Mikuli’s fingering. Although at first glance it may sound bizarre and uncomfortable, actually, being based on the repetition of the sequence 1 3 2 5, it will turn out to be easier for your mind, easier to be applied, allowing the hand to stay relaxed.

134÷135. Because of the repetition of the initial *C*<sup>b6</sup> the version of *A*, changed later, is less valuable:



145. Rightly Rudorff observes: “There is no doubt that the composer himself replaced the former text with the more fluent and playable solution we read in Brandus’ edition.”

146÷148. In m. 146 of *A* (here below) on the second octave in l. h. it seems there is a *staccato*-dot. No editor mentions that, perhaps because that dot is in an unusual position; by chance, however, it is very appropriate. We think that Chopin added it without too much attention and this is the reason, because of which it is poorly placed; then the composer forgot to add a similar dot in mm. 147 and 148. — As for the fingering, you could hardly find another one more Chopinian than that suggested by Mikuli.



156 & 157. Like Rudorff, we think it was the engraver who omitted the accents in l. h. The editors, instead, are inclined not to deny that Chopin deleted them while proofreading.

165. In *A* *C*<sup>b2</sup> has no accent, but a *fz*, which was very likely changed by Chopin to avoid the repetition of the *fz* at the beginning of m. 166.

170÷172. In these measures Chopin employs a typical *bel canto* figure: a turn preparing a “*picchiettato*”. Some chopinologists, instead of ‘figure’ have introduced the term ‘gesture’; but we never saw the arms, the legs and so on, of a music note!

171. Because of the editors’ blindness reams have been written about this measure. Gastone Belotti, in a way a qualified and meritorious chopinologist, making one of his blunders (*cf.* G. BELOTTI, *Il problema del testo autentico delle opere di F. Chopin*, in “*Quadrivium*” XVII [1976] n. 12), maintained that F2 “writes out exactly” the text of the autograph! Rudorff, instead, a century before Belotti, had realized that the reading of F2 “is undoubtedly wrong. However—he adds—, if here we have a late Chopin’s correction, by which the composer would have modelled the passage on both



the preceding and following measure, and the engraver misunderstood it, this must be left in doubt”. Rudorff would solve the problem, if he was aware of *G*<sub>4</sub>. Mikuli (on the left) corrected first the text of

F2 and, having realized that its reading was wrong, put on one side the Rudorff's scruples and arranged the text according to the previous and following measure. Ekier in *UT* follows *A*, being persuaded that the reading of F2 was due to the engraver; but, forced by the Grabowski's evidences (cf. GRAB.[1996] p. 226s.), in *WN* he turns the tables and agrees with Mikuli's solution, which is played by all the pianists, unaware of the true reading. Samson, who seems not to know G4 (!?), comes back to "a publisher's error, corrected in the present edition;" actually, he follows Mikuli. Müllermann, who quotes G4 too, does not realize anything.

But let us take a look at the four readings:

As already said, G1 was based on the corrected proofs of F1 and, consequently, agrees with F1. G4—as its collation has shown—was based on G1, but with the exception of this measure. Well, from where comes out this reading? See above, p. viia. The collation of m. 171 in F2 and G4 proves without any doubt that their source is the same. The Parisian engraver did not misunderstand the Chopin's correction; he simply made a common mistake, i.e. he forgot to change *D*<sup>s</sup> (circuited in the example) in *F*<sup>s</sup>: once made this correction, the two editions perfectly agree, and one testifies for the other. It is disappointing to have to realize the editors' obtuseness.

173. Some editors give as variant the text of *A*, which over *Ab*<sup>s</sup> has a mordent instead of an "acciaccatura". From a philological point of view, though, there is no variant. However, since in *A* Chopin writes at first an *acciaccatura*, then deletes it for a mordent and, at last, while proofreading, changes again his mind, the performing of the mordent is justified. Since the mordent is a patently vocal embellishment, it will be the mood of the 'singer' to decide there and then. What is important to emphasize is how such embellishment has to be

performed. To explain the performance of the *appoggiaturas*—the *acciaccatura*, in fact, is more instrumental than vocal—, Chopin wrote two *Etudes*, i.e. Nos. 3 and 5 Op. 25. But the pianists seem to ignore that—and the bel canto too! So, here is our suggestion:

182. The integration of the pedal is admissible, ma not certain: the excitement, before coming back in m. 184, is placating and, therefore, the omission of the pedal might not an oversight.

190÷192. The source of one of the two fingerings given by Mikuli—the one over the notes, in our opinion—is almost certainly Marcelina Czartoriska.

194-196-198. According to Ekier the short lines in F2<sup>D</sup> under the C<sup>4</sup>s would be "accents in the form of short lines, rarely used by Chopin." On the contrary, we think they are not accents, but warning indications: probably, Camille Dubois—like many pianists today—neglected a little those Cs and favoured the subsequent notes.

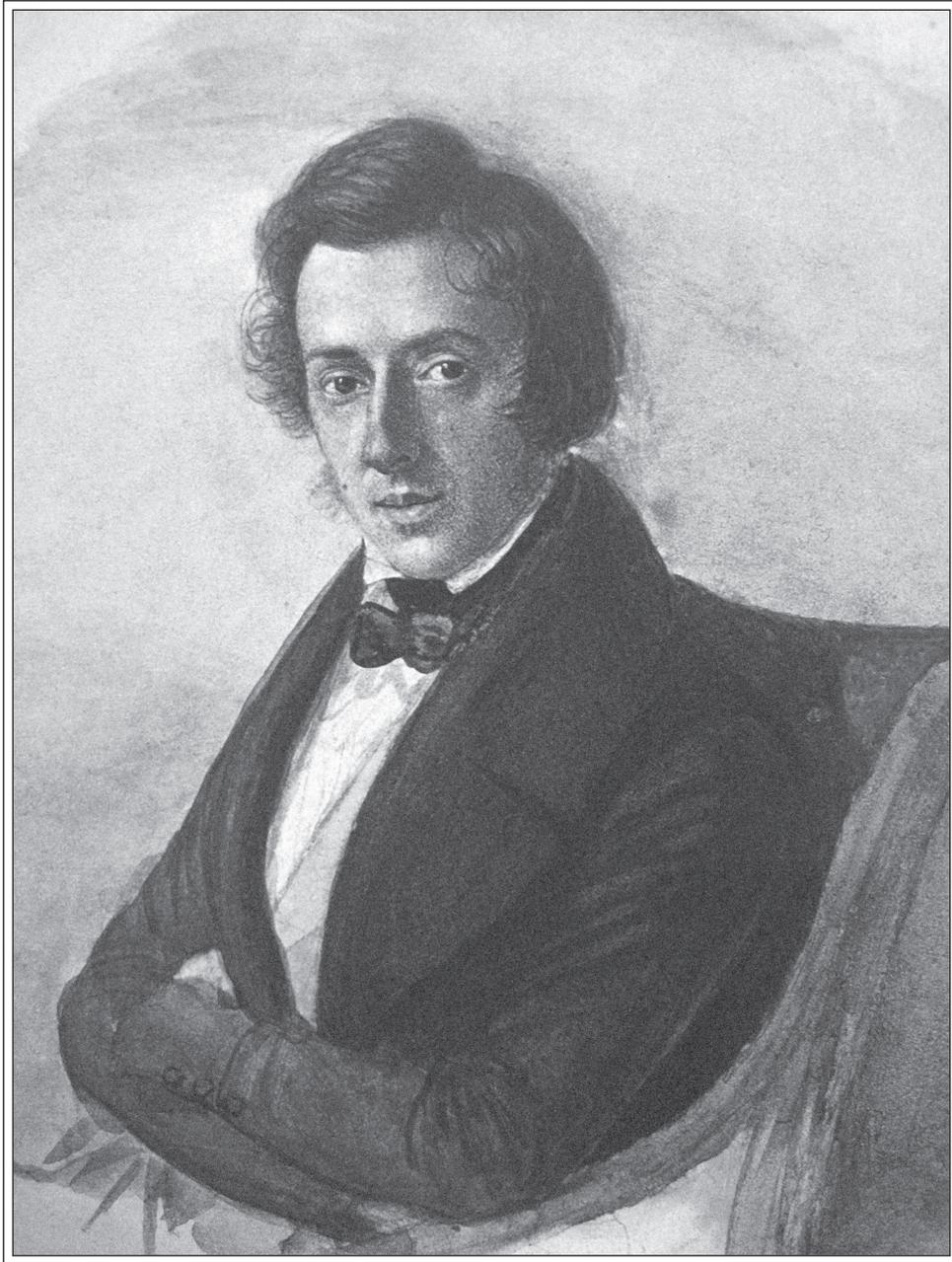
221. *BH*<sup>cw</sup>, *PW*, *UT*, *WN*, and *PE* add the pedalling, but it is an error. When in the l. h. there are minims or whole notes to be kept down by the fifth finger, rarely Chopin uses the pedal.

236. Although we have followed *A*, the omission of the accent over the first sixth (r. h.) may not be a negligence of the engraver.

238. While proofreading Chopin deleted both *ff* we see in *A* and *sz* in m. 242, which was replaced by an accent. Very likely Chopin, among accents and *crescendos*, thought it right to be less categorical and to leave to the performer the arrangement of the dynamics of this overpowering finale.

259. As Rudorff rightly observed, "the opposed diagonal lines in the last three fourths grouped together in a triplet on p. 11, m. 15 [= m. 259], are in the autograph just like that: perhaps this kind of sign—which once indicated usually the *arpeggio*—should mean a gradual transition from the broken octaves to octaves perfectly united." The fact that these diagonal lines are missing in F—a probable oversight of the engraver—does not change anything for those performers who feel how to mix the meaning of the *appoggiaturas* with the expression *accelerando*.





*Chopin in 1836.*  
*[Watercolour by Maria Wodzińska.]*