

Commentary

Frontispiece. We display the title page of **F1**, which does not differ from **F2**, nor in the price, which is 5^f, cf. *ACCFE* p. 310 and Plate no. 118, p. 704; **FP** has no title page. As for **G**, not depending on the meagre indications in *C^g*, cf. *ibid.* p. 312 and Plate no. 119, p. 705. On the frontispiece of **E**, with no dedication, cf. *ibid.* p. 314 (about the title pages of the first editions by Wessel, see GRAB.[2001]).

1. In the music syntax a sentence is accomplished in four measures—no matter if the time is binary, ternary or mixed—; whence a musical period unwinds four by four measures (the universal cause of such a necessity cannot be covered here). This means that mm. 9, 13 or 17 do begin a new sentence. Since the squaring of the *Andantino* is perfect, we have to check in which measures a new sentence is beginning. Well the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th sentences start with the following measures:



Since the correspondence is perfect, we have to deduce that the numbers of these measures are 5, 9, 13, and 17. The last five measures contain the *coda* of 4 mm. + 1 m. for the *cadenza*, which ends the *Andantino*. Some editors attribute to the initial three octaves—which actually are an anacrusis without beat—the title of 1st measure, albeit incomplete, and so upset the syntax of the piece. It is as if a simple period like “Now I eat some bread, because I am hungry,” were upset this way, “Now I eat some. Bread, because I. Am hungry...” Previously Chopin had written:



But, realizing that the first sentence would be a monster of five measures, he deleted the first two octaves. Just a musician without any sense of squaring, *i. e.* without any musicianship, can conceive to consider an anacrusis as if it were a complete measure. However, if the conductors have inverted, against every law of nature, the movements of their baton, no wonder at all. In these times most of musicians and/or musicologists look like Etruscologists, who know everything about the Etruscan language and pompously teach it from their university chairs. There is only one little flaw: they cannot translate it!

18. As we have stated elsewhere, in Chopin the vertical slur and the vertical squiggle are not at all equiva-

lent, as many editors think. The *Etude op. 25 no. 3* teaches the correct performance of the *appoggiatura*:



20. The vertical squiggle, unlike the vertical slur (see m. 18), suggests the following performance:



46ff. The fingering of the *legato* octaves is given following the principles set by Chopin himself in the *Etude op. 25 no. 10*.

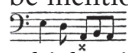

52. The reading of **F** is not a *varia lectio*. While preparing **A**, which is a copy of ***aA**, Chopin, reaching m. 52, began copying ***aA** and wrote out *A⁺-F[♯]* (*v. supra*, p. v1b). But he immediately recalled that he was not satisfied; then, he went to his piano and changed *F[♯]* into *E^b*. Subsequently, while revising *C^g*, he met again that passage and the discontent reappeared. Eventually, he found the desired solution. Here, therefore, there is no variant.

53. Ernst Rudorff—one of the working editors of the famous first edition of Chopin provided with *Revisionsberichte*, published by Breitkopf (Leipzig 1878-1902)—during the preliminary work wrote to Brahms, another member of the editorial board, about three dubious places, the second of which relates to this measure. He writes: “In the 8th measure of the immediately following Presto the left hand has:



“Here the editions agree with the copy before my eyes. Nevertheless, I think probably there is a mistake made by Chopin and the passage had been thought as follows:



“Do you think that this conjecture is so sure that it can be inserted in the text?” The reply of Brahms deserves to be mentioned: “(I would leave as it is...) this *A* too,  which in a way corresponds to  which will come after.”³⁰ Such an observation shows how extraordinary was the musical sensitivity of the German composer. This is the origin of the wrong reading you find in some editions. However, Rudorff did not give up and on p. 4 of the *Revisionsbericht* to the *Ballades* (1879) annotates: “On page 4, measure 8,

³⁰ Cf. FRANZ ZAGIBA, *Chopin und Wien*, Wien (H. Bauer-Verlag) 1951, pp. 128 and 130 (due to an editorial accident the music examples on p. 128 are wrongly reversed).

there is a strong suspicion that the third octave of the left hand should be C instead of A, as the Moscow edition has already amended; the original documents, though, are opposed to that.” Evidently Rudorff was not gifted enough to understand the refined observation of Brahms!

80. Given that, in principle, a very elastic hand, relaxed and fully resting on the keyboard can use any finger anywhere, a good fingering, especially if it wants to be Chopinesque, has to avoid any unnecessary contraction that would alter the quality of the touch. Since Mikuli’s fingering uses here the thumb in an uncomfortable position, we have proposed a much more Chopinian solution, which, besides, is more suitable to the passage.

85. From this measure, where **Mk** adds a second slur (see apparatus), Mikuli moves the slurs in order to graphically emphasize the ternary waving. See, for example, mm. 101÷104 (l.h.):



One is induced to think that Mikuli studied this *Balade*—perhaps the most ‘Polish’ one—with his Master, but also that the latter insisted on rhythm.

92. We have proposed the **Mk**’s variant, because it is very Chopinesque indeed. In our opinion, the particular attention devoted by Mikuli to this piece is justified only assuming that he studied this *Ballade* with his Master (cf. m. 85).

95÷98. Very likely the pedalling of these measures was added subsequently at a desk, not at the piano, since it is entirely against Chopin’s way. As a matter of fact, it creates disharmonic sound effects that Chopin would never tolerate. Yet in *A* the handwriting is his! He was quite absent-minded, cf. mm. 101÷103.

100. Here we have one example—we shall find others in the *Etudes*—where Mikuli changes arbitrarily the text to make proportional what according the music grammar is not.

101÷103. Here too, the pedalling was added through an oversight. In fact, in the parallel passage—see mm. 126÷128—there is no pedalling. **Mk** rightly deletes it. On the other hand, have a look at the accuracy of the pedal release in mm. 119 and 121.

105. **WN** and **PE** consider the reading of *A* as *varia lectio* and insert it in the main text. But there is no variant. First of all, the tie between G^b ’s is clearly

erased (see apparatus) and Gutmann does not write out it. Second, that text had been thought for a different role of the left hand. Here are the steps. Chopin initially copied the text of **aA*—which we still can see beneath the erasure we have removed (here on the right)—, but, not being satisfied, went to the piano and modified it: he turned the first D^b into a dotted minim, changed the last three quavers in the left hand, and then deleted the tie between G^b ’s. Such a deletion is explained well and only if the second G^b had to be changed in *F*. For some trivial reason Chopin’s attention was diverted and he did not, but he did while proofreading. In other words, the alleged *varia lectio* of *A* makes sense only if the left hand plays the primitive text of **aA*.



109. Philologically speaking, the reading of **E** (<*A*/**C^aA*) should be considered a *varia lectio*, but, having been corrected both in *C^G* (<**aA/A*) and in **F1** (<**FP**), we prefer to consider it an outdated *lectio*.

110÷111. Chopin deleted the tie attached to the octave B^b ’- B^b ’ presumably while proofreading **FP**, but someone restored it in **F2**. If it was Chopin himself who deleted that tie in **FP**, he did that by absent-mindedness, because aesthetically the *lectio* with the tie is decidedly preferable.

123. In *A* the minim (C^4 , cf. apparatus) is puzzling, because it alters the timing. However, C^G (> **G**) is much more stunning, because the dotted crotchet, written initially by Gutmann (the engraver of **FP** made the same), was ‘corrected’ again into minim presumably by Chopin himself. The editors ignore such difficulty, but we cannot pass it over in silence. The only solution we see is the following, which, however, may not be considered a *varia lectio*, but a merely hypothetical *varia lectio*:

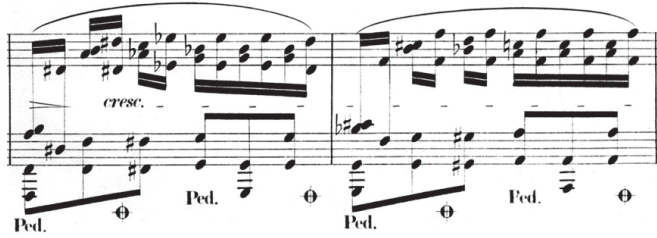


123÷124. The tie between G^b ’s, omitted in **FP**—perhaps through an engraver’s oversight or because the antigraph was not *A*—and not restored by Chopin during proofreading, was added in **F2**. However, since it is missing in **E** too, this corroborates the relationships established in our *stemma*.

124. The editors—but not **Mk**—by analogy with mm. 99÷100 and 105÷106 arbitrarily add a G^2 . It is not a senseless integration, but it is based only on a not at all provable, though legitimate, presumption.

125. The composer himself somehow wanted the *varia lectio*: in fact, the \flat is as clear in *A* as the \natural in *C^G*, where, no doubt, it was Chopin who wrote it.

184÷185. Here we give an example of the unbecoming initiative of the German speaking correctors, who—as we have seen elsewhere—arrogate the right to lay hands on the text. If there were no autograph, no Gutmann’s copy, no French and English editions, but only G, look at the horrors we should ascribe to Chopin:



188÷189, 192÷193. We believe may be of some interest the comments of Saint-Saëns to these measures:


“Let us turn to the most interesting part of the manuscript. In mm. 21 and 22, 25 and 26 of the *Agitato* we find these beautiful movements of the bass:



which were modified as follows:



“Some purists will have pointed out that the left hand did not agree with the right one; which actually, in a rapid movement like this, did not procure any hitch.

“This motion  had never satisfied me, but I did not know why. I understood it after having read the manuscript and realized that the author had made a regrettable correction” (cf. *TMC* p. 24).

201÷203. We preferred the corrected end of \mathcal{A} (= E), because is the only solution not undermined by doubts. Ekier (*WN*) sees two kinds of end: a “close” version (\mathcal{A} and F1) and an “open” one (\mathcal{A} , before its modification, and C⁶). We, however, prefer to consider the music side: so, there is an end, that of \mathcal{A} , which does not break the spell (it will be broken by comments or the applause of the audience), and the other three versions, where it is the performer who, as it were, pulls out the plug. Well, Chopin looked for an impossible solution, that is tried to get both. In our opinion, the corrected end of \mathcal{A} (= E) is musically perfect.

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Here is a further interesting remark of Saint-Saëns: “Through the manuscript we are dealing with, we can see how Chopin was sparing in the use of the pedal; in many passages where he had indicated it, then it was cancelled. If it is frequently inserted in his works, it is because he did not want the pedal to be used at a wrong moment. To do without this aid is not easy; for many it would be even impossible, being so spread the over-use of this medium. A performance without pedalling requires a softness in the hands, of which not all are capable, even if they are highly gifted” (cf. *TMC* p. 25s.).



Appendix:
Schumann and the second Ballade

THE review written by Schumann in 1841 (*v. infra*) gave rise to a number of speculations such as to impose a re-examination of the documents.

The meeting.

On September 8, 1836 Schumann writes to Chopin: “Dear and Honoured Sir, You need only write the one word ‘Yes’ or get someone to write it for you in answer to the question whether, as I have just heard, you are in Dresden or not. Being on the point of returning home via Dresden, I would never forgive myself if I had been anywhere near Your Magnificence without giving a sign of my love and respect. I beg you most longingly to say Yes and to give me your address. Your devoted Robert Schumann. Mendelssohn will be back here in 8 days.”¹

The previous year, in fact, Chopin, on his way home from Karlsbad, had stopped in Leipzig on September 27, 1835 for a day, but on that occasion he had not met Schumann, but Friedrich Wieck, the latter’s daughter, Clara, and Mendelssohn;² hence the pressing call.

Now, because of the fancifulnesses expressed by biographers and chopinologists, we must carefully read the diary of Schumann of September 12, 1836:³

“On 12th early in the morning Chopin, Nowakowsky, Raimund Härtel. (I told him [*i.e.* Chopin] that) “his Ballade I like best of all”. I am very glad of that; I am very glad of that. Does not like his works being discussed. Complete excitement [?].⁴ With him on the tailor Heise, “The overcoat is good, but the price is bad”. Taken to W(ieck)’s home. After <having been at> table, <we went> to Eleonora. The meeting of the day before is borne out...⁵ At Dr. Härtel’s. His playing according to Mendelssohn (*sein Spielen für Mendelssohn*).⁶ It was stirring just to watch him at the keyboard. New Etudes in C minor, in A flat major—in F minor—old Mazurka in B flat—two new ones—new Ballade (*neue Ballade*)—Nocturne in D flat. About Liszt he tells extraordinary things. He [*scil.* Chopin] says he never makes corrections, can never see misprints; Liszt<, instead,> overdoes; he can throw into raptures by playing on any ramshackle piano. At Raimund

H.(ärtel’s). His (= of Chopin) pupil Gutmann <is> among the Portugal king’s suite in Heidelberg. Admirable performance on a new piano built in French style. Etude in E minor, if I am not wrong, and two of the aforementioned ones. —I offer him Sonata and Etudes by me, <Chopin> gives me the Ballade. —<The time to> pack <has come>. Post (= stagecoach). By artifice <I> brought <him> to Eleonora. New Nocturne played, Etude in C minor, in F minor, in A flat major (as above) and a charming one in pure arpeggios in C major.⁷ Departure. He left.”

Two days after making Chopin’s acquaintance, Schumann writes to Heinrich Dorn, a former teacher:

“My dearest Sir, just as I had received, the day before yesterday, your letter, which <now> I want to answer, who came in? — Chopin. That was a great pleasure. We spent a delightful day, which I was still celebrating yesterday too.⁸ [...] By Chopin I have a new Ballade (*Von Chopin habe ich eine neue Ballade*). It seems to me his most imaginative work (not of greatest genius) (*sein genialistisches (nicht genialstes) Werk*);⁹ I also told him I liked it best of all. After long consideration he said with great conviction: ‘I am glad, (because) it is my favourite too.’ He played besides a number of Etudes, Nocturnes, Mazurkas—all incomparably. It is touching just to see him at the piano. You would love him very much.” (Cf. *Robert Schumanns Briefe – Neue Folge*, hg. von J. Gustav Jansen, Leipzig [Breitkopf und Härtel] 1904, p. 77f.).

There is no doubt that the mentioned *Ballade* is the *Op.* 23, and this is confirmed by the exchange of the scores. In contrast, the brief news published by the “*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*” of September 16, 1836¹⁰ leads to think that Chopin had carried with him not only the printed scores of some compositions, but also some manuscripts of the ones not yet published. If, in fact, with “new Etudes (*neue Etüden*)” Schumann meant ‘not those from *Op.* 10’,¹¹ the cited keys make reference to nos. 12, 1, and 2 from *Op.* 25, not yet printed. As for the *Ballade*, it is called “new (*neue*)” because of its recent issue.¹² In his letter to Dorn, Schumann repeats the adjective ‘new,’ clearly referring to the printed edition (*habe ich*).

It is evident that there is no reference to the sec-

¹ Cf. M. KARLOWICZ, *Souvenirs inédits de Frédéric Chopin*, tr. par L. Disière, Paris (H. Welter) 1904, p. 181.

² Cf. Mendelssohn’s letter of October 6, 1835, in *Briefe aus den Jahren 1830 bis 1847*, hg. von Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy und Prof. Dr. Carl Mendelssohn Bartholdy, I-II, Leipzig (Hermann Mendelssohn) 1899, II p. 64f.

³ Cf. Sch. *Tb.* II p. 25.

⁴ Eigeldinger translates “warm and whole agreement (*entente chaleureuse et totale*)” (cf. EIGELD. [2006] p. 340). The *Tagebücher’s* German editor reads “Durchwärmung [?] durch un durch,” but adds a question mark after *Durchwärmung*, because the reading is not sure. Since *durchwärmen* means ‘to warm up’, we think Schumann would mean that Chopin, playing his way, had warmed up the atmosphere, metaphorically of course!

⁵ According to the editor the subsequent word is illegible.

⁶ Eigeldinger translates, “Chopin plays for Mendelssohn (*joue pour M.*)” (*ibid.*), but Mendelssohn was not there: he would have come back after 16th (*see above*, “in 8 days”). Moreover, ‘sein Spielen’ is not the same as ‘spielt’. If it is true that ‘für’ often means ‘for’, *i.e.* ‘in favour of’, it may also mean ‘in the opinion of’. Probably Schumann had reported to Chopin how Mendelssohn, the year before, had been impressed by the Pole’s playing.

⁷ *V. infra*.

⁸ ‘Yesterday’ (September 13) was the birthday of Clara Wieck.

⁹ The passage has been variously translated. To understand the difference between ‘genial’ and ‘genialisch,’ untranslatable into English, consider the following example: ‘Even if Tom is not a genius (*genial*), he is still very much alike (*genialisch*).’

¹⁰ Cf. p. 94: “Chopin was a day in Leipzig: he carried with him [brachte... mit] new sublime Etudes, Nocturnes, Mazurkas, a new Ballade and other. He played a lot and in a really impressive way.” Mind you: ‘a new Ballade’, not ‘two Ballades’ or, generically, ‘Ballades’!

¹¹ Which is plausible, because ‘neue’ was inserted later (cf. Sch. *Tb.* II p. 25 n. 15).

¹² In no. 9 of the “*Intelligenz-Blatt zur allgemeinen musikalischen Zeitung*” of July, attached to no. 28 of the “*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*” of July 13, 1836 we read (c. 51): “Our publishing house will issue before long: / Chopin, Fr., Grande Polonaise pour Piano avec Orchestre. *Op.* 22. / — Ballade pour Piano. *Op.* 23. / — 2 Ballades [*sic!*] pour Piano. *Op.* 26;” then, after Schunke and Meyerbeer, again Chopin: it is announced the imminent publication of the

ond *Ballade*! If Chopin had played a second ballade, Schumann, a critical spirit indeed, could not be silent and, expressing to Dorn his own judgement on the *Op.* 23, would certainly not refrained from comparing the two *Ballades*.¹³ Actually, the unequivocal opinion manifested to Dorn about the first *Ballade* makes improbable the silence about the second one. Even the preference given to the first clashes with the presence of the second, because, the genre being the same, the comparison with *all* the other works (unter allen Werken) would fall into the background, whereas that with the *other Ballade* would stick out a mile.

Nevertheless, misled by an annotation to ‘neue Ballade’ of the editor of the Schumann’s *Tagebücher*,¹⁴ the chopinologists believe that Chopin played to Schumann also (or only!) the second *Ballade*: he would have performed it at Härtel’s between the “two new” Etudes and the Nocturne in *D* flat (*v. supra*). Here is Nauhaus’s annotation: “Here probably (*wahrscheinlich*) there is a reference to the Ballade in *F* major *Op.* 38 printed in a revised version in 1840 and dedicated to Schumann—the first version had been composed in 1836.¹⁵ Schumann recalls the differences between the two versions in the article titled ‘Shorter pieces for piano’ written in 1841. Such annotation of Nauhaus proves in a patent way how the documents can be misinterpreted. As a matter of fact, the comparison of the diary of September 12 with the letter to Dorn of 14th and the news given by “NZfM” on 16th does not consent any “probably,” since there is no reference at all to a second ballade. Whoever wants to see behind the expression ‘new Ballade’ a performance of the second *Ballade*, distorts the documents indelicately. In our opinion Nauhaus, knowing the review of 1841 but not admitting that Schumann could be mistaken, searched desperately in the diary of September 12 something to cling to and unreasonably found it in the expression ‘neue Ballade,’ which, instead, must be referred to *Op.* 23 only just published.

We also have a brief report by Friedrich Wieck in the diary of her daughter Clara:

4-hands version of his *Opp.* 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 26 (this time with the right title ‘Deux Polonoises’). From the issue of September 7, 1836 of “AMZ” you realize that the *Ballade Op.* 23 has been already published. In France, the “RGM” of July 31, 1836, p. 274, writes the *Ballade* is on sale at 7 and a half francs.

¹³ Karasowski, in fact, in the completely rewritten new edition of his biography, believes that the “new Ballade” in the letter to Dorn is the *Op.* 38 (*cf.* M. KARASOWSKI, *Friedrich Chopin. Sein Leben und seine Briefe*, neue Ausgabe, Berlin [Verlag von Ries & Erler] *s.d.*, p. 177 n. 1), but Bronarski challenges his opinion (*cf.* L. BRONARSKI, *Études sur Chopin*, II, Lausanne [Éditions La Concorde] 1946, p. 116 n. 3).

¹⁴ *Cf.* Sch. *Tb.* II p. 455 n. 19.

¹⁵ The editor of the Italian translation goes even too far and remarks: “... *Ballade in F major*, *Op.* 38, published for the first time in 1838 and then revised in a new edition in 1840...” (*cf.* R. SCHUMANN - CL. WIECK, *Casa Schumann. Diari 1841-1844*, Torino [E.D.T.] 1998, p. 13). Where would he have seen that edition of 1838?

“On 12th Chopin caught us by surprise and listened to the whole <Clara’s> *Op.* 5 and 2 Mazurkas and the *Ballade* from *Op.* 6 as well as the *Op.* 7. He was enchanted and enthusiastic and seems impressed by us. He was very unwell; in Dresden he let nobody visit him; here, he came and saw Schumann only, took with him *Op.* 5 and in return left to Clara an album leaf.”¹⁶

Therefore, at Wiecks’ Chopin—it would seem that—did not play anything: probably, the Wiecks, seeing him unwell, had the decency, unlike Schumann, not to strain him. Litzmann, who consulted the not yet published diary of Clara, writes: “Of the year 1836 we still have to recall two important visits, the one by Spohr and the other by Chopin. [...] Chopin’s visit cheered up and at the same time saddened her: she found him ailing more than ever. She played her *Opp.* 5 and 6, as well as her Concerto *Op.* 7, which he listened to. Carrying her *Op.* 5—to which he had particularly thrilled—under his arm, he took leave emotionally, leaving in return an album leaf.”¹⁷

The review of the Etudes Op. 25.

A year later, in the issue of December 22, 1837 of “NZfM” (p. 199f.), Schumann published his review of the *Etudes Op.* 25, issued two months before:

“[...] In these Etudes, I have the additional advantage of having heard Chopin himself play nearly all of them, and ‘very much *à la Chopin* he plays them,’ whispered Florestan in my ear.”

The famous description of the first *Etude* in *A* flat follows (“Imagine an aeolian harp...”), and you find some remarks about the performance, too:

“It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that he allowed us to hear every one of its small notes. It was rather an undulation of the *A* flat major chord revived every now and again by the pedal. But through the harmonic waves one heard a wondrous melody full-voiced, and it was only in the middle section that a tenor voice distinctly emerged from the chords in conjunction with that main theme. After the *Etude* it feels as though you have just seen a blissful picture in a dream, which you, already half awake, would like to seize again; but it is hard to talk about, and any praise would have been out of place. Uninterruptedly he went on to the other, in *F* minor, the second in the book, again an *Etude* whose individuality remains impressed in an unforgettable manner, so charming, dreamy, and soft, like a singing of a sleeping child. That in *F* major followed, fine again, but less original in character than in figuration; the object here was, first of all, the bravura display, the most amiable; and we had to compliment the master on that.”

Then, Schumann-*Eusebius* gives an opinion on both books in comparison:

“Nevertheless, not to suppress my most frank opinion, the im-

¹⁶ *Cf.* Sch. *Tb.* II p. 455 n. 18. — *Op.* 6 consists of 6 pieces: 1. Toccata, 2. Notturmo, 3. Mazurca in *G* minor, 4. Ballata, 5. Mazurca in *G* major, 6. Polonoise.

¹⁷ Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann. Ein Künstlerleben nach Tagebüchern und Briefen*, I, Leipzig (Breitkopf und Härtel) 1903, p. 105.

portance of the earlier large collection seems on the whole more relevant to me.”

Finally, he states that almost all *Etudes* were composed within the same period of time, except the most recent ones as the first and “the last, magnificent in C minor (die letzte prächtige in C-Moll)” of *Op. 25*.

What do we get from such a review written one year after Chopin’s acquaintance?

1. A well concealed reservation about the piano playing, “very much *à la Chopin*.”
2. As in the diary of 12th, three *Etudes* are quoted, two of which he heard three times: at Dr. Härtel’s, Raimund H.’s, and Eleonora’s, where, though, the *Etude* in *F* minor preceded that in *A* flat major. One of them, instead, presumably that in *C* minor, was heard twice: at Dr. Härtel’s and Eleonora’s.
3. If, on one hand, he cites the *Etude* no. 3 in *F* major, not mentioned in the diary, on the other, he ignores the one in *E* minor (“if I am not wrong [*irr ich nicht*]”).
4. While in the letter to Dorn Schumann writes summarily that Chopin played “a number of *Etudes*, *Nocturnes*, *Mazurkas*,” here he says he heard “nearly all of them.”
5. Nothing is said about the charming *Etude* “in pure arpeggios in *C* major (*in reinen Harpeggien in C-Dur*).”
6. The collection of *Op. 10* is better than *Op. 25*.

From the above, what can we remark in the light of both the diary of 12th and the letter to Dorn?

1. In the letter, having said that Chopin had performed every piece «incomparably (unvergleichlich)», Schumann adds: “But Clara is a greater virtuoso (größere Virtuofin) and gives almost more meaning to his compositions than he does.” The German writer, though, is not content with praising Clara Wieck and continues: “Imagine the perfection, a mastery which is almost inconceivable by oneself [= *without having heard her play*].” Then, in the issue of April 10, 1840 of “NZfM” (p. 118), with regard to Liszt, Schumann writes: “Next to Liszt there is certainly Chopin as a performer, who does not give in to him at all at least as for fairylike softness and grace (Näher an Liszt steht schon Chopin als Spieler, der ihm wenigstens an feenhafter Zartheit und Grazie nichts nachgibt).” And just ahead (p. 119): “But I should like to sacrifice the prodigious and fearless bravura, which he [*scil.* Liszt] showed here, to the enchanting softness how it has manifested itself in the subsequent *Etude*. Chopin excepted, no one, as I said, as far as I know, could equal him in this (Chopin ausgenommen, wüßte ich, wie gesagt, Niemanden, der ihm hierin gleichkäme).”

Now let us look at what Clara wrote in the diary of September 22, 1840: “I have a dangerous rival, *i.e.* miss *Rieffel*. As I could deduce from one of <his> externalizations, Robert listens for his compositions more willingly when played by her than by me—which is running enough through my mind. He said she plays things with grater accuracy; this may be true, because I consider first of all the whole and, therefore, do not mind several small but important accents, which are many in Robert’s compositions—it can be said that almost every note has its own meaning. I place the performance before the composition and this should not be any longer. I will endeavour to satisfy his ideal.”¹⁸ Where did Clara’s absolute perfection end up? Does Schumann contradict himself maybe? Not exactly, because, when he is writing, always bears in mind—like George Sand—the recipient, in order to steer him/her, and does that with a subtle skill. To be more explicit, Schumann wanted Dorn to be aware of the unconditional admiration and even adoration he felt for Clara.

- 2.3.4. There is no doubt that Schumann heard the *Etudes* nos. 1, 2, and 12 from *Op. 25* played by Chopin. What is clashing it that in the diary is mentioned an *Etude* of doubtful key—perhaps in *E* minor—, but not the third in *F* major, which, moreover, would have been appreciated thanks to the performer’s bravura. Let us admit that, beside *Etudes* nos. 1, 2, and 12, Schumann also heard the third and another one: well, they are five, not “nearly all of them.”
- 5.6. Schumann mentioned the *Etudes Op. 10*, giving the impression to know them, in his article “The piano *Etudes* ordered by purposes”. To help the students to choose the etudes more suitable, in the issue of “NZfM” of February 6, 1836 (p. 45f.) he publishes an interesting chart, where he enters 28 kinds of difficulties and for each of them points out the suitable etudes drawn from 21 collections composed by 21 different authors, from Bach to Schumann himself; moreover, an asterisk beside the number indicates the pieces having poetic character (Die mit einem * bezeichneten Nummern haben überdem einen poetischen Charakter). The *Etudes Op. 10* by Chopin are distributed under 7 types of difficulties:

Speed and lightness (fingers’ nimble movement, soft touch).

Right hand: 4*, 5* (only on black keys), 8*. Left hand: 12*.

Melody and accompaniment, both performed by one only hand: 3*, 6*.

¹⁸ Cf. *Sch.Tb.* II p. 104.

(Keys') firm striking, chords' rapid exchange: 11*.
 Stretches. Right hand: 1*. Left hand: 9*. Both hands: 11*.
 Fingers' and hands' exchange on the same key: 7* (dyads
 in couples).
 Chromatic scales with support notes: 2.
 Difficult accentuation, times' counterpointed division: 10*.

All the *Etudes Op.* 10 are mentioned. The no. 2 is the only one without asterisk, even if it is the most dazzling evidence of the Chopin's genius!

That said, how might one consider the diary of September 12—that is seven months later? At Eleonora's, in fact, Chopin played “a charming (*Etude*) in pure arpeggios in C major.” Among the ‘new’ *Etudes*, i.e. those of *Op.* 25, there is none in C major, least of all “in pure arpeggios” (we leave out no. 12 which consists of broken arpeggios). Even if the attribute of “charming (*reizend*),” or graceful or lovely, is not so suited to the first *Etude*—which actually is impressive—the only one *Etude* in pure arpeggios is just the no. 1. It is evident—there is no other plausible hypothesis—Schumann had forgotten it! Seven months after having pointed it out as suitable for stretching the hand, he could not remember it any more!

The second Ballade.

But let us go on. Four years go by—mind you: four years. In the diary of the week from September 27 to October 4, 1840 we read: “Yesterday has been issued a new Chopin's Ballade dedicated to me; which gratifies me more than a princely honour.”¹⁹ Let aside the dedication, the annotation is very poor indeed: not a word of comment. We wonder if it is possible that Schumann, on account of the memory shown off in the review of 1841, could not remember that it was the *Ballade*, which Chopin—in the opinion of Nauhaus—had “probably” played to him four years earlier.

There is something else. Some days later, on October 7, Schumann annotates: “Today I studied industriously enough (*ziemlich fleißig*): *Ballade* of Chopin, Sonata in C major of Beethoven, *Kreisleriana* ect [sic!].”²⁰ Despite the *Ballade Op.* 38 dedicated to him was already on sale, Schumann does not feel the need to specify anything. Why? Because the second *Ballade* had not yet a place in his mind.

But back to the diary of September 12. The annotations that follow those of 12th are dated 16th; hence, the diary of 12th was presumably written between the night of 12th and the night of 15th. Well, Schumann writes that at R. Härtel's Chopin played an *Etude* in E minor, adding, “If I am not wrong (*irrich nicht*).” What? Five years later he will remember that the (not mentioned) second *Ballade* ended in F major, and the day after could he not remember the key of an *Etude*?

The review of 1841.²¹

And let us come to the text that made the chopinologists discuss so much:

“We have yet to note the Ballade as a remarkable piece. Chopin has already written one under the same title, one of his wildest and most original compositions; the new one is different (*die neue ist anders*), as a work of art inferior to the first, but hardly less fantastic and inventive. The passionate intermediate episodes seem to have been inserted afterwards (*Die leidenschaftlichen Zwischenätze scheinen erst später hinzugekommen zu sein*). I remember very well (*ich erinnere mich sehr gut*) when Chopin played the Ballade here and it ended in F major; now, it closes in A minor. At that time he also mentioned how he was prompted to his Ballades (*zu seinen Balladen*) by some poems of Mickiewicz (*durch einige Gedichte von Mickiewitz angeregt worden sei*). Conversely, a poet might easily be inspired to find words to his music; it stirs one profoundly.”

Some remarks.

1. Schumann asserts that the ‘new’ *Ballade* is another thing in comparison with the first. Well, but such a difference had to come out right from the diary, where, instead, there is no word about any comparison.
2. The intermediate episodes “seem (*scheinen*)” to have been inserted afterwards: ‘seem’ or ‘have been’? Does he not remember them any more? So, Schumann would remember ‘very well’ that the *Ballade* ended in F major, but he has forgotten if those episodes were there or not! Moreover, Schumann's words imply that, if we cut out the intermediate episodes, we would have the first version of the *Ballade*: which is simply absurd.
3. In his diary Schumann says that Chopin “does not like his works being discussed»; nevertheless, he would have revealed that the source of inspiration for the Ballades was given by some poems of Mickiewicz. In truth, it seems very unlikely that Chopin could make such a statement. Perhaps, while making small talk, somebody named Mickiewicz, and that is all.
4. In his learned essay Bellman²² annotates that the plural “*seine Balladen*...—though it is at five years' distance from the actual conversation—is the clearest indication that the early version of op. 38 had already acquired the title a ‘Ballade’.” In our opinion, instead, the plural is because in 1841, when Schumann wrote that review, the *Ballades* were already two!

In conclusion, although the inconsistencies and the contradictions described above do not allow to say that

¹⁹ Cf. Sch. *Tb.* II p. 107.

²⁰ Cf. Sch. *Tb.* II p. 109.

²¹ Cf. “NZfM” of November 2, 1841, p. 141S.

²² Cf. JONATHAN D. BELLMAN, *Chopin's Polish Ballade Op. 38 as Narrative of National Martyrdom*, Oxford (Oxford University Press) 2010, p. 5. This is the best essay ever published on the subject. Unfortunately, however, in author's opinion the testimony of Schumann may not be questioned.

Schumann made it all up, they, however, entitle to believe that his testimony concerning the second *Balade* is completely unreliable.

*

As a proof of the inclination of Schumann as a writer to twist reality, we will quote a passage from the second paragraph of his review of the Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique*:²³

“I felt an indescribable sensation, when I glanced at the symphony for the first time. As a child often I turned upside down the scores on the music stand to give myself the pleasure of watching the webs of notes so bizarrely intertwined (as subsequently the palaces of Venice upside-down reflected in the water). The symphony looks like, being upright, to such a music turned upside down. Then, other scenes from his earliest childhood crossed the mind of these lines' writer, for example, when at dead of night, while everyone was asleep in the house, he saw himself creeping as in a dream, and with his eyes closed, to his old piano, now ruined, and playing chords and then crying. When in the <next> morning he was told about what had happened, he could recall only a dream of strange sounds and a lot of unknown things he had heard and seen, and clearly distinguished three authoritative names, one in the south, one in the east and one in the west—

Paganini, Chopin, Berlioz (Wundersam war mir zu Muthe, wie ich den ersten Blick in die Symphonie warf. Als Kind schon leg' ich oft Notensstücke verkehrt auf das Pult, um mich (wie später an den im Wasser ungestürzten Pallästen Venedigs) an den sonderbar verschlungenen Notengebäuden zu ergötzen. Die Symphonie sieht aufrecht stehend einer solchen umgestürzten Musik ähnlich. Sodann fielen dem Schreiber dieser Zeilen andre Szenen aus seiner frühesten Kindheit ein, z. B. als er sich um Spätmitternacht, wo schon Alles im Hause schlief, im Traum und mit verschlossenen Augen an sein altes, jetzt zerbrochenes Klavier geschlichen und Accorde angeschlagen und viel dazu geweint. Wie man es ihm am Morgen darauf erzählte, so erinnerte er sich nur eines seltsam klingenden Traumes und vieler fremden Dinge, die er gehört und gesehen und er unterschied deutlich drei mächtige Namen, einen in Süden, einen in Osten, und den letzten in Westen – Paganini, Chopin, Berlioz).”

Now, the fact that Schumann as a child could have distinctly seen the names of Paganini, Chopin, and Berlioz, unless we admit that he was the greatest clairvoyant in the world, is at least laughable—only the name of Schumann in the north is missing! On the other hand, for the edition of his *Gesammelte Schriften* Schumann thought to cut out this first part (signed Florestan) of his more complex and demanding review, which, besides, did not take into consideration the original score, but the Liszt's piano transcription.



²³ Cf. “NZfM” of July 3, 1835, p. 1.