

## **Towards a Vernacular Sonata [?]**

Accepting the preposition that “authentic cultural nationality” is possible, a hinted practical supposition of “unauthentic” is insinuated, lurking in the dark or straight out in the open, detectable by both, comparison and definition. The unauthentic of an insecure art, plowing through the centuries, constantly seeking reassurance from the mirror for the unattainable cardinal points of its own timid and indefinable existence.

In the mean time, from – the national French musical affairs minister by artificial cultural insemination– Jean-Baptiste Lully, expressing the French idiom, which was later exported to Germany, to the intangible Claude Debussy, the collateral artifact of the Commune of 1871, whose curious mind guided him to exotic lands instead, the French kept penetrating with sweet melodies, novelties and theoretical treatises the ears and minds – perhaps the souls too – of Europe, making the world – from Potsdam to Drottningholm and Dorpat to Saint Petersburg – the cultural suburb of Paris, which not even the industrious and factual Mikhail Kutuzov was able to successfully repel.

Having already absorbed in its enormous belly the Persian Kings and Greek heroes of Gluck and Handel along with the colonial curiosities of Gioachino Rossini and the Hungarian subtleties of Johannes Brahms, Europe completed the mosaic all the way to the 20th century with exotic fauns and Russian rites, hinting at the unspoken, albeit inevitable truth, that that which for one is national, could be exotic for the other.

In this way the cultural cloth of Europe’s existence has been embroidered with endless tales where ironically the East has kept feeding the indecipherable infatuational appetite of the West, sometimes reaping the east-of-the-west and other times the east-of-the-east as in the thousand and one nights of Rimsky-Korsakov, without realizing that going constantly towards the east one is bound to meet the west and at the end all roads, which do not lead to God, lead to Paris.

### **Noble drifters and dress fashion victims**

After one of the products of the industrial revolution, the guillotine, fell into the wrong hands, many of the nobles of France found themselves crossing the channel, constituting the first high class émigrés of the continent. Leaving in deep night in peasant disguise, during the aftermath of the French revolution could thus be considered equivalent to noble status.

In this manner, the dream of the peasants to be wearing the nobles’ garments one day becoming virtual aristocrats, had been turned around and a peasant garment was worth more than one could imagine, making all classes having similar dress preferences. Even the Versailles residents brought their taste in line with the dress code of the year in June of 1791, attempting a tour of rural France, before they were caught and brought back to Paris in sheer humiliation. In this manner the poor man’s clothes had been the official life-jacket of the French aristocracy, indispensable part of the nobles’ wardrobe ready for any crisis, for the circumstances or the day of its next use, were highly unpredictable.

### **The virtual Orangerie, Style galant reincarnation**

Except for the purely utilitarian folk garments, nobility frequently found itself curious to try different things lying around in the attic of the normal folk. From early on, they had developed a gravitational pull towards the provincial landscape and its fauna, [including people] which was turned inventively into gardens and soon became the virtual background of their portraits in front of trees and cattle, near the brook.

The same stood true about the architecture, Friedrich the Great of Prussia designed almost everything in Sans Souci and Friedrich Wilhelm II his nephew designed the first floor of his palace, the architect was there to fill in the gaps and take care of the formalities. From there on it was only one step away from designing everything the imagination could hold.

Already as early as 1600 King Henri IV<sup>1</sup> had thought of himself as Hercules killing the beast, which not only had as many of its nine heads as the picture could handle, had also been invited inside the palace and

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<sup>1</sup> Henri IV (1553-1610) King of Navarra and later of France.

although it had been a water beast, was depicted having wings, providing stunning evidence of the emerging rococo *mise en scene*, for rococo was not an era but a condition of the mind and therefore all could happen anywhere, any time.

The Rococo style of depiction had begun; it was just a matter of time for the word to follow.

Ironically Henri IV although strong enough to slay the virtual multi-headed beast in stern composure, was unable to save his own real head,<sup>2</sup> the day after the coronation of his Medici wife Marie. Marie had later Rubens depicting her own life into a series of 24 portraits of enormous dimensions, some as large as 3x4 meters, creating perhaps the first and biggest in size, personal album of all times.

It is Paris in the early 1600s and the era in which the aristocracy fantasizes extrovertly about its own image in sheer sublime bliss, had come.

In this sense, the orangerie of most northern palaces was not an interior heated garden but the desire of the nobles defying the impossible, an elixir through which dreams came true, where the exotic plants were just the paradigm and therefore could be possible to be extended, including equally landscapes and furniture, dances and rhythms, turned into style galant sophisticated inventions of the mind, where fantasy had defied and overtaken Nature.

Thus Antoinette asked for a new garden in which she could immediately sit under the trees, so she ordered fully grown-up trees while Potsdam had already depicted the planting of such trees in paintings, recording their deeds for eternity to look and marvel, unable to see neither the futility nor the appropriation, since the raw meaning had not been part of their world. As for virtual meaning, it had been the potion of their existence, without which life would be unbearable.



King Henri IV as Hercules slaying the Lernean Hydra, constituting one of the earliest virtual Rococo style depictions, soon to be followed by almost every member of the French palace.

### The other side of the border

Sebastian List, the grandfather of Franz, emigrated from Germany across the border to Raiding, a small place in Hungary with over 55% of German population. The List household looking over the hills could see Hungary on one side and Germany on the other, and looking at the streets could see more Germans than anything else.

Thus, when young Franz Liszt reached the age of 12, it was time for him to be transferred to the market side of the border, where the new species, the audience in a desperate attempt to find a place in eternity, was getting involved in the arts, able for a small fee to buy the status of a dedicatee, becoming part of the creation process. Their way was not per se the creation itself, although several times they tried their hands on it, but being – or thinking of themselves as – the cradle inside which composers, painters and poets were fed the incentive to produce the art of their time. Inside this social apparatus the audience were not only the benefactors but also the theme and the subject matter of this art, which was taking place unmistakably in their presence and consent.

That was the world, which the boy Franz Liszt from across the border was about to enter, wrapped inside the adjunct “Hungarian”, which was there to give exotic flavour rather than cultural meaning. In any case his cultural status was negligible, first came the distance his fingers could travel on the keyboard in the course of the evening.

Thus, little Franz ended up in Paris where, being non-French was refused admittance to the conservatoire. In a few years he would be an inter-salon citizen who needed be nothing he did not wish, in order to enter anywhere. Going back to Hungary in 1859 addressed his audience in French with the memorable phrase *Je suis Hongrois*, probably not because he knew no Hungarian to utter the simple phrase but because he had been accustomed to the brand of Hungarians who preferred to speak and consume art in the French manner.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Even more ironically his head had been actually lost from 1793 when it was removed until 2010 when it was discovered and put back with the rest of his body in the Saint Dennis Cathedral.

<sup>3</sup> The claim that Liszt knew no Hungarian – even though his home language was German – does not stand on solid ground, for he had a proven extraordinary memory, being able to play entire programmes by any composer at the spot and learned French within months, therefore he was also capable of picking the street language of the town he grew up in. A possible reason could lie in the general resentment to the imposition of the Hungarian language to all ethnic groups in Hungary around 1790, which made them resist its use.

### Hearing the nightingale

At the same time, Jenny Lind from Stockholm, the Swedish nightingale, joined the work force according to the industrial revolution principles of child labour, having had her first accident in the rococo fast track before the age of twelve. When she recovered she started again, this time capturing the hearts of Europe, posing the eternal question of their existence, which demanded an answer to relieve the aristocracy from its deep contemplation and agony: had virtuous Amina been visiting the bedroom of a man sleepwalking or not?<sup>4</sup>

Art in the rococo mind had become the social window through which one could watch – without being blamed – all that was prohibited. Thus, it was put on stage and flooded with lights, thrown into common view, while its audience was watching from the dark.

The service Jenny provided therefore to her audience was far greater than her actual singing, this is why: “Those that could not afford to buy a ticket would stand for hours by the stage door just to see her pass”<sup>5</sup> making one wonder about their need to be engaged in the optical perception of an acoustical phenomenon, to look at a singer they had never heard singing, pass by.

Her image had by far surpassed the ploys of her voice, for what they were offered was much more elevating for their spirit and soul, to which even the “Grandmother of Europe” Victoria of England had indulged in. The frugal observation of one or two critics that her low notes were at times getting out of tune, seemed insignificant, for who can blame a nightingale for the way she sings?

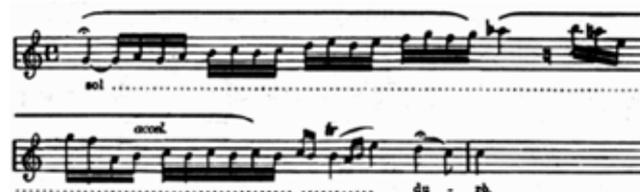
Her present to the world was the mental practice of somnambulism, in which virtue could stay intact, allowing all the sinful desires to pass through the sieve without blemish, creating the new species of human, one of virtuous mind with a sinful heart. Thus she gave them the alibi that sinful thoughts were no longer products of the mind but involuntary leaps of the heart. The time was ripe and in 1856 Amalia Freud gave birth to a boy called Sigmund...

When Amina stepped on the stage – uncertain of whether she was a poor girl or had been replaced by the idolic substitute of a grand soprano enacting the secret desires of her audience – left behind the music of Bellini and sung her own version of the arias, a fact immediately recorded in the music journals not as an infringement but as an elegant reincarnation of the original music. Again, who could blame a sleepwalking nightingale?

**Example 1a.** *Sonnambula Ah! Non credea*, Bellini's score



**Example 1b.** *Sonnambula Ah! Non credea*, the celebrated intervention of Jenny Lind.



<sup>4</sup> Bellini, *La Sonnambula*, 1831.

<sup>5</sup> Rogers, 1946: 440.

Immediately the books on Jenny Lind published her version, which was the only version her audience had actually known. In this respect the prone to deception audience had the opportunity to experience the recording of the music they had heard to eternity, turning the sweet moment of their meeting together into history. Bellini's music had just been the vehicle through which that meeting had occurred. Thus the triumph of the performer in matters of composition had not been a case solely idiomatic to Neapolitan number-opera, but a more ecumenical matter, the handling of which was a preeminent way of understanding the world, using the divine right to use the music as fit. In this way, the composer was disposable representing an abstract entity, one the audience could not relate to in human terms, while the performers were there, offering their own self as indispensable part of the music, in the same manner salespeople attach their mannerism to the essence of the product. In return the audience would show its gratitude towards the stage healers of their souls, for touching in the dark the inner strings of their existence by inviting them to consume their performance on stage and sometimes their real life misfortunes. It was the time when the castrato production line was reaching its peak, being in ultimatum demand, until the state-law had to step in, in 1870, prohibiting the practice, depriving thus the music-loving audience of its noble pursuit of artistic bliss.

For Rococo has not been the stroke of a pencil or the turn of the figure nor it is born on paper or canvas, it is a deep conviction of oneself, born inside the mind, with an also deep sense of voyeurism for the lives of the others. It is a bank from where one can borrow a personal fiction to dress their lives with, lending at a small, insignificant rate, operating at the highest customer discretion: no one would ever find out about their inner desires.

### Coming from the eastern provinces

Nikolas the son of François Chopin, given a "biographical" Polish ancestry to sooth the long wounded pride of the Poles,<sup>6</sup> was born in 1771 in Lorraine, part of Francia Orientalis an area with lingual, cultural and economical diversity for more than 800 years. Two years before the French revolution, at the age of 17, Nikolas, whose street language would have been the dialect of Ventadorn and Marcabru, set for Warsaw where he changed his name to Szopen and – being cultivated himself – taught French, "the second language of the nobility" to the cultivated Poles there.

*Love of show is another very striking trait in the character of the Poles. It struggles to manifest itself among the poor, causes the curious mixture of splendour and shabbiness among the better-situated people, and gives rise to the greatest extravagances among the wealthy. If we may believe the chroniclers and poets, the entertainments of the Polish magnates must have often vied with the marvelous feasts of imperial Rome.<sup>7</sup>*

His son Frederick Francois, born at the beginning of 1810, was brought up inside a French-speaking household, being associated mostly with the nobility of the city, absorbing its values and habits as indispensable part of his upbringing.

Chopin's early introduction into aristocratic society and constant intercourse with the aristocracy is an item of his education, which must not be considered as of subordinate importance. More than almost any other of his early disciplines, it formed his tastes, or at least strongly assisted in developing certain inborn traits of his nature, and in doing this influenced his entire moral and artistic character.<sup>8</sup>

Although the guillotine had claimed some sixteen thousand nobles within a single year,<sup>9</sup> when Chopin arrived in Paris there had remained enough nobility slipping from one salon to the next, considering themselves the driving force behind artistic creativity.

Being themselves real life characters inside their own verismo opera, having to be ready at any time to run for their lives across the border or across the channel, they needed a dream to live in, in order to forget what their lives had come to, so they needed a fantasy to inhabit, inside which they would be safe and not be reminded of the humiliating and despised life-jacket waiting for them in the closet.

<sup>6</sup> Early biographers presented a Polish family connection based more on "belief" and less on evidence.

<sup>7</sup> Niecks, 1888: 10.

<sup>8</sup> Niecks, 1888: 33.

<sup>9</sup> 5 September 1793, to 28 July 1794.

Pushing their way in, they developed a taste for young artists, a neoclassical artistic pedophilia, bringing the stamina of the young boys and girls to its border of collapse, filling in this manner the cold nights of northern Europe, waiting for the high E flats and the bravura passages to sparkle and lighten the sky of their existence, which had become one of a real-time witness.

They were there when little Jenny Lind broke down and could no longer sing, they were also there when she took their hand, leading them into deep fantasy, turning them into fiction, creating the virtual mythology of their – otherwise thin coated – world.

Frederick on the other hand was way too innocent, or way too reserved for all this. For this reason after he survived the Polonaises of his early childhood and the Warsaw salon exposure, he stuck to his music, the only means of expression he understood, trying to stay away from all trouble, knowing from very early that his death had been already en route. Franz Liszt, somewhat more prone to indulgence, would not hesitate to wear the Hungarian sword he was given as a present on stage, reminding his audience of their rights upon himself, he was theirs, for they had created him. In return he would receive a license to possess an indefinite number of mistresses, and a life of Roman dimensions, where another dark creation of theirs, the urban fairy Lola Montez had her habitat too. Later in life when all seemed too futile and frugal, Lola Montez would be seen limping in the streets of New York with an early stroke attached to her bio, meeting the romantic prophecy of early death, while Liszt would turn to God, for Sigmund Freud was no more than just a boy at the time.

### **The corporate folklore of the Rococo**

#### **Polonaise made in Leipzig**

Thus, in 1831 Frederick arrived in Paris carrying with him national presents for the capital, Polonaises and Mazurkas, little souvenirs from the people of Poland.

Germany however was already ahead of its time, Johann Sebastian had provided as early as the Cöthen years three Polonaises, in the first Brandenburg Concerto, the second Orchestral Suite and – ironically – in the “French” suite No. 6, while little Clara Wieck was performing her own home made Polonaises, picked up by ear in the local salons.

Germany was importing virtual dreams from Paris and artistic curiosities from its eastern cultural provinces in Hungary and Poland. When imports from the provinces were not enough to satisfy the appetite for folklore of the local market, Robert Schumann would provide pieces in an undefined folk idiom<sup>10</sup> and Johannes Brahms, Hungarian dances, picked by ear at the taverns in the port of Hamburg late at night. This was not ethnological mission, it was the need of the aristocracy to try new things; any imitation would be welcomed so long as the collective pathos was brought forward, the objective was entertainment, not artistic purity.

Then when in 1859 Franz Liszt in ardent naivety made a study of gypsy Hungarian music, which proved to be nothing more than popular pieces modified by the gypsy musicians, for use in the local cafes, no one became alarmed by the fact.<sup>11</sup> On the contrary they treated any such music in the same fashion they had been treating the exotic plants of the orangerie, the only virtue of which had most of the time been their rarity and foreignness. According to the custom, the virtual folklore pieces, taken as spoils, were immediately collected and handed over to the proper servants for further attendance, brought out from time to time for a selective, intimate public exhibition, becoming the vehicle that demonstrated the exquisite taste for the unusual, nobles had been famous for. The pieces were mostly drawn from the cultural meadows of the eastern provinces, which kept providing tirelessly the cultural metropolis with local novelties and curiosities.

Thus when Frederick Chopin stepped his foot in Paris in early 1831, little Clara Wieck of 12, from Leipzig was already performing the four Polonaises op. 1 she had composed herself the previous year.

<sup>10</sup> Fünf Stücke im Volkston op. 102 for cello and piano

<sup>11</sup> The Gypsies and their Music in Hungary, 1859

**Example 2.** Clara Wieck, *Quatre Polonaises pour le Pianoforte*, op. 1.1 (1830)<sup>12</sup>

The Polonaise of Clara is obviously the product of instruction, as both the rhythmic pattern [x] and the appoggiatura landing on the second beat are set carefully to match each other in complementary two-bar phrases, in order to make clear the dance pattern intended, insinuating the scholarly intervention of Friedrich Wieck.

The rhythm of the Polonaise has been a confusing issue, as it appears to follow a one-measure pattern given as [ ♩ ] which negates itself in terms of structure as it is not resolving properly.

The corrected version [ ♩ ] on the other hand is metrically complete, defies however the supposed ending on the second beat. In this respect, Clara Wieck's version (Ex. 2) gives the solution that the Polonaise is made not from one but a two-measure pattern, the second measure of which ends on the second beat:



containing possibly an anacrusis at the beginning as it is suggested in Michal Oginski's Polonaise which had either been written in 1794 or 1820, depending on other people's politics.

**Example 3.** Oginski, *Polonez*

thus the Polonaise two-measure pattern could even be:



Clara was perhaps too young to be aware of what a Polonaise really was, she possibly knew nothing about Poland either. She knew France however and Paris and a year later would take her German Polonaises there in front of an audience nurtured by Sigismond Thalberg and Henri Herz, the main representatives of the corporate Rococo style, who kept shaping the taste of their aristocratic audience, after having shaped themselves to the taste of the confederation of European salons. In this manner the Polonaise had been everywhere from Paris to Leipzig, and Stockholm to Saint Petersburg where the German princess exported as Sophie-Friederike of Anhalt-Zerbst, was imported in Russia as Ekaterina Alexeevna to play German politics with the Russians so Friedrich of Prussia could win the seven-year war.<sup>13</sup> In her new role she would open the cultural border for the free circulation of the Polonaise between Poland and Russia, by installing her former lover Stanislaw Poniatowsky to the Polish throne by way of a military coup in 1764, leading to the 1795 partition initiated by herself and Friedrich.

In her palace Ivan Khandoshkin, the virtuoso violinist and teacher of her assassinated husband Peter III, loyal to the European practice collected a number of Russian tunes to use as improvised material for variations in *stile brillante*, which he published around 1783 along with three solo sonatas for violin. Keeping with the tradition, his first name on the cover appeared as *Antoine* and all titles were in French.

<sup>12</sup> As expected, according to the protocol, the titles are in French.

<sup>13</sup> Friedrich II was the initiator of the princely exportation to Russia, hence a bigger than life portrait of Ekaterina has been placed in the Neue Palais in Potsdam.

### Faking a Polonaise

After travelling through the courts of Europe, being grinded in the cultural mills of the omnivorous Rococo, the Polonaise returned to Poland, this time with French spelling and pronunciation. Musical journalism seems uncertain about the details and as to whether it either lost its character or gained a new one. As expected it never returned to the Polish villages, for it had collected so much culture, purpose and sophistication that made it incompatible with its original use; if anyone could be found to testify about.

The folk polonez was adopted by the 17th century Polish nobility, which transformed it into a more sophisticated dance, suitable for their refined, cultured courts.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, in the course of time there was a Polonaise for everyone, each one however was destined to have their own brand. Peasants were given one in the form of patriotic songs of uprising, each time their masters sided with one empire against another, nobles in the shape of gay, entertaining ceremonies, Russians got it stuck inadvertently into their national anthem for 44 years,<sup>15</sup> while salons got a version suitable to cultivated taste, widening their horizon of tactful entertainment, with unspeakable at times impact for the inner self, as described below in ardent realism.

...the dance began to assume a heightened emotional quality with contrasts between noble majesty and heartfelt melancholy.<sup>16</sup>

As strange as it may seem, there appears to be not much of an account testifying that the folk Polonez ever existed as such. Also its dance movements hardly suggest that it ever belonged to the peasants, and Poland was indeed inhabited by peasants. William Coxe who travelled there in 1778 gives an account of the assumed inventors of the Polonez, the ‘uncultivated’ Poles:

The Polish peasants are cringing and servile in their expressions of respect; they bowed down to the ground; took off their hats or caps and held them in their hands till we were out of sight; stopped their carts on the first glimpse of our carriage; in short, their whole behaviour gave evident symptoms of the abject servitude under which they groaned.<sup>17</sup>

The Polonaise had been wrapped so much in elegance and polite bows in the salons of Europe that nothing on it reminded of its supposed old character, it had now become just a dance, even less; just a rhythm. The people of Poland had stood watching their noble masters dancing the Polonaise and the Mazurka while they had to serve them in porcelain plates and kitchenware made in Limoges and Saint Petersburg, that they had forgotten the origins and the meaning of the dances, if there was supposed to be one.

Frederick Chopin having lived in Saxon and Kazimierz palaces from the age of seven months, had possibly never spoken to a Polish peasant and if he saw one it would have been through the frame of the coach window, in many respects in the same way that William Coxe saw them, lacking probably the acute observational focus of Coxe.

In the meantime the social cloth of Poland had been weaved with two distinct elements,

*A nobleman was on his estate prosecutor as well as judge, [...] and whilst the nobleman enjoyed these high privileges, [...] the peasant was quite at the mercy of the privileged class, and his master could do with him pretty much as he liked, whipping and selling not excepted, nor did killing cost more than a fine of a few shillings”.*<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile the salons of Poland eager to catch-up with the Cosmopolis, were importing the new curiosity from Paris, the Quadrille, while Maria Szymanowska (1789–1831) after having given mostly private piano concerts in many cities of Europe, moved her entire salon to Saint Petersburg in 1828, carrying along subtleties

<sup>14</sup> Polonaise. *New Grove On Line* (Oxford UP, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> The military Polonaise *Grom pobedy* (Thunder of victory) written in 1791 to celebrate the victory over the Turks, became Russia’s national anthem until 1833. It was written by Oginski’s teacher, Osip Kozlovsky who also wrote a number of Polonaises.

<sup>16</sup> Polonaise. *New Grove On Line* (Oxford UP, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Coxe, 1788: 347.

<sup>18</sup> Niecks, 1890 : 7.

from England and France to the Peterhof until her death in 1831. Three years later in 1834, Adam Mickiewicz the husband of her daughter, living in exile in Paris was writing the epic *Pan Tadeusz* describing the 1811 struggles of greater Poland – Lithuania to create a face of its own, with the noble masters setting the rules. Ironically he describes the time when Szymanowska was scanning the salons of Europe playing Polonaises, Valses, Anglaises and Cotillons, whereas Napoleon was getting ready to collect peasants from the crop-fields of Poland and Lithuania, whom he would leave dead behind in the battle-fields of Russia in the next year, before retreating, spreading typhus and death in the villages along the route, all the way from Moscow to Paris.

Little boy Chopin unaware of all, according to the industrial revolution protocol, wrote his first Polonaise [G minor] in 1817, at the age of seven, copying not the taverns and village squares but specimens from Mozart and Beethoven given to him by his Czech teacher Wojciech Ziwny, who had been educated in Bohemia. His other source was his own Polish salon habitat, where he learned the music of Michal Kleofas Oginsky (1765–1833) and Maria Szymanowska both of whom had established the style of the so-called ‘Polish sentimentalism’.<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting that in the 18 Dances of Szymanowska<sup>20</sup> four are Polonaises, two Mazurkas, four Anglaises and nine French (four Valses, two Contredanses, two Quadrilles and one Cotillon) all with French titles, supporting the idea that a European salon-to-salon internet had been in existence, oblivious to ethnic and cultural borders.<sup>21</sup>

On November 1, 1830 Chopin sets for Vienna in the company of his friend Titus Woyciechowski and ten days later they are in Dresden where they heard of the *November Uprising* in Warsaw against Russia. On November 30, one day after it started, Titus returns to Poland to join the revolution while Chopin, leaving the revolutions behind, in early 1831 reaches Paris. There he soon becomes part of the salon music, performing for his growing clientele, while Music journalism discovers in him a lurking national temper and finds heroic and revolutionary traits inside his etudes and Polonaises.<sup>22</sup> Robert Schumann, having many battles happening inside his head wrote:

Fate also distinguished Chopin among all others by endowing him with an original and pronounced nationalism, that of Poland. And because this nationalism is in deep mourning, it attracts us all the more firmly to this thoughtful artist. Chopin works are guns buried in flowers.<sup>23</sup>

Chopin, himself a reserved person, wrote a handful only of Polonaises, having probably the piano in mind rather than anything else, either national or choreographic.<sup>24</sup> That becomes obvious from observing the rhythmic deviations and the freedom he takes from one measure to the next since there is no danger for anyone missing their dancing steps in the salons of Paris that he performed. The Polonaises of Michal Kleofas Oginsky are also of the same free rhythmic nature, meant probably to move the hearts rather than the feet of their noble audience. Chopin’s first series of Polonaises written in 1817 at the age of seven, was published posthumously against his will and the next set dates from 1834, 17 years later. Incidentally, most of Chopin’s pieces he asked to be disposed of, were mainly Polonaises, a fact which can perhaps explain their initial function and term their destiny.

### **Rococo for all**

Chopin not a man of words but a man of notes, being somewhat involuntary and uneasy with the overly possessive powers of public exposure avoided every such encounter. In March of 1830 in his second Warsaw concert the beast of Rococo opened its arms to embrace him.

<sup>19</sup> The score bears the dedication “à Son Excellence Mme la Comtesse Victoire Skarbek” where even the name of madame Skarbeck is in French, “the second language of the nobility”.

<sup>20</sup> Published ca. 1820 in French as, *Dix huit Danses pour le Piano-Forte*.

<sup>21</sup> Szymanowska had performed for nobility in France, Italy, England, Holland from 1815 to 1828 when she was appointed Court pianist in Saint Petersburg.

<sup>22</sup> Etude op. 10.12 has been nicknamed by music journalism *Revolutionary* and Polonaise op. 53 *Heroique*.

<sup>23</sup> Schumann, 1946: 132.

<sup>24</sup> The often quoted phrase of George Sand that “Chopin was more Polish than Poland” should not be taken as forensic evidence but as a clever word-play of an intelligent human being, ‘a gun buried in flowers’ directed probably at Chopin himself, rather to his scholars.

A sonnet was printed in his honor, champagne was offered him... Worse still, Orłowski served up the themes of his concerto into mazurkas and had the impudence to publish them.<sup>25</sup>

Chopin with an admirable innate sense of dignity, was able to repel several times the Rococo magnet, staying cautiously away from exposure, lending to the salons only his pianism, somehow aware of the expressive options his art could inflict to his audience.

Then came the last blow: he was asked by a music seller for his portrait, which he refused, having no desire, he said with a shiver, to see his face on cheese and butter wrappers.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time the unfortunate nightingale of Stockholm found herself pictured in chocolate boxes, her name being given to tulips, letting herself several times to be drawn into an apparatus of profit, dictated by the rules of free market society:

Never in all the history of music has a prima donna been so skillfully and so irresistibly exploited as Barnum exploited Jenny Lind.<sup>27</sup>

### The songS of the nightingales

As the revolution of 1848 reaches Paris most of Chopin's salon supporters and students, crossing the channel according to the noble protocol, leave for London, causing him great financial distress on top of a fragile health. After his last concert there on February 16 he too leaves for England with his faithful Scottish student Jane Stirling who appears to be in love with him and tries to help. It seems that Revolution follows Chopin but once more he is a step ahead, not out of political conviction, he just stays away from trouble all his life, he is a composer not a revolutionary, despite the fact that music journalism insists to make a hero of some kind or another out of him, fulfilling their dreams not his, and thus he is loaded with the salvation of Poland by anyone who wishes to. This time he is too ill to think of it and after his return to France he dies on October 17 while Rococo journalism did not fail to turn his deathbed into an opera house, staging additionally a debate as to whether it was Delphine Potocka or Jenny Lind performing arias there.



Popular cap and hair style from 1849 named after Jenny Lind

It was Turgenev who spoke of the half hundred countesses in Europe who claimed to have held the dying Chopin in their arms<sup>28</sup>

The habit of concerts for the dying seems to have been a normal practice as "*Princess Maria Württemberg, to whom Chopin dedicated his Mazurkas op. 30, continued to play the piano in private, and she is reported to have comforted her dying father with her keyboard playing in 1823.*"<sup>29</sup>

Jenny Lind went out of gossip perhaps a trifle too soon for the taste of the restless European heart, which had been eagerly in the business of personal drama and considered the case far too elegant to let it die away. Thus giving it its proper deep meaning, noticed the connection when Jenny Lind sung in England the song *Faithful love, will never die* based on the Mazurka op. 24 No. 3 of Chopin. Once more love had been sensed, ought to be exposed.

The actual song reminds and possesses all the credentials of a student exercise and Frederick is nowhere to be found, but the queen liked it and Jenny composed it and sung it, thus who can blame an innocent mind?

As for the audience, as music is being moved to bigger auditoriums keeps searching for new novelties to satisfy the habit, whether be it savage Russia, sacrificing its young daughters on stage in Champs-Élysées or the banana costume of Josephine Baker imported from the far side of the east, the west.

<sup>25</sup> Huneker, 2007: 24.

<sup>26</sup> Huneker, 2007: 24.

<sup>27</sup> Rogers, 1946: 442.

<sup>28</sup> Huneker, 2007: 72.

<sup>29</sup> Klementyna Hoffman, *Pamiętniki* [Memoirs] 1849, in Goldberg, 2008: 179.

In this manner, Europe somnambuling its existence through the ages, keeps watching as everybody enters the room, posing anew the eternal question of whether art is for real or it happens among the sleepwalking, without noticing that its own cloth is being weaved still using the same porcelain Rococo threads, made in the chambers of its industrial – so called revolution.

Meanwhile the cultural edge of the world, keeps forging new novelties in vernacular sonata and rondeau forms in its provincial franchise workshops resembling the gifts from the eastern provinces to Rome, everywhere from the banks of the Vistula to the banks of the Moldau, providing new curiosities for the taste buds of the west, which keeps extending its cultural appetite to the end of the world or the end of time, whichever comes first...

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### Santrauka

#### Tautinės sonatos link?

Jau pripažintas teorinis teiginys „autentinis kultūrinis tautiškumas“ insinuoja menamą aliuziją apie „neautentišką kultūrinį tautiškumą“, užslėptą ar akivaizdų, aptinkamą ir palyginimo, ir apibrėžimo būdu. Neautentiškas menas skrodžia šimtmečius, nenuilstamai bandydamas įtvirtinti nepasiekiamus savo baikštus ir neapibrėžto egzistavimo tikslus.

Nuo dirbtinio kultūrinio apvaisinimo būdu iškilusio Prancūzijos nacionalinių muzikos reikalų ministro Jeano Baptiste'o iki neapčiuopiamojo Claudio Achille'o 1871 m. Paryžiaus komunos produktas – prancūzai savo maloniomis ausiai melodijomis, naujovėmis ir teoriniais darbais nesiliovė skverbtis į Europos ausis, protus, o tikriausiai ir į širdis, paversdami visą likusį pasaulį – nuo Drotningholmo iki Dorpat, nuo Potsdamo iki Sankt Peterburgo – Paryžiaus priemiesčiu, ir šito rezultatyviai atremti nesugebėjo net pats veiklusis Kutuzovas.

Savo milžiniškame pilve priglaudusi visus Glucko ir Hendelio persų karalius ir graikų didvyrius kartu su Gioachino kolonijinėmis keistenybėmis ir Johannesso vengriškomis subtilybėmis, iki XX a. ši mozaika pasipildė egzotiškais faunais ir rusiškomis šventosiomis apeigomis, patvirtinama nutylimą, tačiau akivaizdžią tiesą, kad tai, kas vienam yra tautiška, kitam gali atrodyti egzotiška.

Šitaip Europos kultūrinės egzistencijos skraistė buvo išsiuvinėta nesibaigiančiomis pasakomis, kuriose Rytai tenkino nepasotinamą Vakarų apetitą, retkarčiais numelždami Vakarų rytus arba Rytų rytus panašiai kaip N. Rimskio-Korsakovo tūkstantis ir vienoje naktyje, nesuvokdami, kad nesustojamai eidamas į rytus neišvengiamai atsidursi Vakaruose ir kad galop visi keliai, kurie neveda į Dievą, atves į Paryžių.

Tuo laiku pasaulio kultūrinis pakraštys į kultūros kosmopolį nenuilstamai eksportuoja savo folklorą sonatos ar rondo pakuotėje, primenančioje Rytų provincijų dovanas Romai.