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On collective forms of the Chopin cult in Poland during the nineteenth century

ABSTRACT: This article is devoted to specific forms of the Chopin cult that developed in Poland during the nineteenth century. Due to the socio-political situation in the country during the period of the Partitions and the influence of tradition, this cult was manifest first and foremost in the joint experiencing of anniversaries connected with the composer on the part of members of local communities or the entire nation. The basic medium of that experience was the press, in which biographic articles, sketches on his music and also poetical works devoted to the composer were an obligatory part of the anniversaries of Chopin's birth and death. In this way, the Chopin cult in Poland became primarily a literary phenomenon. Also linked to the traditional culture of the letter that was Polish culture of the nineteenth century is the characteristic form of the Chopin cult known as the *obchód*. The communal character of the *obchód* was reflected in its specific form and content. One of the prime concerns was the need to forcibly communicate the fact that Chopin's music was a national good. Thus at the centre of the theatrically-managed *obchód* stood an orator or actor declaiming against the background of Chopin's music. For the purposes of these declamations, a huge amount of literature was produced, examples of which are discussed in the article. Another characteristic "anniversary" product were re-workings of Chopin compositions for large orchestral and choral forces, treated as "ceremonial". One example of a Chopin celebration displaying the features discussed were the Lviv Chopin celebrations in 1910, which the author describes in more detail.

KEYWORDS: Fryderyk Chopin cult, Chopin literature, Chopin anniversaries

In nineteenth-century Poland, the Chopin cult passed through phases that provide a good illustration of the spiritual changes in our culture and also reflect the current social and political situation in our divided country. For the latter reason, it would be appropriate to speak separately about the Chopin cult in the Russian partition and in the so-called annexed territories, in Wielkopolska and Galicia, from the perspective of the civil liberties that reigned there, the extent and character of censorship, and so on. Given the current state of our knowledge, it would only be possible to make an initial reconnaissance on that subject, since there is a general lack of sources

illustrating the relationship between the administration (and its tool, censorship) and Polish musical life in the upper spheres. These gaps are filled to some extent by diaries, journals, memoirs and other manuscript sources, as well as press publications containing comments on events occurring in other partitions to that in which the given source was published. But they do not give a complete picture of the situation.

In the specific case of the Chopin cult, it has recently been speculated that there existed in Warsaw and the Russian partition something like a special censorship of Chopin. This is suggested by Elżbieta Szczepańska-Lange in her book on musical life in Warsaw during the Romantic era in the series *Historia muzyki polskiej* [The history of music in Poland]. We read there that both during the composer's lifetime and after his death, very little was written about him in the Warsaw press, and although it was not forbidden to perform Chopin's music in public, the authorities scuppered all attempts at organising Chopin celebrations. In respect to the 1880s and 1890s, we even read that "every attempt at paying tribute [...] to Chopin [...] ended in failure"¹, due to the "ruthless combatting of everything that could have aroused patriotic moods"². The second excerpt quoted here expresses a view that has become established in Polish letters, but one with which contemporary historians do not fully concur, exhorting us to consider the Russian period in its authentic diversity, concerning such things as the variable regulating of national liberties by successive governor-generals of Warsaw. One splendid example of this is provided by a comparison of the policies of two governor-generals ruling Warsaw during the decades about which Szczepańska-Lange writes in the part of her book referred to above: Joseph Gourko, well known for his severe anti-Polish line, and his predecessor, Pyotr Albedinsky, about whom both his contemporaries and present-day historians write that he earned great popularity among the Poles as an advocate of concessions.³ Did the difference in the

¹ Elżbieta Szczepańska-Lange, *Romantyzm. Część druga B: Życie Muzyczne w Warszawie 1850-1900* [Romanticism. Part two B: musical life in Warsaw 1850-1900] (Warszawa, 2010), 694.

² *Ibid.*, 695.

³ Under Albedinsky, "the system did not change, but the forms became less severe", wrote Erazm Piltz in *Polityka rosyjska w Polsce* [Russian policies in Poland] (Warszawa, 1909), 43. Stefan Askenazy gave a positive assessment of Albedinsky's role as the author of the "Privislinya" educational reforms; *Sto lat zarządu w Królestwie Polskim 1800-1900* [A hundred years of administration in the Kingdom of Poland 1800-1900], 2nd edn (Lviv, 1903), 85. The opinions of these two authors were supported by Stanisław Wiech in the article 'Rządy warszawskiego generała-gubernatora Piotra Albedyńskiego – lata nadziei, lata złudzeń' [The administration of the Warsaw governor-general Pyotr Albedinsky – years of hope, years of illusions], in *Unifikacja za wszelką cenę. Sprawy polskie w polityce rosyjskiej na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* [Unification at all costs. Polish affairs in Russian

attitudes of these two generals translate into different realities for the Chopin cult in Warsaw? For the time being, we have no ready answer to this question and to many others like it.

The same is true for the other partitions. In Grzegorz Kucharczyk's exhaustive and richly documented work *Cenzura pruska w Wielkopolsce w czasach zaborów 1815-1914* [Prussian censorship in Wielkopolska during the partitions 1815–1914] (Poznań, 2001), the name of Chopin does not appear. The author does not address the question of the censors' attitude to art music in the geographical and temporal area examined (he does discuss, meanwhile, the censorship of Polish church and patriotic songs, with the national anthem to the fore). This may signify one of two things: a neutral attitude on the part of the Prussian censors' to concert life as an apolitical sphere or else the marginal significance of high musical culture for the affairs of Wielkopolska. Reading the conclusion of one of the first Polish sketches about Chopin, published in Wielkopolska (Marceli Antoni Szulc's 'Przegląd ostatnich dzieł Chopina' [A review of Chopin's last works], published in the Poznań weekly *Tygodnik Literacki* in 1842), one may form the opinion that the second thesis is quite rational. The conclusion in question reads as follows: "[Chopin] belongs to our nation alone; and so the nation ought to know about him"⁴. This is followed by several sentences criticising Poznań audiences, which he sees as provincial, lacking an acquired habit of participating in musical culture and quite simply not familiar with Chopin.

As regards the Prussian censors' attitude to the figure and oeuvre of Chopin, I shall illustrate it – only provisionally, of course – with another fragment from the same text:

[Chopin] nurtures in our hearts the sacred flame of nationhood. It is he who most eloquently translates the thoughts of the nation, and his works are a sacred haven; that arc, as Mickiewicz says, in which the treasure of our native music is placed; all that is most noble, beautiful and sublime, concealed within it, pulses in a Pole's breast, the thread of folk culture, the legacy and heritage of centuries, the glorious testimony to the poetical aspirations of our people.⁵

It is worth drawing attention to the fact that the censors "passed" an apology of the national values of Chopin's art together with the name of Mickiewicz, who was the object of continual altercations between the censors and Wielkopolska publishers, as a symbolic figure in Romantic Polish litera-

policies around the turn of the twentieth century], ed. Andrzej Szwarz and Paweł Wiczorkiewicz (Warszawa, 2002), 95.

⁴ 'Przegląd ostatnich dzieł Chopina przez [...]' [A review of Chopin's last works by [...]], *Tygodnik Literacki* 11 (Poznań, 1842), 83.

⁵ *Ibid.*

ture, treated by the Prussians as a dangerous catalyst of patriotic moods in the Poznań region.⁶

As for Galicia, the familiar view of the mildness of the censorship there and the high level of national liberties is supported by Mariola Szydłowska's conclusions in *Cenzura teatralna w Galicji w dobie autonomicznej 1860-1918*:

[...] in contrast to the pre-Constitution times, [the Austrian censorship] was not an implement of national suppression and persecution [...]. The censors tried to interpret the provisions of [Alexander] Bach's theatre act in such a way as to avoid affronting the monarchy, harming the ruling social class and offending the patriotic feelings of the Poles.⁸

Although Szydłowska's work concerns only theatre and opera, these conclusions may be extended to other domains of musical life in Galicia, including that of the Chopin cult, which flourished there without hindrance, although chiefly among amateurs (especially of the fairer sex!) and not in professional musical institutions (due to the social peculiarities of the region, and not to political issues).

In the present paper, I relegate the question of the political aspects of the Chopin cult and its differentiation among the realities of the three partitions to the background, since I am interested in something quite the opposite: the possibility of demonstrating that over and above any differences resulting from such factors and the need to comply with the demands of the censors, there were common features that can be distinguished from an observation of attitudes and behaviour deriving from a particular type of culture, measured not only in geographical or geopolitical terms, but also in generational terms. Thus the principal question is as follows: what features of nineteenth-century Polish intellectual culture determined the specific nature of the Chopin cult in Poland at that time, taken – in spite of everything – as a whole, shaped within the culture of the Polish language?

Already at first glance, for example, one sees that the Polish Chopin cult was an exemplary representation of the "culture of the letter", traditionally concentrated on the production and reception of written documents. In a word, Chopin was mostly written about; he was spoken about, too, but under the Partitions there were not too many opportunities for (public) speaking.

⁶ See Grzegorz Kucharczyk, *Cenzura pruska w Wielkopolsce w czasach zaborów 1815-1914* [Prussian censorship in Wielkopolska during the partitions 1815-1914] (Poznań, 2001), 277 and n.

⁷ Mariola Szydłowska, *Cenzura teatralna w Galicji w dobie autonomicznej 1860-1918* [Theatre censorship during the period of autonomy 1860-1918] (Kraków, 1995).

⁸ The period in question is that preceding the proclamation of the October Diploma (1860), establishing a constitutional monarchy in Austria-Hungary. *Ibid.*, 75-76.

The earliest “Chopin speech” delivered in Poland during the nineteenth century was made in Warsaw as part of the ceremonial closure of the first six-year course of study (1867) at the Warsaw Music Institute, most probably by the institute’s director, Apolinary Kątski.⁹ In fact, it is difficult to count this among documents of the Chopin cult, since the idea behind it was the effect of deliberate calculation: criticised for his loyal stance towards the partitioner, Kątski sought to use this speech to gain allies among Polish patriots. During the 1870s, the custom of organising anniversary soirées devoted to Chopin became established. The focal point of these evenings were speeches, taking the form – esteemed by the public – of lectures. The best known lectures, on “How to Play Chopin”, were delivered in 1872–1873 by Jan Kleczyński. His rivals were Zygmunt Noskowski and Władysław Bogusławski. The lecture initiative was overseen by the Warsaw Music Society, formed in 1871 – it was one of the main points of the society’s statutory activities. The more important lectures were subsequently published in the press. It was an ambition of Polish newspapers and periodicals at that time to honour patriotic anniversaries. Since this was done in a climate of increased censorial strictures, the focus was necessarily on people rather than events. Among those to be remembered in the Polish press on the anniversaries of their birth and death, Chopin was undoubtedly something of a record-holder. It should be noted that until the end of the nineteenth century, anniversaries of the composer’s birth were calculated from 1 March 1809.

It would be difficult to point to a press publication from the second half of the nineteenth century that did not publish at least a brief mention of Chopin each year at the beginning of March and in mid October. This would frequently take the popular form of a poem. Also readily published were photocopies of souvenirs: likenesses, manuscripts, letters, etc. Prominent periodicals commissioned serious biographical articles and syntheses devoted to Chopin’s oeuvre. These were particularly numerous on the occasion of round anniversaries – in 1899 and 1910. In those two years, Polish musicians and writers undertook great intellectual efforts, writing texts that still form the core of the Polish library of Chopin studies. “Ordinary” annual anniversary texts are also an interesting document of the evolution of the obligatory “Polish” image of the composer, in which such features as Christian morality and patriotism were particularly highlighted.

As we know, cultural life in nineteenth-century Poland flourished mainly in private: in manor houses and salons, where distinctive forms of patriotic devotion were cultivated. These included staged verbal-musical evenings, in which specific theatrical forms were combined, such as those derived from the

⁹ The text of this speech is preserved in Warsaw, in the *Akta Instytutu Muzycznego* at the Archiwum Państwowe m. st. Warszawy.

tradition of the *tableau vivant* and also musical performance and declamation. It may be assumed that Władysław Wolski's well-known fantasy *Szopen* was produced for a staged performance during just such a soirée. Evidence to this effect is the conventional dialogue of several protagonists, to which music can be "set" at will – both piano music and also music played by larger ensembles, including choir and orchestra. One may picture a rendition of Wolski's fantasy by comparing it with extant descriptions of theatrical productions of scenes written by the famous Deotyma, such as a *Symfonia życia* [Symphony of life], dedicated to Beethoven (on the centenary of his birth, of course), and a *Symfonia słoneczna* [Symphony of the sun], dedicated to Copernicus, on the 400th anniversary of his birth. The convention of staging was applied to the performance of both these works. Characters representing the protagonists of the work¹⁰ were joined on stage by allegorical characters, reciting their lines to "the accompaniment of music softly supporting the declamation". At crucial points in the action, a chorus, placed behind the stage, would join in with "thunderous songs", in a pseudo-Greek convention.

In the 1880s, the institution of patriotic soirées entered official halls, taking the solemn form of the *akademia*, or *obchód*, as it was known in the language of that epoch (the plural form *obchody* was adopted in the twentieth century). Chopin anniversary "academies" were organised by the Warsaw Music Society, among others. They were of a somewhat different character to salon soirées – the theatrical element was curtailed, with greater scope given to music. But theatrics were not abandoned entirely. A portrait or bust of the evening's hero made an obligatory appearance on the stage, decked in church fashion, with garlands of greenery, and the participation of an actor – or even several actors – was also *de rigueur*. Of course, the custom of combining displays of music and declamation did not belong exclusively to anniversary academies. It was part of a popular convention in concert life, which took account of the need to arouse the public's interest with the most varied offer possible. However, the acting displays that graced the *obchód* differed fundamentally from ordinary declamation episodes in concerts. The latter were on any subject (there were even instances of comedy works being recited in very serious concerts), whilst the anniversary had to be adorned with works whose subject, or at least mood, was suited to the occasion. The performer appeared in funeral attire. NB ceremonial dress was also obligatory for the audience.

¹⁰ A performance of the *Symfonia słoneczna* is documented in a study by Adam Plug (Antoni Pietkiewicz): *Deotyma (Jadwiga Łuszczewska). Pamiętka jubileuszowa* [Deotyma (Jadwiga Łuszczewska). Jubilee memento] (Warszawa, 1900), 74, whilst the description of the performance of the *Symfonia życia* is taken from the 'Z Lutni. Uroczysty koncert ku czci Deotymy' [From the lute. A grand concert in honour of Deotyma] *Goniec Wileński* 220 (1908).

The custom of declamation during anniversary concerts perdured until the Second World War, but its heyday came at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in the provinces. For example, there is an extant detailed programme of the Chopin *obchód* organised by the Warsaw Philharmonic in 1905. The musical part comprised performances of Chopin originals and transcriptions by Aleksander Michałowski and Stanisław Barcewicz, as well as a fragment from Giacomo Orefice's opera *Chopin* performed by singers from the Warsaw Opera. In the interlude between the Chopin parts of the programme, actors from the Teatr Rozmaitości [Variety Theatre], Jadwiga Mrozowska and Zbigniew Śliwiński, performed, with orchestral accompaniment, a selection of folk songs and Mrozowska also played Ophelia's scene from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.¹¹

Original poetry was also used in anniversary Chopin celebrations. After all, there was no lack of more or less successful poems devoted to Chopin's music or representing attempts at translating that music into poetry. The most popular of these were Kornel Ujejski's *Tłumaczenia Szopena* [Chopin translations], especially a passage that transposes the *Marche funèbre* from the *B flat minor Sonata*. This poem was adapted for "melorecitation" (recitation to the accompaniment of music – a genre that held a privileged place in Chopin celebrations) by Michał Hertz. The fantasy *Dzwony* [The bells] (the title given to Leon Idzikowski's Lviv publication of Hertz's adaption) formed part of the repertoire of outstanding Warsaw actors: Alojzy Żółkowski, Józef Kotarbiński and Roman Żelazowski.

Hertz's example was followed by other composers. A number of poems by Artur Oppman, Lucjan Rydel, Witold Łaszczyński and Włodzimierz Wolski were set to the best-known mazurkas, waltzes and nocturnes by Feliks Starczewski. Two of those melodeclamations, to the *Prelude in A major* and the *Polonaise in A major*, with texts by Łaszczyński, were published in an anniversary Chopin edition of *Wędrowiec*, in 1899. They were all published subsequently in Leon Chojecki's *Meloman*. Among other popular melorecitations, one may mention the "declamation" *Żołnierz napoleoński* [A soldier of Napoleon] by Jerzy Orwicz (pseudonym of Natalia Dzierzkówna), also published in *Meloman*, in 1910. The words of this declamation were set to the strains of the *Waltz*, Op. 69 No. 1, in accordance with the best rules of the art. NB in its heyday, the "declamation" genre was treated to a theoretical tract: *Poetyka żywego słowa* [The poetic of the living word] was published in book form by Juliusz Tenner in 1901. A shortened version of this work, as a paper entitled 'Muzyka tonów i muzyka słowa' [The music of tones and the music of words], was included in the commemorative book of the Lviv Chopin *obchód*

¹¹ 'Koncerty Filharmonii Warszawskiej' [Concerts at the Warsaw Philharmonic], *Kraj* 35 (1905).

of 1910, which shows that great weight was still attached to the ritual of declamation to musical accompaniment at that time. Most of the melorecitations are of little poetical worth. Their standard borders on popular art: their authors did not venture beyond clichéd images employing the motif of recollection and longing – for the homeland, youth or freedom; in the background, love strands appeared, as well as religious accents, quite characteristically. Dzierzkówna's *Żołnierz napoleoński*, quite ineptly set to the rhythm of the music, is the story of a veteran who returns to his native village after years away and recounts his recollections using words that are vividly reminiscent of the monologues of the protagonists of Stanisław Moniuszko's *Straszny dwór* [The haunted manor]:

I had my own cottage here,
 In this valley, in this ravine...
 Here my mother placed a cross on my brow
 When I set off for battle... bloody,
 Through tears, she told me gaily:
 "Son, keep defending the righteous cause".¹²

The rhythmic irregularities of the poem are the result of the author's attempts to subordinate it strictly to the flow of Chopin's capricious melody and to the ornaments and pauses it contains.

In relating the content of Chopin celebrations during the nineteenth century, we have thus far spoken mainly about words and gestures, but paradoxically little about music. So it is time to take a look at the musical side of Chopin concerts. One characteristic feature of this was that it was not confined to the music of Chopin, or even to piano music. The pianist was almost always accompanied by a violinist or singer. This resulted from the convention of the compiling of concert programmes, geared towards diversity. Another characteristic feature is the equal status of the original and the transcription, resulting from the influence of the same convention, but evolving in a very characteristic direction: transcriptions for chamber forces (for voice or violin), supremely popular during the 1870s and 1880s, were later dominated by transcriptions for larger ensembles: choir and orchestra. One can specify the moments at which the demand for arrangements of this kind grew quite suddenly: the years of the round anniversaries, 1899 and 1910, which required an exceptional setting to the anniversary celebrations and the participation of

¹² "Ja tu miałem chatkę własną,
 W tym parowie, w tej dolinie...
 Tu mi matka krzyż na czoło kładła
 Kiedym szedł w bój... krwawy,
 Przez łzy rzekła mi wesoło:
 'Synu, broń wciąż dobrej sprawy'".

the greatest possible number of performers. The grand Chopin ceremony organised on 17 October 1899 by the Warsaw Music Society featured choirs and an orchestra mustered ad hoc by Zygmunt Noskowski, as well as Piotr Maszyński's choral society "Lutnia". In the *Gazeta Polska* of the next day, we read the following:

Yesterday, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Chopin, the Music Society held an "extraordinary concert". The programme comprised works by Chopin either in the original or arranged. The performers were Miss Maria Kamińska, Mr Aleksander Michałowski, choirs and orchestra under the direction of Mr Zygmunt Noskowski and "Lutnia", under the direction of Mr Piotr Maszyński. A marble bust of Chopin adorned the stage, and leaves of ivy and laurel festooned the columns and the walls. The audience, in festive attire, filled the hall to the rafters.¹³

This review also includes a valuable, detailed description, albeit written with mocking intention, of Noskowski's transcriptions of the *Prelude in C minor* and the *Marche funèbre* performed in the concert:

The *Prelude in C minor*, that elegy, sung from the depths of the soul in a single breath through a plaintive tear, in Mr Noskowski's arrangement for mixed choir and orchestra turned into a drawn-out melodrama, in which the vociferous sounds of the brass instruments do not form an organic whole with the whistle of the violins and with the mawkish moan of the human voices. And the verse brings no glory to our poetry. Whoever asks his soul "Whence your flight, are you weary of life, does the world torment you?" cannot translate the feelings that quiver with pain beneath every note of the *C minor Prelude*.

The arrangement of the *Marche funèbre* comes off even worse.

Whilst the opening bars, given to the bassoons, do reproduce the character of the gloomy mood quite well, the composition then disintegrates entirely. The contrasts of the strengths and sonorities of the instruments are too great. The tonal colouring alters from one moment to the next. One gains the impression as if someone had transferred a drawing by Grottger onto a sheet of card made up of different coloured pieces. In the middle section, Mr Noskowski places between the flowing Italianate melody and the deliberately modest accompaniment a harmony full of figuration of his own invention, thereby depriving Chopin's work of its characteristically enchanting simplicity. This is not a reworking of the *Marche funèbre* for other instruments, as with a transcription for military band, but the alteration of the spirit of Chopin himself, which is something of a sacrilege.¹⁴

¹³ Antoni Sygietyński, 'Koncert chopinowski' [A Chopin concert], *Gazeta Polska* 238 (1899/10), 2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

From the above description, one has no difficulty in concluding that Noskowski's chief aspiration was to impart to his cantata arrangement the features of monumentalism and pathos (incidentally, standard features of nineteenth-century symphonic music). Other composers took a similar line in their orchestral transcriptions, for example Adam Münchheimer, in his popular transcription of the *Polonaise in A major*.

A different aim motivated authors of choral transcriptions, who adhered to a poetic of a choral song that was accessible to amateurs in terms of the forces it used, and so employing the least complicated musical means possible and "heart-grabbing" poetical content, either "native" Polish words or texts referring to universal Romantic motifs. For instance, on the eighty-third anniversary of Chopin's birth, celebrated in Warsaw – now correctly – in 1893, an amateur choir presented, in an evening organised by the Warsaw Music Society, a transcription of the *Prelude in G major* entitled *Elfy* [Elves].¹⁵

The clear supremacy of choral songs and cantata forms as elements of the "musical setting" of Chopin solemnities is linked to a highly characteristic feature of public life at that time, namely the accentuating of a sense of community on the occasion of various ceremonies, especially for funerals and anniversaries, through the gathering of a large number of participants. Under the Partitions, all national "occasions" were ersatz forms of Polish life and manifestations of the community of Poles. One old Polish custom was the participation of people "from society" in the amateur music performances adorning national solemnities. Since amateurs usually possessed only the ability to sing, this "music" often took the form of occasional cantatas with a choir or vocal-instrumental religious works. The repertoire was formed ad hoc or chosen among easier contemporary works.

For obvious reasons, most national feasts were celebrated during the nineteenth century in both the Polish capitals of Galicia: Cracow and Lviv. In the latter city, the cultural elites of the three partitions arranged to meet on the occasion of the centenary of Chopin's birth. Not by accident was the Chopin celebration planned for October 1910 accompanied by a Congress of Polish Musicians – a get-together that was intended to initiate organised collective activities on the part of the fragmented and hitherto poorly represented music environment. The congress was modelled on German musicological congresses, and so as a presentation of the current output of scholars specialising in musicology – a discipline that was barely getting off the ground in Poland at that time – and representatives of related disciplines, and also as an opportunity to discuss on-going problems in domestic musical culture on different levels: from the elite to the grass roots. The generational conflict between the congress organisers and the musicological "youth", which had

¹⁵ See Władysław Bogusławski, 'Z muzyki' [Of music], *Gazeta Polska* 44 (1893), 3.

been continuing for a number of years, meant that Adolf Chybiński and Zdzisław Jachimecki ostentatiously declined to appear at the congress and the Chopin solemnities. Among those not to disappoint were Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Stanisław Przybyszewski and Wanda Landowska. The course of the congress and the anniversary celebrations was accurately reflected in the commemorative book published in Lviv in 1911. It has also been the subject of interest on the part of several contemporary authors, and so I shall pass over the widely-known details of how events unfolded. I will draw attention, meanwhile, to one very characteristic aspect of the Lviv celebrations which is usually overlooked, namely the aspiration to lending it a “community” profile. This was made manifest most distinctly in such moments as the Lviv community’s ceremonial greeting of Paderewski and his transporting to the hotel in the form of a quasi-religious procession, with joint attendance, in a huge congregation, in the mass that opened proceedings (the sermons given during that mass were printed by the leading Lviv dailies).

On the occasion of the centenary of the composer’s birth, celebrated in Lviv, although no new cantata was composed, a huge choir of amateurs was used, featuring the distinguished participation of outstanding opera singers from all the stages in the country, representatives of the aristocracy and the entire cream of Lviv society. That choir took part in a performance of works of early Polish music during an historical concert put together by Aleksander Poliński, who made available rare copies from his collection of early Polish music. A highlight of the concert was the playing of Wanda Landowska, who performed, among other things, several early polonaises on the harpsichord.

Yet the “communal” significance of the anniversary concerts in Lviv in 1910 does not stop with the participation of an amateur choir. The organisers’ idea was to extend the celebrations to the whole country (that is, to the whole of Galicia). Chopin concerts were held in October 1910 not just in Lviv and Cracow, but in virtually all the towns of the Polish borderlands. All told, some 37 provincial concerts of this kind were organised, in which 47 pianists and 22 declaimers took part.¹⁶ Also participating in these concerts were local amateur choirs (some recorded in the commemorative book as peasant choirs), performing arrangements of Chopin’s works or folk songs. The whole undertaking was inspired by the remarkable, and hitherto unarticulated, idea of making Chopin accessible to the “common folk”. It may be treated as a distant echo of the “peasant mania” of the Young Poland era, which was quite intense among the democrats of Lviv, ardently committed, for example, to the mission of publishing cultural periodicals intended for the uninitiated reader. It

¹⁶ This information was painstakingly collected in the commemorative book of the celebrations: *Obchód setnej rocznicy urodzin Fryderyka Chopina (1810-1910) i Pierwszy Zjazd Muzyków Polskich we Lwowie* (Lviv, 1912).

goes without saying that in 1910 the subject of Chopin recurred in these periodicals. Several authors submitted articles that gave readers clearly to understand that the composer was a eulogist of the beauties of the Polish countryside; one such example is the preface to an essay by Kazimierz Kalinowski published in the popular *Ziarno*:

Let us listen to Chopin's music only with our hearts, and we will certainly here within it all those echoes of the Polish countryside which the master imbibed into his soul as a young lad, inclined to reverie and longing, and nurtured deep in his breast throughout his life whenever, in a moment of inspiration, he placed his fingers on the keys.¹⁷

Yet the concept of popularising Chopin's music among the "common folk" should be perceived in connection with the "homeland" agitation pursued by the national democrats. The tone of this agitation (perfectly familiar to us through the speech made in Lviv by Ignacy Jan Paderewski, for example) is betrayed by an announcement of the Chopin celebrations in Lviv, printed in *Słowo Polskie*:

The centenary of the birth of Fryderyk Chopin gives us an opportunity for an unprecedented collective manifestation in honour of the immortal Master, one of the greatest geniuses of our nation. In a few days' time, a great congress of composers and virtuosos will pay Him tribute in our city [...]. The entire intellectual and social elite will delight in the wonderful music of the bard-magician.

But Fryderyk Chopin is not just a supremely national, but also a supremely traditional, popular portrayer of our collective soul. His mistress is that inconsolable mourner of the graves of our nation's knights, that Arc of the Covenant between former and present times, the common Song. He sang of the suffering, loving and yearning of millions – and he has the right to enter every Polish heart and to dwell there forever.

Chopin's music is awaited with longing by millions of weary, sorrowful souls, millions crushed by the weighty yoke of life: legions of workers and peasants for whom that song is the only solace and delight.

The music of Chopin, characteristic, native through and through, that music of the folk like no other, which plays and winds imperceptibly through every Polish heart, should win the dominion of souls and rule over millions.¹⁸

A secondary strand to the campaign to bring Chopin "to the masses" was the demand for the Polonised spelling of the composer's name, Szopen, to be deemed binding. This was also expressed in the Lviv *Słowo Polskie*.

¹⁷ Kazimierz Kalinowski, 'Fryderyk Szopen', *Ziarno* 8 (1910), 147–148.

¹⁸ 'Wielki koncert ludowy Szopena' [A grand popular Chopin concert], *Słowo Polskie* 491 (1910).

The “homeland” agitation was not solely the speciality of the Lviv environment, although it was particularly intense there. It was also reflected in Poznań, Vilnius and Polish communities in Moscow and St. Petersburg, where the local music societies also took care to organise public Chopin celebrations. Things proceeded differently in Warsaw, where the centenary of the composer’s birth was commemorated in an elitist, and at the same time modern, way: in February 1910, the Warsaw Philharmonic organised a piano festival lasting several days, in which the most outstanding Polish pianists active both at home and abroad displayed their talents, including several musicians who just a few years previously had made a name for themselves as Chopin specialists (including Aleksander Michałowski and Józef Hofmann).

One cannot conclude consideration of the forms of the collective cult of Chopin in nineteenth-century Poland without naming the guardians of the Chopin tradition and collectors of his souvenirs: Marcelina Czartoryska, Nathalie Janotha, Ferdynand Hoesick, Mieczysław Karłowicz and Kornelia Parnasowa, whose Lviv home contained an entire Chopin museum, later plundered in the turmoil of war. Also belonging to the nineteenth-century legacy are initiatives aimed at building Chopin monuments and protecting sites connected with the composer. The nineteenth-century Polish Chopin cult was at first distinctly “extritorial”, manifesting itself in ordinary venues of public gatherings, not linked to the “geography” of places inhabited or visited by the composer. We know what a surprise for Varsovians was the discovery of Żelazowa Wola by Mily Balakirev. Yet we also know that this “extritoriality” was one of the chief features of Polish culture during the period of the Partitions, gathering its souvenirs in Paris or in Rapperswill. It was with great difficulty that efforts were made to place a commemorative plaque on the wall of Chopin’s final abode in Paris. But at the same time, it was also in Paris that the first Chopin monument was erected – in 1900, in the Luxembourg Gardens. In Warsaw, a Chopin monument was not forthcoming until 1926. The ceremony of its unveiling was perhaps the last Chopin *obchód* organised in the traditional nineteenth-century spirit, with one exception: it was an international occasion, a demonstration of a new community – the European community that was forged after the war. An international character was preserved by the collective Chopin cult in Poland during the twentieth century. Its changing forms and content – resulting from the evolution of the notions of Europe and from the various approaches to national heritage – are worth a separate presentation.

Translated by John Comber

