

1993

Chopin twenty-four preludes opus 28

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Recommended Citation

Meier, Marilyn Anne, Chopin twenty-four preludes opus 28, Doctor of Creative Arts thesis, School of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, 1993. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/947>

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CHOPIN

TWENTY-FOUR PRELUDES OPUS 28

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS

from



UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

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1993

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ABSTRACT

CHOPIN Twenty-four Preludes Op. 28 is a presentation of my interpretation of the *Preludes*. The thesis includes a general study of the history and development of the piano prelude genre, specific historical study of Chopin's *Preludes*, and Chopin's contribution as pianist and teacher.

My intention is to link together the relationship between musical and interpretative analysis and Chopin's influence on the modern piano playing technique in order to achieve my interpretative goals in performance of these preludes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the following people who have assisted and supported me throughout the writing of this thesis:

David Vance, my supervisor and friend.

Béla Siki, my former teacher and mentor.

And especially my dear family and friends for their love and encouragement.

INTRODUCTION

The approach taken in this thesis has been that of considering the importance of the history of the piano prelude, Chopin's contribution to the development of the prelude genre, his performing and teaching techniques, and a musical analysis in order to reach my interpretation of the *Twenty-four Preludes Op. 28*.

The thesis is divided into four chapters:

Chapter 1 deals with the piano prelude and examines its history and development from the fifteenth century to the present day. It considers composers who wrote preludes before and after Chopin, and discusses Chopin's contribution to the genre.

Chapter 2 is a study of Chopin as pianist and teacher and provides a detailed account of both his innovations as a composer-performer and his teaching techniques.

Chapter 3 deals exclusively with the *Op. 28 Preludes*: the period of their composition, editions, titles, critical response and performance.

Chapter 4 is my specific musical and interpretative analysis of the preludes. A summary of all the processes involved in reaching my interpretative goals concludes the thesis. Unless otherwise noted, all of the musical examples used in this chapter are taken from Paderewski's edition of the *Preludes*, published by Polish Music Publications (1949).

Chapter 1

THE PIANO PRELUDE

Making an entrance is important in architecture, the theatre and literature. The foyer of a building and the opening lines of a poem set a mood and create character and individuality. Actors draw attention to themselves, and make an impression upon the audience, by making an entrance. So too in musical performance is the introduction of the musicians and their work important. Like the foyer of a building, the prelude offers a way in to a larger musical edifice. A brief work in free style, the prelude functioned as a way for the performer to prepare himself and the audience and to warm up his fingers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the Baroque, the prelude was an introductory movement to a main work or group of works, then developed in the Romantic era and twentieth century as an independent piece featuring great creativity and originality.

1.2 Early Preludes.

Preludes were first introduced in the fifteenth century *Ileborgh Tablature*, a collection of works by Brother Adam Ileborgh. These were the earliest idiomatic keyboard compositions known to avoid using a cantus firmus and exhibited a metrical freedom and figuration in the upper voice not found in liturgical

cantus firmus settings.¹ They were characterized by independent melodic lines and accompaniment, rhythmic freedom and variety, and were transposable.² The following example is typical of early preludes. Note the descending melodic bass-line, rhythmic variety, metric values and change in metre. Although the prelude is not really improvisatory because it is written out, its rhythmic freedom suggests the idea of improvisation. As all the notes fit under the five fingers, the idiomatic right-hand aims to loosen and flex the fingers.



Fig. 1: *Ileborgh Tablature: Praeambulum bonum super C.*

¹ Kirby, F.E. *A Short History of Keyboard Music*. New York: Schirmer, 1966. pp. 36-38.

² Gillespie, John. *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music*. New York: Dover, 1965. pp. 18-20.

Similar preludes were included in the *Fundamentum Organisandi* (Principles of Composition) by Conrad Paumann (1410-1473), the *Buxheim Organ Book* (1475), and the Hamburg and Erlangen manuscripts.³ Figure 2 again shows an example of rhythmic freedom and freedom of note groupings, as well as the lack of tempo markings making it appear improvisatory.



Fig. 2: *Buxheim Organ Book: Praelambulum super G.*

³ Kirby, pp. 36-38.

1.3 The Unmeasured Prelude.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the *unmeasured prelude* began to appear. Constructed of chords alternating with passage work and having metric freedom, these preludes were mainly used in the French Baroque lute suite in order for the player to test his tuning, warm up his fingers before playing the rest of the suite and establish the tonality. Preludes played by French harpsichordists were perhaps also similarly used to check the tuning of their instrument, as the practice of equal temperament was not yet widely in use.⁴

The French composer Nicolas Le Beque (1630-1702) included unmeasured preludes in most of his *Pieces de Clavessin* of 1677. Perhaps it was pieces like these that were the subject of Mace's description of the seventeenth century prelude as being "a piece of confused-wild-shapeless-kind of intricate play ... in which no perfect form, shape, or uniformity can be perceived."⁵ Figure 3 shows the *Prelude en D la re sol* from the first book of *Pieces de Clavessin*.

⁴ Gillespie, pp. 41-42.

⁵ Mace, Thomas. *Musick's Monument*. London: n.p., 1676.

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Le Beque - Prelude en D la re sol". The score is written for piano and is organized into six systems, each consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef). The music is characterized by intricate melodic lines and complex harmonic structures. The first system shows a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The second system features a treble staff with a rapid sixteenth-note passage and a bass staff with a more active accompaniment. The third system continues with similar melodic and harmonic patterns. The fourth system shows a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The fifth system features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The sixth system concludes the piece with a treble staff featuring a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The score is written in a clear, legible style with standard musical notation.

Fig. 3: Le Beque - Prelude en D la re sol

Rameau (1683-1764) also included an unmeasured prelude as the first piece in Book 1 of his *Pieces de Clavecin* (1706). This is the sole prelude in the collection. As shown in Figure 4, the opening is the only unmeasured passage which suggests that the prelude started to lose its value as a means of checking tuning and preparing the audience for tonality and became more structured and metrically regular. The concept of the prelude as a self-contained musical structure began to take hold.

I. PIÈCES DE CLAVECIN · LIVRE PREMIER (1706)

PRÉLUDE

Fig. 4: Rameau - *Prelude, Pieces de Clavecin - Livre Premier.*

1.4: Baroque Preludes: J.S. Bach.

During the Baroque, preludes usually preceded fugues or were introductory movements to suites. These works were measured and used one theme or motive which was developed and sustained throughout the prelude. The most influential work in the prelude genre at this time was Johann Sebastian Bach's forty eight Preludes and Fugues known as the *Wohltemperierte Clavier*, the first twenty four composed in 1722 (Book I) and a second set collected in 1744 (Book II). Bach's purpose was to show the equal temperament tuning of the keyboard in which the octave is divided into twelve equal parts or semi-tones resulting in the instrument sounding equally in tune in each of the twelve keys. The preludes and fugues were written in each of the twelve keys in both major and minor modes. The preludes with their respective fugues vary greatly. Mostly, the prelude is virtuosic like an étude, at times related to the fugue, at times completely different. They are short, concise works adhering to no special form, with a distinctive, individual style characterized by the use of short themes or figures sustained throughout. Some preludes are of a purely harmonic nature using arpeggios (No.s 1 and 6 of Book I)



Fig. 5: (a) Bach *Prelude No.1, Book 1*. mm. 1-2.

BWV 851

Fig. 5: (b) *Prelude No. 6, Book 1.* mm. 1-2.

or scale passages (No. 5 of Book I and No. 11 of Book II)

BWV 850

Fig. 5: (c) *Prelude No. 5, Book 1.* mm. 1-2.

BWV 880

Fig. 5: (d) *Prelude No. 11, Book 2.* mm. 1-4.

or broken chords (No.s 11 and 21 of Book I and No. 6 of Book II)

BWV 856

Fig. 5: (e) *Prelude No. 11, Book 1.* mm. 1-2.

BWV 866

Fig. 5: (f) *Prelude No. 21, Book 1.* mm. 1-2.

BWV 875

Fig. 5: (g) *Prelude No. 6, Book 2.* mm. 1-4.

Some are specifically lyrical movements (No.s 8 and 22 of Book I)

BWV 853

Fig. 5: (h) *Prelude No. 8, Book 1. mm. 4.*

BWV 867

Fig. 5: (i) *Prelude No. 22, Book 1. mm. 1-2.*

or contrapuntal pieces (No.s 4, 7, 24 of Book I and No.s 4, 5, of Book II.⁶)

BWV 849

Fig. 5: (j) *Prelude No. 4, Book 1. mm. 1-3.*

⁶ Macpherson, Stewart. *Form in Music*. N.p.: Galliard, n.d. p. 128.

BWV 852

Fig. 5: (k) *Prelude No. 7, Book 1.* mm. 1-3.

BWV 869

(Andante)

Fig. 5: (l) *Prelude No. 24, Book 1.* mm. 1-4.

BWV 873

Fig. 5: (m) *Prelude No. 4, Book 2.* mm. 1-4.

BWV 874

Fig. 5: (n) *Prelude No. 5, Book 2.* mm. 1-4.

The title prelude does not appear often from the time of J.S. Bach to Clementi (1752-1832). Perhaps with the development of the sonata as a form, the prelude used at the beginning of suites or paired with fugues disappeared and the prelude type form became absorbed into other forms.

1.5 Chopin and the Prelude.

Chopin inherited the prelude as a genre that had developed from the idiomatic German organ tablatures of the fifteenth century, to the unmeasured preludes used by French lute and harpsichord players in the seventeenth century, to the eighteenth century when preludes served mainly as introductory movements to a group of works or a work such as a fugue, the most famous example of which is the *Wohltemperierte Clavier* of J.S. Bach. In his study of Chopin's *Preludes* Op. 28, Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger suggests that Chopin would have known the following collections of preludes:⁷

CLEMENTI *Preludes and Exercises* in all major and minor keys (1811, rev. 2/ c. 1821)

HUMMEL *Vorspiele vor Anfange eines Stuekes (sic) aus allen 24 Dur und mol Tonarten* Opus 67 (c. 1814)

CRAMER *Twenty six Preludes or Short Introductions in the principal Major and Minor Keys* (1818)

SZYMANOWSKA *Vingt Exercises et Preludes* (1819)

⁷ Eigeldinger, Jean-Jacques. *24 Preludes Opus 28: genre, structure, significance*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1988. p. 172.

WURFEL *Zbior exercycyi w kształcie prelusyow ze wszystkich tonow maior i minor* (1821)

KALKBRENNER *Vinjt-quatre Preludes dans tous les Tons majeurs et mineurs, pouvant servir d'exemple pour apprendre a preluder* Opus 88 (1827)

MOSCHELES *50 Preludes ou Introductions dans tous les tons Majeurs & Mineurs* Opus 73 (1828)⁸

Each of the above collections was composed for pedagogical use, and offer no real unity beyond the use of the twelve keys in both major and minor modes. The length of each prelude is consistent in all the collections: all are brief, ranging from several measures to three pages. These preludes continued in the earlier accepted tradition of being an improvisation, cadenza or instrumental recitative, not taking on any other form or genre.⁹

1.6 Preludes - Chopin.

It was Chopin who established the "new" prelude genre by creating an independent work of a suggestive, imaginative nature. Whilst still owing its origins to earlier preludes - short, stylised improvisations, usually based upon one theme or motif and in each of the twelve major and minor keys - the *24 Preludes* Op. 28 (1836-1839) do not conform to the traditions of, or what was expected of, preludes in times past. These ideals would have been the basis for André Gide's remarks in his *Notes sur Chopin*:

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

I admit that I do not wholly understand the title that Chopin chose to give these short pieces: *Preludes*. Preludes to what? Each of Bach's preludes is followed by its fugue; it is an integral part of it. But I can no more imagine one of these Chopin preludes followed by some other piece in the same key, even if by the same composer.¹⁰

Liszt had called Chopin "an enthusiastic student of Bach"¹¹ and Bach's influence on the form and texture of Chopin's preludes is considerable. Although Chopin composed his preludes in each of the twelve major and minor keys, his arrangement of the keys is different to Bach's - Chopin chose to order his preludes in the circle of fifths and relative minor, i.e. C-a, G-e, D-b, and so on, whereas Bach arranges his preludes ascending chromatically from middle C. Chopin, like Bach, also bases his preludes upon a unifying motive or figure. Many of the preludes feature a single motive providing all of the thematic material, such as rapid figuration (No.s 1, 8, 10 and 14) or repeated melodies and rhythms (No.s 7, 11, 13 and 20). Lyrical melodies and contrasting middle sections have elements of Chopin's *Nocturnes* (No.s 13, 15 and 21) while others employ both figuration and melodic material (No.s 1, 3, 8, 23, 24). Some are like études exploiting specific technical devices (No.s 8, 12, 16 and 19).

¹⁰ Gide, A. *Notes sur Chopin*. Paris: n.p., 1948. p. 32

¹¹ Niecks, Frederick. *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician*. Vol. 1. New York: Cooper Square, 1973. p. 30.

1.7 Preludes - Mendelssohn.

Perhaps the most important contemporary of Chopin to compose preludes was Mendelssohn (1809-1847) who composed the *Praeludien* Op. 104 (1836) *Six Preludes and Fugues* Op. 35 (1837) and a *Prelude and Fugue in e* (c.1842-3). Like Bach's preludes, Mendelssohn's are brief, concise works based upon the use of certain figures or motives developed consistently throughout. The *Six Preludes and Fugues* Op. 35 are similar to études, each one stressing a certain technical device. Figure 6 shows the opening measures of the first prelude.

1837

mf leggiero

Theil I.

f

sf assai marcato

sf

legato simile

sf

Fig. 6: Mendelssohn *Prelude No. 1* Op. 35. p. 1.

1.8 Preludes - Alkan, Heller, Busoni, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich.

As well as Chopin, several further composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries composed collections of preludes using all twelve major and minor keys: Alkan, Op. 31 (1847); Heller, Op. 81 (1853); Busoni, Op. 37 (c. 1882); Scriabin, Op. 22 (1897); Rachmaninoff, Op. 23 (1903), Op. 32 (1910); and Shostakovich, Op. 34 (1932-3), *Preludes and Fugues*, Op. 87 (1950-1).¹²

Alkan, whose real name was Charles Valentin Morhange (1813-1888), a virtuoso pianist active in Paris and a friend of Liszt, used great virtuosity in conventional forms such as his preludes.¹³ Hungarian-born Stephen Heller (1813-1888) spent most of his life in Paris and was in contact with Chopin, Berlioz and Liszt. Like Chopin, most of his works were written for the piano.¹⁴ The compositions of Italian composer Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) were directly influenced by Bach stressing the absolute and objective nature of musical works. Besides his preludes, he also composed the *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Chopin* Op. 22 (1884) which is based upon Chopin's *Prelude in C-sharp minor*, Op. 28 No. 10.¹⁵ Scriabin (1872-1915) was greatly influenced by Chopin in his earlier works. Composed throughout his life, his preludes were important character pieces. Later preludes have innovative harmonies, and many even lack key signatures.¹⁶ The

¹² Eigeldinger, p. 185.

¹³ Gillespie. pp. 244-5.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 265.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 348.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 272-274.

preludes of Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) were influenced by Chopin and Liszt. They consist mainly of romantic melodies accompanied by various arpeggiated figures, an example of which is the *Prelude Op. 32, No. 5*. Figure 7 shows the opening measures.

S. Rachmaninoff, Op. 32. No. 5.

Moderato.

The musical score for the opening measures of Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in G Major, Op. 32, No. 5* is presented in four systems. The piece is in G major and 4/4 time, marked *Moderato*. The first system shows the right hand with a melody starting on G4, marked *p*, and the left hand with a sixteenth-note arpeggiated figure, marked *p*. The second system continues the melody with a *dolce* marking and the arpeggiated figure. The third system shows the melody with a *p* marking and the arpeggiated figure with a *pp* marking. The fourth system shows the melody with a *pp* marking and the arpeggiated figure with a *dim.* marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 7: Rachmaninoff *Prelude in G Major, Op. 32, No. 5*. mm. 1-8.

Shostakovich composed his Op. 34 (1932-33) preludes to be used as daily technical exercises. Each piece is very brief, satirical in mood. Ivan Martynov, a Soviet biographer of Shostakovich, claims the composer considered that these preludes depicted his state of mind. Like Chopin's preludes, these works are sequenced in fifths. It is said that Shostakovich was inspired to compose the twenty-four *Preludes and Fugues Op. 87* (1951) after hearing a performance of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* at a festival in Leipzig.¹⁷ Moderate in style, they differ greatly from the satirical voice heard in the Op. 34.

¹⁷ Macdonald, Ian. *The New Shostakovich*. London: Fourth Estate, 1990. p. 84.

PRELUDE № 1

D. SCHOSTAKOWITSCH
Op. 87 (1951r.)

Moderato (♩ = 92)

p dolce

pp

pespress.

pp

cresc.

pp subito

mp dim.

p

Fig. 8: Shostakovich *Prelude No. 1*, Op. 87. mm. 1-36.

1.9 Preludes - Debussy.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) continued the prelude genre by taking it to new heights of development, enlarging the concept of tonality in his twenty-four *Preludes* of 1910 (Book I) and 1913 (Book II).¹⁸ Debussy's *Preludes* break away from the character of previous preludes by developing more than one figure or motive throughout the work, having a greater concern for colour through pedalling and effects, and by departing from the functional use of the diatonic mode, using pentatonicism and many unresolved dissonances. While the preludes are informed by extramusical ideas and are titled, Debussy is more concerned with their musical content and so teasingly places these titles at the end of each piece. The *Preludes* take ideas from diverse sources: dance or elements of dance; natural phenomena; legends; fantasy; a sense of atmosphere. Like Chopin, Debussy explores a range of technical demands, from relative ease to great virtuosity. The following example shows Debussy's use of a wide range of dynamics, markings indicating changes in articulation and in tempo, all of which create palettes of colour and sound effects such as bells and tambourines.

¹⁸ Schmitz, E. Robert. *The Piano Works of Debussy*. New York: Dover, 1966. p. 129.

Vif (♩ = 184)

V

Très modéré

pp

pp léger et lointain

quitez, en
laissant vibrer

En serrant

Très modéré

pp

p

quitez, en
p laissant vibrer

Vif

f

p

p dim. molto leggiero

p joyeux et léger

pp

Fig. 9: Debussy *Prelude No. 5, Book 1. (...Les collines d'Anacapri)* mm. 1-16.

1.10 Preludes - Szymanowski, Fauré, Martin, Ohana.

Three other European composers of note who composed smaller groups of preludes and were influenced by Chopin are the Polish composer Karel Szymanowski (1882-1937), the Frenchman Gabriel Urbain Fauré (1845-1924) and the Swiss Frank Martin (1890-1974).¹⁹

Szymanowski was part of the Polish national school of piano music, totally indebted to the legacy of Chopin. He composed nine *Preludes* Op. 1 in 1900. Fauré composed nine *Preludes* Op. 103 in 1910-11. The music, influenced by Chopin, is sensitive and subdued characterized by harmonic innovations, sounds and colours. As with Chopin's *Preludes*, these works have no programmatic or literary associations. Martin's eight *Preludes* of 1948 are perhaps his best known works.²⁰ They continue the long established prelude genre of brief works, developing the same theme or mood consistently throughout. The French composer Maurice Ohana (b. 1914) has also contributed to the tradition of writing a set of twenty-four preludes with a composition of 1974. While these preludes are uninvolved with tonality, the final number ends with a low D, recalling Chopin's ending to Op. 28.²¹

¹⁹ Eigeldinger, p. 185.

²⁰ Kirby. pp. 436-7.

²¹ Eigeldinger, p. 185.

1.11 Conclusion.

The history of the prelude is long, dating from fifteenth century German organ tablatures, and passing to seventeenth century unmeasured preludes used by French lute and harpsichord players in order to loosen the fingers of the performer, test the tuning of the instrument, establish the tonality and prepare the audience's minds for the more conventional music to come. In the eighteenth century, preludes served mainly as introductory movements to a group of dance pieces or a substantial work such as a fugue, the most famous example of the latter being the *Wohltemperierte Clavier* of J.S. Bach. Chopin, whilst still greatly influenced by J.S. Bach, gave the prelude its independence, creating pieces of great imagination. Debussy took the prelude even further by exploring the tonality, colour and resonance of the instrument and developing several motives within the one piece consequently breaking away from the customary practice of using one motive or theme. Just as in architecture, styles and symbols develop and change, and while one era may demand something of a particular style, the next era may ask for something else. In music, and specifically the piano, this applies not only to the performance of the prelude but also to the development of modern playing and teaching practices of which Chopin had undoubtedly the greatest influence.

Chapter 2

CHOPIN AS PIANIST AND TEACHER

Chopin's influence as a performer and significance as a teacher has extended to this present age. Copied and greatly admired, he was the founder of the modern piano technique, adopting a relaxed style of playing, innovative fingerings and pedalling effects used always in order to achieve the best possible tone and smoothness when required.

2.2 Performing

Throughout his short life, Chopin gave a total of only fifty two public concerts. According to the reviews which exist from many of these performances, Chopin was considered to be a genius, and to have a talent for perfection. His playing was noted for its clean touch, control and refinement; it was observed that he had no apparent technical limitations, accomplishing passages of great difficulty in such a smooth and subtle way that the listener could not tell the real degree of difficulty of the work performed. Chopin avoided the grand gestures associated with the nineteenth century German piano tradition, preferring to employ a relaxed style, conveying his musical intentions by subtle means such as delicate articulation, innovative fingerings and particular use of the pedal.

A review of Chopin's Vienna concert of August 11 or 18* , 1829 in the Viennese *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung* draws attention to Chopin's touch and relaxed manner of playing by remarking:

a fine but truly an outstanding talent ... in both his playing and his compositions ... the young man displays an extremely modest character. He seems reluctant to show off ... His touch, though clean and firm, had little of the brilliance which our virtuosos like to exhibit the minute they sit down at the keyboard ... He played in the calmest manner without those flourishes which generally distinguish the artist from the dilettante immediately. Nevertheless, our highly refined and sensitive public quickly recognised in the young, unknown foreigner a true musician. ²²

A similar review from May 1841 reads:

Listen to Chopin and you will quickly see that he does not bow to fashion or vulgarity to achieve fame and fortune. This artist, this poet, has not, like so many others over the past fifteen to twenty years, striven by every means imaginable to please the public. On the contrary, he has avoided pretensions, preferring the quiet life devoid of ostentation, competitiveness or emotional displays ... pay attention to how he dreams, how he weeps, how he sings so sweetly, tenderly, and with

* Chopin performed the same program on August 11 and 18 at the *Kärnthnerthor Theater* in Vienna.

²² *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, Vienna, 20 Aug, 1829.

such sorrow, how he expresses to perfection everything that is heartfelt and noble. Chopin is the pianist of feeling *par excellence* ... One can say that Chopin has created his own school of piano technique and composition. From the first moment that he runs his fingers over the keyboard nothing can rival the lightness and delicacy of his touch.²³

Even a composer like Hector Berlioz, whose interest was largely in orchestral music, responded by stating that:

Chopin's playing is invariably full of mercurial grace, refinement, and originality, while his compositions are second to none in their harmonic richness and melodic sweetness.²⁴

Not all of Chopin's reviews were favourable towards his performance. Some critics disliked his simplicity of playing. A critic in Manchester observed that:

This artiste does not quite come up to our idea of a first rate pianist; it is true he plays very difficult music with beautiful delicacy and precision of finger but there is no melody or meaning in it.²⁵

²³ *La France Musicale*, Paris, 2 May, 1841.

²⁴ *Journal des Debats*, Paris, 13 April, 1842.

²⁵ *Manchester Examiner*, Manchester, 5 Sept, 1848.

The Musical World was ambivalent:

He certainly played with great finish - too much so, perhaps, and might have deserved the name of finesse I missed the astonishing power of Leopold de Meyer, the vigour of Thalberg, the dash of Herz, or the grace of Sterndale Bennett. Notwithstanding, Mons. Chopin is assuredly a great pianist, and no one can hear him without receiving some amount of delectation ²⁶

2.3 Phrasing and tone

Chopin aimed at producing a pure singing tone, fine *legato* and carefully moulded phrasing. By concentrating on listening to his playing, the art of touch or sound production came before the acquisition of virtuosity. To Chopin, singing formed the basis of all instrumental training and the more that pianists drew their inspiration from vocal models, the more convincing their playing became through: breathing (good phrasing); a broad *cantabile* style; intense *legato*; sense of line and phrasing; fullness of sound; and the cello-like quality that the piano can reveal.²⁷ His views on phrasing were stated by his student Mikuli to Niecks -

Chopin, according to Mikuli, repeatedly said that when he heard bad phrasing it appeared

²⁶ *The Musical World*, London, 9 Sept, 1848.

²⁷ Eigeldinger, J-J. *Chopin: pianist and teacher*. Trans. Naomi Shohet with Krysia Osostowicz and Roy Howat. Ed. Roy Howat. London: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

to him as if someone recited, in a language he did not know, a speech laboriously memorised, not only neglecting to observe the right quantity of the syllables, but perhaps even making full stops in the middle of words.²⁸

2.4 Rubato

Two types of tempo rubato were used by Chopin with great effectiveness. The first type, described as the practice of freeing the melody of metrical strictness, either by lingering hesitantly or by pushing forward whilst keeping the accompaniment strictly in time, stemmed from the Italian baroque tradition of *bel canto*. His second use of rubato consisted of changing the pace in a whole section or a phrase by either slowing or accelerating the pulse depending on the direction of the music. Chopin achieved this by notating specific tempo markings such as *stretto*, *calando*, *ritenuto* which are found throughout the preludes and other compositions. Marcelina Czartoryska, one of Chopin's students during the last years of his life, has provided the following information on his use of rubato:

Chopin did not ever exaggerate his fantasy, being guided by his outstanding aesthetic instinct. We are delivered from any exaggeration and false *pathos* by the simplicity of his poetic enthusiasm and moderation. The *rubato* of Chopin's rhythm liberated from all school bonds, but never

²⁸ Niecks, F.. p. 187.

passing into disharmony, nor anarchy.... To play Chopin without any rules, without *rubato*, veiling his accents ... we hear not Chopin, but his caricature. Chopin disdained over-sensitivity as false, and as a man educated in the music of J.S. Bach and Mozart, he could never seek capricious or exaggerated *tempi*. He would not stand for anything that could destroy the basic outlines of a composition; and, therefore, took care that students should not arbitrarily change *tempi*.

29

Liszt described Chopin's *rubato* rather imaginatively:

Look at these trees, the wind plays in the leaves, stirs up life among them, the tree remains the same, that is *Chopinesque rubato*.³⁰

2.5 Fingering

Chopin was one of the most influential and boldest revolutionaries of fingering. Rather than accepting the practice of employing all of the fingers equally, Chopin enhanced their inequality, using it as a means for variety in sound. He used unorthodox fingerings in order to achieve the best possible smoothness when required and to enable great agility whilst keeping the hand still and relaxed. He often would pass the third or fourth

²⁹ Letnanová, Elena. *Piano Interpretation in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, c. 1991.

³⁰ Niecks, 2, p. 101.

finger over the fifth, use the thumb on the black keys (a practice frowned upon by the older school of pianists)³¹ pass the thumb under the fifth finger, slide fingers from a black key to a white key or from a white key to another white key.³² Mikuli conveyed the following information to Niecks:

In the notation of fingering, especially of that peculiar to himself, Chopin was not sparing. Here pianoforte playing owes him great innovations which, on account of their expedience, were soon adapted, notwithstanding the horror with which authorities at first regarded them. Thus, for instance, Chopin used without hesitation the thumb on the black keys, passed it even under the little finger (it is true, with a distinct inward bend of the wrist), if this could facilitate the execution and give it more repose and evenness. With one and the same finger he took often two consecutive keys (and this not only in gliding down from a black to the next white key) without the least interruption of the sequence being noticeable. The passing over each other of the longer fingers without the aid of the thumb he frequently made use of, and not only in passages where the thumb stationary on a key made this unavoidably necessary.³³

³¹ Hedley, p. 123.

³² Schonberg, H. *The Great Pianists* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963. p. 147

³³ Niecks, p. 186.

A review from London also commented on this aspect of Chopin's playing:

His treatment of the pianoforte is peculiar; and though we know that a system is not to be "explained in one word" we will mention a point or two so entirely novel that even the distant amateur may in part conceive how from such motions an original style of performance, and thence of composition must inevitably result. Whereas other pianists have proceeded on the intention of equalising the power of the fingers, M. Chopin's plans are arranged so as to utilise their natural inequality of power, and if carried out, provide varieties of expression not to be attained by those with whom evenness is the first excellence. Allied with this fancy are M. Chopin's peculiar mode of treating the scale and the shake, and his manner of sliding with one and the same finger from note to note, by way of producing a peculiar *legato*, and of passing the third finger over the fourth finger. All of these innovations are "art and part" of his music as properly rendered; and as enacted by himself, they harm by an ease and grace which, though superfine, are totally different affectation.³⁴

2.6 Hands

Hedley described Chopin's hands "though not large, being extraordinarily supple."³⁵ Cortot considered Chopin's touch to be

³⁴ *Athenaeum*, London, 1 July, 1848.

³⁵ Hedley. p. 121.

beautiful due to the combination of a strong bone-structure and supple joints capable of every delicate movement.³⁶ Heller, in correspondence with Niecks, wrote:

What a wonderful sight it was to see Chopin's small hands expand and cover a third of the keyboard. It was like the opening of the mouth of a serpent which is going to swallow a rabbit whole.³⁷

2.7 Original Prelude Fingering

In the *Preludes*, the only original examples of Chopin's innovative fingerings are found in No.s 3, 13, 16, 21, 23 and 24 as marked in the original French (*Ad. Catelin et Cie*) and English editions (*Wessel & Co. London No. 3098*).³⁸ These fingerings deal with maintaining the hand parallel to the keyboard, achieving lateral wrist movement and *legato* playing.

(a) Hand parallel to the keyboard

Keeping the hand parallel to the keys was certainly a central part of Chopin's fingerings: we know this as his fingerings were marked as such and from the following exercise sent to his niece Ludwika. Consisting of diminished seventh arpeggios, the exercises bore the

³⁶ Cortot, p. 20.

³⁷ Niecks, p. 96.

³⁸ Chopin, *Preludes*, ed. Paderewski, (Poland: *Instytut Fryderyka Chopina*, 1949) p. 65.

instructions: "Elbow level with the white keys. Hand neither towards the right nor the left."³⁹



Fig. 10: Chopin exercise for diminished seventh arpeggios.

The following musical examples with notated fingerings to keep the hand parallel to the keys are from preludes No.s 3, 16, 21, 23, 24.



Fig. 11: (a) *Prelude No. 3*. mm. 1-3.

³⁹ Hedley, pp. 127-8.

Fig. 11: (b) *Prelude No. 3*. mm. 7-9.

Fig. 11: (c) *Prelude No. 3*. mm. 22-33.

Musical score for Fig. 11(d), showing measures 40-41. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 40-41. The left hand (bass clef) provides harmonic support with chords and some movement. Measure numbers 40 and 41 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves.

Fig. 11: (d) *Prelude No. 16.* mm. 40-41.

Musical score for Fig. 11(e), showing measures 53-59. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) has a long slur over measures 53-55. The left hand (bass clef) has a melodic line with fingerings (1, 2, 1, 5) indicated. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present. The score ends with two measures marked *Ped.** (pedal). Measure number 53 is indicated at the beginning of the staff.

Fig.11: (e) *Prelude No. 21.* mm. 53-59.

Moderato

23

p *delicatissimo*

ped. * *ped.* * 4 3 1 3 *

ped. * *ped.* * *ped.* * 1 2 1 2 4 1 2 2 1 5

ped. * *ped.* * *ped.* * 4 2 1 3 2 1 1 2 1

ped. * *ped.* * *ped.* * 5 3 1 3 5 5 2 1 2 1

ped. * *ped.* * *ped.* * 3 2 1 3 3 3 3

ped. * *ped.* * *ped.* * 4 3 1 3 *

The image displays five systems of musical notation for a piano piece, likely a prelude. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, fingerings, and performance markings.

- System 1:** Treble clef staff starts at measure 11. It features a melodic line with fingerings 1, 2, 5, 2, 8, and 4. A slur covers measures 11-14. The bass clef staff has a rhythmic accompaniment with markings "Ped." and "*". The instruction "poco riten." is written above the treble staff.
- System 2:** Treble clef staff starts at measure 13. It features a melodic line with fingerings 8, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1. A slur covers measures 13-16. The bass clef staff has markings "Ped." and "*". The instruction "a tempo" is written above the treble staff.
- System 3:** Treble clef staff starts at measure 15. It features a melodic line with fingerings 8, 4, 3, 2, 1, 3, 2, 1. A slur covers measures 15-18. The bass clef staff has markings "Ped." and "*".
- System 4:** Treble clef staff starts at measure 17. It features a melodic line with a slur covering measures 17-20. The bass clef staff has markings "Ped." and "*". The instruction "dim." is written above the treble staff.
- System 5:** Treble clef staff starts at measure 20. It features a melodic line with fingerings 5, 4, 2, 1, 1, 8. A slur covers measures 20-23. The bass clef staff has markings "Ped." and "*". The instruction "smorz." is written above the treble staff. Fingerings 3, 2, 1, 4 and 1, 2, 1, 2 are also present in the bass staff.

PWM-231

Fig. 11: (f) Prelude No. 23.

Musical score for *Prelude No. 24*, measures 15-77. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a complex piano accompaniment with arpeggiated chords and a melodic line with various ornaments and techniques.

The score is divided into four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs):

- System 1 (Measures 15-17):** The right hand begins with an 8-measure ornament. The left hand plays a steady arpeggiated accompaniment.
- System 2 (Measures 65-67):** The right hand features a melodic line with a 13-measure ornament (fingerings: 1323, 3, 1) and a 5-measure ornament (fingerings: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4). The left hand continues the arpeggiated accompaniment.
- System 3 (Measures 68-71):** The right hand has a melodic line with a 5-measure ornament (fingerings: 1, 3, 2, 1, 5, 4, 1, 5). The left hand continues the arpeggiated accompaniment.
- System 4 (Measures 72-77):** The right hand starts with a *stretto* section (fingerings: 5, 5) and a *fff* dynamic marking. The left hand continues the arpeggiated accompaniment.

Performance markings include *sempre ff*, *stretto*, and *fff*. The left hand is marked with *Ted.* and asterisks.

Fig. 11: (g) *Prelude No. 24*. mm. 15-17, 65-77.

(b) Lateral wrist movement

Chopin believed the ideal position for the hands was to be above the keys E, F#, G#, A#, and B: the longer fingers (2,3,4) on the black keys, the shorter fingers (1 and 5) on the white keys, with the hand turned slightly outward, the object being to secure the hand for an advantageous and graceful position. Chopin began his students with the B major scale so that they too could learn to use this to their advantage. With this position, Chopin also discovered that the second finger could be used as a pivot, encouraging lateral wrist movement useful for flexible extension of the right-hand, extended left-hand writing and simultaneous extensions in both hands.⁴⁰ Among present day teachers, Béla Siki is one who considers that the basic advantage of such a hand position is that most of Chopin's figurations are patterned after it and by employing it where appropriate, one can play large, arpeggiated chords, *legato* octaves alternating the third, fourth and fifth fingers and passing the third or fourth finger over the fifth finger with the least amount of effort. For the left-hand, this position results in easy execution of widely-spaced Alberti basses. It may be called the ideal Chopin playing position.⁴¹ Examples of original fingerings marked for lateral wrist movement in the preludes are found in No.s 13 and 21.

⁴⁰ Eigeldinger, p. 18.

⁴¹ Siki, B. *Piano Repertoire* New York: Macmillan, 1981. p. 179.

Lento

1
p
legato
Ped. *

Fig. 12: (a) *Prelude No. 13*. mm. 1-3.

14
dim.
f
Ped. *

19
Ped.

24
pp
* 1 2 2 1 2 2 1
5 3 4 5 3 4 5

Fig. 12: (b) *Prelude No. 21*. mm. 14-28.

(c) *Legato* playing

The remaining original fingerings are marked in *Prelude No. 21*, and are employed in order to play *legato*.

Cantabile

21

1

3 2 1 1
4 3 4

Leg. *

1 2 1 1
3 4 3 4

Leg. *

3

2 1 1
4 5 4

Leg. *

1 2 1 1
3 4 5 4

Leg. *

5

1 1 2 1 2
3 4 3 4 3

1 1 2 1
3 4 5 3

Fig. 13: (a) *Prelude No. 21*. mm. 1-8.

The musical score consists of three systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 34-38) shows a dense texture of beamed sixteenth notes with various fingerings and repeated 'Ped.' markings. The second system (measures 39-42) begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and includes a 'din.' (diminuendo) marking. The third system (measures 43-46) features a piano (*p*) dynamic and continues the intricate sixteenth-note patterns. The score is annotated with numerous fingerings and pedal markings throughout.

Fig. 13: (b) *Prelude No. 21*. mm. 34-46.

A further example of such *legato* fingering is found in the proof for the original French edition of the *Etude Op.10, No. 2*.

origina et

19/10

Allegro sempre legato

No. 2.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Etude Opus 10, No. 2. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The score is heavily annotated with inked corrections and handwritten notes. At the top, the title "origina et" is written in cursive. Below it, "Allegro sempre legato" is written. The first system has a tempo marking "Allegro" and the text "sempre legato". The second system has "sempre legato" written above it. The fourth system has "sempre legato" written above it. The fifth system has "cres." written below it. There are many handwritten numbers (e.g., 1 3 4 5, 3 4 5, 5 4 3, 3 4 5, 5 4 3, 3 4 5, 5 4 3, 3 4 5, 5 4 3, 3 4 5, 5 4 3, 3 4 5, 5 4 3, 3 4 5, 5 4 3) written above the notes, likely indicating fingerings or corrections. On the left side, there are handwritten notes: "X 4/4", "4/4", "fa", "tranne", "3/4", "fa", "X 3/4", "fa". On the right side, there are handwritten notes: "ajouté", "et en haut", "traverse", "X 6/8", "ajouté", "fa", "ajouté", "fa". At the bottom center, there is a small stamp that says "M. 1890". At the bottom left, there is a handwritten number "Pu. 50 141".

Fig. 14: Etude Opus 10, No. 2. First page proof for the original French edition containing inked corrections, all by Chopin.⁴²

⁴² Bourmiquel, Camille. Chopin. New York: Grove Press, 1960. p. 172.

2.8 Pedalling

In the use of the pedal, Chopin was considered to be an "explorer and unsurpassed master."⁴³ Certainly the problem of interpreting notated pedal markings must be taken into account as they are usually awkward and imprecise, and use of the pedal is mostly determined by the mechanics specific to the piano being played, individual taste and the acoustics of the performance place. However, the following two accounts from Kleczyński and Marmontel show how Chopin developed a new dependence on the use of both pedals, applying them in order to create special effects in his music, thereby altering the quality and timbre of the sound.

Chopin brought [the combined use of the pedals] to perfection. Chopin frequently passed, and without transition, from the open to the soft pedal, especially in enharmonic modulation. These passages had an altogether particular charm, especially when played on Pleyel's pianofortes.⁴⁴

Chopin used the pedals with marvellous discretion. He often coupled them to obtain a soft and veiled sonority, but more often still he would use them separately for brilliant passages, for sustained harmonies, for deep bass notes, and for loud ringing chords. Or he would use the soft pedal alone for those light murmurings which seem to create a

⁴³ Hedley, p. 123.

⁴⁴ Kleczyński, Jean. *How to play Chopin. The works of Frederic Chopin, their proper interpretation.* Trans. Alfred Whittingham. 6th ed. London: William Reeves, 1913. p. 59. Kleczyński undertook the first research on Chopin twenty years after composer's death.

transparent vapour around the arabesque that embellish the melody and envelope it like fine lace. ⁴⁵

Chopin's original pedallings (indicated in manuscripts) created particular effects such as embellishing the harmony as shown in the opening measures of the *Polonaise Fantaisie, Opus 61*. The pedal is marked to be held from the second note of the bar throughout the cadenza which follows.

Fig 15: *Polonaise-Fantaisie. Opus 61. m. 1.*

In her book, *Piano Interpretation in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Elena Letnanová lists the most frequently deployed pedal markings in Chopin's compositions as follows:

⁴⁵ Marmontel, Antoine. *Histoire du piano et de ses origines*. Paris: Heugel, 1825. pp. 256-7.

1. Broken chords and passages where the harmony remains the same such as the *Etude in Ab Major, Op. 25, No. 1*:

Allegro sostenuto ($\text{♩} = 104$) Op. 25 - Nr 1

13 *p*

Ped. **Ped.* *

Fig. 16: Chopin *Etude in Ab Major, Op. 25 No. 1*. mm. 1-2.

2. With each melody note when the same hand plays the melody and accompaniment:

Largo

9

f *Ped.* **Ped.* **Ped.* **Ped.* **Ped.* **Ped.* **Ped.* **Ped.*

Fig. 17: Chopin *Prelude No. 9*. mm. 1-2.

3. When a large sonority is required:

17 *ff*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Fig. 18: Chopin *Prelude No. 22, Op. 28.* mm. 17-19.

4. In passages in the middle of the keyboard in order to enrich the tone, avoiding the mixture of neighbouring tones (producing dissonances) and two notes belonging to the same consonant chord:

15 *p* *Sostenuto*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Fig. 19: Chopin *Prelude No. 15.* mm. 1-4.

5. Syncopated pedalling - pressing the pedal after striking the note.⁴⁶

(Ped. *Ped. *Ped. *Ped. *Ped. *Ped. *Ped. *Ped. *Ped. *Ped. *Ped. simile)

Fig. 20: *Prelude No. 20*. mm. 1-4.

In the preludes, Chopin's pedal markings are mostly indicated in the lyrical pieces where the effects are subtle and delicate. Pedal markings in the Paderewski edition exactly follow those of the original manuscripts.

2.9 Chopin's Teaching

The unconstricted and natural principles of playing that Chopin employed were also those which he conveyed to his pupils. His method of teaching stressed a great flexibility of the wrist and arm and the production of a rich, singing tone. With the exception of Gutmann, who is said to have been Chopin's favourite pupil⁴⁷; Mathias, who became a noted professor at Paris Conservatoire; Mikuli, who published an edition of Chopin's works; Madame Dubois,

⁴⁶ Letnanová, E. p. 123-4.

⁴⁷ Niecks, p. 178

a highly esteemed teacher in Paris; and Filtsch, an infant prodigy who died very young, Chopin's students were not professionals. In his book *Frederick Chopin as a man and musician*, Niecks reports information regarding Chopin's teaching methods and repertoire directly from several of these students including Madame Dubois, Mathias, and Mikuli. Mikuli wrote the following account regarding touch:

As to Chopin's method of teaching, it was absolutely of the old *legato* school, of the school of Clementi and Cramer. Of course, he had enriched it by a great variety of touch; he obtained a wonderful variety of tone and nuances of tone ... what concerned Chopin most at the commencement of his instruction was to free the pupil from every stiffness and convulsive, cramped movement of the hand, and to give him thus the first condition of a beautiful style of playing, *souplesse* (suppleness), and with it independence of the fingers. He taught indefatigably that the exercises in question were no mere mechanical ones, but called for the intelligence and the whole will of the pupil, on which account twenty and even forty thoughtless repetitions do no good at all, still less the practicing during which, according to Kalkbrenner's advice, one may occupy one's self simultaneously with some kind of reading(!).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 181

2.10 Teaching Repertoire

In correspondence with Niecks, Madame Dubois lists Chopin's most frequently used teaching repertoire as the following:⁴⁹

Clementi:	<i>Preludes and Exercises, Book 2</i> <i>Gradus ad Parnassum</i>
J.S. Bach:	<i>Wohltemperierte Clavier</i>
Hummel:	<i>Rondo brillant sur un thème russe</i> <i>La Bella capricciosa</i> <i>Sonata in F# minor (Op. 81)</i> <i>Concertos in A minor and B minor</i> <i>Septet</i>
Field:	Concertos Nocturnes
Beethoven:	Concertos <i>Sonatas Op. 27, No. 2; Op. 26; Op. 57</i>
Weber:	<i>Sonatas in C major, Ab major</i>
Schubert:	<i>Ländler</i> Waltzes Duets Marches Polonaises <i>Divertissement hongrois</i>
Mendelssohn:	<i>Concerto in G minor</i> <i>Songs without words</i>
Liszt:	<i>La Tarantella de Rossini</i> <i>Septet from Lucia</i>

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 189.

2.11 Piano Method

Chopin began a *Piano Method* which was intended to cover the art of piano playing and theory of music.⁵⁰ Although never completed, a few notes do remain. In his book *The Great Pianists*, Harold Schonberg includes examples of Chopin's incomplete *Piano Method*.

Amongst these notes are the following -

Everything depends on good fingering.

Kalkbrenner's method of playing from the wrist only is wrong. Forearm and upper arm should be used in addition to the wrist, hand and fingers.

Suppleness is of extreme importance.

Do not use a flat hand. Ease of movement is impossible if the fingers are outstretched.

Correct use of pedal remains a study for life.

Concentrate on *legato*. Hear great singers.

Fingers are unequal in strength. Special exercises should be developed to make the best of each finger.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Methuen-Campbell, J. *Chopin Playing/From the Composer to the Present Day*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1981.

⁵¹ Schonberg, pp. 149-50.

Mikuli wrote:

Chopin treated very thoroughly the different kinds of touch, especially the full-toned *legato*. As gymnastic helps he recommended the bending inward and outward of the wrist, the repeated touch from the wrist, the extending of the fingers, but all this with the earnest warning against over-fatigue. He made his pupils play the scales with a full tone, as connected as possible, very slowly and only gradually advancing to a quicker *tempo*, and with metronomic evenness. The passing of the thumb under the other fingers and the passing of the latter over the former was to be facilitated by a corresponding turning inward of the hand. The scales with many black keys (B, F# and C#) were first studied, and last, as the most difficult, C Major. In the same sequence he took up Clementi's *Preludes et Exercises*, a work which for its utility he esteemed very highly. According to Chopin the evenness of the scales (also of the arpeggios) not merely depended on the utmost equal strengthening of all fingers by means of five-finger exercises and on a thumb entirely free at the passing under and over, but rather a lateral movement (with the elbow hanging quite down and always easy) of the hand, not by jerks, but continuously and evenly flowing, which he tried to illustrate by the *glissando* over the keyboard. Of studies he gave after this a selection of Cramer's *Etudes*, Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, Moscheles' style-studies for the higher development (which were very sympathetic to him), and J.S. Bach's *Suites* and some *Fugues* from *D a s*

wohltemperirte Clavier. In a certain way Field's and his own nocturnes numbered likewise with the studies, for in them the pupil was - partly by the apprehension of his explanation, partly by observation and imitation (he played them to the pupil unweariedly) - to learn to know, love, and execute the beautiful smooth vocal tone and the *legato*. With double notes and chords he demanded most strictly simultaneous striking, breaking was only allowed when it was indicated by the composer himself; shakes, which he generally began with the auxiliary note, had not so much to be played quick as with great evenness, the conclusion of the shake quietly and without precipitation. For the turn and the *appoggiatura* he recommended the great Italian singers as models. Although he made his pupils play octaves from the wrist, they must not thereby lose in fullness of tone.⁵²

2.12 Béla Siki

During my research of Chopin as a teacher and performer, it was pleasantly surprising to find that Béla Siki, my former teacher of six years, conveyed many of the same principles to me as Chopin did to his students. One of Siki's teachers was the Rumanian pianist Dinu Lipatti. In my correspondence with Professor Siki, I posed the question of the legacy of Chopin's teaching to which he replied:

I am flattered that you detect a similarity between my teaching philosophy and that of Chopin. It is somehow an undeserved

⁵² Niecks, pp. 184-5.

compliment. Any pianist who takes his profession seriously, will end up at Chopin, if he reads enough and is honest enough. However, it is difficult to research Chopin's own thoughts, due to his extreme reserve, for not to say muteness. The fact that he had only a few professional students, makes this case even more unfortunate. The four professionals, Guttman, Filtsch, Mikuli and Matthias (sic) tried to transmit the essential of Chopin's teaching.

As for Lipatti, he was a stunningly similar human being to the image of Chopin. He showed extreme reserve, he only seldom expressed his views and had an aristocratic distinction in his behavior. I do not believe that this attitude was a conscientious imitation of Chopin, at least, I never felt it. Nature sometimes reproduces similar individuals. I believe, it is pure coincidence only.⁵³

2.13 Conclusion

Chopin's piano teaching was as closely bound to his stylistic ideas as to his contribution to the technique of the instrument. Through reviews of his concerts and reports from several of his students, we know that he regarded piano technique to be no more than a means of reproducing musical intentions, and he avoided the bravura style of playing associated with nineteenth century German piano tradition, choosing instead to employ a relaxed, natural style, communicating his ideas in a subtle way by means of delicate

⁵³ Siki, Béla. Letter to the author. 14 April 1991.

articulation, innovative fingerings and special use of the pedal. His legacy of performing and teaching has left us with the means to a simple, natural approach to playing by the use of pedalling effects; fingerings for *legato* playing; effortless scale and arpeggio technique; rubato; and a hand position over the notes E, F#, G#, A# and B that uses the second finger as a pivot. In the performance of the *Preludes Op. 28*, all of Chopin's influences should be taken into account in order to facilitate ease of execution, both technically and musically.

Chapter 3

THE CHOPIN PRELUDES OPUS 28

Along with Bach's *Wohltemperierte Clavier*, the Chopin *Twenty-four Preludes Op. 28* are at the core of any concert pianist's training by being an excellent introduction to the study of Chopin's piano works and to the practice of his influences as a pianist and teacher. The *Preludes* also reveal the fact that Chopin's compositions were influenced equally by the expression of emotions and by the demands of musical form. In these pieces, Chopin developed an already established genre into something quite extraordinary.

3.2 Preludes - Date of composition

Although completed and published as a set in 1839, there is considerable controversy regarding their date of origin, and how many and which preludes were composed or completed in Majorca. Cortot believed that only the slow-moving preludes could have been composed there because Chopin's cell-like room was too resonant, and the vibrations of the piano too great, for the chromatic sequences of the faster pieces.⁵⁴ Eigeldinger considers the *Preludes* as a complete work, basing his study on its final realisation at the midpoint of Chopin's composing career.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Methuen-Campbell, J. p. 64.

⁵⁵ Eigeldinger, J-J. "Twenty-four Preludes op. 28: genre, structure, significance." *Chopin Studies*. Ed. Jim Samson. London: Cambridge University Press, 1988. p. 168-170.

The following table showing the years the preludes were composed is taken from the Henle edition.

Preludes Op. 28: Years composed^{5 6}

Number	Key	Date
No. 1	C major	1836-1838
No. 2	A minor	September 1831
No. 3	G major	1833-1834
No. 4	E minor	1838
No. 5	D major	1831-1838
No. 6	B minor	1838
No. 7	A major	1836
No. 8	F# minor	September 1831
No. 9	E major	1836-1838
No. 10	C# minor	1836-1837
No. 11	B major	1831-1838
No. 12	G# minor	1832-1834
No. 13	F# major	1834-1835
No. 14	Eb minor	1838-1839
No. 15	Db major	1839
No. 16	Bb minor	1839
No. 17	Ab major	1834-1835
No. 18	F minor	1836-1837
No. 19	Eb major	1832-1834
No. 20	C minor	1837
No. 21	Bb major	1836-1838
No. 22	G minor	1831-1834
No. 23	F major	1833-1834
No. 24	D minor	September 1831

⁵⁶ Chopin, F. *Preludes*. Munich: G. Henle Verlag, n.d.

3.3 Editions

The preludes were first published in Paris in June 1839 by Catelin with the French rights and dedication to Camille Pleyel. The German edition was published in the same year by Kistner in Leipzig, and was dedicated to J.C. Kessler. Chopin sent his manuscript to Fontana⁵⁷ for copying on 22 January 1839 which therefore marks the final date for his revisions and is the only real evidence that the work was completed prior to that date. Fontana's copy was the basis for the first German edition while Chopin's manuscript was the basis for the first French edition.⁵⁸

Amongst the most popular editions used today is the Paderewski edition (1949) from The Fryderyk Chopin Institute Polish Music Publications. The editors aim "to establish a text which fully reveals Chopin's thought and corresponds to his intentions as closely as possible" and is based upon Chopin's autograph manuscripts and the copies approved by him, and first editions.⁵⁹ Also in frequent use is the German Urtext (1982) which uses source material from the Autograph and first French edition⁶⁰, and the Cortot edition, (1957) published by Salabert, in which Cortot lists his titles for each prelude and includes interpretative and technical practice suggestions.

⁵⁷ Fontana was a boyhood friend of Chopin. Later in Paris he was copyist and loyal friend to Chopin until he emigrated to America in 1841.

⁵⁸ Zimmermann, E. *Preface: Chopin, Préludes*. Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1982.

⁵⁹ Chopin, F. *Preludes*. Ed. Paderewski. Complete works I. Cracow: Polish Music Publications, 1986. p. 61. 22nd ed.

⁶⁰ Zimmermann, pp. 4-5.

3.4 Titles

Besides George Sand's infamous "Raindrop" title to the fifteenth prelude, the most famous descriptive titles are those by Alfred Cortot which are included in his edition of the *Preludes* published by Salabert:⁶¹

1. "*Attente fiévreuse de l'aimé*" : Waiting feverishly for the beloved one.
2. "*Méditation douloureuse; la mer déserte, au loin....*" : Sad meditations; in the distance a deserted sea.
3. "*Le chant du ruisseau*" : Song of the Brook.
4. "*Sur une tombe*" : Beside a tomb.
5. "*L'arbre plein de chants*" : A tree full of song.
6. "*Le mal du pays*" : Longing for one's country.
7. "*Des souvenirs délicieux flottent comme un parfum a travers la mémoire....*" : Delicious recollections float like perfume through the memory.
8. "*La neige tombe, le vent hurle, la tempête fait rage; mais en mon triste cœur, l'orage est plus terrible encore*" : The snow falls, the wind howls, the tempest rages, but in my sad heart there is a more terrible storm.
9. "*Voix prophétiques*" : The end of Poland. (lit. prophetic voices)
10. "*Fusées qui retombent*" : Falling rockets.
11. "*Desir de jeune fille*" : A young girl's wish.
12. "*Chevauchée dans la nuit*" : The rider in the night.
13. "*Sur le sol étranger, par une nuit étoilée, et en pensant a la bien-aimée lointaine*" : In a strange land, under a starry sky, thinking of the beloved one far away.
14. "*Mer orageuse*" : A stormy sea.
15. "*Mais la Mort est la, dans l'ombre....*" : A young mother rocking her child.
16. "*La course a l'abîme*" : The road to the Abyss.
17. "*Elle m'a dit: Je t'aime*" : She told me that she loved me.
18. "*Imprécations*" : Imprecations.

⁶¹ Chopin, F. 24 *Préludes*, Op. 28. Ed. A. Cortot. Paris: Salabert, 1926. Preface.

19. "*Des ailes, des ailes, pour m'enfuir vers vous, o ma bien-aimée!*" : Had I but wings, I would fly to you my beloved.

20. "*Funérailles*" : A funeral procession.

21. "*Retour solitaire a l'endroit des aveux*" : Returning solitary to the spot where vows were made.

22. "*Révolution*" : Revolution.

23. "*Naiades jouant*" : Naidda playing.

24. "*Du sang, de la volupté, de la mort*" : Voluptuousness and Death.

3.5 Critical response

The most famous critical responses to the *Preludes* are found in reviews from Liszt and Schumann. Liszt recognised the significance of the work, knowing that Chopin had created an influential new genre that would inspire composers into the future.

Chopin's preludes are unique compositions. They are not simply, as their title would suggest, pieces intended as an introduction to something further; they are poetic preludes similar to those of a great contemporary poet [Lamartine] which gently ease the soul into a golden dream world and then whisk it away to the highest realms of the ideal. Admirable in their diversity, they require scrupulous examination of the workmanship and thought which have gone into them before they can be properly appreciated. Even then they still retain the appearance of spontaneous improvisations produced without the slightest effort. They possess that freedom and charm which characterize works of genius.⁶²

⁶² *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*. 2 May 1842. p. 246.

Schumann reacted to the *Preludes* with less enthusiasm, being somewhat disturbed at their diversity:

The Preludes are strange pieces. I confess I imagined them differently, and designed in the grandest style, like his Etudes. But almost the opposite is true: they are sketches, beginnings of Etudes, or, so to speak, ruins, eagle wings, a wild motley of pieces. But each piece, written in a fine, pearly hand, shows: 'Frederick Chopin wrote it.' One recognises him in the pauses by the passionate breathing. He is and remains the boldest and proudest poetic mind of the time. The collection also contains the morbid, the feverish, the repellent. May each search what suits him; may only the philistine stay away!⁶³

3.6 Performance

The opinion of the *Preludes* being, as Schumann stated, a "wild motley of pieces", prevailed through to this century until Cortot and Busoni popularised the practice of playing the complete set. Certainly, performing complete works such as the *Preludes* or *Etudes* was not customary before the beginning of this century and we know from reviews of Chopin's concerts that he never played the complete Op. 28 in public.⁶⁴ Keeping with traditions of that period, the most he played at the one time were four preludes in a concert on the 26 April 1841.⁶⁵ Today, most concert pianists have the complete Op. 28

⁶³ *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. 19 November 1839. p. 163.

⁶⁴ See Atwood, W. *Fryderyk Chopin, Pianist from Warsaw*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987. pp. 197-260.

⁶⁵ Methuen-Campbell, J. p. 23.

in their repertoire and it is not uncommon to see the entire work programmed or at least several preludes performed as a group. However, some pianists and critics do consider that programming complete sets of Chopin's works, such as the twenty-four preludes, or either book of études, is not what Chopin intended and is rather an aesthetic of our time in which there is more emphasis upon performing large-scale works. Some also question the musical grounds for grouping pieces together that have little more in common than their formal structure or generic title. Also to be considered is the matter of creating a balanced program: when performed in recital as a whole, the *Preludes* would be the major work as they have a duration of over forty minutes. In any case, the Chopin *Twenty-four Preludes Op. 28* hold a unique position in the literature for the piano and should be part of every pianist's repertoire.

Chapter 4

MUSICAL AND INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS

Analysis is an imperative part of studying musical works, as it describes the music, providing a better understanding of the score and the artistry of the compositional process. Particular things observed then become a springboard for interpretative ideas. This process may be described as follows:

When a musician *reads* notes, he doesn't play the notes of a score in the same way that a typist types what he sees. The musician reads the notation as music, and the performance is an interpretation of the music as he understands it: an interpretation in which intervals, rhythms and dynamics are given what seem to the performer to be appropriate values. They are not simply executed as a series of instructions in terms of equal-tempered intervals, arithmetically-related durations, and a scale of eight dynamic levels from pianissimo to fortissimo. Consequently when a composer writes down music he is relying heavily on the reader's musical ear and imagination in supplying the precise intervallic, rhythmic and dynamic values that the notation omits, just as he has to contribute sonorous, dramatic and emotional values that cannot possibly be specified in the score.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Cook, Nicholas. *A guide to musical analysis*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1987. p. 227.

In this chapter, I have attempted to convey my interpretative and technical approach to the Chopin preludes. Interpretation involves artistic licence and the following commentary represents my own point of view. There is no right way of playing Chopin, but there are certain traits that indicate good Chopin interpretation such as: the use of subtle legato; sustaining the purity of melodies; realizing contrasts in mood, textures and balance between parts; using highly developed contrapuntal playing; and rhythmic flexibility.⁶⁷

Béla Siki has also commented on the interpretation of Chopin:

The traditions of interpreting Chopin were not set during his lifetime, partly because his students (who were generally of mediocre talent) were unable to transmit them to the next generation. However, if one were to condense the likes and dislikes of Chopin, it would be safe to say that Chopin hated excesses or sentimentality and liked a well-controlled, balanced performance.⁶⁸

The Chopin *Preludes* are self-contained pieces, following strictly the sequence of the twenty-four keys, moving in fifths, a major key always followed by the parallel minor key. This succession, which seems outwardly pedagogic, has an organic if unobtrusive effect on the nature of the music. The carefully chosen rhythmical contrasts between succeeding pieces also lend variety to the cycle as a whole.

⁶⁷ Methuen-Campbell, James. *Chopin Playing/ From the Composer to the Present Day*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1981.

⁶⁸ Siki, p. 180.

4.2 Prelude 1 C major *Agitato* 2/8

Marked *agitato*, the first prelude of Chopin's Opus 28 surges forward in an excited manner, serving as an opening flourish. Whether deliberate or not, it alludes to the first Prelude of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Both preludes are in C major, both consist of chordal progressions notated as broken chords and feature continuously moving semiquavers.

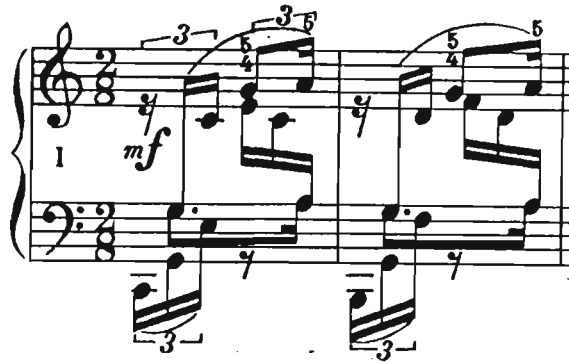


Fig. 21: (a) Chopin *Prelude No. 1, Opus 28*. mm. 1-2.

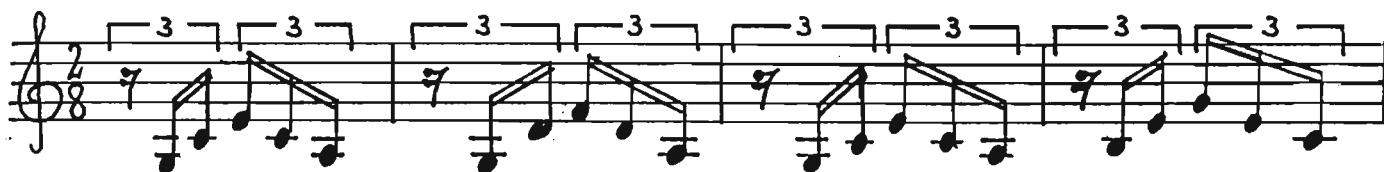
The image shows the first two measures of Bach's Prelude No. 1, Book 1, from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. It is written in C major, 2/8 time. The right hand plays a continuous stream of eighth notes, with the first measure containing a triplet of eighth notes (C4, D4, E4) and the second measure containing a triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4). The left hand plays a broken chord accompaniment of eighth notes, with a triplet of eighth notes (C3, B2, A2) in the first measure and another triplet (G2, F2, E2) in the second measure.

Fig. 21: (b) Bach *Prelude No. 1, Book 1, Well-Tempered Clavier*. mm. 1-2

Within Chopin's broken chords are four separate voices. The upper voice has a step-wise moving melody doubled an octave lower and rhythmically altered in the tenor voice. The bass and alto voices consist of triplet semiquaver figuration in dialogue with one another, the bass always moving upward, the alto part moving both upward and downward. The first note of the bass line should be stressed as it underpins the harmony. Stressing these notes can however pose considerable difficulty to those pianists with smaller hands. This problem may be helped by not holding the note longer than its notated value, and by moving the wrist laterally, sweeping the hand from left to right. The other voices to be stressed are the soprano and tenor. As notated, the tenor voice should be held throughout each bar, thus reinforcing the upper-voice melody. The remaining notes merely serve to fill in the harmonies and dynamically should be played well below the rest.



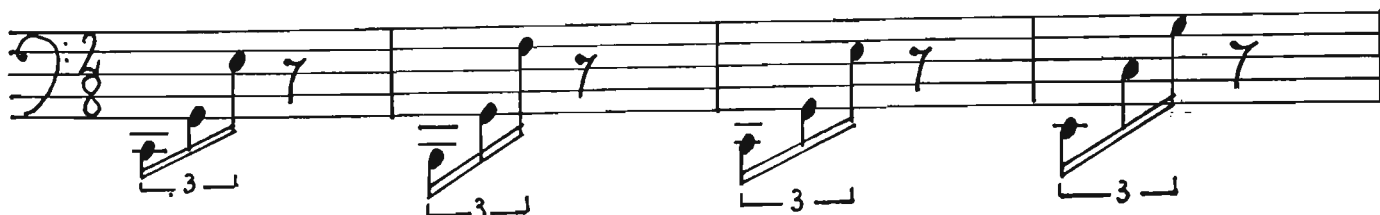
(a) Upper-voice melody. This voice should be the loudest throughout.



(b) Alto voice filling in the harmonies. This voice should be the softest throughout.



(c) Tenor voice doubling the upper-voice melody with rhythmic augmentation.



(d) Bass-voice. The first note of each bar establishes the harmonic changes, the remaining two notes fill in the harmonies.

Fig. 22: The four voices of *Prelude No. 1*.

The key centre is C major throughout with harmonic changes occurring on the first beat of each measure until m. 24. From mm. 25-28, the harmonic progression is I - V7 - I - V7 over a tonic pedal.

From m. 29 until the end, the harmony remains in the tonic with the addition of subdominant-to-tonic suspensions in the upper-voice. In mm. 1, 3, 9, 11, 25 and 27, the sixth is added to the tonic triad, a practice considered by Abraham in his book *Chopin's Musical Style* to form one of the basic chords of Chopin's rich harmonic vocabulary.⁶⁹ Another of Chopin's frequently-used devices is the addition of non-harmonic passing notes and appoggiaturas. These are employed in the treble and tenor upper-part melody. Abraham also states that often in Chopin's music, what appears to be a rapid series of modulations are usually not true modulations.⁷⁰ In this prelude, the upward whole tone and semi-tonal movement occurring in the bass and treble parts from mm. 12-23 may suggest movement out of C major although no actual modulation occurs.

Fig. 23: *Prelude No. 1*. mm. 7-27.

⁶⁹ Abraham, G. *Chopin's Musical Style* London: Oxford University Press, 1939. p. 78.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

The formal structure consists of four eight measure phrases, plus a coda of two measures. From mm. 16-20, a *stretto* is marked. In Chopin's music *stretto* means to push the tempo forward. Throughout the prelude, the sound should be chord-like, achieved by playing the semiquavers intensely *legato*, not articulated and separated. The marked *agitato* suggests a freedom in tempo used as a device to stress the dynamics and climaxes of each phrase.

The image displays five systems of musical notation for Chopin's Prelude No. 1. Each system consists of a treble and bass clef staff. The first system (measures 1-8) begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and includes performance instructions: *(cresc.)* and *poco accel.*. The second system (measures 9-15) features a *(a tempo)* marking and dynamic changes of *dim e rit.* and *cresc.*. The third system (measures 16-20) is marked *stretto*. The fourth system (measures 21-27) includes dynamics *(ff)*, *(dim.)*, *(rit)*, and *p*, along with *(a tempo)* markings. The fifth system (measures 28-34) concludes with *(rit.)* and *(pp)* markings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingering numbers (3, 5, 6, 7).

Fig. 24: Prelude No. 1.

Pedal changes should occur in relation to the harmony, i.e. on every measure throughout until the final two measures where it is sustained for the coda. The dynamics should create a wave of sound from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*.

4.3 *Prelude 2* A minor *Lento* C

With its disturbing character and quite dissonant harmonies, the melancholy, meditative *Prelude No. 2* contrasts greatly with the preceding prelude. It features a constant ostinato accompaniment and declaratory melody and is based upon the same melodic phrase repeated four times, rhythmically altered and transposed each time. Figure 25 shows that the first and third versions are almost identical except that version three has a longer first note. The entire first measure of the original phrase has been deleted in version four.

The figure displays four staves of musical notation, each representing a different version of a melodic phrase. The staves are numbered 1 through 4. Staff 1 is labeled '1.' and 'INTRO' and ends with a measure number '7'. Staff 2 is labeled '2.' and ends with a measure number '13'. Staff 3 is labeled '3.' and ends with a measure number '19'. Staff 4 is labeled '4.' and ends with a measure number '23'. Each staff shows a melodic phrase with various rhythmic and transpositional alterations.

Fig. 25: *Prelude No. 2*. Four versions of the melody.

Phrase:

- (1) E minor and modulates to G major (relative major)
- (2) B minor and modulates to D major (relative major)
- (3) D minor.
- (4) D minor and ends with a modulation to A minor.

The Prelude has been compared to Wagner's Prelude to *Tristan and Isolde*⁷¹: both are in A minor and avoid the tonic throughout by continuous chromatic movement, remaining mostly in the dominant (Chopin begins in the dominant minor) and sub-dominant. The use of passing notes, appoggiaturas, suspensions and anticipations is considerable throughout the accompaniment. Figure 26 illustrates that by noting the lowest bass line, the harmonies are clear.

⁷¹ Abraham, p. 95.

e-min. — — — — G: I — — — — V — — — —
 G: I
 b min: I — — — — D: I
 D: V
 = a: IV — — — — I
 a: I a: V a-min. cadence
 of V of V

Fig. 26: *Prelude No. 2*. Bass-line and excerpts of the accompaniment.⁷²

The accompaniment, made considerably difficult by the awkward stretches, should be well controlled and played *legato*. Chopin's own practice of turning the hand outward may be of assistance here. By turning the left-hand second, third, fourth and

⁷² Leichtentritt, H. *Analyse de Chopin'schen Klavierwerke*. Berlin: Max Hesses Verlag, 1921. p. 131.

fifth fingers slightly outward whilst keeping the thumb in its normal position, move the hand and fore-arm from left to right on each note. The opening two measures should set the desired melancholy mood and be played *piano*. Figure 27 shows Chopin's fingering according to the Paderewski edition.

Fig. 27: *Prelude No. 2.* mm. 1-4.

The right-hand melody should have a direct sound and be played with arm weight and intensity. The melody must be smoothly sustained from note-to-note ensuring clear realization of the long phrases. As the right-hand consists of the same melodic phrase repeated (with slight alterations) four times, the sound may also be altered each time so as to take advantage of colour changes in key. Extra time may be taken approaching the ends of each phrase, i.e. dotted quaver to semiquaver beats in mm. 6, 11 and 18, with an immediate return to the original tempo at the right-hand tied minim, the conclusion of the phrase. The recitative nature of the melody is brought to the fore at m. 17 when the left-hand motive abruptly ceases returning only briefly in mm. 18 and 19 as a remembrance.

Although the last four measures slow down naturally due to the absence of the moving left-hand accompaniment, a deliberate *ritenuto* from the *sostenuto* at m. 21 until the end would be appropriate as at this point, harmonic ambiguity is lost.

The pedal should be used throughout the prelude, changing on every beat from mm. 1-16 and on every second beat in m. 17 and the first half of m. 18. The only pedal marking notated in the score is at the brief return of the left-hand motive in mm. 18-19. The marking should be observed because the motive here is like a memory and should therefore be played *pianissimo* and slightly blurred, as though heard far in the distance. At m. 20 and the first half of m. 21, the pedal may be changed on every second beat. From the second half of m. 21 until the end, the pedal may be changed on each chord.

4.4 *Prelude 3* G major *Vivace* C

Dubbed by Cortot as the *Song of the Brook*, this prelude has a light-hearted, spirited mood, especially following the sombre second prelude. Leichtentritt describes it rather fancifully as sounding like an idyllic shepherd's song accompanied by a running stream.⁷³

The Prelude consists of three eight measure phrases with a two measure introduction, a six measure coda and a connecting measure in the middle (m. 11). The formal outline is as follows:

Section	Measure
Introduction	1-2: establishes accompaniment figure
Phrase 1	3-10
Connecting measure	11
Phrase 2	12-19
Phrase 3	20-27
Coda	28-33

The key centre throughout is G major except at the end of the first phrase which briefly passes through D major as the dominant (note flattened seventh), and towards the end of the second phrase which modulates briefly to the subdominant C major. The return of the F# in the accompaniment in m. 22 indicates a return to G major.

⁷³ Ibid, 131.

The left-hand should be light, played *piano* and clearly, creating the effect of air between each note. This effect may be achieved by keeping the wrist low, and lifting the fingers high, articulating each note. The energetic right-hand melody should be played clearly with finger articulation. In m. 8 and again at m. 10, it is important not to hold onto the lower two notes - rolling the wrist from left to right resolves this problem.

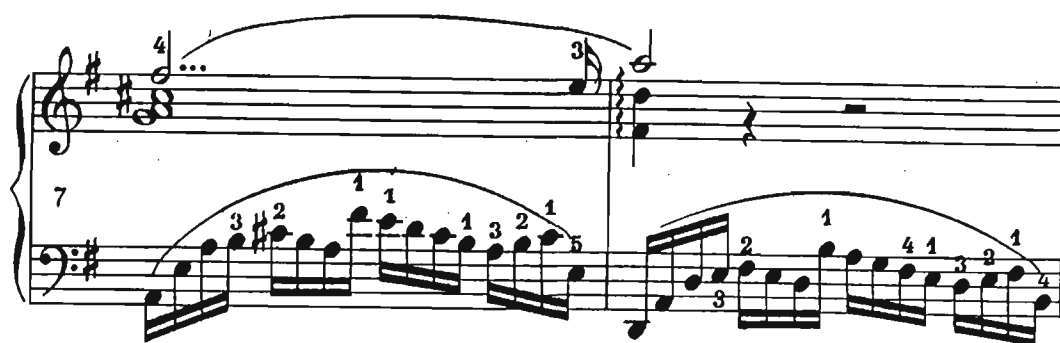


Fig. 28: *Prelude No. 3.* mm. 7-8.

The grace note in m. 17 may be played with the left-hand's second beat, second quaver, the right-hand played as a semiquaver triplet. See Figure 29.

Fig. 29: *Prelude No. 3.* mm. 16-18.

Particular attention must be paid to all rests and to semiquavers corresponding to the left-hand semiquavers, ensuring that each note is given its true full value. From mm. 3-15 rests are marked between most of the melody notes. From m. 16 no rests are indicated. This difference in notation implies a contrast in interpretation. From the dominant seventh chord of m. 16-17 leading to the C major section beginning at m. 18, the left-hand may adopt a closer *legato* touch and the right-hand chords may use more arm weight in order to achieve a warmer sound. Here, the right-hand phrases are longer than previous measures so it is important to listen carefully to the long lines ensuring that the complete phrase length is observed. At m. 26 there is a return to the light, airy articulation. At m. 28, the right-hand joins the left with its moving semiquavers. By keeping both wrists low, and articulating each note within *legato*, this section will remain smooth and have the amount of lightness required. Figure 30 shows my suggested fingering for mm. 28-31, the purpose of which is to keep the right-hand parallel to the keyboard.

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system covers measures 28-31 and is marked *leggiero* and *p*. The second system covers measures 30-31 and is marked *dim.*. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The right hand plays a melodic line with various intervals and slurs, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and ties.

Fig. 30: *Prelude No. 3*. mm. 28-31.

The pedal may be used sparingly between mm. 1-15, only when the right-hand plays the melody. At the sound change from mm. 16-25, more pedal may be used, changing on each melody note. No pedal is required then until the last two chords. Half pedalling mm. 1-15 and mm. 28-31 would also be acceptable as long as no blurring of the accompaniment were to occur.

4.5 *Prelude 4* E minor *Largo* C

The fourth prelude's mood swings back to that of No. 2 and features a yearning, intense melody accompanied by repeated chords. The melody is intensified by the slow chromatic descent of the accompaniment's bass line creating a mood of doom and darkness. Although no actual modulation occurs, this chromatic descent and the use of passing notes, appoggiaturas, suspensions and anticipations gives the impression of harmonic movement away from the tonic. The accompaniment throughout consists of three-note repeated chords until the final three measures. The bass line descends chromatically throughout except in mm. 8-9, and 17-18 where it moves by a whole-step, in m. 10 where it moves up a semi-tone and back to assert the cadence in m. 12, and at m. 16 moving down a minor third. The upper two parts descend chromatically or by whole-step throughout, although only simultaneously in m. 14 and the last two beats of m. 16. This continuous chromatic movement creates frequent changes of harmony including the appearance of diminished seventh chords resolving to dominant sevenths. Figure 31 shows the chromatic movement of the left-hand accompaniment.

The image displays three staves of musical notation for the left-hand accompaniment of Chopin's Prelude No. 4. The first staff covers measures 1 through 8, the second staff covers measures 9 through 16, and the third staff covers measures 17 through 25. The notation is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of a series of chords and chordal textures, with some measures featuring a melodic line in the upper voice of the left hand. Measure numbers 8, 16, and 25 are indicated at the end of their respective staves.

Fig. 31: *Prelude No. 4*. Harmonic pattern of the left-hand accompaniment.

From mm. 16-18, Chopin marks a *stretto*, indicating, as in the first prelude, a pushing forward of the tempo. This has the effect of a climax then release to the end. The final two measures consist of three chords which may be played slowly, with a sense of resignation.

The left-hand chords should be played softly, with a concentrated, set (but not stiff) hand position releasing the chords just half-way up from the bed of the keyboard. This repeated chord technique results in a connected, constant sound. Pedalling should be

kept to the absolute minimum, and when used at all, should be half pedalling so that the *legato* sound is a result of the performer's technique rather than the use of the pedal. The only place where the pedal may be fully used is at mm. 17 and 18. Throughout the prelude, the left-hand chords should be played steadily and in strict tempo. The only sections in which freedom may be taken occur at the indicated *stretto* at mm. 16-17 where the tempo should move ahead and then slow again to the original tempo in the second half of m. 18; and a gradual slowing at the notated *smorzando* from mm. 21-22. There may be a big *crescendo* with the *stretto* of m. 16 to the *forte* climax of the piece at m. 17. This is the only loud section of this prelude so it should be passionate and dramatic, dropping back again to the original mood and softness at m. 19.

The soulful right-hand melody requires strong and intense finger articulation within the dynamic *piano*. Using a technique of overlapping each melody note (delaying the release of each note until the next note has been played) will create a very intense *legato*.

4.6 *Prelude 5* D major *Molto allegro* 3/8

Like an étude, the fifth prelude features fast, continuous semiquaver passage-work. It shows Chopin's technique of figuration composition with weaving semiquavers and widely-spaced arpeggiated figures.

The form and main key centres are as follows:

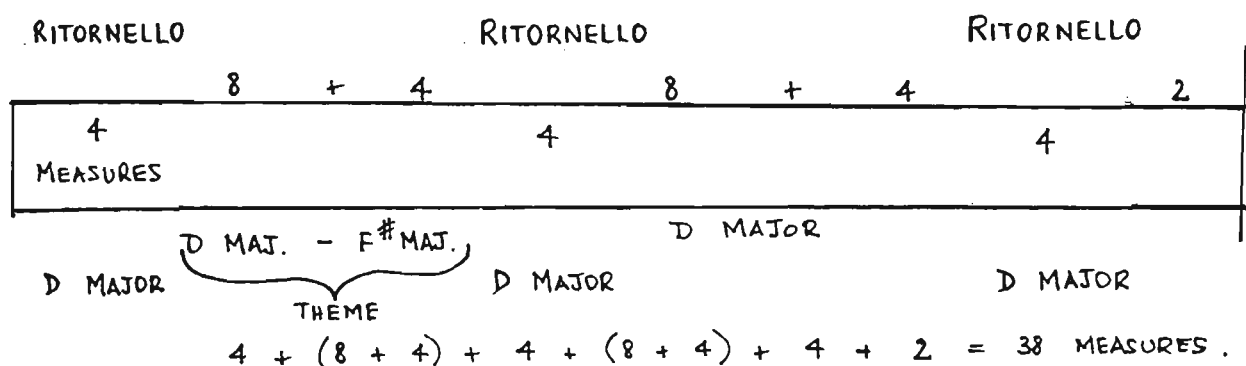


Fig. 32: *Prelude No. 5*. Form and key centres.⁷⁴

The prelude is based upon the rhythmic contrast between the complicated ritornello and the straightforward theme. The ritornello's four 3/8 measures (right-hand) are actually made up of three 2/4 measures. Adding to the complication, the ostinato left-hand also consists of three 2/4 measures but begins each measure a semiquaver later than the right-hand.

⁷⁴ After Leichtentritt, p. 136.

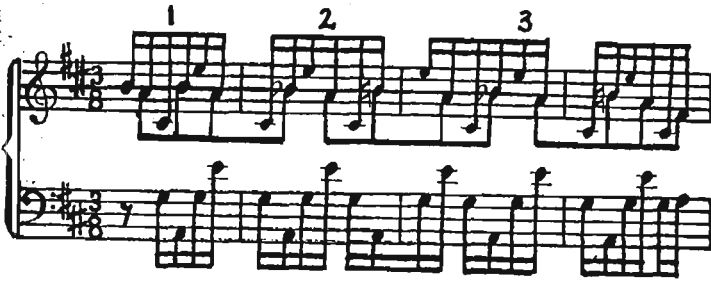


Fig. 33: *Prelude No. 5*. mm. 1-4.⁷⁵

A falling semitone motive creating a cross-rhythm appears in the right-hand of mm. 1-4, 17-20, 33-36. See Figure 34.

Fig. 34: *Prelude No. 5*. mm. 1-4 showing melodic motive.

The twelve measure theme can be divided into two sections: eight measures of forward movement and four measures of repetition.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 137.

FORWARD MOVEMENT

REPETITION

Fig. 35: *Prelude No. 5*. mm. 5-16.

Harmonically, the first ritornello and the first eight measures of the theme use the circle of fifths - D major, A major, E minor and B minor, with the last four measures in F# major. The next ritornello returns to D major. The twelve-measure theme is repeated, the first eight measures of which are altered. The last four measures, final

ritornello and additional two closing measures are in D major. The two different musical ideas during this prelude require different technical approaches. The first idea, occurring in mm. 1-4, 17-20, and 33-36, requires very flexible wrists in both hands, moving them, in contrary motion, from left to right. This particular technique, a feature of Chopin's own playing and teaching, can be used frequently in his works. One clear example is in the *Etude Opus 25, No. 1*, in which the performer can employ this lateral wrist technique throughout, solving the technical problems caused by attempting to play with a motionless wrist and not having large enough hands to do so. Even pianists with very large hands would have difficulty in playing this étude in such a way. Musically, this technique is important because the articulation comes from the wrists and hands, rather than from the fingers, resulting in a controlled, *legato* sound.

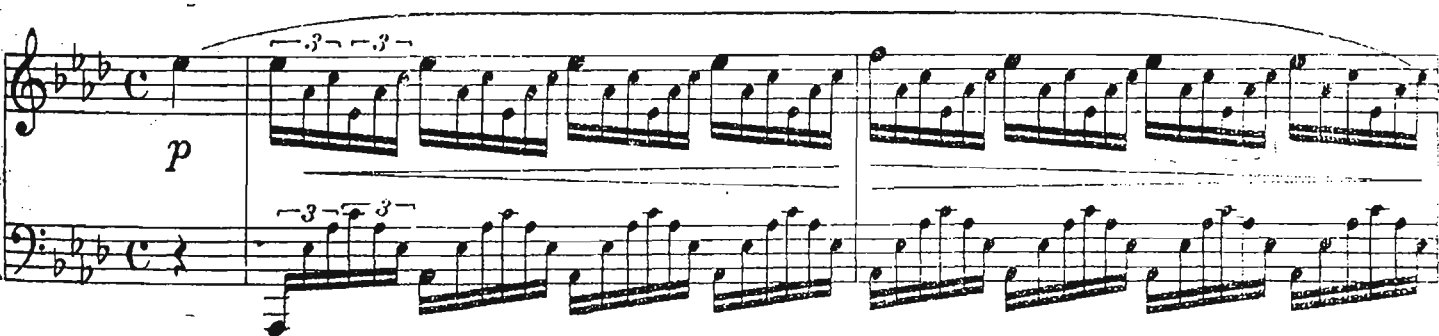


Fig. 36: *Etude Opus 25, No. 1*. mm. 1-2.

The second idea is found in the remaining measures of the prelude. The fingering for these passages should be carefully decided, the

wrist should again be very flexible, and there may be increased finger articulation where appropriate.

The image shows a musical score for 'Prelude No. 5' in G major, measures 20-31. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system (measures 20-25) has a right-hand melody with a 'cresc.' marking and a left-hand accompaniment with 'Ped.' markings. The second system (measures 26-31) has a right-hand melody with a '(f)' marking and a left-hand accompaniment with 'dim.' marking. Fingerings and articulation marks are provided throughout.

Fig. 37: *Prelude No. 5.* mm. 20-31.

The pedal may be used throughout and changed at each right-hand motive note in mm. 1-4, 17-20, and 33-36 and on every second beat or harmonic change in the remaining measures. The dynamics should create swells of sound, climaxes and *diminuendi*. The last two chords should be pedalled, played short, *forte* and decisive. The pedal should be held longer than the full value of the last measure due to the marked pause on the final quaver rest.

4.7 *Prelude 6* B minor *Lento assai* 3/4

An elegy⁷⁶ or song of lament, the B minor prelude is distinguished by a melancholy cello-like melody accompanied by a repeated note accompaniment. George Sand records that this prelude occurred to Chopin one evening while rain was falling and that it “precipitates the soul into a frightful depression.”⁷⁷

There are four sections which may be outlined as follows:

Section	Measure	Key
1.	1-8	B minor
2.	9-14	B minor to C major
3.	15-22	B minor with the dominant
4.	23-26	B minor.

The final four measures are identical to the first four measures of section one.

Throughout the prelude is the right-hand pedal point revolving mainly around the note B. In m. 23 it moves down to F#, its lowest note. In m. 25, the pedal point is interrupted by a rest indicating a deliberately notated slowing.

⁷⁶ Eigeldinger, J-J. *24 Preludes Op. 28: genre, structure, significance*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1988. p. 185.

⁷⁷ Sand, G. *Winter in Majorca* trans. Robert Graves (London: Cassell & Co. Ltd. 1956) p. 171

The only movement out of B minor is to C major (the Neapolitan) at the climax in mm. 11-14. Measures 13-14 are notated in 3/4 but actually sound like three 2/4 measures. This results in the monotonous repeated notes seeming stronger and more insistent.



Fig. 38: *Prelude No. 6*. mm. 11-14.⁷⁸

The sixth prelude consists of three levels:

1. Left-hand melody.
2. Top right-hand voice, repeated quavers.
3. Middle right-hand voices filling in the harmonies.

The left-hand melody, suggesting a cello tune, should be played with an intense *legato* articulation, creating a rich sound singing

⁷⁸ Leichtentritt, p. 139

clearly above the right-hand. The passages at mm. 5 and 13 are made difficult due to the wide stretches. To alleviate this problem, the hand should be brought quickly into a closed position on the third semiquaver, so that a fast, smooth cross-over to the fourth can occur. It is also important to cross the thumb quickly over to the second beat of those bars.

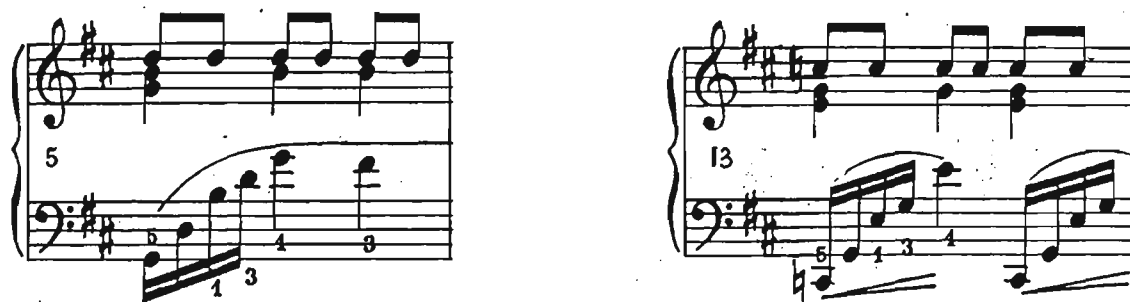


Fig. 39: *Prelude No. 6*. mm. 5 and 13.

The top right-hand repeated voice is notated as slurred quavers of which the first is accented. It is clear that the first note should be louder than the second, but interpreted more as a *tenuto* rather than as a sharp accent. This slurring effect is easily achieved in performance by a down-up motion from the forearm. The slurring motion occurs throughout mm. 1-6. On the last beat of m. 6 to the second beat of m. 8, the right-hand has its only *legato* melody. From m. 9, the slurring motion returns until the end. The middle voice, filling out the harmony, requires only that its notes should be held down softly.

At m. 14, a slight slowing into m. 15 is appropriate because at m. 15, the sound should become softer and more resigned, echoed even more in m. 19 at *pianissimo*. In the Paderewski edition, the last four measures are joined by a slur, indicating no slurring motion as before. These measures should be played very slowly and softly, like an echo.

The pedal may be changed on every beat throughout except from the third beat of m. 5 until the end of m. 8 where it may be changed on every quaver.

4.8 *Prelude 7* A major *Andantino* 3/4

This elegant, Mazurka-like prelude is the simplest and one of the shortest, consisting of only sixteen measures, divided into two eight measure phrases each of which can also be subdivided into two four measure units. Marked *dolce* and framed by the pensive sixth prelude in B minor and the stormy eighth in F# minor, its character is simple and sweet, offering a moment of calm between the tension before and after.

The main beats occur with the right-hand dotted quaver dissonances: the first beat of m. 1, then every second measure thereafter. The melodic shape is inverted between successive phrases (but not between phrases 6 and 7). The climax of the whole

piece is the F# seventh chord in m. 12. The stressed beats may be played as if marked *tenuto* and the subsequent three repeated chords *diminuendo*.

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of Chopin's Prelude No. 7. The tempo is marked 'Andantino' and the dynamics are 'p dolce'. The right hand has a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a large F#7 chord in measure 4, which is marked with a tenuto line and fingerings 5, 2, 3, 1, 5, 2. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

Fig. 40: *Prelude No. 7.* mm. 1-4.

The climax of the whole piece is the F# seventh chord in m. 12 which provides an example of a frequently used Chopin pianistic technique, the writing of a chord so large it is necessary to play the lower two notes of the right-hand with the thumb. Technically, a *tenuto* arm weight action may be used on each stressed beat throughout, with a somewhat lighter action for the remaining beats. The pedal should be changed on every beat throughout.


The only dynamic markings are the *piano* at the beginning and the *crescendo* in m. 11. However, appropriate *crescendi* and *diminuendi* should be employed at the climaxes and resolutions of each phrase, e.g. *crescendo* from the beginning to m. 5, *diminuendo* through mm. 6-8; *diminuendo* from mm. 13-16. There may be a

considerable slowing down of the final four measures in order to accentuate the final cadence.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano piece, likely a prelude. The notation is in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The first system is marked 'Andantino' and 'p dolce', with a measure number '7' at the beginning. The second system features dynamics '(mf)' and '(p)'. The third system includes the instruction 'rall.' (ritardando) and a measure number '11'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingering numbers (1-5) above notes. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the last four measures of the third system.

Fig. 41: *Prelude No. 7.*

4.9 Prelude 8 F# minor *Molto agitato* C

Composed in 1831, the étude-like eighth prelude is technically one of the more difficult and develops from three different rhythmic ideas - an energetic melody with the dotted rhythm () a whirl of demisemiquavers above the melody, and a downward-moving triplet figure accompaniment in broken chords. In performance, the three ideas have their own levels: in the foreground is the melody alone, the middleground is the left-hand accompaniment, while the demisemiquavers provide the background.

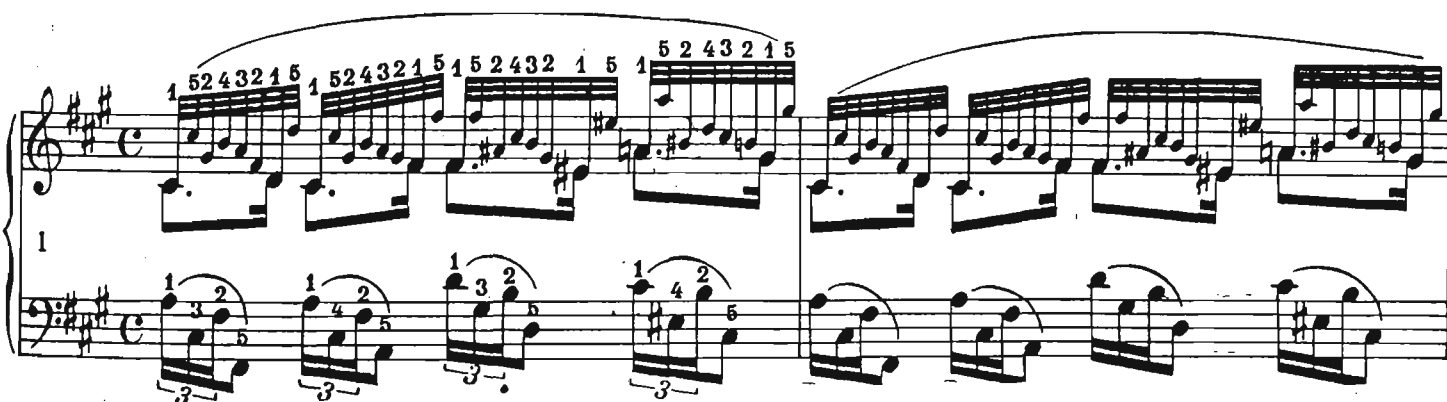


Fig. 42: *Prelude No. 8.* mm. 1-2.

The form is ternary with the recapitulation altered harmonically and also marked *molto agitato e stretto*. The formal division follows the pattern below:

Section	Measures	Keys
A	1-8	F# minor
B	9-18	
	9-10	F-natural pedal point
	11	Cycle of fifths - F maj7- B-flat maj, D maj7-G minor.
	12	Cycle of fifths - Bb maj7-Eb min
	13-14	Cb major
	15-18	Dim7-Bb maj- C# maj7.
A	19-26	F# minor
Coda	27-30	
	27-28	F# minor
	29-31	F# major
	32-34	F# minor

Occurring in m. 29, the most notable harmonic change is from F# minor to F# major. This change has the satisfying effect of prolonging the ending then resolving it, thus creating tension and release.

The demisemiquavers are not to be clearly articulated so that the overall sound and texture is more important than the individual notes. The accompaniment may use the Chopin playing technique of the laterally-moving wrist - moving, in this case, from right to left. The first note of the left-hand accompaniment may be strongly accented while the remaining notes are played in a sweeping motion to the left, not articulated with the fingers. A relatively high wrist position throughout allows both control of balance and tempo.

The following is a suggested dynamic and tempi scheme:

Measures	Dynamics and Tempi
1-4	<i>crescendo - diminuendo</i> . No dynamics: <i>piano</i> is suggested. Slight easing of tempo in m. 4.
5-8	<i>crescendo - diminuendo</i> No dynamics marked - <i>piano</i> is suggested. Slight easing of tempo in m. 8.
9-10	Tempo may urge forward
9-12	<i>crescendo</i> indicated in the music.
13-14	<i>forte - crescendo</i> indicated in the music. Tempo still may urge forward.
17	<i>subito piano</i> indicated in the music.
18	<i>ritenuto</i> indicated in the music.
19-34	<i>Molto agitato e stretto</i> . May begin in a slower tempo then accelerate until m. 26. Unlike the first and middle sections, the dynamics are marked carefully throughout the recapitulation providing a clue for dynamics in the exposition.
25-26	Accent the first notes of the left-hand broken chords to emphasize the descending line.

Fig. 43: *Prelude No. 8*. mm. 25-26.


mm. 32-24	<i>Ritenu</i> to during m. 32
33	Chords to be played slowly.
34	The E# appoggiatura is to be played first, then held while the notes of the F# minor chord are arpeggiated from the bass upward so that the E# finally resolves to the F#.



Fig. 44: *Prelude No. 8*. mm. 33-34. By slightly lingering on the Neapolitan 6th (3rd beat, m. 33) its effect of power and surprise may be emphasised.

In general, the desired tense and fiery character of this prelude is achieved due to the mercurial right-hand demisemiquavers, modulations to remote keys and by observing the various dynamics and fluctuations of tempo.

4.10 *Prelude 9* E major *Largo* C

The ninth prelude is march-like, its character grand, noble and distinguished contrasting to the fast No. 8. It consists of an upper voice melody supported by triplet chords and a strong, melodic bass. The form is ternary, with each section of equal length (four measures). In each of these sections, the rhythmic motive  is altered.

A: mm. 1-4

B: mm. 5-8

A: mm. 9-12

Fig. 45: *Prelude No. 9*. Melodic rhythm.

Melodically, the motive is also altered in each section. In Section A, the melody begins on *b* and ascends step-wise for three measures, reaching a high point in m. 3, then moving downward again in mm. 3-4 returning to the beginning note *b*. In Section B, the melody ascends step-wise, this time reaching the highest point of the piece at m. 8, then descending again to the starting note *b*. The second Section A ascends step-wise during the entire four measures ending the piece on the tonic note *e*. The melodic line ascends more steeply in Section B than in either of the A sections, reaching the climax in m. 8. Figure 46 shows this movement.

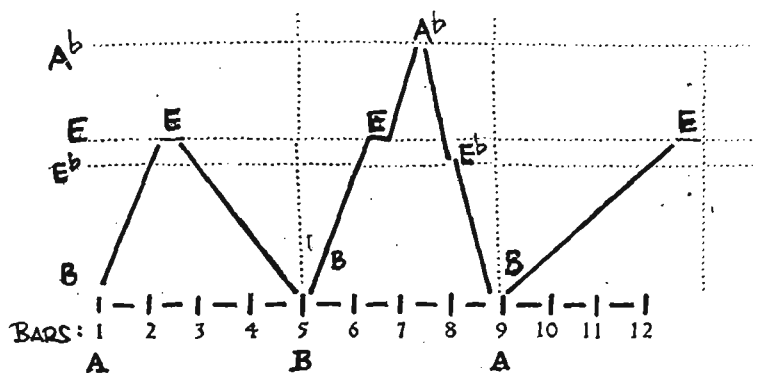


Fig. 46: *Prelude No. 9.* Melodic movement.⁷⁹

The bass is closely related to the melody especially in Section B where it moves in contrary motion to the melody. Chopin often gives the bass-voice more emphasis melodically by employing such motion between outer parts.

Fig. 47: *Prelude No. 9.* mm. 5-8. Melody and bass voices.

⁷⁹ After Leichtentritt, p. 146.

The climax in m. 8 occurs after several factors regarding both dynamics and notation. Leichtentritt suggests that it is reached in the following five ways -

1. Reaching the highest note of the piece Ab.
- In m. 8, the chord is Ab major 6/4 with Eb strong in the bass.
2. The *crescendo* to *fortissimo*.
3. Contrary motion of the bass and melody.
4. Doubling of the bass in mm. 6-8.
5. Modulation from E major to the key of Ab major, achieved by E-natural to Eb (semitonal relationship) and E to G# (Ab) relationship by third enharmonic modulation.⁸⁰

In performance, the grand and noble character can be achieved by observing the slow, strict tempo and rhythm, and by using arm weight for a rich, warm sound. Arm weight should be used in the right-hand throughout. The most weight is to be distributed onto the fifth finger which plays the melody, while the accompanying right-hand triplets should be *legato* and always played more softly than the melody. The left-hand reinforces the harmonies and should be played *legato* and clearly.

Fig. 48: *Prelude No. 9*. mm. 1-2.

⁸⁰ Leichtentritt, p. 147.

Rhythmic precision is important, particularly in those bars when both hands have different dotted rhythms.

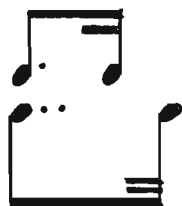


Fig. 49: *Prelude No. 9*. Rhythmic figure found in mm. 3-6, 10.

At the transition from m. 5, a drop in sound (*subito p*) creates an effective preparation for the huge *crescendo* at m. 6 which reaches *fortissimo* in m. 8, *diminuendo* during m. 8 to *piano* again at m. 9.

Fig. 50: *Prelude No. 9*. mm. 5-7.

The marked *ritenuto* in m. 11 should be observed so that the prelude comes to a grand conclusion. The pedal is best changed on every beat throughout.

4.11 *Prelude 10* C# minor *Molto allegro* 3/4

An *arabesque*,⁸¹ or work based upon a florid melodic figure, this brief prelude is made up of improvisatory play with pianistic figures.⁸² It consists of four four-measure phrases with an additional two measures which are an echo of the final cadence in m. 16. Each four-measure phrase consists of two distinct ideas, each of which evokes a different mood and character. The first is bright and sparkling, the second elegant and relaxed.

The first idea has a cascading *leggiero* run in the right-hand which descends from the highest C# over three and a half octaves. The run is made up of five semiquavers* per beat. Under each group of semiquavers is a marked *diminuendo*. This *diminuendo* may be interpreted as a slight accent on the first semiquaver. Technically, moving the hand in and up in a pushing motion on the first semiquaver of each group will ensure the fifth finger reaches its notes and assists in bringing out the desired accent. In these passages the fingers should be well curved. The left-hand has widely-spaced, arpeggiated chords which should be played short and precise with an accent on the top note which is the third of the chord. In executing these chords, Chopin's lateral wrist technique may be employed. A quick depression and release of the pedal should

⁸¹ Eigeldinger, p. 185.

⁸² Hedley, p. 146.

* The Henle edition marks these:

The Chopin Institute edition writes them as:



coincide with each chord so that all rests and harmonic changes are clearly realized.

The second idea consists of sustained crotchet chords, the only uneasiness in rhythm being the dotted quaver and semiquaver beats disturbing the temporary calm. Figure 51 shows the two ideas.

10

Molto allegro

8

leggiere

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system is a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes and triplets, while the left hand plays sustained chords. The tempo is marked 'Molto allegro' and the performance instruction is 'leggiere'. A bracket above the first two measures of the right hand is labeled '8'. The second system is a close-up of the right hand, showing fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and a triplet of eighth notes.

The first two measures move from tonic to subdominant, the latter two stress the dominant.

Fig. 51: *Prelude No. 10.* mm. 1-4.

The following table shows the key centres:

Section	Measures	Keys
1	1-4	C# minor i
2	5-8	C# min to G# maj V
3	9-12	F# min to C# min iv
4	13-18	C# minor i

Molto allegro

10

(p) *leggiero*

Fig. 52: *Prelude No. 10.* mm. 1-2.


The second idea should have a more relaxed tempo, fuller sound and be played *legato*. The pedal should be changed on each beat. Although the rhythm of the first beats of mm. 4, 8, 12 and 16 are similar in both hands, the right-hand has no rest so the articulation in each hand is different. The left-hand rhythm  should be precisely played in contrast to the right-hand *legato* as if an imitation of timpani beats.



Fig. 53: *Prelude No. 10.* mm. 3-4.

In the final bar, the same semiquaver rest is indicated in both hands. By playing the downbeat very short and elongating the semiquaver rest, the progression is interrupted and tension is heightened until resolved by the final two chords.



Fig. 54: *Prelude No. 10.* mm. 17-18.

The only dynamic marked is a *piano* in m. 5 where it is associated with the descending passages. As a contrast, the chordal ascending second idea may be played *mezzo-forte*. The final measure may be played *pianissimo*.

4.12 *Prelude 11* B major *Vivace* 6/8

The eleventh prelude employs the subtle effects of passing notes and ornaments accompanied by continuously moving broken chords⁸³ and uses a minimum amount of motivic and melodic material. Consisting mainly of continually moving quavers, it has a calm, graceful character. In performance, the most important feature is the touch employed in order to realize the desired marked *legato*. As in all passages relying on broken chords, the wrist should move laterally.

After two measures of introduction, the next two measures are a *ritornello*. The following two measures can be described as the theme. This scheme repeats again going onto the four measure climax between mm. 11-14, then occurs once more, this time followed by a repeat of the introduction. A coda occurs in the final five measures.

⁸³ Abraham, p. 73

The formal structure is as follows:

Section	Measures
Introduction	1-2
Ritornello	3-4
Theme	5-6
Ritornello	7-8
Theme	9-10
Climax 1	1-14
Ritornello	15-16
Theme	17-18
Ritornello	19-20
Echo	21-27

Fig. 55: *Prelude No. 11*. Diagram of formal outline.⁸⁴

There is a suggestion of hemiola in mm. 5, 9-10 and 17. The harmony remains in the key of B major throughout, beginning on V then in m. 21, the F# melody note is supported by the tonic chord.

After the *vivace* from the beginning, a *ritenuto* in m. 14 would be structurally appropriate in order to clearly show the return of the ritornello.

⁸⁴ After Leichtentritt, p. 149.

Fig. 56: *Prelude No. 11.* mm. 13-15.

Measures 21-22 are identical to the introduction mm. 1-2, remaining *vivace* in order to allow the built-in *ritenuto* from mm. 21-25 to occur. This *ritenuto* is due to a change in rhythmic notation. A deliberate *ritenuto* may then take place in the final two bars.

Fig. 57: *Prelude No. 11.* mm. 21-27.

Although the only indication of a notated right-hand melody, other than moving quavers, is found in mm. 13-14, throughout mm. 3-20 there are two levels of sound, one a melody, the other an

accompaniment. Observing these melodic notes brings out the hemiola in mm. 5, 9-10 and 17.

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff contains the melody, with notes having stems pointing upwards. The bottom two staves contain the accompaniment, with notes having stems pointing downwards. The music is in 3/4 time and features a hemiola pattern in measures 5, 9-10, and 17. The notes with stems going up indicate the melody, while those with stems going down indicate the accompaniment.

Fig. 58: *Prelude No. 11*. mm. 3-20. The notes with stems going up indicate the melody, while those with stems going down the accompaniment.

The prelude should be played *piano* with a *crescendo* - *diminuendo* in mm. 5-6, a *crescendo* in mm. 9-10 to the climax at m. 11 and *diminuendo* again from mm. 12-14. As mm. 17-18 are almost identical to mm. 5-6, a *crescendo* - *diminuendo* would also be appropriate. The pedal may be changed on every beat throughout.

The ornaments in mm. 15-16, 19-20 may be interpreted as semiquaver triplets. See Figure 59.

The image shows a musical score for measures 16-20 of a piece. It consists of two staves: a treble staff on top and a bass staff on the bottom. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The right hand (treble staff) plays a quaver (eighth note) motive that ascends by small steps. In measures 16, 19, and 20, there are ornaments (semiquaver triplets) over the notes. The left hand (bass staff) plays leaping bass notes. Fingerings are indicated: 1, 2, 3, 1, 3, 1. There are also some markings like 'x' and '3' in the bass staff.

Fig. 59: *Prelude No. 11.* mm. 16-20.

4.13 *Prelude 12* G# minor *Presto* 3/4

Strong and passionate in character, the twelfth prelude features an insistent 3/4 rhythm, leaping bass notes and a right-hand quaver motive that ascends by small steps, usually a minor or major second, always repeating each note before going on to the next. The fast tempo and constant slurring motion required make this prelude technically one of the most difficult.



Fig. 60: *Prelude No. 12*. mm. 1-4. Right-hand quaver motive.

The form is ternary with a coda. The formal structure and key centres is shown below:

Section	Measures	Key
A	1-20. Five four-measure phrases.	G# minor with a transition to B major and B minor.
B	21-40 Five four-measure phrases The bass part is similar to Section A, the quaver motive is expanded.	Passes through various keys - B minor, A minor, G major, C major, E minor, B minor, D# minor returning again to G# minor.
The texture is thickened with the dynamic <i>fortissimo</i> .		
A	41-64 Six four-measure phrases	Remains in G# minor throughout.
The first twelve measures are an exact reprise of the first A section; the next twelve measures feature the right-hand motive, this time descending..		
Coda 65-79. Has an in-built shift of bar-lines, the whole section being pushed back one crotchet beat.		

In the first Section A and Section B, the melodic line always ascends except in mm. 21-28 where it descends. From the second

half of the repeated A section and Coda, this upward direction is reversed and the melodic-line descends, the tension being eased by the marked *diminuendo* and *ritenuto*. The final two heavy staccato notes are like an echo of the strength found earlier in the piece.

From mm. 1-20 and 41-64, the rhythm is insistent and always urging forward. Within these two sections there are two ideas that require different playing techniques. The first idea, found in mm. 1-4, 9-12, 29-32, 41-44 and 49-52, consists of the ascending quaver motive. Chopin's technical device of turning the hand to the right is applicable here: moving the wrist up and down in order to place a slur over every two quavers. Whenever the fingering changes on the same note, the next finger should be quickly prepared then substituted for the other finger. Keep the left-hand parallel to the keys and bounce from note to note, accenting the downbeat of each measure so the pulse is one beat per measure. To ensure accuracy, always lead with the upper-notes played with the thumb, i.e. aim to play these notes louder than the others.

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of Chopin's Prelude No. 12. The tempo is marked 'Presto'. The music is in 2/4 time and F# major. The right hand part features an ascending eighth-note pattern with slurs and fingerings (1, 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4, 4, 5, 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4, 4, 5, 4, 5). The left hand part plays a steady bass line with slurs and fingerings (5, 4, 5). Dynamics include a forte (f) marking and a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The number 12 is written on the left margin.

Fig. 61: *Prelude No. 12*. mm. 1-4.

The second idea, found in mm. 5-8, 13-16 (note the hemiola which is emphasised by a slight accent on each bass octave F#) and 45-48, features the phrase climaxes and a pulse felt as three beats per measure. Here, the right-hand should become parallel to the keys and the slurs played by employing a lateral wrist action. In mm. 5-6, the left-hand chords may be played with a lateral wrist using the second finger on D# as a pivot.

The musical score for Figure 62 consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, in a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The right-hand staff contains a melodic line with slurs and fingerings: 4, 5, 4, 5, 4, 5, 4. The left-hand staff contains chords with fingerings: 1/2, 2/5, 1/2, 2/5, 1/2, 2/5, 1/3, 1/3, 1/2. The score is labeled with '5' in the beginning of the first measure.

Fig. 62: *Prelude No. 12.* mm. 5-8.

There should be a *ritenuto* in m. 20 leading into the middle section.

The rhapsodic middle section has a noble, broad character. A slower tempo may be employed in order to allow for the thicker texture and *fortissimo*. In mm. 21-22, 24-26 and 28, the downbeats should be strongly accented. m. 23 and m. 27 do not have notated accents indicating a pause from the emphasized rhythm. In these two

measures, the dynamics may drop from the marked *fortissimo* to *forte*.

Figure 63 shows measures 21-24 of Chopin's Prelude No. 12. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings of *ff* and *f*. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes.

Fig. 63: *Prelude No. 12*. mm. 21-24. Note the asymmetrical phrasing through this section.

In mm. 29-32, the right-hand may again use the Chopin device of turning to the right. The left-hand chords need to be played march-like and strictly in tempo.

Figure 64 shows measures 29-32 of Chopin's Prelude No. 12. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and fingerings.

Fig. 64: *Prelude No. 12*. mm. 29-32.

The lateral wrist technique may be used for the right-hand chords in mm. 34-36. In mm. 37-38, the right-hand octaves should ring out above all other notes and the slurred inner-voices should be played intensive *legato*. A slight slowing of the tempo may occur between the third beat of m. 36 and the first beat of m. 37.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 34 to 38. Measure 34 begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The right hand plays a series of chords, each with a slur and an accent (>). The left hand plays a bass line of chords. Measure 35 continues the right-hand chord sequence. Measure 36 features a right-hand chord with a slur and an accent, and a left-hand chord. Measure 37 shows a right-hand octave with a slur and an accent, and a left-hand chord. Measure 38 concludes with a right-hand octave and a left-hand chord. Performance markings include *(rit...)* and *(ff)*. Fingerings are indicated as 4 2 3 2 for the right hand in measure 38.

The second system covers measure 38, showing a continuation of the right-hand octave and the left-hand accompaniment.

Fig. 65: *Prelude No. 12.* mm. 34-38.

In addition to accenting the left-hand downbeats in mm. 49-52, the bass line should also be clearly realized as it descends step-wise.

The musical score for measures 49-52 of Prelude No. 12 is presented in two staves. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The right-hand staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with slurs and accents. The left-hand staff (bass clef) contains a descending bass line with slurs and accents. A 'cresc.' marking is placed above the left-hand staff in measure 50. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A fermata is placed over the final notes in measure 52.

Fig. 66: *Prelude No. 12.* mm. 49-52.

There may be a *ritenuto* in m. 64 leading into the Coda. In the Coda (mm. 65-81), the left-hand octaves should remain steady. The only indication of a change in tempo is the *poco ritenuto* in m. 71, m. 74 may then be played *a tempo*, then *ritenuto* from m. 77 to the second beat of m. 80. The last two notes should be played *a tempo* and *fortissimo*.

64 (a tempo) (rit....)

70 poco riten. (a tempo) dim.

76 (a tempo) (rit....) ff

Fig. 67: Prelude No. 12. mm. 64-81.

4.14 *Prelude 13* F# major *Lento* 6/4

The peaceful and calm thirteenth prelude features a broad chordal melody accompanied by continuous quavers. Even though the accompaniment frequently employs dissonances, the harmonic scheme is simple, employing the tonic, F# major, the parallel minor, D#, and the subdominant, B major.

The form is ternary with coda shown as follows:

Section	Measures	Phrases
A	1-16	Two eight-measure phrases
	17-20	Codetta
B	21-28	One eight-measure phrase
A	29-37	One eight-measure phrase
Coda	38-39	

The entire piece is based upon the use of four voices. Although in both the A and B sections the melody is found in the upper voice and the accompaniment in the lower three voices, the treatment varies between the two sections. In the two A sections, the melody is found in the top voice and the accompaniment in the lower two notes of the chords and moving quaver bass. In the central *Più lento* section, the upper voice has the melody and the lower three voices (notated as quavers) form the accompaniment. The tenor and bass parts have melodic movement in dialogue with the melody. In m. 30 (*fortissimo*) Chopin thickens the texture with four-note chords in the right-hand.

The image displays two musical excerpts from Chopin's Prelude No. 13.
Section A (mm. 1-2): The tempo is marked *Lento* and the dynamics are *p*. The upper staff features a melody for three voices, with the first measure circled. The lower staff provides accompaniment for three voices, with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3) and a pedaling symbol (x) indicated.
Section B (mm. 21-22): The tempo is marked *Più lento* and the dynamics are *sostenuto*. The upper staff features a soprano melody, with the first measure circled. The lower staff provides accompaniment for three voices, with fingerings (2, 5, 2, 5, 3, 2, 5, 3, 2, 5, 3) and a pedaling symbol (x) indicated.

Fig. 68: *Prelude No. 13*. mm. 1-2, 21-22 showing the different treatment of the four voices.

In the second A section, an additional upper voice is added to the melody. The two measure coda consists of a three voice accompaniment and single voice melody resembling the B section. In the A sections, the left-hand accompaniment is more expressively shaped than the B section.

Marked *legato*, the left-hand should employ a rolling technique. The sound should be no more than a murmur beneath the melody. As the phrases are quite long, it is important to sustain each note to the next, ensuring a long, singing line.

Lento

1

p

legato

Fig. 69: *Prelude No. 13.* mm. 1-3.

From m. 13 to the first beat of m. 15, the dynamics may be *crescendo* then *diminuendo*. The fourth beat of m. 18 may be played *forte-piano* and using *rubato* by lingering on the low bass note. In m. 20, the tempo may slow down going into the *più lento* section at m. 21.

11

14

18

(p)

(fp)

(rit.....)

Fig. 70: *Prelude No. 13.* mm. 11-20.

From the *più lento* section at m. 21, the melody should be clear, but the overall sound more distant and resigned. The left-hand moving voices in the upper part of mm. 21 and 23 and the lower part of mm. 22 and 24 should be heard.

Musical score for Figure 71, showing measures 21-23 of Prelude No. 13. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). Measure 21 is marked "Più lento" and "sostenuto". The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (2, 3, 2, 5, 2, 3). The left hand has a moving bass line with fingerings (1 1 1, 5 3, 2 2, 1 3).

Fig. 71: *Prelude No. 13.* mm. 21-23.

In m. 26, there may be a *poco accelerando*, then slow again in m. 27 where the first three beats should broaden towards the climax on the fourth beat.

Musical score for Figure 72, showing measures 26-27 of Prelude No. 13. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of three sharps. Measure 26 is marked "(poco accel...)" and measure 27 is marked "a tempo". The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 2, 3, 2). The left hand has a moving bass line with fingerings (1 3, 2 5, 1 5 4, 1).

Fig. 72: *Prelude No. 13.* mm. 26-27.

At the recapitulation from m. 29, there should be a return to the sound heard at the beginning of the prelude. Here, the melody is in the middle voice of the right-hand. From mm. 33-36, redistribution of the right-hand parts is needed as the stretches are too large to be played with the one hand. The lower chords have the melody and should be played on the beat, the upper part following.

The image displays a musical score for two systems of music. The first system, labeled '33', consists of two staves. The upper staff (treble clef) contains a melody in the middle voice, with notes beamed together and some slurs. The lower staff (bass clef) contains chords, with some notes marked with 'Ped.' and asterisks. The second system, labeled '36', also consists of two staves. The upper staff (treble clef) contains a melody, with a 'riten.' marking above it and some slurs. The lower staff (bass clef) contains chords, with some notes marked with 'Ped.' and asterisks. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, beams, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 73: *Prelude No. 13.* mm. 33-38.

The pedal may be used generously throughout in order to add to the overall colour. However, care should be taken that the pedal is changed with every harmonic alteration and when the accompaniment voices move.

4.15 *Prelude 14* Eb minor *Allegro* C

The fourteenth prelude is an elementary *unisono* piece which Chopin enriches with great expressiveness. The chordal scheme is arpeggiated, consisting of fast, symmetrical octave triplets in the lower register of the piano.

The nineteen measures are divided into two sections: mm. 1-10 and mm. 11-19. The first section cadences every four measures, firstly on Bb minor, then in F minor, adding two extra measures in order to regain the tonic. The second section begins similarly to the opening, then expands in rhapsodic fashion to the end.

The image displays six staves of musical notation in bass clef, illustrating the harmonic scheme for Prelude No. 14. The notation includes notes, rests, and chord symbols. The chord labels are as follows:

- Staff 1: E^b MIN. — TO —
- Staff 2: B^b MIN. — TO —
- Staff 3: — F MIN. - D^b MAJ. B^b MAJ.
- Staff 4: E^b MIN.
- Staff 5: (No explicit label, but contains complex chordal structures)
- Staff 6: (No explicit label, but contains complex chordal structures)

Fig. 74: *Prelude No. 14*. Harmonic scheme.⁸⁵

In order to achieve the agitated, restless character of the fourteenth prelude, the performer needs to consider the articulation

⁸⁵ After Leichtentritt, p. 155

to be employed, and must carefully realise the marked *crescendi* and *diminuendi* which create powerful swells of sound. Marked *pesante*, this prelude requires a technique that employs a shaking, vibrating action, effected by using high wrists and playing from the arms, i.e. in a pushing motion onto the keys, rather than articulation by the fingers. The right-hand should predominate as playing the left-hand too heavily would result in an undesirable, muddy sound. The latter should be like a shadow of the right.

The only dynamic marked is the *fortissimo* in m. 11. The performer may begin the prelude *mezzo-forte*, then follow the *crescendi* and *diminuendi* clearly throughout. There may be *poco ritenuto* in m. 10 going into m. 11. Mm. 11 and 12 should be the loudest, then m.13 may drop in dynamic to *mezzo-forte* in order to execute the *crescendo* to *fortissimo* in m. 15. The marked *diminuendo* should reach *pianissimo* in the last measure to the final note.

10 *cresc. (rit...) ff*

13 *(mf)*

16 *(pp)*

Fig. 75: *Prelude No. 14.* mm. 10-19.

Deliberate consideration of foreground and background is unnecessary, as the marked *crescendi* and *diminuendi* result in certain notes sounding louder than others.

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, identified as Fig. 76: *Prelude No. 14*, measures 15-19. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of two systems of staves. The first system starts at measure 13 and the second at measure 16. The upper staff of each system contains the melodic line, and the lower staff contains the bass line. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above notes. Pedal points are circled in the upper staff of each system.

Fig. 76: *Prelude No. 14*. mm. 15-19. The uncircled notes are pedal points.

A feeling of two beats per measure ensures that the tempo always urges forward.

Composed as a three part nocturne, the prelude has the following structure:

Section	Measures	Keys
A	(a) 1-8	Db major
	(b) 9-16	
	17-19 echo	Ab min, Bb min
	(a) 20-27 reprise of beginning section (a)	Db major
B	28-75	C# min with movement to Eb major and G# minor.
A	76-89 Shortened repeat of section A with freer ending	

The beginning is marked *legato* and should be very sustained with a warm, soft sound. The use of the pedal may be generous to add to the colour. The melody, accompaniment, and pulsating Ab pedal point require different articulations. Using slightly flattened fingers with arm weight is appropriate for the melody between mm. 1-8. In order to play the pedal point evenly, a pushing motion from the arms may be employed. *Rubato* may be used by pausing slightly on the first quaver of m. 1 and m. 5.

Sostenuto

Fig. 78: *Prelude No. 15.* mm. 1-4.

The image shows a musical score for Figure 79, which is a section of Prelude No. 15, measures 24-27. The score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The right-hand part (treble clef) begins with a melodic line starting on G4, marked with a fermata over measure 25. The left-hand part (bass clef) features a series of chords and octaves. A 'rit e dim' (ritardando e diminuendo) marking is present in measure 25, extending through measure 27. The score concludes with a key signature change to G minor (two flats) in the final measure.

Fig. 79: (c) *Prelude No. 15*. mm. 24-27.

Marked *sotto voce* from m. 28, the repeated G#s should sound like a constant and soft pulsating beat, and should be played with the repeated chord technique of the fourth prelude, allowing the notes to come only half-way up from the bed of the key. The G#s are best played with a pushing action from the arm, with either the second finger alone, or with the thumb and second finger placed together. When the G#s become octaves, the alto line should be the louder.

The left-hand chords may be played with a crab-like action, i.e. a gripping articulation from one chord to the next, preparing each chord quickly and changing fingerings by substitution when necessary. The chords should *crescendo* from mm. 28-39 and mm. 44-55, climaxing at the *fortissimo* passages in m. 40 and m. 56. Here, the left-hand octaves should be played *legato*, emphasizing the upper note in order to bring out its melodic component.

28 *sotto voce* *cresc.*

33 *cresc.* *Ped.* *

38 *ff* *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* *

Fig. 80: *Prelude No. 15.* mm. 28-42.

From mm. 60-63, the outer notes have the melodic line.

60 *p*

Fig. 81: *Prelude No. 15.* mm. 60-63.

From mm. 64-67 the melody is in the middle voice and the upper G#s reinforce the pedal point. The melody can be played clearly by using a gripping articulation for the middle notes.



Fig. 82: *Prelude No. 15.* mm. 64-67.

The climax of the section from mm. 60-75 is on the downbeat of m. 71. After this beat, the tempo and dynamics should gradually decrease until the *ritenuto* in m. 75 leading to the return of the opening theme. Niecks has described the middle section effectively by seeing it as an oppressive dream, with images of a procession of monks chanting prayers in the monastery of Valdemosa, the vision only dispelled by the re-entrance of the Db major section.⁸⁷ The ten-note flourish in m. 79 should be played with a light, well-articulated touch. An overlapping technique from the Bb in m. 81 may be employed in order to achieve a smooth, poetic sound. From mm. 84-88, the alto line should be clearly brought out, especially the accented C to Db (leading-note to tonic) in mm. 87-88.

⁸⁷ Niecks, p. 256

78

smorzando

slentando f

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Ped. * Ped. *

83

p


pp

ritenuto

Fig. 83: *Prelude No. 15*, mm. 78-89.

The pedal should be changed on each right-hand beat during the first section mm. 1-8, on every beat from mm. 9-19, then again on each right-hand beat from mm. 20-27. Throughout the middle section, the pedal should be changed on every left-hand note, and at each harmonic change from mm. 60-75. The recapitulation may be pedalled similarly to the first section.

4.17 *Prelude 16* Bb minor *Presto con fuoco* 2/2

Like an *étude*, the wild and stormy sixteenth prelude begins with six *forte* chords, three of which contain pungent minor seconds. Weinstock likens these chords (which are followed by a pause) to pounding on the stage to attract the attention of the audience. The piece is then launched on a frenzied career of *presto con fuoco*.⁸⁸ It features restless ascending and descending right-hand semiquaver figuration with a leaping bass accompaniment, the rhythm of which is mostly  throughout. With each ascent of the semiquaver figure, there is always a corresponding descent. Usually this occurs during one measure, the turning point being located in the middle of the measure. However, it also occurs over longer periods, where the ascent and descent take two measures in each direction (mm. 6-10). With each ascent and descent there is also a corresponding *crescendo* and *diminuendo*.

⁸⁸ Weinstock, H. *CHOPIN The Man & His Music*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1981. p. 223.

The prelude has a simple binary structure:

Section	Measures
Introduction	1
A	2-17
B	18-41
Coda	42-46.

Section B is a repeat of A with varied bass notes and harmonies. It then has an additional eight-measure phrase parallel to its second phrase. The piece ends with a five-measure coda. Harmonically, it remains in Bb minor throughout with only brief movement out of the key. At m. 25, the key is the parallel major, Db major, shortly thereafter D# to C# minor (enharmonic modulation from Db), then a descending sequence of B minor to A minor to the dominant F major at m. 30. Here begins the cycle of fifths to strengthen the return to the tonic and also the descending octave scale. The approach to the final Bb minor cadence begins already sixteen measures from the end at the *stretto*. During this passage, the tonic triad of Bb minor is rarely found. The Cb major passage, seven measures before the end, suggests restlessness, represented by the Neapolitan sixth chord on the subdominant.

In the introductory measure, the first chord may be elongated and arpeggiated (beginning in the left-hand), then the remaining notes may *accelerando* and *crescendo*, bringing out the top notes clearly. Of note is the effect of the pause at the end of the first

measure which creates a sense of expectation after the dramatic explosion of the chords, also the expectation of (a) the V7 chord and (b) the downward descent of the soprano, the last note of which is not resolved in the soprano voice of the next measure but on the first bass note.

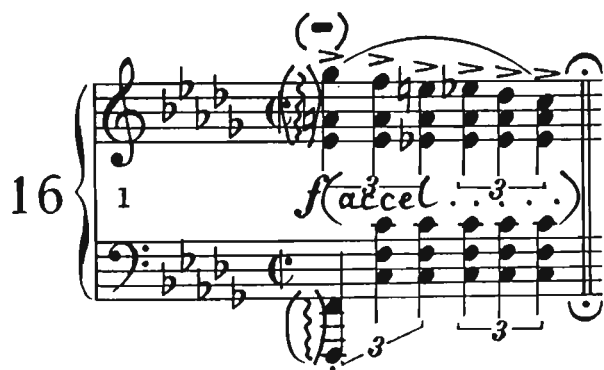


Fig. 85: *Prelude No. 16.* m. 1.

The continuous right-hand semiquavers should be played *legato*, without excessive articulation, and not heavily. At the commencement of study of this prelude, fingering to suit the performer should be carefully decided. Diligent slow practice with the use of rhythms is suggested in order to achieve even control throughout.

The *presto con fuoco* section may begin *mezzo-forte*. From mm. 10-13, the marked *crescendo* may begin even softer than *mezzo-forte*, and in each measure, there may be a *poco crescendo-diminuendo* corresponding to the ascent and descent of the semiquavers.

Fig. 86: *Prelude No. 16.* mm. 10-12.

The rhythm of the left-hand accompaniment is mostly however slurs are marked in three different ways requiring changes in articulation.

1. - unslurred quaver is played staccato.
2. - all notes played *legato*.
3. - the upper notes of the octave should lead, and the unslurred quaver should be played staccato.

Presto con fuoco

Fig. 87: (a) *Prelude No. 16.* mm. 2-3.

Fig. 87: (b) *Prelude No. 16*. mm. 10-12.

Fig. 87: (c) *Prelude No. 16*. mm. 19-20.

In m. 34, the *sempre più animato* should begin *piano*. From mm. 42-45, the right-hand should lead by playing louder than the left. A huge *crescendo* is also marked to the final two chords. On the third beat of m. 45, both notes may be played with the right-hand in order to ensure accuracy. The last two chords should be played very abruptly and *fortissimo*.

Fig. 88: *Prelude No. 16*. mm. 44-46.

4.18 *Prelude 17* Ab major *Allegretto* 6/8

The elegant, singing seventeenth prelude is based upon the alternation between a broad melody in Ab major and more agitated and sequential passages. Both ideas use the same thematic material and are accompanied by constant quaver chords.

The form and key centres are as follows:

Section	Measures	Keys
Introduction	1-2	Ab major
A	3-18	Ab major
B	19-34	E major, C# min E major to Ab maj.(enharmonic modulation Ab = G#)
A	35-42	Ab major
C	43-64	E major, F# maj., E major, Eb maj., D major sequence to Eb major, Ab major.
A	65-90	Ab major.
The form of the final A section varies with the addition of a coda from mm. 84-90.		

Each time Section A occurs, it has a different dynamic. The first time it is marked *piano*, then *forte*; the second time *fortissimo*, third time *sotto voce*, *pianissimo*, played over a resounding low Ab like a clock bell. According to Madame Dubois, Chopin intended the eleven repeated bass notes (mm. 65-88) to resemble the sound of an old

clock in a castle which struck the eleventh hour.⁸⁹ The alternating sections B, and C consist of *crescendi* and *diminuendi* rather than the more static dynamics of the A sections.

Harmonically, the prelude is simple with the frequent use of non-harmonic notes. In Section B, the change from E major to Ab major occurs enharmonically with the use of Ab to Fb, or G# to E. Figure 89 gives the harmonic analysis of mm. 19-27 and 50-57 where the most complex progressions occur.

The figure consists of two main systems of musical notation, each with treble and bass staves. The left system (mm. 19-27) shows a progression from E major (I) to Ab major (VI) via enharmonic changes. Annotations include: E: VI, E: I, IV, PASSING NOTES, C# = IV, V, I, B: V, I, DESCENDING SEQUENCE, SEQUENCE = IV, V, f# = IV, V, e: = IV, and E: I, V, I. The right system (mm. 50-57) shows a progression from B major (V) to Eb major (VI) via enharmonic changes. Annotations include: DESCENDING SEQUENCE, B: V, = I, PASSING NOTES, E: V, I, Eb: V, I, = D: I, = G: V, = VI, D: V, I, and Eb: V, I.

Fig. 89: *Prelude No. 17*. mm. 19-27, 50-57.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Paderewski, Ignace-Jan & Lawton, Mary. *The Paderewski Memoirs*. London & Glasgow: Collins, 1939. p. 83.

⁹⁰ Leichtentritt, pp. 162-3

In the broad melody sections (mm. 3-18, 35-42, and mm. 65-80), the melody should be played clearly above the accompaniment by using arm weight. In order to achieve a smooth and unobtrusive sound, the middle chords should be played with the repeated chord technique of the fourth prelude, using a pushing arm motion, only allowing the notes to come halfway up from the bed of the keys. The bass notes should always be clearly heard, especially the clock bells from mm. 65-88.

Fig. 90: *Prelude No. 17.* mm. 65-68.

In performance, the differences in dynamics between each repetition of the first theme should be clearly realized.

Fig. 91: (a) *Prelude No. 17.* mm. 3-4.

Musical score for Fig. 91 (b), measures 11-12 of Prelude No. 17. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It features a piano (p) dynamic. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment of chords. A fermata is placed over the final measure.

Fig. 91: (b) *Prelude No. 17*. mm. 11-12.

Musical score for Fig. 91 (c), measures 35-36 of Prelude No. 17. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It features a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment of chords. A fermata is placed over the final measure.

Fig. 91: (c) *Prelude No. 17*. mm. 35-36.

Musical score for Fig. 91 (d), measures 65-67 of Prelude No. 17. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It features a pianissimo (pp) dynamic with the instruction *sotto voce*. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment of chords. A fortissimo (sf) dynamic is indicated at the beginning of the first measure.

Fig. 91: (d) *Prelude No. 17*. mm. 65-67.

In the remaining more agitated and sequential sections where the middle chords and the bass are used in dialogue with the melody, the tempo may urge forward.

The introduction in mm. 1-2 should be played *piano*, with a *crescendo - diminuendo* as marked. In addition, in order to resolve the cadence to the dominant on the first quaver of m. 3, there may be an *accelerando - ritenuto* corresponding to the *crescendo - diminuendo*, then a slight pause on the first quaver of m. 3.

Allegretto

The musical score for Figure 92 shows the first five measures of Prelude No. 17. It is written for piano in 6/8 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The score begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *crescendo - diminuendo* marking. The melody in the right hand is marked with fingering numbers: 1, 2, 4, 5, 2, 3, 5, 3, 2, 5, 4, 3. There are also performance instructions: '(accel. rit..)' and a '1' in the first measure. The bass line consists of chords and single notes, with some notes marked with '5', '4', and '3'.

Fig. 92: *Prelude No. 17.* mm. 1-5.

The section from mm. 65 - end is marked *pianissimo* and *sotto voce* and should sound distant like a remembrance of the earlier melody. Pedal changes need not be clear as a slightly blurred sound can greatly contribute to this desired atmosphere. Each bass note should sound like the clock bell then the following notes be played as softly as possible. The tempo may also be slower.

4.19 *Prelude 18* F minor *Molto allegro* C

The strong and dynamic eighteenth prelude consists of a dialogue between fast, fantasia-like passages and heavy chords. Here Chopin employs *unisono* construction as seen earlier in the fourteenth prelude.

Up until m. 9 (section one), the melodic-line storms upward and then descends again, the remainder (section two) descending by small steps. The harmonic basis is mostly F minor with passing movement through the keys of B minor, C minor, Ab major. See Figure 93.

Figure 93 displays the harmonic analysis of Chopin's Prelude No. 18, showing two staves of musical notation with Roman numerals indicating the harmonic structure. The first staff shows a sequence of chords: F minor (V), B minor (I), C minor (IV), F minor (V), F minor (I), and Ab major (V). The second staff shows a sequence of chords: F minor (I), B minor (V), F minor (I), C minor (IV), F minor (I), B minor (V), and F minor (I).

Fig. 93: *Prelude No. 18*. Harmonic analysis.⁹¹

⁹¹ Leichtentritt, p. 166.

In m. 5, the right-hand phrasing should coincide with the left-hand so that it is identical to the beginning. Mm. 5 and 6 may be interpreted the same as mm. 1 and 2.

Fig. 96: *Prelude No. 18.* mm. 5-6.

Mm. 7-8 *crescendo* to m. 9. Figure 77 shows the two instances where both notes may be played with the right-hand to ensure accuracy.

Fig. 97: *Prelude No. 18.* mm. 7-8.

From m. 9, there is a continuous *crescendo* marked until the second beat of m 13 and *diminuendi* marked on each group of semiquavers. Each *sforzando* chord should be louder and broader

chords should be played extremely loudly using a relaxed arm weight for full sonority.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system, starting at measure 14, consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a melodic line with various ornaments and slurs, while the lower staff provides harmonic accompaniment with chords and triplets. Dynamics include *accél* and *rit*. The second system, starting at measure 17, continues the piece with more complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings of *ff* and *fff*. It includes detailed fingering numbers and phrasing slurs.

Fig. 99: *Prelude No. 18.* mm. 14-21.

4.20 *Prelude 19* Eb major *Vivace* 3/4

Like an *étude*, the nineteenth prelude features perpetual motion in leaping broken-chord triplets in both hands, the melody found in the right-hand on the first quaver of each beat.

The form is ternary with an extended coda. The key areas and structure are as follows:

Section	Measures	Keys
A	1-16	Eb maj to Bb maj
B	17-32	Gb maj to Bb maj and Eb maj.
A	33-48	Eb major
Coda	49-71	Eb major.

Measures 29-32 and 43-46 show examples of a typical Chopin trait of creating a natural *crescendo* by using a fast moving ascending sequence of chords.

The image shows a musical score for measures 29-32 of Chopin's Prelude 19. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is two flats (Bb and Eb), and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a fast-moving ascending sequence of chords in both hands, creating a natural crescendo. The right hand plays a melody on the first quaver of each beat, while the left hand plays broken-chord triplets. The sequence of chords in the right hand is: Eb major (measures 29-30), Bb major (measures 31-32), and Eb major (measures 33-34). The left hand plays broken-chord triplets in the same sequence. The score is marked with a *cresc.* (crescendo) in the first measure. The measures are numbered 29, 30, 31, and 32. The right hand has a fermata over the final chord in measure 32. The left hand has a fermata over the final chord in measure 32. The score ends with a double bar line in measure 32.

Fig. 100: (a) mm. 29-32.

Fig. 100: (b) mm. 43-46.

During the last seven measures, a hemiola occurs with the 3/4 measures actually becoming 2/4. There is also a chromatic descent of the melody.

Fig. 101: *Prelude No. 19*. mm. 63-71.⁹²

In this prelude, the performer is posed with the difficulty of smoothly playing leaping triplets at a very fast tempo, whilst clearly realizing the melody in the upper part. Technically, this is perhaps the most difficult of all the preludes. By keeping the hands close to

⁹² After Leichtentritt, p. 167.

the keys and using a lateral wrist and arm technique, it is possible to allow the melody to sing out above all the other notes. As there is no marked dynamic, it may begin *piano* and then the marked *crescendi* and *diminuendi* should be clearly observed.

19

Vivace.
legato

(p)

Fig. 102: *Prelude No. 19.* mm. 1-8.

A small *ritenuto* may be employed at the ends of phrases, such as in m. 8, the first two beats of mm. 16 and 24, mm. 40, 48 and 56.

15

(rit.....)

Fig. 103: (a) *Prelude No. 19.* mm. 15-19.

Fig. 103: (b) *Prelude No. 19*. mm.48-52.

Based on the harmonic changes (parallel diminished sevenths) the strong hemiola from mm. 29-32 should be clearly observed.


Fig. 104: *Prelude No. 19*. mm. 29-32.

The pedal should be changed on each beat throughout and at the hemiolas so the melody is always clearly heard. The cross rhythm occurring in mm. 65-69 may be emphasized by concentrating on the descending chromatic voice in the treble.

The image shows a musical score for Figure 105, which is measures 65-69 of Prelude No. 19. The score is written for piano in C minor, 4/4 time. The right-hand part consists of a chromatic scale starting on G4, moving up to C5, and then down to G3. The notes are circled, and fingerings are indicated: 4 for G4, 5 for A4, 4 for B4, and 4 for C5. The left-hand part plays a steady crotchet octave pattern, starting on G3 and moving up to G4. The score includes dynamics: 'cresc.' (crescendo) from measure 65 to 68, and 'dim.' (diminuendo) from measure 68 to 69. The piece ends with a final C minor chord in measure 69.

Fig. 105: *Prelude No. 19.* mm. 65-69.

4.21 *Prelude 20* C minor *Largo* C

Like a funeral march and full of dramatic melancholy, number twenty is the shortest of the preludes. It consists of three four-measure phrases plus one measure, the final C minor chord. The harmonic rhythm is in crotchets throughout. The first four measures cadence four times: in C minor (i), Ab major (VI), C minor (i), G major (V). The following four measures are in C minor with chromatic passing chords. The right-hand rhythmic feature throughout is  while the left-hand moves in inexorable crotchet octaves.

This prelude is an excellent exercise in the study and practice of relaxed arm weight, both in loud and soft passages.

The *fortissimo* passage should have a rich depth of tone, in which the upper-voice melody is clearly realized. The dynamic may slightly drop in m. 3 for an effective beginning to the marked *crescendo*.

Fig. 106: *Prelude No. 20*. mm. 1-4.

The difference between *piano* and *pianissimo* must be clearly observed in mm. 9-10, then a *crescendo* is made to the final accented chord. The pedal should be changed on every beat.

4.22 *Prelude 21* Bb major *Cantabile* 3/4

The nocturne-like prelude features a broad melody and constant quaver accompaniment. The main objective in performance is to achieve its calm and expressive character. Technically, the aims are to play a clear, singing *legato* melody with smooth accompaniment.

The form and key centres are as follows:

Section	Measures	Keys
A	1-16	Bb major
B	17-32	Gb major
C	33-44	Bb major
Coda	45-59	Bb major


The typical Bachian rhythm and phrasing  is constant in the accompaniment throughout Sections A and C.



Fig. 107: (a) *Prelude No. 21*. mm. 1-4.

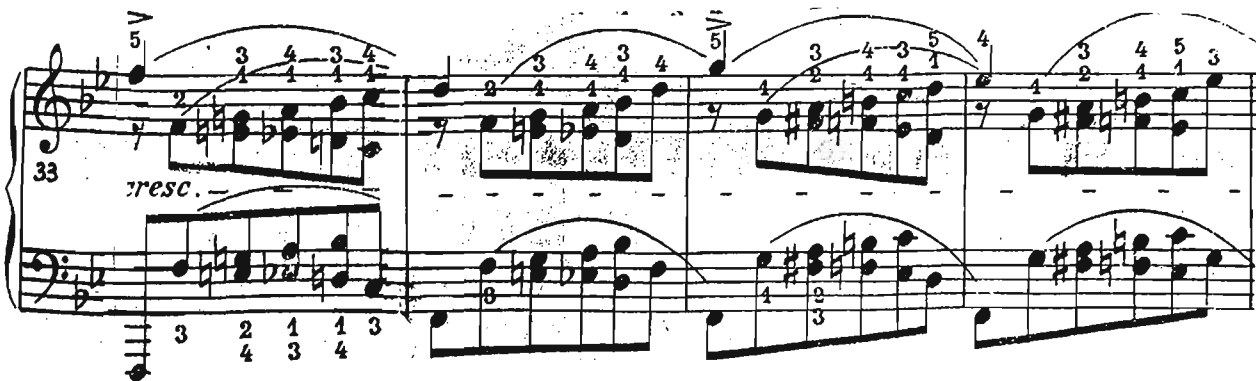


Fig. 107: (b) *Prelude No. 21*. mm. 33-36.

Section A features a three-voice structure, the melody in the upper voice, the accompaniment in the two lower voices. The accompaniment frequently has chromatic passing notes added to the basic harmonies. Marked *cantabile*, the melody must sing out above the accompaniment. The right-hand should employ an intensive *legato* articulation, frequently overlapping one note to the next. In order to reach the second quaver of each bar in the left-hand accurately, there may be a slight elongation of the bass note. The time borrowed may then be made up by a *poco accelerando* in the following quavers. The upper-voice of the quavers is to be stressed, played *legato*, and observing the marked *crescendi* when the notes ascend, and the *diminuendi* when they descend. Phrasing is very important, as are clear pedal changes on every beat.

Cantabile

21

(p) (poco accel.) (poco accel.) (poco accel.) (sinite...)

1 2 3 4

3 2 1 1

4 3 4

1 2 1 1

3 4 3 4

1 2 1 1

3 4 3 4

1 2 1 1

3 4 5 4

1 4 3 2 1

3 4 3 4 2 3

1 3 1 4 2 1

3 4 5 3

Fig. 108: *Prelude No. 21*. mm. 1-8.

In Section B, the key area of Gb (chord: flattened sixth) occurs suddenly without modulation. This sudden key change creates an even stronger *forte*, makes the upper voice more pronounced, and creates a new sound colour. The right-hand chords should be strong and ring out like a fanfare. The accompaniment throughout Section B is varied with constant, murmuring quavers. The left-hand needs to employ a less articulated rolling motion from the wrist so it sounds like a murmur beneath the chords. The *pianissimo* in m. 25 should be a distant echo of the *forte* section. The pedal need only be changed at each bar.

Fig. 109: *Prelude No. 21.* mm. 14-28.

In Section C from mm. 33-44, the melody changes and the accompaniment figure is employed in both hands, the only difference being that the last note in the right-hand is a crotchet and the left-hand is a quaver. Clearer articulation may be employed again from m. 33 which should begin *pianissimo* then *crescendo* to the *fortissimo* climax in mm. 39-41. The tempo may also push forward, then in m. 38 there should be a *ritenuto*. The first two quavers of m. 41 may be played in a broader tempo, then *accelerando* with the *diminuendo* at the end of m. 41. From m. 43, the momentum may slow down, then there may be a *ritenuto* in m. 44 leading into m. 45.

33 (pp) *cresc.* (stretto)

38 rit. ff (a tempo) dim. accel.

42 (a tempo) (rit.) (p)

Fig. 110: *Prelude No. 21.* mm. 33-45.

In the coda, the accompanying figure forms the main melodic and rhythmic material.

Fig. 111: *Prelude No. 21*. mm. 45-49.

In mm. 45, 47, 49, 51, and 53, the first left-hand quaver may be elongated, then the murmuring quaver figure, which forms the main melodic material until the end, should be clearly realized. The D in m. 57 and the last two chords should be played loudly, bringing out the descending scale. Here Chopin clearly indicates the importance of C to B \flat by the notation which is consistent with mm. 50-53 where there are also two voices.

Fig. 112: *Prelude No. 21*. mm. 50-59.

4.23 *Prelude 22* G minor *Molto agitato* 6/8

Marked *molto agitato*, *forte* and later *fortissimo*, the twenty-second prelude features a dialogue between declamatory octave quavers in the left-hand and chords which occur in the right-hand on the second quaver of each measure. The right-hand has a melody in similar sequence with that of the left-hand - when the bass-line moves upward, the right-hand does also; when the bass-line moves downward, the right-hand follows. The sharp accents which are not simultaneous in both hands, contribute to the wild strength of this piece. In performance, strong left-hand octave playing and precise syncopated rhythm are required. The main melody is in the bass, the octaves always led by the upper notes. The right-hand answers in dialogue from mm. 1-12, always with a *diminuendo*. From mm. 13-34, there is a marked accent on the upper note. Beginning *forte*, the first phrase may *crescendo* to the climax in m. 5. The tempo may also push forward.

Molto agitato

22

f

Fig. 113: *Prelude No. 22*. mm. 1-7.

The form and key centres are as follows:

Section	Measures	Keys
A	1-16 1-4 are parallel to mm. 9-12.	G minor
B	17-34 1/2	A \flat major to G minor
Coda	34 1/2-41	G minor

The melodic contour of Section A consists of four-measure ascending sequences followed by four-measure descending sequences.



Fig. 114: *Prelude No. 22*. mm. 1-16. Section A bass-line.⁹³ Mm. 5-6 are an inversion of mm. 1-2.

Mm. 23-24 may slightly *diminuendo* before the repeated *fortissimo* section.

Fig. 115: *Prelude No. 22*. mm. 20-27.

⁹³ Leichtentritt, p. 171

The *più animato* section from m. 30 begins a more urgent pace, the only brief pause being a tiny *ritenuto* in m. 34 for the restatement of the beginning idea. After the *ritenuto*, the *più animato* resumes to the end.

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 28-31) is marked *più animato*. The second system (measures 32-35) includes a *rit.* marking in measure 34 and an *accel.* marking in measure 35. Below the first system, there are six pedal markings: *Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. **. The third system (measures 36-41) includes a *cresc.* marking in measure 36, a *(sf)* marking in measure 39, and a *ff* marking in measure 40. A fermata is placed over the final chord in measure 41.

Fig. 116: *Prelude No. 22*. mm. 28-41.

The pedal should be changed on every dotted crotchet beat throughout.

4.24 *Prelude 23* F major *Moderato* C

The twenty-third prelude features semiquaver figuration throughout in the upper-part and arpeggiated chords, broken chords and melodic fragments in the lower-part.

The whole piece is based upon the beginning four-measure phrase which occurs five times, each time either a fourth or fifth higher, climbing like a terrace towards the highest point of the keyboard at m. 17. The five versions are in F major, C major, F major, Bb major and F major. Each version is musically the same until the fourth version which breaks the continuity with melodic and harmonic variation.

Moderato

p *delicatissimo*

Fig. 117: (a) *Prelude No. 23*. mm. 1-2.

Fig. 117: (b) *Prelude No. 23*. mm. 5-6.

Fig. 117: (c) *Prelude No. 23*. mm. 9-10.

a tempo

Fig. 117: (d) *Prelude No. 23*. mm. 13-14.

Fig. 117: (e) *Prelude No. 23*. mm. 17-18.

The harmony throughout is simple, consisting of five cadence points at each version of the beginning four-measure phrase. The second last measure consists of the tonic chord F major with an added Eb, implying a modulation to Bb major. Chopin accents the note, and it is held by the pedal, making it likely that the non-functional flattened seventh is deliberate. However, if it is non-functional, then its purpose must be colouration, supplying ambiguity because the tonic is insisted upon by the closing measure in which there are only two notes, the tonic F separated by four octaves. The left-hand figure in the first two beats of m. 20 is a rhythmic diminution of the pitch content of the left-hand motive of the opening.

Fig. 118: *Prelude No. 23.* mm. 20-22.

Marked *delicatissimo*, the carefree and light-hearted character of this prelude may be achieved by employing the light, high finger articulation and low wrist recommended for the left-hand in the

third prelude. In mm. 2, 6, 10, and 18, the left-hand motive should be clearly heard, and the trill played as shown in Figure 119.

Moderato

1. *p delicatissimo*

Fig. 119: *Prelude No. 23*. mm. 1-2.

Each restatement of the beginning four-bar phrase may be played slightly louder than the one before. There may be a *crescendo* from m. 13 and climax in m. 16. Here there may be a *ritenuto e diminuendo* leading to the fifth statement of the beginning phrase in mm. 17-18. The *diminuendo* marked in m. 19, and *smorzando* in m. 20 to the end should be observed. The marked accent on the Eb in m. 21 should be clearly realized in order to emphasize the harmonic ambiguity, ending the prelude with the flattened seventh as if leading to Bb.

a tempo

8

13 (*mf*) (*cresc.*)

ped. * *ped.* *

8

15 (*f*) (*rit. e dim...*)

ped. * *ped.* * *ped.* *

8

17 (*mf*) (*a tempo*)

ped. * *ped.* * *ped.* * *ped.* * *ped.* *

20 (*smorz.*)

5 1 1 8 5

Fig. 120: Prelude No. 23. mm. 13-22.

4.25 *Prelude 24* D minor *Allegro appassionato* 6/8

The wild and heroic twenty-fourth prelude features a declamatory melody accompanied by widely-spaced broken chords. The melodic intervals resemble the theme of the first movement of Beethoven's *Appassionata Sonata*, Opus 57.⁹⁴

Allegro appassionato

24

f

ped.

Fig. 121: (a) *Prelude No. 24*. mm. 1-7.

⁹⁴ Hedley, p. 147

Allegro assai

Fig. 121: b) Beethoven *Sonata Opus 57*, 1st mvt. mm. 1-5.

Consisting of three sections and a coda, each based upon the beginning theme, the form is variation of Ternary due to the doubling of Section A; firstly in the tonic, then transposed to the dominant minor (Section B). The right-hand melody consists of rhapsodic passages constructed in scales, arpeggios and chromatic thirds.

The form and key centres are as follows:

Section	Measure	Keys
A	a: 1-18	D minor, F major, A minor
	b: 9-32	A minor, C major, E minor
B	c: 33-65	E minor, C min, Ab maj., Db major, D minor.
A	Coda: 66-77	D minor

In this prelude, the performer is faced with the technical difficulties of widely-spaced left-hand broken chords and right-hand rhapsodic passages. The left-hand wrist and arm must be flexible throughout, employing the lateral technique of moving from left to right. The lowest note should be the loudest, the remaining notes not excessively articulated. There may be an elongation of the first bass notes in mm. 1, 15, 19, 33, 37, 39, 43, 51, and 65 in order to show the key changes.

The declamatory melody should always be clearly heard above the accompaniment. In the second statement of the theme in m. 21, the second finger supported by the thumb and use of arm weight may be used in order to achieve as loud a sound as possible.

The image shows a musical score for measures 21-24 of a piece. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 21 is marked with a '21' in the left margin. The right-hand melody begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a half note A4, and a quarter note B4. The left hand plays broken chords. Measures 22-24 continue the right-hand melody with various articulations and fingerings. Fingerings are indicated by numbers in parentheses above notes. A '2' is written above the first note of measure 22, and '2' is written above the first note of measure 23. A '2' is written above the first note of measure 24. A '3' is written above the first note of measure 25. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time.

Fig. 122: *Prelude No. 24*. mm. 21-24.

The first note of the scale passages (m. 14, 17, 18 etc.) should always be accented, followed by a *crescendo* to the top note in a huge sweep of sound. The most important notes of the scales and

arpeggios are the first and the last. Due to the speed required, the middle notes should never be over-articulated. After the accented upper notes, the arpeggios in mm. 17 and 35 should *diminuendo*, then the following scale or arpeggio *crescendo*.

Fig. 123: (a) *Prelude No. 24*. mm. 17-19.

Fig. 123: (b) *Prelude No. 24*. mm. 35-37.

From mm. 37-38, the mood may relax and there may be a *diminuendo* into m. 39. Mm. 39-49 should be played more lyrically and *legato*.

Musical score for Figure 124, showing measures 37-40 of Prelude No. 24. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 3, 1, 2, 3, 5). The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamics include 'dim.' and 'p'.

Fig. 124: *Prelude No. 24* mm. 37-40.

The *appassionato* returns in m. 50 where the theme is even more intense by being notated in octaves. Here, the lower note played with the thumb should be the louder in order to ensure accuracy.

Musical score for Figure 125, showing measures 49-52 of Prelude No. 24. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (5, 4, 5, 5, 4, 5, 4, 5, 4, 5). The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamics include 'cresc.'.

Fig. 125: *Prelude No. 24* mm. 49-52.

Fingering to suit the performer must be carefully decided for the descending chromatic thirds in mm. 55-56. There should be a *crescendo* in m. 56, and the last triplet may *ritenuto* leading into m. 57.

53

56 (cresc. rit. ...) (a tempo)

Fig. 126: *Prelude No. 24*. mm. 53-57.

From m. 61, the right-hand octaves should be spelt out decisively with the thumb louder as it is the strongest finger. A *ritenuto* in m. 64 would be appropriate in order to bring the *stretto* to its climax.

61

fff *stretto* (rit. ...)

Fig. 127: *Prelude No. 24*. mm. 61-64.

The descending arpeggios in mm. 66 and 70 should *crescendo*. M. 68 may be softer, m. 72 is marked *stretto* and should also *crescendo*. The arpeggio in m. 74 may begin slowly, then accelerate. The final three low D's should be struck very loudly. Hedley describes these notes as slamming and bolting the door at the end of the whole work.⁹⁵

The musical score for Figure 128 shows measures 65 through 77 of Prelude No. 24. The notation is arranged in three systems, each with a bass staff and a treble staff. Measure 65 begins with a bass line and a treble line. Measure 66 features a descending arpeggio in the bass staff, marked *sempre ff*. Measure 67 continues this arpeggio. Measure 68 shows a treble line starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 69 has a descending arpeggio in the bass marked *ff*. Measure 70 has a descending arpeggio in the bass marked *ff* and *stretto*. Measure 71 has a descending arpeggio in the bass marked *ff* and *accel*. Measure 72 has a descending arpeggio in the bass marked *ff* and *stretto*. Measure 73 has a descending arpeggio in the bass marked *ff* and *stretto*. Measure 74 has a descending arpeggio in the bass marked *ff* and *stretto*. Measure 75 has a descending arpeggio in the bass marked *ff* and *stretto*. Measure 76 has a descending arpeggio in the bass marked *ff* and *stretto*. Measure 77 has a descending arpeggio in the bass marked *ff* and *stretto*. The score includes various dynamics, articulation marks, and performance instructions.

Fig. 128: *Prelude No. 24*. mm. 65-77.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 147.

4.26 Conclusion

The *Twenty-four Preludes* hold a central place in the literature for the piano. Chopin brought to the genre an independent identity, freeing the prelude from its earlier habit of serving as an introductory movement to a suite or of providing a partner to a fugue. While each of the *Preludes* in Op. 28 may stand alone, complete in itself, it is as an integrated set that they make their most persuasive statement. They stand equivalent to Bach's *Wohltemperierte Clavier* not only in their mastery of compositional process, but also in a pedagogic sense. They represent a compendium of Chopin's keyboard techniques, and provide valuable insights to the compositional and expressive devices to be found elsewhere in Chopin's solo piano music. They provide the basis for modern pianism, perhaps even more so than the *Wohltemperierte Clavier* which, after all, was written before the piano came into being. Chopin's *Preludes* prepare the way for future composers such as Debussy who in turn extended the genre by exploring new colours, tonal areas and pedalling effects.

Any performance of the *Preludes* must take into account the contribution that Chopin made to the genre, and acknowledge the technical innovations that the composer advanced through his own performing and teaching. His influences as a teacher have been far reaching and have helped shape modern piano technique and performance practice. Chopin's solutions to technical difficulties, and

his approach to the nature and sonority of the instrument, are everywhere illustrated in the *Preludes*. By a close analysis of the musical content of the *Preludes*, it is possible to examine ways in which Chopin approached the keyboard as the vehicle for his most profound musical thoughts, and so arrive at a practical interpretative view which accommodates both academic understanding and the freedom of personal taste and ability.

To realise the infinite variety and imaginative accomplishment of the work provides the performer with a continual challenge. My hope is that this essay, stemming from my own study as a performer, will help other pianists to approach a work that is demanding both musically and technically, but one which can hold rich rewards.

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