

CONTENTS

Preface	vi
Préface	ix
Vorwort	xii

PRÉLUDES OP. 28

	Page No.		Page No.
<p>1</p> <p>Agitato</p>  <p>2</p>		<p>8</p> <p>Molto agitato</p>  <p>9</p>	
<p>2</p> <p>Lento</p>  <p>3</p>		<p>9</p> <p>Largo</p>  <p>12</p>	
<p>3</p> <p>Vivace</p>  <p>4</p>		<p>10</p> <p>Allegro molto</p>  <p>13</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>Largo</p>  <p>6</p>		<p>11</p> <p>Vivace</p>  <p>14</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>Allegro molto</p>  <p>7</p>		<p>12</p> <p>Presto</p>  <p>15</p>	
<p>6</p> <p>Lento assai</p>  <p>8</p>		<p>13</p> <p>Lento</p>  <p>18</p>	
<p>7</p> <p>Andantino</p>  <p>9</p>		<p>14</p> <p>Allegro</p>  <p>20</p>	

PREFACE

PRÉLUDES OP. 28

Genre and genesis

Chopin's twenty-four Preludes Op. 28 (1839) mark a significant break in the long history of the genre, for with this collection the hitherto utilitarian prelude became essentially autonomous. From its origins in fifteenth-century German organ tablature to the numerous piano collections of 1810–40, the keyboard prelude – like those for lute and other similar instruments – had been associated with improvisation and pedagogy; that is, the genre was defined by its functions. In notated form, the prelude served as a model for extemporization in different styles; it also enabled the performer to test the instrument and check its tuning, to establish a key, to prepare the audience for the ensuing piece, and to warm up. As a teaching tool, the prelude helped pupils master the various modes or keys as well the art of modulation. It also inspired highly varied compositional genres and styles which reflected and defined the particular period and musical 'school': consider, for example, the alternating sections in *stile osservato* and *fantastico* in numerous Italian Baroque toccatas; the unbarred preludes of seventeenth-century French lute and harpsichord composers; and the pairing of preludes and fugues in German music before and during the time of J. S. Bach.

Chopin's predecessors often composed short piano pieces entitled 'preludes', generally in sets passing through the twenty-four keys. These preludes ranged from barely disguised cadential formulae to music filling a page (rarely more than that). Through arpeggios or chords and varied figuration, they exploited the resources of the instrument, at the same time fulfilling the genre's functions as described above; consider, for instance, the preludes of Hummel, Clementi, Cramer (who shunned barlines), Henri Herz, Kalkbrenner, Moscheles and Joseph Kessler (who dedicated his Op. 31 of 1835 to Chopin). Of these, only Hummel's preludes adopt the tonal succession in Chopin's Op. 28. As a young man, Chopin certainly had occasion to play Szymanowska's *Vingt Exercices et Préludes*; later, in Prague (1829), he came to admire August Alexander Klengel's forty-eight *Canons et Fugues* and instructed his pupils to practise Clementi's *Preludes and Exercises in all Major and Minor Keys*.

Liszt immediately perceived the break marked by Op. 28: 'They are not only, as the title might indicate, introductions to other pieces. Rather, they are poetic preludes, like those of a great contemporary poet [Lamartine?], who cradles the soul in golden dreams, and elevates it to the regions of the ideal ... Everything seems fresh, elastic, created on impulse, abounding with the freedom of expression that characterizes works of genius.' That is to say, the Preludes constituted a *poetische Musik* bearing the imprint of stylized improvisation. Schumann responded to the collection with guarded enthusiasm, writing: 'They are sketches, the beginnings of Etudes, or, so to speak, ruins, eagle feathers, all disorder and wild confusion' – a response arising from the 'aesthetic of the fragment' to which Schumann's own compositional problems were related. Heller, Schumann's disciple in Paris, took a similar line, observing: 'Chopin's Preludes have portrayed the genre superbly, and happy are they who have had the good fortune of experiencing such bursts of thought (that is what they are for the most part). But many of them are very aphoristically expressed, admirable though these aphorisms are.' Even more than the concept of the 'miniature', that of 'aphorism' suggests understatement and spontaneity, both issuing from the lightning-like quality of improvisation and the mood of the moment, resulting in what one might term *moments musicaux* or *pensées fugitives*. George Sand described the improvisations at Valldemossa with first-hand insight as 'terrible or heartrending ideas'. According to Jean-Joseph Bonaventure Laurens, the only score that Chopin took to Majorca was that of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Chopin's twenty-four Preludes stand at the crossroads of the 'Forty Eight' and the aesthetic of the *vision fugitive*, and presage the eponymous collections of Alkan (as well as his 48 *Motifs, esquisses*), Heller, Busoni, Scriabin, Cui, Rachmaninoff and Shostakovich. If Debussy's two books of preludes

expand tonality into a new aesthetic direction, Ohana's Preludes (1974) step outside the tonal system altogether, albeit paying tribute to Chopin by ending with three low Ds in his twenty-fourth Prelude.

The Preludes Op. 28 cannot be seen in isolation from Chopin's and Sand's legendary stay in Majorca. It is unclear when the set was begun, though not before 1837 or 1838. Composed largely before the Majorca sojourn, the collection was finished and revised at Valldemossa prior to 22 January 1839, once the Pleyel upright that Chopin needed for the purpose had arrived. The pieces composed in Majorca were probably Nos. 4, 5, 7(?), 9, 10, 14, 16 and 18, following hard on the heels of No. 2. Camille Pleyel, the dedicatee of the French and English editions – the German edition was dedicated to Kessler – was also the copyright owner, though he later sold the English rights to Wessel. Chopin, who needed an advance to finance his trip, apparently sold the Preludes to Pleyel 'because he [Pleyel] liked them'. One wonders whether Pleyel (who proclaimed 'These are my preludes') might himself have commissioned the set, although the opus number was assigned by Breitkopf & Hartel's Paris agent Probst.

The engraver's autograph manuscript (*Stichvorlage*), which Julian Fontana sent to Pleyel after copying it, serves as the principal source for the present edition, the French proof having been revised by Fontana in Chopin's absence. The English proofs, engraved from the French edition, could well have been checked by Moscheles, from whom the fingering throughout the edition may therefore derive.

Form and design

Unlike Bach in his *Well-Tempered Clavier* Book I, Chopin, who seems to use equal temperament (with enharmonic relationships exploited either successively or, from No. 9 onwards, simultaneously), had no point to make in the ordering of his Preludes. Consequently, in contrast to Kalkbrenner (who slavishly adhered to Bach's chromatically ascending pattern), Chopin proceeds through the circle of fifths and relative minors. But the tonal plan apart, what structural principles, if any, govern Op. 28? There is not, for example, a systematic alternation between quick preludes in the major mode and slower ones in the minor. The shortest pieces are twice as numerous in the first half of the set as in the second, which contains the most elaborate (bithematic) preludes, including the longest and some of the slowest ones (Nos. 13, 15, 17 and 21). One commentator has proposed a four-part division within Op. 28 along the lines of an underlying sonata form, also attributing structural significance to successive pairs of adjacent notes (i.e. seconds) used to balance one another. Another writer has discerned an omnipresent melodic cell, while others have denied the relevance of such organizational principles in the set, preferring to understand Chopin's preludes in terms of the genre's traditional functions.

It is clear, however, that individual numbers may be categorized in terms of compositional types other than the prelude; in this sense Op. 28 constitutes a microcosm at the centre of Chopin's wider output. For instance, the set presents new types of 'étude' (Nos. 8, 12, 16, 19 and 24) in alternation with 'nocturnes' (Nos. 13, 15 and 21). There are rhythmic elements from mazurkas (Nos. 7 and 10), marches and hymns (Nos. 9 and 20), a pair of elegies (Nos. 4 and 6), the beginnings of an impromptu (No. 11), a stylized 'romance' *alla serenata* (No. 17), an instrumental recitative (No. 18) and so on. The predominant compositional principle is monothematicism manifest in innovative pianistic textures which, coupled with a prevalent *moto perpetuo*, ally Chopin's style with the musical aesthetic of the late Baroque. There is even a purely functional prelude: No. 1, which pays homage to Bach. But whereas the five black keys intervene one by one within the otherwise 'pure' C major of the first prelude of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Chopin's opening prelude offsets the diatonicism of C major with a rising chromatic progression in the middle of the piece – an elegant hint of what lies ahead.

24 Préludes

Op. 28

à son ami J.C. Kessler/ à son ami Camille Pleyel ★

Agitato

1 *mf*

7 *cresc.*

14 *stretto*

21 *p*

28

★ See Critical Commentary, Sources.

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Lento

2 *p*

5

9

13 *dim.*

18 *slentando* (*dim.*) *sostenuto*

The musical score is for a piano piece, marked 'Lento'. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is 'Lento'. The score includes dynamic markings: *p* (piano) at measure 2, *dim.* (diminuendo) at measure 13, and *slentando* (diminuendo) and *sostenuto* (sustained) at measure 18. The piece ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign at the end of the final system.

NOTES ON EDITORIAL METHOD AND PRACTICE

Editorial concept

The Complete Chopin is based on two key premises. First, there can be no definitive version of Chopin's works: variants form an integral part of the music. Second, a permissive conflation of readings from several sources – in effect producing a version of the music that never really existed – should be avoided. Accordingly, our procedure is to identify a single principal source for each work and to prepare an edition of that source (which we regard as 'best', even if it cannot be definitive). At the same time, we reproduce important variants from other authorized sources either adjacent to or, in certain instances, within the main music text, in footnotes or in the Critical Commentary, thus enabling scholarly comparison and facilitating choice in performance. (Conflation may be inadmissible for the editor, but it remains an option and right for the performer.) Multiple versions of whole works are presented when differences between the sources are so abundant or fundamental that they go beyond the category of 'variant'.

Sources

The complexity of the Chopin sources could hardly be greater, given the varying ways in which each work was drafted, prepared for publication (usually in three different countries) and subsequently revised in successive impressions. Our edition takes account of the following sources as relevant:

- autograph manuscripts, many of which were used by engravers (i.e. *Stichvorlagen*, or engraver's manuscripts);
- proofs, whether uncorrected or corrected by Chopin;
- first editions, including subsequent impressions released during Chopin's lifetime if relevant;
- autograph glosses in the scores of his students and associates; and
- editions of pieces for which no other source material survives.

In determining a single principal source for each piece, we have been guided by several factors of variable relevance from work to work. For the music published during Chopin's lifetime, these include the following:

- Chopin's presence in Paris, which allowed him to correct proofsheets and successive impressions of the French first edition, whereas he had less control over the publication process in Germany and England. We therefore tend to privilege the French first edition and later printings thereof;
- the existence of an autograph or authoritative copy related to a particular first edition; and
- the quality of the source with respect to errors and clarity of presentation.

For the posthumously published works, a more *ad hoc* methodology must be adopted, taking into account extant autograph manuscripts or approved copies or early editions when no other source material survives. The rationale for the selection of each work's principal source is given in the Critical Commentary.

Editorial principles

Our central aim is fidelity to the designated principal source except when errors and omissions occur therein. When such errors and omissions are indisputable, corrections are made tacitly in the music text, without distinguishing marks, but are discussed in the Critical Commentary (except for certain types of accidental; see below). When they are open to debate, any changes made editorially are distinguished in the music text by the use of square brackets; the Critical Commentary will discuss and justify these changes as necessary.

When other authorized sources offer significant alternatives, we present these as variants in one of the following ways:

- *alternative music text* is positioned on the page, either next to the main text or in footnotes; the provenance of each variant is identified according to the system of abbreviations defined in the Critical Commentary;
- *alternative dynamics, articulation and other small-scale variants* are incorporated within the music text but are distinguished by round brackets;
- *alternative fingerings* are printed in italics; and
- *alternative pedallings* appear below the staff in smaller type and enclosed within round brackets, their provenance being identified according to the system of abbreviations defined in the Critical Commentary.

Minor alternatives in other authorized sources are discussed and reproduced in the Critical Commentary as necessary, but do not appear in the body of the edition proper.

The principle of fidelity to an early nineteenth-century source raises important questions about the appearance of our Edition, given the differences in notational conventions between Chopin's age and our own. Our general practice is to conserve relevant features of early to mid nineteenth-century notation while modernizing details which otherwise would not be comprehensible to today's performers. The criterion is whether or not a given feature has any bearing on the music's meaning. For instance, we generally follow the original notation with regard to the position of slurs before or after tied notes; the chains of small-scale slurs in Chopin's original texts; superimposed (multiple) slurs; unbroken beamings across multiple groups of quavers, semiquavers etc.; and the disposition of the hands across the staves. We also respect the expressive idiosyncrasies of parallel passages.

Select characteristics of the Edition

- *Square brackets* distinguish all editorial interventions except precautionary accidentals (which are added only when reading accuracy is jeopardized). *Round brackets* (parentheses) designate additions and variants from other authorized sources.
- *Accidentals* missing from the original source are tacitly replaced in this Edition when these are found within the same bar at a higher or lower register, and when they clearly apply to other uses of the same pitch class in that bar (this sort of omission being extremely typical of Chopin).
- No editorial *fingerings* have been added. When Chopin's own fingerings appear in the principal source, they are presented in roman type in our Edition. Any significant fingerings from other authorized sources appear in italics; their provenance is identified in the Critical Commentary.
- *Right- and left-hand parts* may be divided between the two staves when such a disposition is vital to the original sense or better conforms to hand positions. This is how Chopin tended to notate his music, and it may be significant with regard to articulation and sonority.
- *Accents* pose a major problem in Chopin editing. Accents of various sizes are found throughout Chopin's manuscripts (as well as many scribal copies) and apparently have different meanings according to context; nevertheless, such meanings can be difficult to ascertain, not least because of notational inconsistencies on Chopin's part which make the editor's job all the more vexed. This Edition preserves the two principal types of accent in Chopin's autographs: conventional accents (>) and 'long accents' (≡). The latter seem to have various functions: to indicate dynamic reinforcement, expressive stress and proportional prolongation for notes of long rhythmic value (i.e. minims and semibreves); to convey a sense

CRITICAL COMMENTARY

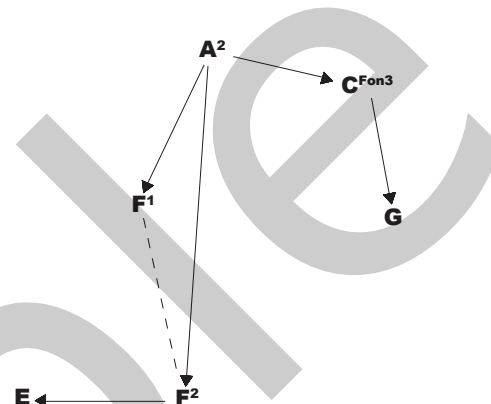
24 PRÉLUDES OP. 28

Sources

- A¹** Autograph sketch of Nos. 2 and 4. [Stevenson, Maryland, USA, private collection; PL-Wtfc: F.1743]
- A²** Autograph, finished before 22 January 1839. *Stichvorlage* for **F¹** and **F²**. [PL-Wn: Mus. 93]
- A³** Presentation manuscript (autograph) of No. 17 (bars 65–72 only), 9 November 1839. Album of I. Moscheles. [GB-Lbl: Music Loan 95.2.]
- A⁴** Presentation manuscript (autograph) of No. 20, 30 January 1840. Album of J.-M. DuBois de Beauchesne. [F-Pn: W. 24.88]
- A⁵** Presentation manuscript (autograph) of No. 20, 20 May 1845. Album of Cheremetieff family. [R-Mn: M.9817]
- C^{Fon1}** Copy of earlier version of No. 3, prepared by Julian Fontana. [PL-Wtfc: M/340]
- C^{Fon2}** Copy of earlier version of No. 17, prepared by Julian Fontana. [A-Wgm: no shelfmark]
- C^{Fon3}** Copy of **A²**, prepared by Julian Fontana, 1839. *Stichvorlage* for **G**. [lost; PL-Wtfc: F. 503]
- C^{Sand}** Copy of Nos 2, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 20, prepared by George Sand. Album of G. Sand. [private collection]
- F¹** French first edition, first impression. Adolphe Catelin & C^{ie}, Paris, 2 vols, plate No. Ad. C. (560) & C^{ie} (August 1839). Dedicated *à son ami Camille Pleyel*, as are **F²** and **F³**.
- F²** Reprint of **F¹**, corrected on the basis of **A²** (Autumn 1839).
- F³** Reprint of **F²**, without changes to the musical text. Brandus & C^{ie}, Paris, plate No. B. et C^{ie} 4594 (early 1846).
- G** German first edition, prepared from **C^{Fon3}**. Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, 2 vols, plate No. 6088 (September 1839). Dedicated *à son ami J. C. Kessler*.
- E** English first edition, based on **F²**, entitled *Twenty Four Grand Preludes*. Wessel & C^o, London, 2 vols, plate Nos. W & C^o N^o 3098, 3099 (early 1840). Dedicated *to his Friend Camille Pleyel*.
- S** Stirling copy of **F²** (2 vols), with autograph annotations by Chopin, Stirling and Tellefsen. [F-Pn: Rés. Vma 241 (IV, 28 (1–2))]
- J** Jędrzejewicz copy of **F²** (2 vols), with autograph annotations by Chopin, Stirling and probably also Tellefsen. [PL-Wtfc: M/176]
- D** Dubois copy of **F³** (Vol. 1) and **F²** (Vol. 2), with autograph annotations by Chopin. [F-Pn: Rés. F 980 (I, 3)]
- Sch** Scherbatoff copy of **F²**, with some autograph annotations by Chopin. [US-CAh, The Houghton Library: fMus. C 4555. B 846c]

Suggested filiation

The autograph *Stichvorlage* **A²** was used to engrave both the French first edition **F¹** and its corrected reprint **F²**. The English first edition **E** was based on **F²**. (The fingering in **E** is excluded from the present edition; its origin remains a matter for conjecture.) Prepared from **A²**, **C^{Fon3}** served as the basis of the German first edition **G**. Hence the following filiation:



With regard to accidentals, **E** is the most accurate of the printed sources: it corrects many of **F²**'s errors and omissions. Nevertheless, the best source overall is **A²**, the autograph that Chopin prepared, which thus has particular authority (especially given that he did not personally oversee the production of **F¹** and **F²**). **A²** therefore serves as the principal source of the present edition.

No. 1: *Agitato*

Bars 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28.

A², **F²**, **E**: RH beat 2 notated as follows:



Bar 21. **D** contains vertical stroke indicating phrase break (i.e. 'breathing with the wrist') over RH ♯ (see J.-J. Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 45, 112–13)

Bars 29, 30, 31, 32.

F², **E**: ♯ under RH chord 6

No. 2: *Lento*

Bars 1, 2. **F²**, **E**: LH notated as in bars 3ff.

Bars 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19.

C^{Sand}: LH notated



probably for ease of execution

Bars 15–16. **A²**: ——— begins bar 16 on barline

Bars 17, 20. **S**: RH note 2 (long appoggiatura) crossed out

Bar 21. LH — only in **E**