

Abstract

Chopin Teaching Singers

with section on Thomas Tellefsen: Singing and Royal Patronage

Research and presentation by Cecilia Jorgensen, Icons of Europe



The paper *Chopin Teaching Singers* presents new evidence and reasoning to show that, contrary to current thinking, the composer tutored professional singers. Among a multitude of period information, it cites a newspaper referring in early 1848 to “the Chopin School, with its well-known song method, with its principles on hand movements with the arm kept still”.

The case of three singers, who all achieved international fame, are examined: Pauline Garcia-Viardot, who underwent a remarkable transformation from a budding concert pianist in 1836 into an international singer and acclaimed creator of “new products of song” in 1839; Henriette Nissen, who became a pupil of Chopin and Manuel Garcia, Jr. in 1839 and later wrote her *L'étude de chant*; and Jenny Lind who, beyond any reasonable doubt, studied under Chopin in 1841-1842 and over the summer of 1844. Jenny Lind later performed her arrangements of four of Chopin's Mazurkas on which Moscheles commented in 1857.



The place of the Norwegian pianist-composer Thomas Tellefsen, a pupil of Chopin, in this particular scenario is briefly analysed.

The paper concludes that the scope of Chopin's teaching extended beyond piano playing into “the art of singing” and related fields (e.g. self-accompaniment and composition) relevant for the individual talent of the pupil. His “method” may well draw on principles developed by Manuel Garcia, Sr. before 1832 and be reflected in the *École de Garcia* publication of 1847.

Chopin could therefore be seen as an important contributor to the Bel Canto tradition as it evolved in parallel with superior pianos in the musical culture of the 19th century.

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