



# CHOPIN

## IN THE WORLD



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Drawing Room in the Czapskich (formerly Krasińskich) Palace at 5 Krakowskie Przedmieście Street in Warsaw.

The Frederick Chopin Society pursues concert, exhibition, scientific and publishing activities, such as *The Collected Works of Frederick Chopin (Dzieła wszystkie)*, edited by Ignacy Paderewski, Ludwik Bronarski

and Józef Turczyński (in cooperation with the Polish Music Publishers PWM), the annual "Rocznik Chopinowski" (25 volumes up to date), "Chopin Studies" (seven volumes from 1985 to 2002), a Catalogue of the Works of Frederick Chopin (*Katalog Dzieł Fryderyka Chopina*, together with the Polish Music Publishers in Cracow), and the

10 volumes containing facsimile autographs of Chopin's works and letters.

Among other international events, the Frederick Chopin Society in Warsaw organises the Frederick Chopin Piano Competition.

## Meeting of the Board of the IFCS

In 2003 the Board met twice. The first session took place in February in Vienna, simultaneously with the meeting of Chopin Societies. The following issues were discussed:

The following Societies joined the Federation: Centre de Recherche Culturel Chopin (Charmes, France), represented by Françoise Berger, and Chopin-Gesellschaft Salzburg, represented by Roland Schistek.

The membership fee was set at EUR 250 or USD 250.

Representatives of Societies discussed their activities. They stressed difficulties

encountered in their activities and asked for brief information on the output of Fryderyk Chopin, broken down into individual genres.

Elżbieta Artysz presented a proposal by Grzegorz Michalski, Director of the Fryderyk Chopin Institute to make available to the International Federation of Chopin Societies a room in the Institute's Office at 44 Nowogrodzka Street in Warsaw. All those attending unanimously agreed to the proposal and expressed their warmest thanks to Mr. Michalski.

The second session took place in Garmisch, during the 19<sup>th</sup> International Chopin Festival. Four Societies joined the Federation: from Vlaanderen (Belgium), Houston (United States), St. Petersburg (Russia) and Helsinki (Finland). The

Fryderyk Chopin Society in Warsaw and the Chopin Foundation of the United States (Miami) have returned to the Federation.

The first part of the Symposium entitled "The Role of Classical Music in Contemporary Europe with an Emphasis on the Music of Chopin" took place. The second part of the Symposium is planned for the year 2004. Vice-President Ivan Klánský has proposed that the next meeting of the Federation Board take place in August of 2004 in Mariánské Lázně in the Czech Republic.

Elżbieta Artysz

## New Chopin Publications

**Cecilia and Jens Jorgensen – *Chopin and the Swedish Nightingale. The Life and Times of Chopin and a Romance Unveiled 154 Years Later. Icons of Europe* asbl, Brussels, 2003.**

This is a novelty in the book market not only because of the beautiful quality of the publication, but also because of content. The book consists of 8 chapters, of which the first five recount Chopin's life, starting with a biography of his father Nicolas, who came from Lorraine. The story is full of facts, supported by colour illustrations – portraits of the most important persons in Chopin's life, important personalities of the period, facsimiles of Chopin's manuscripts, photographs of places he visited etc. Chapter six is where the revelation begins – a tale of Chopin's acquaintance with Jenny Lind, the title "Swedish Nightingale". The authors

suggest that this was the last romance, or perhaps the last dream of a love affair between Chopin and the Swedish singer in the years 1848-1849. They interpret and analyse in depth the allusions in her letters and go as far so as to suggest that the pair discussed marriage. All this despite the fact that correspondence between Chopin and Jenny Lind does not exist. Chopin's deteriorating health and external circumstances laid waste to these plans. Cecilia and Jens Jorgensen refer to this as a "drama of Shakespearean proportions". The letters of Jenny Lind are written in code, full of symbols. It is difficult for us to verify their true content and intention, as only the book's authors know these letters. They have delved into their style, and into the personality of the singer. On the other hand, Chopin's letters written in England in 1848 describe his wonder at her opera performances, but there are no allusions whatsoever as to love, romance or marriage. The authors quote, among others, Chopin's letter dated June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1848, in which he writes that he has no

strength, and yet he could begin life anew. Can this be interpreted unambiguously?

The second revelation is the discovery that the sum of 25 000 francs which Chopin received anonymously in the last period of his life was given by Jenny Lind, not, as previously thought, from Jane Stirling. Jenny donated large sums of money to charity. She was paid great sums for her performances. Jane Stirling did love Chopin, but she rather had no access to such sums.

As we can see, there are still many facts to be discovered 154 years after Chopin's death, or our view of facts thought to be known can change. There is another, very important piece of information: Starting in the year 1855, Jenny Lind sang four mazurkas with Italian words and piano accompaniment, which were based on Chopin's mazurkas. The authors quote the words of the last of these, op. 24 no. 3: "Mio pover cor, lascia il dolor". I recommend this book to all who love Chopin and his music.

The book was presented on 11 October 2003 in Lasne, Belgium. A concert perform-



ance featured singers Biljana Staffansson and Ljiljana Jovanović, accompanied by pianist Daniel Blumenthal performing works by Chopin and Bellini.

**Ulrich Erckenbrecht – *Brief über Chopin. Erläuterung einer Vorliebe*, Kassel, 2002.**

This book was written for the love of the music of Chopin. In the introduction the author recalls his first encounter with Chopin's music while learning to play the piano. After hearing the *Nocturne in F-sharp major*, op. 15 no. 2, he understood that Chopin is his composer. Chopin's biography is outlined briefly, listing only the most important details. The author then goes on to review the musical genres composed by Chopin. What's surprising is that he considers the composer's chamber works as inferior, including those for piano and cello. While the *Duo Concertant* is not one of Chopin's greatest works, his *Sonata in G minor* for piano and cello cannot be called a "meaningless work", even in a great performance. The *Sonata* is a marvellous work, which brought in a new quality of sound in Chopin's output. Erckenbrecht then discusses Chopin's piano technique and his ability to parody Liszt or Bellini. He writes about Chopin's teaching. A large part of the book is devoted to others' writings about Chopin, starting from his contemporaries – Liszt, Schumann, Moscheles, George Sand, Balzac and Heine to Gide, Proust, Baudelaire and on to German philosophers, writers and poets: Nietzsche, Adorno, Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann, Gottfried Benn, Hans M. Enzensberger and Carl Zuckmayer. These writings, some of them well known, are put together to form a panorama of Chopin seen as an extraordinary, one of a kind musician, a "Raphael of the piano". The author then muses about Chopin and Karl Marx. What would happen if Marx, who lived in Paris in 1843-45, 1848 and 1849 met the anti-communist Chopin instead of Engels (in 1844), asks Erckenbrecht. He then answers that being an avid music lover, he would probably take piano lessons together with his wife. What purpose do these musings serve? Who are they for? Chopin did not need to meet Marx, but Chopin's influence could not be great enough to change or shape the views of young philosophers.

The Chopin Year in 1999 was commemorated in the Ukraine with a small book about the composer, published by ASTON in the year 2000: *Fortepianne mistestvo Shopena. Naukovo-metodichni napis* [The Pianistic Mastery of Chopin].

The book contains a number of reflections on Chopin's teaching and pianistic technique, supported with analyses of some



Cecilia and Jens Jorgensen together with artists after the concert in Lasne

genres, forms and explanations of performing difficulties connected with Chopin's works and a reminiscence about some pianists, such as Aleksander Michałowski and Raoul Koczalski.

Edition Argus published in Schliengen in the year 2003 materials from the international conference devoted to Chopin, held in Düsseldorf in 1999. It must be stressed that the publication was financed largely by the Polish Institute in Düsseldorf, the Ministry of Culture and by the Polish Cultural Foundation. The book is called *Chopin 1849/1999. Aspekte der Rezeptions und Interpretationsgeschichte*, Andreas Ballstaedt, editor. It has been published with great care, on beautiful paper, with a beautiful cover. The book is divided into four parts. The first part discusses Chopin's piano playing (L. Fink) and the history of the interpretation of his works, namely the concertos (J. Rink), the *Fantaisie in F minor* (W. Kirsch), Ignaz Friedman's sheet music editions and recordings (Z. Chechlińska) and recording media as documents of musical interpretation (A. Ballstaedt). The second part focuses on arrangements and reworking of Chopin's works: a typology of transcriptions (M. Gołąb), vocal transcriptions of mazurkas done by Pauline Viardot (I. Poniatowska), arrangements by Henselt (L. Schiwietz) and the use of Chopin's music in choreographies (D. Philippi). The third part discusses Chopin's influence on the composition of mazurkas (Z. Helman), on the works of F. Hiller (K.W. Niemöller) and Gabriel Fauré (A. Edler). The fourth part takes up the problem of the way Chopin was

perceived e.g. in the writings of L. Rellstab (J. Kallberg), poses the question whether Chopin was a classicist (V. Kalisch) and touches upon funeral ceremony issues based on Chopin's funeral (L. Kramer). These are scientific papers, based on most recent literature and sources, but music lovers will also find issues to draw their interest.

Irena Poniatowska

**Stanisław Dybowski – *Słownik pianistów polskich* [A Dictionary of Polish Pianists].**

This is the first book of its kind in Poland, devoted entirely to the performing activities of Polish pianists, from Frantisek Lessel (18<sup>th</sup> century) to contemporary times. The book contains profiles of 344 pianists involved in concert activities, as well as in teaching and composition. Each profile consists of a biographical note and an assessment of artistic activity based on available documents. The book is richly illustrated (about 100 illustrations) and is 880 pages long. The profiles are preceded by comprehensive information on Polish piano-playing tradition, the beginnings of piano recordings, the Chopin idiom in piano performance and an artistic family tree deriving historical tradition all the way to Joseph Haydn. The book also contains a bibliography and an index of 3700 names, including Maria Szymanowska, Joseph Hofmann, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Ignaz Friedman, Raoul Koczalski, Witold Małcużyński, Krystian Zimerman and others.