



Research Article

From Chopin to Kitsch? Pauline Viardot's Vocal Mazurkas and the popularisation of classical music

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Abstract

This article examines the concept of 'popular music' in the context of the work of Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849). The paper analyses six mazurkas by the Polish composer and their transcription for voice and piano, performed by the opera diva Pauline Viardot (1821–1910) to words by the French poet Louis Pomme (1831–1901). This chamber vocal cycle, composed by Viardot, illustrates the established poetics of the salons of the second third of the 19th century, where literature and music converged. Based on an analysis of various sources, this study examines the history of the works' creation, their imagery and intonation, as well as the harmonic features of these vocal miniatures, whilst reconstructing their context. As a result, a connection is revealed between Viardot's vocal mazurkas and Chopin's songs, composed between 1829 and 1847, in the themes of love and loneliness. The aim of this article is to investigate how the opera singer bridges the gap between classical music and the mass audience and becomes a creator of kitsch. The research methodology includes an analysis of historical sources, as well as a musical and literary analysis of Chopin's and Viardot's mazurkas. The author concludes that kitsch emerges at the intersection of classical and popular music, where the integration of various elements from different mazurkas helps Viardot achieve a precise correspondence between the expressive content of the text and Chopin's musical language.

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Introduction

In a letter to Viardot in Paris dated November 11 (23), 1864, Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev (1818–1883) mentions the publication of Polina Viardot's transcriptions of Chopin's mazurkas: "Your mazurkas are still only being sold separately; they will be compiled into a collection later for the true start of the season" ²(Turgenev 1988: 62–63). The publisher Gérard compiled a collection of six mazurkas with lyrics by Louis Pome, which was reprinted in 1885 and 1899, confirming their high sales and proving their popularity. In total, Viardot created fifteen arrangements of Chopin's mazurkas for voice and piano, which became virtuoso musical masterpieces of enduring beauty and remain part of the vocal repertoire to this day. This article presents a comparative analysis of the first six vocal mazurkas by Pauline Viardot. Chopin's Mazurkas; No. 31 (op. 50, No. 2), No. 23 (op. 33, No. 2), No. 1 (op. 6, No. 1), No. 5 (op. 7, No. 1), No. 49 (op. 68, No. 2), No. 14 (op. 24, No. 1). Viardot's Mazurkas; 'Seize ans', 'Aime-moi', "Plainte d'amoure", 'The Coquette', "L'aiselet", 'The Breakup'.

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² Author's translation.

Although Viardot “arranged fifteen of Chopin’s mazurkas for voice, she published a selection of six” (Harley 2000: 34). Since the manuscripts of these transcriptions have been lost, we cannot determine their date of creation with certainty, but the first of them were written during Chopin’s lifetime. For my study, I selected Viardot’s first six mazurkas to lyrics by Louis Pomme, as they form a unified thematic and musical cycle: this circumstance helps to better understand Viardot’s intentions in her choice of transcription techniques. “When you play the mazurkas one after another, the initial impression of diversity gives way to a sense of ‘duality of feelings’ pervading the entire sequence,” about Chopin’s mazurkas wrote Boris Asafiev (1989: 118); “one can sense in the music of the mazurkas both landscapes familiar to Chopin and genre scenes of everyday life: it is a kind of diary of observations” (Asafiev 1989: 115). Viardot’s first six mazurkas also constitute the diary of a young woman who has experienced a love story and felt the full range of emotions toward her beloved: “Chopin’s music, of course, is full of ‘love’; this is one of its realms” (Asafiev 1989: 117). It is precisely these that have become the focus of my attention in this work.

The sources on Chopin and Viardot used in this study can be divided into the following groups: correspondence, monographs and articles on the lives and works of the two musicians, memoirs, and books and articles on issues of composition and interpretation.

Scholars of Chopin’s work actively discuss the creative connection between Maria Szymanowska and Frédéric Chopin in various aspects (Harley 2000), while musical connections with Pauline Viardot³ attract less attention from scholars, who often underestimate or negatively assess her vocalisations of Chopin’s mazurkas. Margaret Ann Fons argues that “critics from both Chopin’s time and later history often ignore two equally fundamental questions: (1) the connection between Chopin’s mazurkas and the dance of the same name, and (2) how this connection can serve as the basis for a hermeneutic reading of the mazurkas” (2012: U1). Contemporary scholars assess the significance of Chopin’s mazurkas, arranged for voice by Pauline Viardot, in different ways. One group of scholars argues that these songs are “grotesquely imperfect” (Rauseo 2014: 191). They cite the composer’s letters, in which he expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of his works at various concerts. According to Józef Chominski, Chopin could hardly have tolerated such vocal arrangements of his music (Chominski 1978: 233). But then why did Chopin accompany Viardot on the piano during a salon performance at Lord Falmouth’s in London in July 1848? Chopin did not protest categorically when Viardot inserted mediocre texts into his mazurkas, and this innovation led to a huge number of imitations.

Adam Zamoyski (1980) urges us to look beyond the myths and legends to get to the very essence of Chopin’s life and music. The most interesting finding of his study is the hypnotic effect of Chopin’s music on various cultures. Furthermore, the essence of the emotions and feelings that Chopin’s music evokes in society remains important, including the interplay between music and literature, known as intermediality (Wolf 2002). Indeed, the few studies devoted to Viardot’s arrangements of Chopin’s mazurkas for voice and piano leave huge gaps in our understanding of a fashionable phenomenon in mid-19th-century music: the vocalisation of piano pieces (Shuster 1989). There is a lack of contemporary research on this topic.

The significance of this article lies in the fact that, for the first time, Chopin’s mazurkas are examined as a phenomenon of kitsch in classical music. The author explores the contribution made by Pauline Viardot to the popularisation of Chopin’s mazurkas, using her vocal mazurkas as an example. The study of the process of vocalising Chopin’s instrumental mazurkas raises the issue of the theory of transcription and arrangement and deepens our understanding of the relationship between music and words. The article contains rare facts concerning the musical art of the mid-19th century.

The aim of this article is to demonstrate the presence of kitsch in Parisian salon music of the 1840s, using the example of Chopin’s mazurkas and their interpretation by Pauline Viardot. This task stems from the need for constant decoding and reconciliation, in both performance and analytical practices, of the diverse cultural codes integrated into classical music. An analysis of six mazurkas illustrates how Chopin’s successor used his popular pieces to breathe new life into

³ She is the author of art songs, three salon operas, and more than fifty songs, most of which remain unnoticed and are rarely performed.

elite music, whilst continuing to develop the traditions of classical music for a mass audience and combating widespread misogyny.

This article addresses issues that have not yet been explored in musicology. How does a female composer enhance the virtuosity of Chopin's mazurkas through the use of vocals? What exactly might have caused tension in these arrangements and led to the composer's dissatisfaction? What musical techniques did Viardot employ, taking the poetic text into account? It is worth asking: how did Viardot interpret 'Chopinism' and how did she use it to express her own sounds and rhythms in her musical compositions? Did the opera diva succeed in preserving the Polish composer's distinctive style? When does music cross the line from art and becomes kitsch?

Method

The specific nature of the research required the use of various sources, including archival materials, contemporary reviews of Viardot's performances, periodicals, sheet music publications and academic works. Based on the epistolary legacy: the correspondence between George Sand and Viardot (1959), Chopin's letters (1980) and the letters of Viardot's lover Ivan Turgenev (1981), a chronological reconstruction is carried out of the concept and creative process underlying the opera singer's transcriptions of Chopin's mazurkas, as well as Chopin's own ambivalent attitude towards these compositions. This article presents a comparative musicological analysis of Chopin's mazurkas (1988) and their arrangements for voice and piano performed by Pauline Viardot (1988). The present study is based on the three necessary conditions for the classification of kitsch proposed by the philosopher Tomasz Kulka (1996), which clearly distinguish kitsch from contemporary art: firstly, content charged with positive emotions; secondly, the immediate recognisability of the depicted subject; and thirdly, a simple mode of presentation. Crucially, kitsch is always aimed at finding the optimal solution to satisfy the consumer's undemanding artistic taste.

This study is preceded by a background account of the creation of Pauline Viardot's vocal mazurkas, as her concept matured through close interaction with Chopin and his circle. This is confirmed not only by biographical evidence, but also by the atmosphere of the Parisian salons of the 1840s, as well as the composer's experiments in the genres of salon music. In this context, the question of the relationship between music and words is raised. My analysis of the vocalisation of six of Chopin's mazurkas helps to better understand Viardot's experience: how classical music became more accessible and popular with a wider audience. The reinterpretation of the mazurka genre in the mid-19th century became a striking example of kitsch, and this phenomenon is given particular attention in the article.

Findings

Chopin and Viardot

Polina Viardot was renowned as a singer who inspired great composers to dedicate works to her, stage premieres and create roles for her throughout her distinguished operatic career. She was arguably one of the most influential and respected singers in 19th-century European classical music. Her musical salon is credited with the success of the careers of Camille Saint-Saëns, Jules Massenet, Gabriel Fauré and Charles Gounod. Her outstanding talents and influence were so great that Clara Schumann called her 'the most gifted woman I have ever known', and not without reason. Ivan Turgenev, in a letter to Viardot dated 14 May 1850, marvelled at her: 'You belong to the select few, whereas Mademoiselle Alboni is simply an excellent singer' (IRLI RAS).

George Sand first met Pauline Garcia in November 1839, at a time when Garcia, then a rising star of the Paris opera scene, had just made her debut, crowning her performance with a triumphant success at the Théâtre de l'Italien (Rozanov, 1982: 19). Biographers agree that she was encouraged to marry Louis Viardot by the French writer, and that this was more of a practical arrangement than a union based on feelings. In one of her letters, Viardot wrote: 'I am sad that, despite all my efforts, I was unable to respond to Louis's passionate and profound love' (Rozanov 1982: 20). Thus began the friendship between three geniuses: Pauline Viardot, George Sand and Frédéric Chopin, which lasted until the composer's death. The correspondence between the two women, however, continued until Sand's death in 1876, when, as Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev noted, 'at the end of her life she was barely making ends meet'. This information is

contained in a letter from Turgenev to Alexei Sergeyevich Suvorin (1834–1912), editor of the journal *Novoye Vremya* (Turgenev 1979: 261).

Polina Viardot first met Frédéric Chopin in Noan: the summer residence which Chopin shared in 1845 with his companion George Sand. Viardot became a frequent guest there, alongside artists such as Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, Franz Liszt and Eugène Delacroix. Noan was a place where conversations revolved almost exclusively around art and what were perceived as the highest values in life. Viardot sang for the guests ‘to Chopin’s accompaniment, long-forgotten enchanting arias by Porpora and Martini’ (Julian 1986: 134). Over the course of three weeks, a close and devoted friendship developed between Viardot and Chopin, deepened by mutual respect and admiration for each other’s artistic abilities. During her stay in Noan, Viardot studied Chopin’s works with great interest, and the Polish composer eventually became her mentor. Viardot was also a highly accomplished pianist, whose technical mastery impressed Chopin, and they often performed together as a piano duo. During their joint recitals, the Polish composer gave her advice not only on matters of piano performance, but also on vocal composition. Even as a child, she had discovered her own voice and developed her own philosophy of vocal singing. ‘Chopin, who had always adored bel canto, was enchanted by Viardot’s singing. The exercises her father gave her during those few lessons helped her develop a solid technique that served her faithfully for a long time. She often returned to these exercises when she felt the need to tune her voice or work on difficult passages’ (FitzLyon 1965: 30). It has been suggested that Chopin’s arrangement of the accompaniment to the cavatina ‘Casta Diva’ from the opera ‘Norma’ ‘was apparently intended for Pauline Viardot, who first performed this part in St Petersburg in November 1844’ (Eigeline 1997: 167) ‘The singing that moved Chopin in French musical life was Italian and came from Bellini,’ adds Rauzeo (2014: 195).

Viardot shared her profound knowledge of Spanish music with Chopin and helped him to understand the voice more deeply as a musical instrument. The singer’s vocal range extended from the lower register (the low octave) to a high D in the third octave (*ré aigu*), with what contemporaries described as ‘the most perfect fullness of tone in every note’. ‘All the notes comprising this vast register [...],’ notes one critic in the *Northern Bee* of 12 February 1853, ‘are equally rounded and clear; her lower register possesses an indescribable charm, her middle register is superb, and the transition from chest voice to head voice is imperceptible.’ The two musicians often read scores together at the piano, and Viardot sang Chopin’s songs in their original Polish.

On 20 July 1845, Chopin informed his family in Warsaw of Viardot’s departure from Noan, where she had spent three weeks (1980: 91). In this letter, he mentioned the singer’s intention to call on his parents in Warsaw on her way to St Petersburg and spoke highly of a Spanish song composed by Pauline. She promised Chopin that she would sing it for his relatives. ‘And that will bind you to me,’ he remarked wistfully in his letter (Chopin 1980: 93). Over time, their relationship developed into a devoted friendship, deepened by mutual respect and admiration for each other’s creative abilities. In devising a vocal interpretation of Chopin’s mazurkas, Viardot was most likely familiar with the composer’s vocal works⁴.

Subsequently, the breakdown in relations between George Sand and Chopin weakened the creative ties between Viardot and Chopin; however, the singer remained a loyal friend to both; nevertheless, Chopin died two years later. On 30 October 1849, Viardot, together with Jeanne-Anais Castellan, Pierre Dupont and Luigi Lablasche, performed Mozart’s *Requiem* at Chopin’s funeral. In a letter to George Sand at the end of October 1849, Viardot laments that she had not known of the composer’s imminent death: ‘I was so saddened by the death of poor little Chopin that I did not know where to begin my letter. I am sure that you were just as saddened and that, had you known his end was so near. I am happy to have known him and to have gained a little of his friendship’ (Azoury 1999: 162).

Music in the salons of Paris during Chopin’s time

In the 1830s, Paris became a hub for the intensive exchange of artistic practices, where imported elements underwent mutual transformation. This process led to the formation of what Yuri Lotman would have called a ‘semiosphere’ – a unified semiotic space enabling complex processes of intercultural communication to take place (1986: 25–43). Paris in

⁴ Between 1829 and 1847, Chopin composed 19 songs. Chopin’s vocal works carry a profound philosophical meaning. They can be described as diary entries recording the composer’s experiences and thoughts.

the 1830s served as a laboratory of artistry, where new models of creative behaviour and mechanisms of cultural legitimisation crystallised.

Private Parisian salons functioned as creative laboratories where new aesthetic ideas and artistic practices were tested. Gradually, Chopin's name became fashionable in Paris; Pixis wrote variations on his themes, and Kalkbrenner himself composed *Brilliant Variations* on the theme of Chopin's Mazurka Op. 7 No. 1' (Belza 1968: 187). The salons of Princess Czartoryska (née Marcelina Radziwiłł)⁵, together with those of her daughter-in-law, Countess Delphine Potocka, who was a regular visitor, as well as the salons of Baron Rothschild and the Countess de Méro, created a unique social space. Here, the rigid boundaries between aristocratic and bourgeois culture were blurred, and a new hybrid aesthetic took shape. Performing in these salons was Maria Kalerji (née Nesselrode), of Russian origin and brought up at the St Petersburg court – the muse of Théophile Gautier and a friend of Chopin. 'This magnificent blonde with milky-white skin was reputed to be a famous musician: "When she plays, she rolls her eyes in the manner of Renée Guido's Magdalene," Delacroix writes of her, adding: "Her playing is rather unpleasant"' (Julian 1986: 125). Chopin's favourite haunt was the salon of the Count and Countess Plater on the Chemin d'Antin in the Rue de Londres, where he played his mazurkas. The mazurka held a worthy place in the drawing room: it was a pleasure to listen to and one could dance to it. Sometimes they were danced under Chopin's guidance, as the violinist Eugène Szalay testified: 'Chopin sat down at the piano and played us his B-flat mazurka and then wanted to teach us to dance it. I can still feel how he took me by both hands and led me around the ballroom, showing me the steps. Returning to the piano, he enchanted us with completely new music and a magnificent performance' (Sapcey 2005: 291). Mazurkas and nocturnes 'were part of a broader repertoire known as salon music' (Swartz 1985: 51) and were originally composed as lyrical miniature piano pieces.

In a letter to a friend dated 8 June 1847, Chopin writes about Auguste-Joseph Francom (1808–1884)'s arrangement of his 'Nocturne' into the song 'O salutaris', which 'sings well' (Chopin 1980: 168). In the spring of 1849, Delphine Potocka (1807–1877), like Pauline Viardot, performed his nocturnes⁶ and other piano works in various arrangements. Delacroix listened to these arrangements performed by Potocka: 'This evening at Chopin's I saw the enchantress Potocka. I had already heard her twice: I have never encountered greater perfection. Especially the first time: the room was dimly lit, and her black velvet dress and everything else, even what I could not see, painted a picture of her beauty that was just as captivating as her manners' (Julian 1986: 126); "her voice made a delightful impression on him" (Delacroix 1980: 157). An indispensable feature of Chopin's nocturnes became 'airy', pedal-and-overtone figuration, creating a sense of a vast, softly enveloping space' (Zenkin 2010: 75).

Nocturnes are 'one of the main forms of salon music' (Eigeldinger 1997), and they evoke a strong emotional response from the audience. Within this melancholic perspective, there is a narrative inconsistency that may explain the sharp criticism surrounding this popular music. In the 1880s, Mily Balakirev (1837–1910) arranged Chopin's Mazurka Op. 6 No. 4 for choir, setting it to words by Alexei Khomyakov (1804–1860) under the title *Once, Late at Night*. This score was subsequently published by A. B. Guteil's music publishing house. 'The Romantic nocturne (in its mature, Chopin-esque form) possesses a significantly greater consistency of musical character. This typical form of the nocturne is characterised by a vocal melody, though not purely song-like, but featuring the coloratura typical of Italian operatic bel canto, reflected in the culture of brilliant pianism.

In the salon milieu, Chopin struck a balance between virtuosity and depth. Here, the composer found not merely an audience, but a reference group whose expectations and tastes shaped the parameters of his artistic quest. 'Like his literary friends, Chopin sought new, free forms of self-expression and turned to poetry, literature and folklore for inspiration' (Goldberg 2000: 62). The aesthetic of 'intimate universalism' developed in the salons represented a response to the challenges of society. On the one hand, it retained intimacy and psychological depth, meeting the need for an individualised artistic experience; on the other, it possessed a universal language comprehensible to a diverse audience. 'In the nineteenth century, a decadence in the very essence of art music occurred in the sense of differentiation: it is

⁵ Her husband, Adam Czartoryski (1770–1861) – a Polish politician – was a friend and patron of Chopin (Julian 1986: 115).

⁶ Unfortunately, the scores of Chopin's vocal nocturnes have been irretrievably lost.

important to emphasise the existence of “music of the masses”, distinct from “music of the elites” (Bala 2016: 1024). ‘Popular music’ encompasses concepts of freedom and creativity, regarded as the core of social and cultural life. In the Romantic era, ‘creativity means the enrichment of the imagination; what is valuable is that which is original and eccentric’ (Poniatowska 1990). It is necessary to recall the main ideas of Romanticism concerning the way of feeling, thinking and acting in accordance with supposed human nature. This is a new paradigm that takes into account the emancipatory qualities of popular music as opposed to the exclusive nature of classical music (beauty and the sublime).

Thus, the Parisian salons of the 1830s served not merely as venues for musical performances, but as complex laboratories for the production of new cultural syntheses. Their role in shaping Chopin’s transcultural identity and the development of his unique style cannot be overestimated; they became the creative environment in which the fundamental parameters of musical Romanticism crystallised.

The interaction of various national artistic traditions within the Parisian cultural sphere deserves particular attention, representing a classic case of cultural transfer.

The Relationship Between Music and Words

When Viardot expressed a desire to arrange Chopin’s mazurkas for voice and piano, the composer approved of her idea, and a fruitful collaboration began between the two musicians. ‘Pauline received expert advice from Chopin regarding her piano playing, vocal compositions and arrangements of some of his mazurkas as songs’ (Azoury 1999: 163). At the suggestion of her husband, an impresario, Viardot realised that her piano compositions would sell better if they were heard by a wider audience, even if only performed by singers. ‘Polina was to become an ambassador for art and literature, carrying the good news to the farthest corners of the civilised world’ (Ozward 2002: 117). The second reason was her desire to expand her touring repertoire. Performing without the support of an accompanying opera company meant that the opera soloist had to share the stage with local artists, most of whom were unknown to her and did not possess the same level of skill. The third aim of Viardot’s arrangements was to preserve and enhance this virtuosity for the voice, whilst emphasising the Polish composer’s distinctive style and the national characteristics of his music, all the while maintaining a highly artistic foundation. Chopin’s mazurkas proved to be the ideal basis for achieving these goals.

Over the centuries, the genre has been one of the most obvious ‘bridges’ between the world of music and the wider non-musical world, and one of the most important factors in shaping the meaning of music. The meaning of the genre could often be captured in various structural features of the music, which can be regarded as elements of musical language beyond the individual and specific features of form. Boris Asafiev reflects on the uniqueness of the mazurka genre:

Mazurkas occupy a special place: the intellectual aspect in them is largely absorbed by the properties of the sensory and visual, the concrete, at times extending to dance-like and naturalistic imagery: posture, gesture, gait. The plasticity of the rhythm almost dictates to both the ear and the eye a pictorial quality of everyday life, a portrait-like quality, concealing thought. And alongside this, the depth of lyricism draws perception into the subtleties of psycho-realistic analysis, in turn veiling the intellectual, non-sensory content of the sonically conceivable (1989: 115).

Chopin’s mazurkas represent not merely a stylisation of folk themes, but a complex synthesis of Polish musical archetypes with the language of European musical Romanticism. A semiotic analysis of these compositions reveals their dual nature: simultaneously national and universal. Franz Liszt also reflected on this phenomenon of the mazurka:

The words sung to the melodies of mazurkas, compared with the melodies of other dances, allow one to indulge more vividly in memories. Fresh, ringing voices repeat them countless times in solitude, in the mornings, during hours of merry leisure. They are hummed on the road, in the forest, on the ferry, in moments of sudden emotion, when some encounter, a scene, or an unexpected word suddenly casts an unquenchable light on moments destined to shine in the memory for many years, illuminating the darkest corners of the future (Liszt 1956: 23).

Hegel, too, spoke of two forms of musical meaning, contrasting two types of musical perception; that of the connoisseur and that of the amateur. In the first case, he speaks of ‘filling’ the mind with ‘music in its purest form’, of

the desire ‘to compare what is heard with familiar [...] rules and laws, so as to fully comprehend and appreciate what the composer has achieved’ (List 1959: 304); in the second, it is about ‘filling’ ‘this seemingly incorporeal movement in sounds’ (List 1959: 304) with meaning as such, about ‘seeking out’ ‘spiritual points of reference for the perception of subsequent development’, about ‘clearer ideas, a more immediate [...] content for that which finds a response in [...] the soul’ (List 1959: 304–305). The discussion concerns content and form: the Hungarian musician, commenting on Hegel’s typology, unites them as a simultaneous unity, emphasising that it is precisely the artist, and not the amateur, who is more demanding regarding the content of music, and only in this case does form acquire any significance for him. Form without content loses its meaning:

Those who seek [...] in creative work [...] only ingenious construction, skilful musical texture and complex structure, only the kaleidoscopic variety of mathematical calculations and intertwining lines, push music towards a dead letter and must be likened to those who, in the fragrant flower-garden of Indian and Persian poetry [...] admire only the sonority of the word and the symmetry of the verse, paying no heed to their meaning, to the wealth of thought and imagery contained within them (Liszt 1959: 305).

Traditionally, in Chopin’s music, works are divided into potentially narrative genres (ballads, sonatas, polonaises, concertos) and descriptive lyrical or, in other words, salon genres (waltzes, nocturnes, mazurkas) (Klein 2004: 38–39). Chopin’s mazurkas therefore present a challenge when applying the theory of musical narration as a method of hermeneutic analysis. Chopin’s salon works typically lack both the ‘epic’ quality inherent in his virtuoso works and the programmatic associations that historically point to narrativity, rendering them unsuitable for a narrative reading in the traditional sense. In the absence of traditional narrative markers, these richly expressive works have been largely overlooked in the narrative sphere. The connection between music and words, the close interplay and interpenetration of the characteristics of vocal and instrumental musical works, and the endeavour to bring the expressiveness of the melody closer to that of intonations in spoken language are characteristic of Chopin’s mazurkas.

Analysis of Vocalisation in Chopin’s Mazurkas

Viardot, ‘Seize ans’ (‘16 Years Old’): Chopin, Mazurka No. 31 (Op. 50 No. 2)

It remains unclear whether these two musicians collaborated on the mazurkas during their stay in Noan; however, the first mazurka composed by the prima donna, *Seize ans*, dates from 1841–1842. Chopin wrote this piece after their meeting, and Pauline Viardot’s transcription remains very close to the original. An airy, light and bright musical character underlies this miniature. The main key of the mazurka is A-flat major. It is structured in rondo form with two episodes. The musical material opens with an eight-bar introduction, the function of which is to prepare the listener for the main theme. This is achieved through the use of a dominant pedal and the alternation of dominant seventh chords and six-four cadences. The refrain is constructed as an extended phrase. The melody is smooth and undulating; it begins with a stepwise ascending movement from the mediant to the submediant, followed by a descending movement. Passing chromaticism, a brief modulation to F minor and ascending leaps of a fifth lend it a particular elegance. The piano part mainly performs a harmonic accompanying role.



Example 1. Frédéric Chopin (arranged by Pauline Viardot). 1988. ‘Seize ans’, bars 8–17. New York: International Music Company.

The first episode is relatively brief and consists of eleven bars. It does not introduce a marked contrast; rather, it continues to explore the main musical idea, developing the core melodic material of the refrain. The episode is written in the key of F minor. A notable feature is the change in the rhythmic pattern of the accompaniment: in the first four bars, the strong beat loses its usual accent due to the use of a rest, followed by a tied note. In the concluding section of this period, the composer introduces a virtuosic passage that serves as a link between the episode and the second statement of the refrain. The second episode presents a clear contrast to both the refrain and the first episode. It is constructed in three-part form. In the opening section, the piano part comes to the fore, taking on a more prominent role. This section is written in D-flat major and employs a chordal texture. It is in this passage that the characteristic features of the mazurka genre are most clearly expressed, in particular the subdivision of the strong beat using dotted rhythms and the placement of accents on the weak beats.

In the second section, a marked emotional contrast emerges between them. The vocal part regains the leading role, accompanied by a shift to a minor key (B flat minor). The vocal melody takes on a declamatory character thanks to the repetition of a single note and the use of leaps of a fourth and a fifth. The recapitulation of the second episode is correspondingly shortened. The third presentation of the refrain occurs with only minor melodic changes, which do not significantly alter the overall perception of the mazurka's expressive character.



Example 2. Frédéric Chopin (arr. Pauline Viardot). 1888. 'Seize ans', bars 57–67. New York: International Music Company

Viardot makes no fundamental changes to Chopin's music (Mazurka, Op. 50 No. 2). The formal structure, tonal basis and harmonic plan are preserved. The melody, originally placed by Chopin in the upper voice, was transferred by Viardot to the vocal part. This transfer requires certain adjustments in articulation and ornamentation (for example, Chopin uses mordents on the strong beats, whereas Viardot replaces them with acciaccaturas), as well as subtle rhythmic changes whilst maintaining the overall metrical structure (such as the replacement of dotted rhythms with straight eighth notes). These changes are dictated by the demands of the poetic text, including the characteristics of syllabic stress and the capabilities of the human voice. More notable changes include the addition of a virtuosic passage at the junction of the sections and a fully written-out repetition of the second episode in Viardot's version, whereas Chopin marks this passage with a repeat sign in his version. Furthermore, in this section, Viardot composes the vocal line herself, drawing on characteristic melodic turns associated with Chopin's style. This intervention appears necessary due to the relative absence of a clearly defined melodic line in the corresponding passage of the original mazurka. The texture of the accompaniment has also been slightly adjusted, which preserves the overall sonority whilst clearly highlighting the main melodic line.

Aime moi' (Love Me): Chopin, Mazurka No. 23 (Op. 33 No. 2)

The source for this arrangement is Chopin's Mazurka, Op. 33, No. 2. The piece is characterised by distinct folk-dance motifs. The original key is D major. The folk element is reflected in the overall tonal structure, based on authentic cadential movement, as well as in the melodic contour, reminiscent of the movements of Polish folk dances; in particular, the *kuyavak* in the outer sections and the *mazurka* in the central section. Further references to folk traditions can be observed in the use of the Lydian mode.

Viardot treats Chopin's musical material with a noticeable degree of freedom. Firstly, she moves the final section of Chopin's original work to the beginning, thereby transforming it into an introduction to the plot. Secondly, she transposes the work into A major, which is likely due to vocal considerations. Thirdly, drawing on the recurring melodic and harmonic motifs of the original, Viardot creates a dialogic texture between the vocal part and the accompaniment. Furthermore, given the structure and length of the poetic text, certain sections of the original have been abridged, and the resulting formal structure can be described as a complex ternary form. Viardot's mazurka opens with an extended introduction of nineteen bars, in which the main thematic material is placed in the inner voice. The theme has a wave-like character and is sustained by a tonic pedal, harmonised with elements of a melodic minor colouring alongside the Lydian mode, which reinforces the work's associations with folk idiom.



Example 3. Frédéric Chopin (arr. Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'Aime-moi', bars 41–50. New York: International Music Company

The main melody of the vocal part in the first movement begins with an ascending movement from the dominant to the tonic, followed by a return to the dominant. This undulating progression forms the basis for the subsequent thematic development. Authentic cadential patterns predominate in the harmonic language. In the middle section, the melodic line shifts to the instrumental part, whilst the vocal line takes on an accompanying role. Furthermore, a modulatory transition to E major is introduced, serving as a contrasting tonal juxtaposition.



Example 4. Frédéric Chopin (arr. Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'Aime-moi', bars 27–36. New York: International Music Company

Rhythmically, the theme is relatively even, articulated mainly in eighth notes with triplets on the downbeat, which is one of the characteristic features of the mazurka. The second section of the mazurka (*più lento*) consists of two eight-bar

blocks. Here, the main thematic material presented in the first section is developed. A more distant key is used, F major, with a modulation in the first subsection to C minor, and in the second to A-flat major. In this section, dotted rhythms appear, which heighten the expressiveness. The absence of a pedal tone creates a sense of forward movement in the musical discourse, helping to avoid the impression of harmonic stagnation. In her arrangement, Viardot alters the rhythmic configuration of the upper voice in Chopin's mazurka, thereby creating a renewed melodic character.



Example 5, Frédéric Chopin (arr. Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'Aime-moi', bars 18–22. New York: International Music Company

Viardot, 'Plainte d'amour' ('Lament of Love'): Chopin, Mazurka No. 1 (Op. 6 No. 1)

The overall character of the music leans towards the dramatic, a quality reinforced by the main key of F minor. This represents a significant departure from Frédéric Chopin's original version in F-sharp minor. It can be assumed that Pauline Viardot adopted this transposition for two main reasons: firstly, to adapt the work to a more suitable vocal range; secondly, to avoid the sharper, more piercing sound associated with the key of sharps, replacing it with the comparatively warmer, yet more dramatic colour of the key of flats. The lamenting character of the piece is further emphasised by its formal structure, a rondo with two episodes, which can be interpreted as a symbolic repetition of the lament, presented from various expressive perspectives.

The piece begins with a brief introduction based on a motif taken from the refrain. It is noteworthy that in Chopin's original mazurka (Op. 6 No. 1) there is no introduction. To capture the listeners' attention and prepare them for the musical narrative, Viardot does not introduce entirely new material, but uses an existing fragment from the main thematic section. The refrain is structured as a phrase with repetition. The thematic material develops sequentially. Each part of the melody is built on a motif that outlines the tonic via neighbouring notes, followed by a descending leap from the submediant to the dominant. The motif concludes with an ascending movement outlining the tonic harmony. The harmonic structure is notably simple and consists mainly of a traditional authentic cadence (dominant tonic).

The main theme continues to develop through a descending scale (major second). The composer employs numerous suspensions, structuring this passage around an elliptical harmonic progression. The refrain concludes with a repetition of the opening theme. The first section is brief and consists of eight bars. The balance between the parts shifts: the piano part comes to the fore with pronounced accents. The section is built around a recurring bass motif moving from C to G, which lends the musical texture a sense of stability. The second section is longer. The tonal centre shifts to D-flat minor. There is a greater degree of parity between the piano and vocal parts: the instrumental part not only provides harmonic support for the voice, but also takes on a leading role, particularly during the sustained F in the vocal line. Before the final return of the refrain, the composer introduces a solo passage reminiscent of instrumental cadences. Its thematic material derives from the main element of the refrain, an ascending secondary motion, which subsequently develops into a descending sequence. Compared with Chopin's original mazurka, it becomes evident that Viardot rearranges the vocal part, transposing it to a lower register, borrowing the upper voice from the piano texture and omitting certain ornaments (such as acciaccaturas). At the same time, she retains the basic harmonic structure, rhythmic profile, direction of movement and overall texture with minimal changes. The mazurka's concluding refrain is altered only slightly, mainly by transposing the melody an octave lower. It should be noted that, whilst retaining the basic rhythmic structure, Viardot makes certain changes, including the replacement of dotted rhythms with straight eighth notes, as well as the insertion or omission of rests. These adjustments serve to bring the musical accompaniment more

closely into line with the poetic text. Alongside the dotted rhythm, one of the defining rhythmic features of this mazurka is the triplet on the strong beat. The alternation of these rhythmic figures helps to preserve the characteristic mood and expressiveness of the original mazurka.



Example 6. Frédéric Chopin (arr. Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'Plainte d'amour', bars 1–8. New York: International Music Company



Example 7. Frédéric Chopin (arranged by Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'Plainte d'amour', bars 9–12. New York: International Music Company



Example 7. Frédéric Chopin (arranged by Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'Plainte d'amour', bars 21–25. New York: International Music Company

Viardot, 'La Coquette': Chopin, Mazurka No. 5 (Op. 7 No. 1)

The mazurka is distinguished by its vividly dance-like character, evoking the atmosphere of a fashionable ballroom with a strong sense of dynamism and momentum. Pauline Viardot preserves the essential character of the theme: the melodic line is transferred to the vocal part, whilst the instrumental accompaniment performs a predominantly harmonic supporting function. Viardot's mazurka is written in the key of F major and opens with a brief introduction based on the dominant. In contrast, Chopin's original mazurka (Op. 7 No. 1) has no introductory section, and the piece is written in a different key: B flat major. In keeping with the demands of the poetic text, Viardot sometimes avoids using trills at the climaxes of musical phrases, replacing them with triplet figurations. The formal structure can be characterised as a rondo with two episodes. This structure generally corresponds to that of the original mazurka, except for the written-out repetitions in Viardot's version (whereas Chopin indicates repetitions using musical notation). The refrain theme is

presented in the form of a period. The melodic line consists of an ascending stepwise motion spanning an eleventh interval from the dominant to the supertonic. The strong beat of each bar is articulated through a dotted rhythmic pattern, which corresponds to the stylistic conventions of the mazurka.

Subsequent melodic features include descending leaps across wide intervals (a fifth, a seventh and a diminished fifth), followed by an ascending movement outlining the notes of a dominant ninth chord



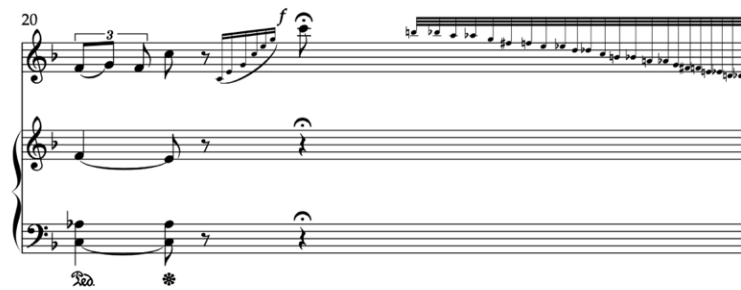
Example 9. Frédéric Chopin (arr. Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'La Coquette', bars 1–9. New York: International Music Company



Example 8. Frédéric Chopin (arranged by Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'La Coquette', bars 27–32. New York: International Music Company



Example 11. Frédéric Chopin (arranged by Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'La Coquette', bars 10–12



Example 9. Frédéric Chopin (arranged by Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'La Coquette', B 59. New York: International Music Company



Example 13. Frédéric Chopin (arr. Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'La Coquette', bars 36–42. New York: International Music Company

The harmonic structure of the theme opens with a dominant chord and is built on relatively simple progressions, in which tonic-dominant relationships predominate. The composer also incorporates a raised fourth into the melodic line, introducing a modal deviation. The second statement of the refrain is abbreviated, forming a simple phrase. The first episode develops the main thematic material of the mazurka, using similar melodic and harmonic patterns, including ascending stepwise motion and figuration of neighbouring notes. This section is written in the key of C major and is also structured as a phrase. A distinctive feature of this passage is the use of a tonic pedal, which contributes to its harmonic stability. The second episode opens with a three-bar introduction based on a fifth in the piano part in D-flat major. This structure is not found in Chopin's original mazurka. By taking this liberty, Viardot creates a smooth transition from one section to the next. The sound of the perfect fifth in the altered subdominant chord in the accompaniment can be compared to the onomatopoeia of folk orchestral instruments (such as the bagpipes or the barrel organ). The direction of the main melody changes; it follows a descending line from C to F, using an augmented second (raising the VI degree). The transition to the final statement of the refrain is achieved through a descending chromatic scale spanning two octaves and beginning on the note C in the third octave. This passage can be regarded as the climax of the piece, emphasised both dynamically (by the marking *f*) and metrically (by the fermata). It also represents the high point of the melodic line of the mazurka as a whole.

This passage is not present in Frédéric Chopin's original version. Pauline Viardot added it to showcase the performer's virtuosity and, at the same time, to heighten the climax of the piece.

L'aiselet" ("The Little Bird"): Chopin, Mazurka No. 49 (Op. 68 No. 2)

Frédéric Chopin's Mazurka, Op. 68 No. 2, arranged by Pauline Viardot, has been given the unofficial title 'Soloveyko' and displays a number of folk characteristics, including a bass ostinato, a pedalised tonal centre in the middle section, and a modified subdominant. The narrative embedded in the song, described as a form of 'historical embroidery'

in 'Gazeta Wielkiego Księstwa Poznańskiego' (1858: 2), presents a contrast between the beauty of nature and the emotional turmoil of love, recalling the tradition of troubadour albas. The composer employs an elegiac, expressive style.

Viardot preserves both the colour and character of the original by selecting a text associated with a bird, thereby enhancing the work's poetic imagery. The piece bears a striking resemblance to Chopin's song 'Życzenie' ('A Maiden's Wish'), his most famous vocal work. Written in 1829 to a text by Stefan Witwiecki, the song explores the impossibility of a union with a beloved, with the heroine comparing herself to a little bird and to phenomena of nature. In Chopin's work, the heroine allegorically compares herself to natural phenomena, but her wish will not come true – she is deprived of any hope of happiness with her beloved. This poetic and expressive foundation can be seen as a potential source of inspiration for Viardot's miniature. In the vocal arrangement, the upper voice of the original mazurka is almost entirely transferred to the vocal part with only minor rhythmic changes (in a few bars, Viardot replaces dotted rhythms with straight eighth notes). The tonal plan and the general three-part structure (complex ternary form) are preserved. However, Viardot approached the formal structure of the original with a degree of interpretative flexibility.

The mazurka is written in A minor (using the melodic form of the minor scale in the harmonic language) and begins with a brief two-bar harmonic introduction, absent from the original mazurka. Its inclusion reflects the requirements of the vocal miniature genre, which calls for a preparatory gesture before the main theme is introduced. The first movement (*Lento*) is written in the form of a binary recapitulation. The melody retains an instrumental character, based on arpeggios of the tonic and demonstrating a general ascending trajectory. A particular expressive refinement is achieved through the use of the augmented second D–D-sharp (the mediant to the raised subdominant), as well as ascending melodic minor tetrachords in cadential contexts and ornamental figures such as trills. A characteristic feature of the mazurka is its rhythmic pattern, characterised by a dotted figure on the strong beat, followed by steady quarter notes on the second and third beats. A notable feature of the accompaniment is the tonic pedal, which creates a sense of harmonic stasis. This effect is further enhanced by the predominance of tonic harmony throughout the passage.



Example 14. Frédéric Chopin (arr. Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'L'aiselet', bars 1–10. New York: International Music Company



Example 10. Frédéric Chopin (arr. Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'L'aiselet', bars 21–24. New York: International Music Company

The second section of the first movement is characterised by a modulatory transition to the relative major key, C major, in the opening phrase. At the same time, the harmonic techniques established in the previous section are retained. Furthermore, the main melody is doubled in the piano part. The second phrase reproduces the corresponding passage from the first section. A particular refinement of the thematic material is achieved through the use of an altered subdominant harmony (II7 with raised first and third degrees). As noted above, Viardot approaches the form and proportions of the original composition with considerable freedom. In the first movement, she shortens the musical material of the opening section: whilst Chopin repeats the initial eight-bar phrase, in Viardot's version this repetition is omitted. Furthermore, the concluding phrase of the first movement has been shortened by removing the repetitive material present in the original.

The second movement (*Poco più mosso*) is written in a parallel major key: A major. The theme consists of two elements: a two-bar idea for the piano, followed by a response from the vocal part, whilst the main melody is simultaneously duplicated in the accompaniment. The melodic structure is based on figurations of adjacent notes around the mediant and dominant, incorporating raised, non-diatonic notes. Particular attention should be paid to the use of the tonic pedal in the bass, which provides harmonic support for this section.

This interplay between the parts creates a sense of dialogue. However, such a dialogic interplay is absent from Frédéric Chopin's original, where the main theme is presented exclusively in the piano part. It is also noteworthy that Viardot omits both the repeat sign and any written repetition of the theme present in Chopin's version. The third section functions as a recapitulation, returning to the material of the first section. The inclusion of a virtuosic, performer-oriented cadenza (bars 58–62) deserves particular attention; this is followed by a coda that repeats the opening section of the first movement. There is no equivalent to this passage in Chopin's original mazurka. Thus, Viardot expands the conclusion by adding a coda based on a repetition of the main theme, a device absent from the original version. It may be surmised that such freedom arises as a compensatory reaction to the abridgements applied to the first movement of the work.

The Breakup': Chopin, Mazurka No. 14 (Op. 24, No. 1), duet

This mazurka was conceived as a duet, and this transformation was made possible by incorporating the dialogic motifs already present in the original music (Chopin, Mazurka, Op. 24 No. 1). Due to the change in instrumentation from solo to duet, Viardot had to compose an additional vocal part, which is not found in the outer movements of Chopin's original work. In doing so, she draws on the main thematic material and intonational patterns of the principal melodic line, whilst employing the traditional technique of parallel consonances. In the central section, Chopin himself writes the main theme in parallel consonances, which allows Viardot to reinterpret the mazurka as a duet and apply a stylistically coherent approach to the construction of the second voice. The work consists of two main parts, each comprising two sections, with the final section serving as both a thematic and tonal recapitulation. Viardot retained the main key of G minor. A brief piano introduction, based on an authentic cadence, precedes the entry of the voices; this introductory passage is absent from Chopin's original mazurka. The entries of the voices are imitative: the lower voice enters three bars after the upper voice with the same melodic material. In using this technique, Viardot draws on Chopin's original, in which the two-part texture appears in the right hand in bar 4. Nevertheless, the subsequent development of each vocal line proceeds independently. One can observe certain common intonational features: the melodic line begins with a descending movement outlining a dominant triad, followed by its inverted counterpart. This is followed by a stepwise motion, ascending in the upper voice and descending in the lower. From a harmonic perspective, altered subdominants are frequently used in this section, although authentic cadential patterns predominate, lending the music a sense of tension. The rhythmic energy is heightened by the extensive use of triplets, which serve to showcase vocal virtuosity. The second section of the first movement presents a clear contrast to the introduction. The piano plays a more active role in the musical texture, and the development of the material takes place through imitative dialogues between the vocal and instrumental parts.

Such echo-like parallels are already present in the original musical text of Frédéric Chopin's mazurka and are partly retained by Viardot in her arrangement.



Example 11. Frédéric Chopin (arr. Pauline Viardot). 1988. 'Farewell', bars 17–22. New York: International Music Company

In the second section, the overall expressive character of the music is transformed. The tonal centre shifts to E flat major, and rhythmically Viardot abandons the triplet figuration in favour of dotted rhythms. The vocal parts are mainly in parallel intervals (thirds and sixths), creating an effect of unity and lightness. The second section of this part recalls the thematic material of the opening section, returning the listener to a more melancholic and restless mood. It should be noted that the final section of Viardot's mazurka differs from the original in both form and thematic content. Her version is more extensive and includes additional passages in the vocal part, borrowed from the characteristic intonations and harmonic patterns of the main theme.

Viardot's legacy: popular art or music for the select few?

Viardot's arrangements proved so successful that, following her opera performances, she was frequently asked to perform them, and gradually they became, alongside Russian romances, part of her repertoire. On 21 February 1842, Viardot performed at a Chopin concert in the Salle Pleyel; the critics were delighted, and the concert proved a success both artistically and financially; Sand described Viardot's performance as 'magnificent' (Tomaszewski 1998: 95). The next 'musical evening' took place in Noan on 9 July 1846, featuring both Viardot and Sand. Having performed in Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh (Belza 1968: 337), Chopin gave two matinee concerts in London; at the second of these, in Lord Falmouth's drawing room, Viardot took part, performing his mazurkas in an arrangement for voice and piano. This is attested to by Chopin's letter to Marie de Rosier in Paris dated 1 June 1848: 'I saw the charming Madame Viardot; she paid me a compliment by performing my *mazurkas* at her concert in the theatre, and I had not asked her to do so' (Chopin 1980: 215). On 13 May 1848, Chopin wrote to his friend Albert Gzimal in a restrained tone: 'Pauline Viardot had less success than Jenny Lind.' Pauline Viardot performed several of her own arrangements at a musical and dramatic matinee in aid of the poor, organised by Madame Scrib on 3 May 1849⁷.

Chopin was so surprised by the attention Viardot's arrangements attracted that he took offence when his name was not mentioned in the programme for one of her subsequent performances. "The repertoire Viardot chose for more intimate performances differed from what she sang on stage. At this private gathering, she performed simpler music, mainly folk melodies and popular tunes' (Poriss 2015: 197). From the correspondence of two Russian society ladies, we learn that in late March 1853, one of them 'was at Viardot's concert [...] and she sings well; the ladies demanded 'The Nightingale'⁸ and Chopin's mazurka.

Viardot created a unique arrangement of these enchanting and memorable mazurkas for her coloratura voice, imbuing them with meaning through her own lyrics and causing a sensation. Viardot remained faithful to Chopin's original melodies, inserting ornamentation and improvising cadences in certain sections as required. Perhaps she had her own stunning and outstanding vocal abilities in mind. Sergei Aksakov wrote in a letter to Maria Kartashevskaya on 21 April 1845: 'I do not know what sort of voice she has. In this voice, full of feeling, which I cannot listen to without being moved to the depths of my soul, there is neither a pure soprano nor a contralto...'. 'Polina lives for the art of singing

⁷ A copy of this programme is kept in the folder of concert programmes in the Saint-Saëns archive at the Old Castle Museum in Dieppe.

⁸ The romance 'The Nightingale' is a romance by the composer Alexander Alyabyev to lyrics by the poet Anton Delvig. This romance became so popular that many considered it a folk song.

as a vocation and regards singing, so to speak, as an act of love' (Ozward 2002: 119). Mass culture is characterised by the standardisation of cultural products, unification, and an orientation towards the average level and average taste. Popular culture is differentiated according to its consumer and depends on personal choice and taste. It is individualised, in contrast to mass culture. The line between 'high' and 'low' art, between 'good' and 'bad' taste, as we can see, had already become extremely blurred by the mid-19th century.

Viardot used a musical artefact that had already proven its effectiveness with the public. For Chopin, Viardot's vocalisation of mazurkas became kitsch⁹, that is, their adaptation to suit mass taste. The phenomenon of kitsch's mass appeal is intriguing: why is kitsch so popular? A certain critic, P. Zaikin, unfairly 'lashed out' at Viardot in the *Moscow Gazette* of 7 April 1853. He reproached her for her 'poor choice of works' for the concert on 3 April, as she had included in the second part of the programme, consisting of Russian 'songs', what the critic considered to be 'whatever came to hand'. He reproaches the public for their indulgence, as a result of which 'artists get away with anything'. Using expressive devices accessible to the general listener, Viardot explored the musical possibilities of kitsch. Viardot understood perfectly the characteristics of her audience in St Petersburg, London and Paris and sought to speak to them in a musical language they could understand. The journalist expressed his indignation: 'Of course, not all artists are like that: many of them would not even think of trivialising art; they strive to satisfy the demands of an educated public and, through their concerts, give true pleasure to the most discerning music lovers.' In 1869, Turgenev wrote an article entitled 'The First Performance of Madame Viardot's Opera in Weimar', in which he reflected on his beloved's career as a composer: 'We all knew that, apart from other difficulties, she had to contend with prejudices that did not allow one and the same person to consistently achieve outstanding results in two different spheres' (Turgenev 1981: 301).

In creating her chamber vocal cycle, Viardot drew on musical techniques from Chopin's mazurkas. The popularity and commercial appeal of kitsch tempted the singer, whilst at the same time forcing her to overcome her inevitable dependence on the mass tastes of the public. In Viardot's work, despite all the apparent superficiality and pandering to popular taste, her heroine is an ordinary young woman seeking happiness in love and suffering failure. Overcoming the inertia of consumerist perception, Viardot's vocal mazurkas restore to the public a renewed sense of simple feelings, speaking of pain, the torments of love and the hope for emotional healing. Their theme is the difficult lot of women and the piercing desire for love. It is precisely the emotional sphere that serves as the primary aim of kitsch art. Kitsch is a beautiful shell, created in accordance with the models of high culture and following their template, but filled with shallow content.

Viardot also included elements borrowed from various mazurkas, perhaps to achieve a closer correspondence between the expressive content of the text and Chopin's musical language. Despite these interventions, the resulting textures remain noticeably transparent. Although some harmonic details are simplified, they consistently retain the essential characteristics of the Polish mazurka, performed with refinement and virtuosity. Chopin's mazurkas are defined by characteristic rhythmic patterns associated with dance. In contrast, Viardot's bel canto-style arrangement, particularly through the use of coloratura, does not, by its very nature, convey a dance-like character. Nevertheless, as an arranger, Viardot both preserves and enhances the virtuosic element of the vocal line, whilst retaining Chopin's stylistic individuality, including the national intonations and artistic integrity of the mazurka genre. Thus, Viardot expands the formal structure of the original mazurka by introducing a coda-like extension. These liberties do not detract from the music's overall elegiac character. Viardot preserves the lively dance impulse in the central section without altering the expressive essence of the original. If we understand kitsch as an act of communication between Chopin's authentic mazurkas, highly valued by elite culture, and the consumer, a representative of mass culture, it becomes clear that Viardot constructs this communication in her own way. Through the use of kitsch tropes: banal sentimentality (a primitive tale of a woman's unhappy love); iconic excess (a melody that is as comprehensible and recognisable as possible); stereotyping (an orientation towards the stereotypical); and predictability; she ensures its unerring impact on the mass consumer. Of

⁹ According to Călinescu (1987), it was in Munich between 1860 and 1880 that 'kitsch' entered the jargon of painters and art dealers as a synonym for "cheap artistic stuff" (p. 234).

course, kitsch would not be possible without access to a mature cultural tradition, whose discoveries and achievements it exploits for its own ends. In this way, Viardot bridges the gap between elite and mass culture, continuing to develop the traditions of classical music for the people.

Conclusion

Chopin's vocal mazurkas enjoyed considerable popularity among his contemporaries, becoming a hallmark of numerous 'entertainment' concerts and salon musical evenings. The analysis conducted allows us to assert that the Parisian cultural sphere of the 1830s, understood as a synergistic environment, served as a necessary condition for the formation of Chopin's transcultural identity. Salon culture shaped the aesthetic of 'intimate universalism' and served as a laboratory for refining genres. Louis Pome's texts are rooted in the tradition of the French romance. In his songs set to Polish poetry, Frédéric Chopin brings the vocal component to the fore as an extension of the poetic word, imbuing his works with a marked philosophical depth. In contrast, Viardot set comparatively modest texts to an operatic vocal structure, creating a stylistic tension that can be perceived as simplified and in line with the expectations of a contemporary audience. Thus, the two contemporary musicians were united not only by the repertoire and compositional approaches discussed here. 'Their work reflects a shared aspiration towards musical mastery, characterised by refinement and meticulous attention to detail' (Harley 2000: 38). It seems that the public was particularly captivated by the narrative connection between the six mazurkas. The close semantic interaction between text and music suggests that Viardot's vocal mazurkas were conceived with a broad audience in mind, reflecting and interacting with the widespread models of the salon repertoire of the first third of the 19th century. Her pieces appealed to the audience's emotions, as kitsch constitutes one of the features of the cultural-linguistic code. Carefully preserving fidelity to Chopin's traditions in the mazurka genre, Viardot ensures their unerring impact on the mass consumer; every new nuance in Viardot's hands acquires a kitsch creativity.

Recommendations

The phenomenon of Chopin's mazurkas represents a canonical example of transculturalism in musical Romanticism, where the synthesis of Polish folk traditions, Italian bel canto, the German contrapuntal tradition and French clarity of form gave rise to a unique hybrid idiom. This synthesis has led to the enduring complexity of interpreting his legacy. The practical significance of this work lies in its potential for further research into the genesis of vocal-chamber miniatures and the trend towards the interpenetration of music and text (Liszt), as well as the symbiosis of vocal and instrumental miniatures (Schubert, Mendelssohn). By a remarkable coincidence, Viardot's Spanish-style songs, particularly *Habanera*, were inspired by her profound knowledge of Chopin's mazurkas. The study of the mutual intersections between the two musicians warrants further research. The unjustly forgotten connection between three geniuses, Chopin, George Sand and Pauline Viardot, still awaits detailed research.

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