

WOJCIECH BOŃKOWSKI

**19TH-CENTURY EDITIONS OF THE WORKS  
OF CHOPIN AS AN ASPECT  
OF THE HISTORY OF RECEPTION**

MUSICOLOGICA WRATISLAVIENSIA 4, ACTA  
UNIVERSITATIS WRATISLAVIENSIS NO. 3185,  
WROCLAW 2009, P. 371

2010 was Chopin Year. That was how the entire world celebrated the bicentennial of Fryderyk Chopin's death. It led not only to a great number of new recordings and sheet music editions, but also books. Those which have enriched the Polish publishing market deserve special notice. Without the slightest doubt, the work written by Wojciech Bońkowski is one of them. The author – musicologist, Italianist, translator of contemporary Italian prose as well as 19th and 20th-century Italian poetry (Tabucchi, Saba, Pasolini etc.) – has addressed a subject that had been a “blank spot” thus far, not only with regards to Chopin studies, but also to musicology studies as such. The editions of Chopin's works and their history have not been discussed yet in any synthesising work within the abundant bibliography regarding our musical *prophet*.

Considering new Polish publications only, we can note at present a great many editorial initiatives for publishing the *Opera Omnia* of the most significant composers for the Polish cultural heritage as well as editions of their selected works from the past ages, preserved in the Polish national archives as music manuscripts. One example is the initiative of the Fryderyk Chopin Institute with the purpose of releasing all available music manuscripts of the composer in facsimile, with commentaries by Chopin scholars in six languages: Polish, English, French, German, Spanish and Japanese. *Works by Chopin. The Facsimile Edition* by Zofia Chechlińska is the first of its kind for international academic publishing projects on such a grand scale. Another, rather local example, is the “Early Music from Jasna Góra” project primarily aiming to publish scores from the manuscripts of Polish composers preserved in the Archives of the Jasna Góra Monastery of the Pauline Fathers in Częstochowa, with a source commentary in Polish and in English. Both initiatives are indisputably praiseworthy and much needed, however, it is Bońkowski's book which makes us realise to what extent we lack a historical perspective, seemingly essential for us to learn the ropes of music editing. *19th-Century Editions of the Works of Chopin as an Aspect of the History of Reception* superbly organises and complements the reader's knowledge in this respect. The fact that its scope is limited to Chopin's editions does not undermine its value by any means. One of its advantages is a clear and precise methodological and research technique that may be projected onto and used in other fields of music history. Bońkowski is undoubtedly a pioneer of such works in Polish musicology. And it is a good start!

We ought to mention that, as part of the introduction, the author refers to a book which allows him to limit his job to the editions only and to exclude transcriptions, namely *19th-century transcriptions of the Works of Chopin: historical, theoretical and aesthetic aspects* by Barbara Literska (Musica Iagellonica, Kraków 2004). Literska explores the issues related to the 19th-century transcriptions of the works of Chopin in a similar way.

The fundamental objective of Bońkowski's book – as we can read in the *Introduction* – is a holistic approach to the edition history of Chopin's works released from the composer's death until the end of the 19th century, from a historical, analytical, social and aesthetic perspective. The author makes us realise that the "one and only" normative perspective which has dominated hitherto is unjustified. If our vision of the past and of the research topic chosen is to be representative and complete, all possible aspects have to be considered.

The scope of the issues taken into account, as one can see solely from the table of contents, is truly impressive. This appreciation does not change once the book is read, as its contents are as remarkable. The work is composed of five chapters, the essential part being formed by chapters III–V, since the first two are an introduction. In chapter I, of primary importance for the rest of the work, the author presents the current state of research (pp.15–34). Bońkowski discusses works on the theory and history of music editing, referring in the very first paragraph to the fundamental dissertation by James Grier, *The Critical Editing of Music. History, Method, and Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 1996). The origin of music editing may be located in the middle of the 18th century (with the edition of Händel's works). Music editing as a kind of scientific editorship did not fully develop until the mid-19th century and is associated with the *Bach-Gesellschaft* founded in 1850. A great number of editions were released at that time in order to form a canon of the concert repertoire.

Those initiatives perfectly reflect the specificity of the time the author focuses on. The works of the most prominent German composers as well as those by Chopin answered the demand of the concert "market" of that time. That was only little over 150 years ago, thus music editing may be considered as a relatively young scientific sub-discipline.

Subsequently, Bońkowski reviews in depth those works on music reception history in the 19th century where issues related to music editing were present to a smaller or greater extent. The respective literature encompasses a large number of publications and reveals the variety of issues considered, such as social and historical conditions, cultural life (e.g. concert culture), or philological analyses focusing on amendments to the musical texts and aspects of interpretation. Once the broader context is discussed, the author proceeds directly to the main topic of his work, i.e. the reception and editions of Chopin's works.

The state of research has provided the author with a basis for indicating the sources and classifying the editions of Chopin's works (chapter II, pp. 35-72). The corpus of selected sources is very large, even though it is limited to the second half of the 19th and early 20th century. It includes more than 140 19th-century and around 30 of the most significant 20th-century editions of Chopin's works, starting from complete editions, through editions of selected works (e.g. including specific genres), to single work editions. Multiple reprints of a single edition in many copies have also greatly increased the source corpus examined. The material has been collected by the author through numerous inquiries in Polish libraries (The National Library of Poland, the Fryderyk Chopin Society or the Library of the Warsaw Music Society) as well as abroad (Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, British Library, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek and others). Out of this vast collection, the author has selected about 40 editions as the most representative from an editorial and historical point of view.

The selection of editions from this period is not accidental, since this was a time when music editing developed both as a scientific sub-discipline and as a publishing market. An-

other major feature of the editions chosen is that they were published after Chopin's death (1849), and therefore the composer did not influence their final form. This is why they represent a perfect material for revealing the various processes of music reception, publishers' attitudes towards Chopin's manuscripts, and the understanding of the eminent composer's works upon his death. As the author tells us, they became the text of a culture whose contents he has tried to discover and interpret in this book.

19th-century music editions lack clear and precisely defined methodological grounds, however the publishing procedures and techniques, introductions, notes, comments, footnotes, title cards or other non-editorial accounts (reviews, letters or memoirs) provide us with enough information to create a general classification from the perspective of contemporary musical research. This is the task undertaken by the author, based on the 40 editions mentioned above (see p. 36). Chronologically, they start with the first editions of complete works released as of 1859 in France, and end with the second version of the Alfred Cortot edition published in 1947. The corpus of the editions selected for analysis covers all typological categories indicated by the author as well as all relevant cultures (German, French, English and Polish), and is representative of the whole period, essential for the editing of Chopin.

In view of the diversity of the editions examined, the author has classified them and distinguished four basic criteria as well as their types, also taking into consideration previously published reference books:

The pragmatic criterion – the purpose of the edition:

- a) source editions (urtexts) – aiming to establish the correct reading of the text conforming to the composer's intention as confirmed by the sources. Here Bońkowski classifies and discusses among others the editions by Karol Mikuli of 1879 and by Jan Kleczyński of 1882. The author points to a very important problem with these editions: as they lack clearly defined rules of musical notation editing, it is hard to show the sources of the variants or other text details. The editorial work was of a prominently critical character with some source elements, which makes us believe that urtexts as such did not generally exist in the 19th century;
- b) critical editions – the main purpose of such editions, just as in the case of urtexts, is to recreate the definitive text of the work, but this time based on aesthetic and sometimes also pragmatic grounds, with questions strictly related to sources being of minor importance. Such editions do not respect the basic rules of scientific music editing: the sources are selected according to subjective criteria related to style or aesthetics, and variants from many different sources are frequently compiled (with an emphasis on the performance value). The text is thus established following the editor's own personal editing criteria, where it should lead to a coherent composition and have a source basis. The author classifies for example *Erste kritische durchgesehene Gesamtausgabe* by Breitkopf & Härtel of 1879 as an edition of this kind;
- c) practical (didactic) editions – editions primarily aiming to form a basis for pianists to learn and perform the work. Here the author indicated the so-called *instructive Ausgaben*, created at that time by prominent teachers and pianists. Usually later versions – rather than the original ones – provided their basis, therefore they were not necessarily source-confirmed and could include possible interventions of the editor at his own discretion. The coherence of the text meant coherence of the proposals for performance (fingerings added, supplementary performance instructions, simplified text versions etc. – as for example in the *Études* edition by Theodor Kullak of 1880);

- d) interpretative editions (performance-related)  
 – a special kind of edition with an almost poetic descriptive interpretation, strongly emphasising the expressive aspect. The typical feature of such editions is that, contrarily to the practical ones, they are created following a performance in order to preserve its specificity. The major example quoted by the author is the edition of Chopin's *Ballads* by the famous pianist Alfred Cortot (Paris, 1929);
- e) analytical editions – parallel to performance editions, but with a different purpose: the musical notation and auxiliary text include results of an analysis of the musical composition based on which the textual variant has been established. According to Bońkowski, the most extraordinary analytical edition is the so-called *Phrasierungsausgabe* (a collection of 14 of Chopin's works) edited by Hugo Riemann (1886-1891). The scale of the editor's tampering is unprecedented (e.g. the displacement of the bar line by a full rhythmic value or the introduction of additional bar lines, meaningful differentiation of the ties, phrasing contrary to the original articulation, etc.). Any faithfulness towards the composer's sources is completely out of the question, the notation being entirely subjected to the musical analysis.

The source criterion – the source basis of the edition:

- a) editions based on original publications, forming a unique type of Chopin edition. These are based on first printings, and copy parts of the text with corrections only if these are related to printing or copyist errors. Such texts were authenticated by the composer himself, with no variants introduced. Another type within this category is based on several first printings. Both were non-existent in the 19th century, but gained special importance in the 20th. The author provides as examples the newest urtexts by Henle-Verlag and the National Edition of Chopin's Works, although they do not necessarily comply with all the criteria required;
- b) editions based on the documented intentions of the composer – resulting from the first printings and the composer's intentions. These are above all manuscripts, final drafts for publication, composer's copies, sketches or copies of Chopin's students with written remarks by the composer. It might also be a compilation of the above sources. The author points to the Édouard Ganche edition (Oxford University Press, 1932) as the most accurate example in this category;
- c) editions based on sources not controlled by the composer – this category is the broadest and easiest one to define, including all interpretative, didactic or practical editions with supplements added by the editors or others, not necessarily comprising the composer's intentions.

Biographical criterion (the person of the editor) – this category includes editions prepared by virtuoso pianists or piano pedagogues as well as conductors, musicologists or experts in music theory. In fact, the professional experience of the editors tended to influence their editing decisions. This criterion may sometimes turn out to be decisive where the pragmatic one seems doubtful.

Philological criterion (scope and extent of the editor's own interventions) – regarding the interventions in particular as indicators of the original musical work. The scope of such modifications has been carefully discussed by the author, therefore the details of this analysis will not be described here.

The author makes the reservation that the above criteria do not form "pure types." However, presenting their detailed summary seems useful, as it greatly helps us to understand the subsequent chapters of the book (III-V), its core part.

In chapter III, entitled "Editions of Chopin's Works – Historical Perspective" (pp. 73-102), Bońkowski shows the corpus of 19th-century editions against the backdrop of legal, economic and financial conditions. The economic aspect is particularly interesting, as we lack comprehensive information in this respect. On the one hand, this results from the inaccessibility of reliable data (no source documents in a satisfactory condition, such as account ledgers of publishing houses or registers of book sellers or printers, exist), and on the other, few researchers have explored this topic thus far. The information gathered by the author lets us estimate the size of the European music publishing market to a limited extent only. Likewise, we lack archival data on the amount of copies for each edition of Chopin's works. The author says that the number of copies might have reached dozens or even hundreds in the case of single editions of the most popular of Chopin's works. The issues related to the costs of preparing particular editions, sheet music prices, and the scale of professional fees, are equally interesting. These figures tell us much about the demand for and popularity of Chopin's music in the 19th century. Considering the contemporary context of "fights" for copyright, information on the legal regulations in this respect in various European countries at that time provides us with valuable knowledge. The situation was largely unclear, varying from one country to another, and the rights were often difficult to enforce. Commercial mechanisms seemed to prevail at that time, without necessarily respecting legal regulations.

Subsequently, the author proceeds to the geographic distribution of the Chopin editions in question. He estimates their number and character within the countries of publication, i.e. Germany, Austria, United Kingdom, U.S.A., Russia, Poland and others (such as Denmark or Italy). As we can note, in each of these countries specific types of editions were published. In Germany and Austria, in the second half of the 19th century, almost 50 editions were released of both collected and single works. These were prepared by about twenty prominent editors who prepared the works of the major composers of that time for publishing, among others Schubert, Schumann, Weber, and of course Chopin. In Germany the copyright expired upon thirty years after the composer's death, which meant that editors such as Breitkopf & Härtel, Schott and Peters had a limited time to prepare their editions. No complete editions were published; however, the prevalent intention was to make the editions relatively comprehensive. The case of Chopin was exceptional in this respect, as generally all opuses were published, i.e. the composer's full legacy together with post-mortem opuses. Thus, the specificity of German editions consisted in an extraordinary and purely academic care as far as the preparation and release of the Polish composer's works were concerned. In turn, the author remarks that in France the editions tended to be mostly of a didactic character, which constituted the legacy of the artist himself. In this country, the editorial activity related to Chopin's works was especially lively, although the number of publications remained smaller than in Germany. The author lists 8 original editions of collected works and a significant number of partial and single-work editions. Such an intense editorial activity was closely connected with the copyright period in France, which expired as early as ten years after the artist's death. In Great Britain, the editorial situation differed significantly from those in the above countries. Bońkowski emphasises that it remained unknown until today (due to the lack of documented sources) how Chopin published his works in this country and what the bases for the post-mortem editions were. Almost all of his works were released there before his death (excluding one composition only, namely the *Sonata in G minor* Op. 65!), and in 1849-1900 only 9 new major editions were published along with many

single-work ones. The legislation in 19th-century England was very unclear, which made the editorial situation of Chopin's works even more complicated. The editors also remain a mystery. This issue, as the author remarks himself, definitely requires further detailed investigation. Russia is another country discussed. In 1849-1903, four collected editions and 27 major selected works were published there. Bońkowski highlights that according to the divisions of editorial zones, Russia and its subjugated countries remained strictly dependent on German publishing houses and editors. The author does not conceal that Poland had a special place within the countries where Chopin's works were published, which might seem obvious; however, the country's difficult political situation was without a doubt unfavourable for any kind of editorial activity. Just like Russia, Poland was situated within the German area of editorial influence. Throughout the period in question, only two editions of complete works were published, the majority being small prints of single works. Among other European or overseas countries mentioned by the author, Denmark and Italy deserve particular attention. Both also depended largely on German publishers. The only original Danish edition is one of 8 of Chopin's works edited by Horneman in Copenhagen in 1880, while several original editions were published in Italy (Milan, Naples) in the 19th century. The editions retained a didactic character until the 20th century. Chapter III ends with a discussion on the distribution of Chopin editions by genre, which is closely connected with cultural aspects of their reception.

Bońkowski indicates certain rules regarding the selection and scope of the works published in particular countries, which applied both to single-work editions as well as those collected on a genre-related basis, such as editions of concerts, sonatas, ballads, scherzos, polonaises etc. To summarise this chapter, Bońkowski draws the following conclusion from the 19th-century edition material. Two general tendencies were characteristic for this period: one academic, typical of Germany and its area of influence, characterised by critical and source-critical editions prepared by eminent musical personalities and aiming to be comprehensive; and a completely different one, with the sole purpose of publishing the most popular works or genres (waltzes, nocturnes or mazurkas) which were unceasingly popular among amateurs (and did not require advanced technical proficiency), and therefore provided the publishers with high profits. This tendency prevailed in the English editions. With the social, ideological and aesthetic considerations of this chapter, Bońkowski prepares the ground to discuss the issues presented in the two following chapters.

Chapter four, "Editions of Chopin's Works in an Analytical Perspective" (pp. 103-177), is undoubtedly the central part of the publication. Selected editions from the second half of the 19th century are analysed in detail from a philological point of view. Special attention is paid to:

- the attitude towards composer-based sources, i.e. autographs, first printings and student copies with Chopin's remarks;
- the way they relate to other contemporary editions;
- the scope, character of and reasons for the editor's amendments to the composer's text,
- the dates of publication, numbers of copies and reprints of the editions in question, used as auxiliary sources for the philological interpretation.

The author has precisely defined the group of editions he analyses. He focuses on editions of collected works connected with Chopin's environment, released by the most prominent publishers from the 19th century European musical centres of editorship (discussed in the previous chapter) and edited by important, renowned and influential personalities. Another selection criterion is how representative Chopin's compositions were: Bońkowski has chosen complex and sophisticated works from a compositional and formal point of view, as well

as those of a smaller size, subjected to extended editorial elaboration. These criteria have provided him with appropriate analytical material, both rich and diverse. The author has carried out dozens of analyses, and in this chapter presents them as four case studies. As he believes, they shed light on the essential problems of the 19th-century editions of Chopin's works and provide an insight into the four most relevant cultural environments: France, Germany, England and Poland:

1. The 1873 edition of complete works by K. Klindworth, St. Petersburg, representing the German area;
2. The corpus of the French editions of collected and complete works published upon the expiry of the copyright in 1859-1947;
3. The English edition of the piano concertos published by Ashdown & Perry in 1860 or 1861;
4. Six selected editions of complete works published by Gebethner and Wolff in Warsaw (1863-64, 1873, 1873-80, 1882, 1902-, 1913-).

In the detailed analyses, essential questions were taken into consideration, including, among other things: the source basis and filiation, editorial modifications and their extent, the reception of Chopin's works (especially in the French area) based on their subsequent editions and reprints, the problem of variants and their role in Chopin's compositions (considering specifically the Warsaw editions) etc. It is impossible to list all of the numerous threads considered by Bońkowski in this careful philological analysis.

All of them are unquestionably of great importance for the scientific hypotheses resulting from this research, and often contradict those previously believed to be true. The conclusions regarding the scope, level and character of editor interventions – from "minor" modifications related to pedalling, phrasing, dynamics and agogics to diastematic and rhythmical changes – are of special interest. These variants were sometimes so numerous they did not seem to follow any – especially editorial – logic. The conclusions regarding the value of the French editions are probably most surprising, since these editions had hitherto been believed to have faithfully followed the composer's intentions. The author, however, has formed the hypothesis as a consequence of his analysis that they are the ones which differ from Chopin's text to the greatest extent, as they contain a large number of interventions and modifications, while the examination of the English ones suggests that the amendments they include coincide with corrections from the didactic copies of Chopin's students (i.a. Jane Stirling), introduced by the composer himself. Should this hypothesis prove right, it would be a historical sensation, according to the author himself (p. 154). The number of research challenges taken up in this chapter is truly outstanding. There are moments when the reader might feel overwhelmed or even slightly disoriented by the level of detail in the author's methods, which is probably the only deficiency of the profound discussion undertaken by Bońkowski, in spite of the author's continuous efforts to systematise the information provided.

In chapter V, entitled "Editions of Chopin's Works in a Social and Aesthetic Perspective" (s. 178-269), which closes the main part of the book, Bońkowski presents a different approach to the previous considerations. He examines Chopin's works as a document of culture, as indicated in the introduction to the book. He defines significant areas of reception for Chopin's works from a social and aesthetic perspective, and discusses them in six sections:

1. "Editions of Chopin's works and the understanding of a musical work in the 19th century" – the previous philological analysis has proven that editors found variants

and performance variability of a musical work perfectly acceptable. Ontological questions become a central part of these considerations: What actually is a musical edition, the subject matter of this research? The answer to this and other more specific questions regarding the work's identity, its relation to a score and performance in the 19th century, as well as the variants of the latter, are essential for this section of the chapter. The broader context of these issues is confirmed by the works of – mostly Anglo-Saxon – researchers (Jeffrey Kallberg and Jim Samson) and the book by Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford 1992), which enable an in-depth presentation of the formation of the concept of the musical work in the 19th century, oscillating between the completed and invariable and the volatile and open. The Chopin editions analysed also demonstrate these typical features, in the sense of a transcription of the approximated intentions of the composer, with an acceptable margin of interpretation, but always within a specific performance manner and style.

2. "Editions of Chopin's works and music performance" – how to perform Chopin's works? This question opens the section and is the main theme of its subject matter. Focusing on the 19th century, Bońkowski, quoting other researchers, states that Chopin's works were among the most frequently performed at that time. As no music recordings existed back then, we cannot refer to "live performances." Therefore we have to count on indirect testimonials such as editions in which the editors left traces of their own schools of performance. The editions have thus been read again, but from a different point of view. Based on the detailed analysis from chapter IV, the author distinguishes between various 19th and 20th-century piano schools. The chart attached ("family tree") is a graphic summary of the chapter. This fascinating discussion focuses on the specific features of and differences between the particular schools of performance. What happens between performance and edition ("printed discourse") is especially interesting, also because the editors were predominantly excellent pianists and pedagogues. Their editing decisions, particularly in the 19th century, are evidence of the reception of Chopin's works at that time.

3. "Between the salon and the monument: ideology in the reception and editing of Chopin's works" – a material discussion with regards to the reception of Chopin's music in the 19th century, which strongly marked the editions. The issue in question is the "salon Chopin" phenomenon. The whole concept of salon music, less demanding and often regarded as trivial, was connected with a specific recipient-performer, i.e. an amateur musician presenting their abilities in the cosiness of their domestic space. However, the 19th-century concept of salon music, linked with the sentimental movement, was related to the role music played, not to its evaluation. In the 18th century the figure of the amateur/enthusiast (*Liebhaber*) as opposed to the expert professional (*Kenner*) appeared, and to judge it was not and would never be right. Excluding axiology of any kind, the author analyses the 19th-century Chopin editions and finds traces of the "salon." These sometimes mean small interventions in the musical form or substance (for example in the *Prelude in C minor* Op. 28 in the H. Scholtz edition of c.a. 1879 or the *Ballad in G minor* in the original Breitkopf & Härtel print of 1836) aiming to gently ease the amateurs' struggle with the music. More frequently, however, the interventions did not concern the musical text as such, but consisted in adding descriptive titles to the works (such



as "Lamentation," "Consolation" or "Meditation") or including the composition in salon music anthologies (especially by English publishers). While discussing these issues, Bońkowski refers to other, already existing works on this topic. One that is frequently quoted is *Piano Music and Playing in the 19th century* by Irena Ponia-towska (Warsaw 1991).

4. "Women in the Chopin editions (and outside of them)" – right from the start, the author states the harsh truth about the absence of women in 19th and 20th-century Chopin editing, who seem to be relegated to the outer edge (footnotes or rare mentions), or "denied their own voice." Even their participation in edition committees was rare. It is admirable that the author, following the tendencies towards gender equality which may be noticed for example in musicological gender studies, has chosen to discuss this issue in a separate section of his book. Feminine music was a specific kind of artistic salon production. Bońkowski says that what strikes one in Chopin's case is the fact that his works were largely associated, especially in Paris, with "women and feminine attributes." This was shown through the characteristic features of his music, such as its lyrical expressivity and sentimentality. "Salon elegance" was inevitably associated with "femininity," and Chopin gave concerts mostly at salons where women formed a considerable part of the audience. Female performers were associated with specific genres of his music, such as the nocturnes and waltzes. The significant presence of these compositions in the editions of collected works was unquestionably related to their high popularity and the demand for them. The author also emphasises the role of female students in Chopin's life (for example Camille O'Meara-Dubois or Jane Stirling). They were not editors as such, but transmitted the tradition of interpretation of the master's works, which was proven "in writing" (for example in study copies containing remarks made by the composer himself), and which greatly influenced 19th-century Chopin editing. In considering the "feminine" subject, this part of the book seems remarkably interesting.

5. "Editions of Chopin's works and the conditions of national reception" – based on considerations concerning the Chopin editions, performers, and audiences, the author attempts to present a very broad social context of how the editions of Chopin's music functioned in relation to the "national" reception of his music. He takes into account critical texts (press, monographs, and edition introductions), publishing catalogues, and concert programmes from the 1830s until the end of the 19th century. According to the author, this research made it possible to define the reception of Chopin's works in particular countries. On the basis of the editions, he concludes that the special interest that the Polish public had in small works of a national character (mainly polonaises and mazurkas) as well as in the lyrical nocturnes meant Chopin was perceived in our country as a national romantic composer. Bońkowski proceeds similarly with regards to the English and French editions, finding that the former suggest the perception of the composer as an author of poetic and sentimental compositions (as the nocturnes, preludes, waltzes, polonaises, mazurkas and études were particularly appreciated and frequently published there), while the latter (showing a greater acknowledgement of the études, preludes and larger forms) gave special recognition to the poetic and epic tone marked by suffering, which also corresponded to the perception of Chopin as a romantic artist. Bońkowski remarks

that the late Chopin works were not properly understood by the audience (in England, France and Poland), and were described as "heavy and misty" because of their excessive formal complexity and difficult musical language.

6. "The value of the editions of Chopin's works in the 19th century" – this section summarizes the core contents of the book and reflects upon axiological matters. Having examined documents of the period, the author tries to find an answer to questions concerning specific features of the 19th-century editions that are highly appreciated by contemporary pianists and audiences. The conclusion is greatly encouraging: generally speaking, the Chopin editions from that period aimed to faithfully reconstruct the composer's text and gave much importance to preserving a direct connection with the performance tradition from the times when Chopin lived and created. The canon of scientific musical textual criticism has been formed on this "positive" basis. To conclude, let us quote the author: "The history of the 19th-century Chopin editions turns out to be a fascinating chronicle of seeking such optimum codes."

What follows is a highly valuable annexe where the author includes translations of selected introductions and editor's comments to Chopin's works in order to complement the contents of the book. The bibliography shows the insightful way the author has proceeded in order to present the topic in a reliable manner. This is the most complex study of 19th-century Chopin editions in the Polish musicological literature, and is also extremely valuable on a global scale. On the one hand, the editions form a document of the culture of that time, and on the other, they are a testimonial of how Chopin's music was understood back then, in the light of its reception described broadly and in many of its aspects. Bońkowski's book is a "chronicle of transformations" as well as a "way of rediscovering the roots," that is rediscovering the very essence of the works of our musical prophet, namely its timelessness and continuousness.

Alina Mądry