

Fredric Chopin . 1826.



1 A pencil drawing of Chopin, by Eliza Radziwill, 1826 (Warsaw, Chopin Society)

Jonathan Bellman

Frédéric Chopin, Antoine de Kontski and the *carezzando* touch

Contexts

In the study of Chopin's performance practices the issue of touch is particularly problematic. Chopin's touch inspired wonder in those who heard him play. Sophie Léo, wife of a Paris-based Hamburg banker, said that 'he appeared hardly to touch the piano; one might have thought an instrument superfluous',¹ and Alfred Hipkins, who tuned for Chopin in England and heard him play several times in 1848, remembered a 'tenderly-subdued style of playing ... [that] was his own, and [was] inseparable from his conception of pianoforte touch'.² Gleaning what he actually did with his hands from the wonder of eye- and ear-witnesses, though, is risky. Piano touch often seems to be a matter of alchemy; exhortations to 'sing' at the keyboard, or to play in such a way as to make the listener forget that the piano has hammers at all, offer no actual instructions on how to approach the instrument physically.³ As Chopin's preferred piano, a Pleyel, was by no means typical, and given that very few survive in playable form, we seem to have little to go on.

Extraordinary as Chopin's pianism was, however, it was not entirely unique. It shared a good deal, technically and aesthetically, with the intimate, finished style of the contemporary Parisian virtuosos. Chopin also commanded certain techniques which were relatively uncommon, even in his own time, and which have become increasingly rare as pianism has continued to evolve. One of these is the caressing touch, in which the finger is not lifted directly from

the key but rather slides back towards the palm of the hand, which Johann Nikolaus Forkel described in connection with J. S. Bach's clavichord playing, and Frédéric Kalkbrenner mentioned in his 1831 piano treatise.⁴ This would later be called the *carezzando* style.

As with so much about Chopin's playing (and indeed his music in general), precise roots and lineage are difficult to establish. As a child, he had studied piano in Warsaw with a Bohemian violinist, an eccentric family friend named Wojciech Zywny. Nicolas Chopin's oft-quoted reminder to his son—'you know the mechanics of piano-playing occupied little of your time and that your mind was busier than your fingers'⁵—suggests that his piano skills had been largely self-taught. For this reason, it seems less profitable to guess what he learned from whom than simply to identify what he was doing, regardless of whether it was taught or discovered.

As it happened, quite a few of those who heard Chopin play noted his way of caressing the keys, of moving his fingers on them after they had already been struck. Georges Mathias, one of Chopin's two pupils who went on to a distinguished performance and teaching career (the other being Carl Mikuli), stressed this particular point to his own students. According to Constantin Piron, author of *L'art du piano* (Paris, 1949), Chopin would enjoin his students, 'Caress the key, never bash it!', while Mathias would gloss that advice as 'You should, so to speak, mould the keyboard with a velvet hand and feel the key rather than striking it!'⁶

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Princess Marcelina Czartoryska (*née Radziwiłł*), one of the composer's very best students, was considered 'to have inherited Chopin's manner, especially in phrasing and accentuation'.⁷ In Paris she described Chopin's teaching for (among others) Cecylia Działyńska, who published a booklet on the subject in 1882. One of Czartoryska's remarks clearly points towards a *caressando* touch: 'The hand should fall softly on the keys just with its own weight—as though to play *pianissimo*, often seeming to caress the keys'. Less explicit, but pointing in the same direction: 'The fingers should sink, immerse themselves somehow in the depths of the piano ... the fingers reluctant to leave the keys'. She also provided a kind of negative acknowledgement: 'The fingers should be free, running over the keys without the slightest effort—but not superficially "tickling" the keyboard, *except in the most delicate passages*'⁸ And Emile Gaillard noted, '[Chopin] appeared to caress the keyboard, while his sensitive and grieving soul rose and wandered freely among us.'⁹

Chopin's student Wilhelm von Lenz described precisely this kind of touch in the context of a particularly trying lesson on Chopin's Nocturne in C minor, op.48 no.1:

[Chopin] was no less exacting when it came to the descending C before the quaver rest at the end of the semiquaver group (fourth bar, third beat), the C was either too short or too long. I found a way out by 'combing' this with the thumb, that is by sliding the finger along the key and releasing it only upon reaching the outer edge. This way the end of the phrase at last satisfied him, but that was nothing beside Chopin's own playing.¹⁰

So the best approach, for this weak-beat phrase ending, was *caressing* the key (rather than striking it) so that the tone would slip off into the silence. Edith Hipkins, daughter of Alfred Hipkins, conceived a theory as to how this kind of touch might have originated. Glossing her father's notes, she wrote in 1937:

The sliding finger,¹¹ said by Jean Kleczyński to be used by Chopin, but anathema for years on the piano, was the true eighteenth-century touch for the keyboards of that period, and it was this soft, sliding touch that gave, that still gives, to the old keyboards their charming *legato*. Modern pianists are quite out of their depth when confronted by instruments of that period.

Through the development of piano technique, this touch has become obsolete, and eludes the present-day enthusiasts, who 'dig' for it with the greatest perseverance, and are no nearer the mystery.¹²

Edith Hipkins's notion that the sliding of the fingers was part of 18th-century keyboard technique was perhaps based on the beliefs of her father, who (later in his life) had become interested in early keyboard instruments and their technique, about which relatively little was known in the 19th century. It is true, however, that caressing the keys pre-dated Chopin, and it seems that it was largely associated with musicians of the Parisian school.

A prime example is Frédéric (born Friedrich) Kalkbrenner, one of the most famous and productive students of the first major instructor of piano at the Paris Conservatory, Louis Adam. Charles Timbrell, historian of French pianism, describes Kalkbrenner as

concerned, above all, with developing the widest variety of finer touches—and like his teacher Adam, he emphasized that these must serve the widest variety of expression. A touch not frequently dealt with before his 1830 [*sic*] *Méthode* is that for 'caressing' the keys—that is, sliding the finger from the middle to the edge of the key with a gentle pressure.¹³

In his method Kalkbrenner is clear but brief about the touch:

La manière d'attaquer la note doit se varier à l'infini, d'après les différens sentimens qu'on veut exprimer, tantôt en caressant la touche, tantôt en se précipitant sur elle comme le lion qui se saisit de sa proie. Cependant en tirant de l'instrument tout le son qu'il peut donner, il faut surtout bien se garder de le frapper, car on doit jouer du piano et non pas le boxer.

The manner of striking the note must be infinitely varied, according to the different sentiments one wants to express, now caressing the key, now hurling oneself on it like a lion seizing his prey. However one draws from the instrument all the sound it is able to give, it is especially necessary to take care not to thump it, for one must play the piano and not box with it.¹⁴

It is worth remembering here that when Chopin first arrived in Paris, Kalkbrenner's refined pianism was extremely attractive to him, and he seriously considered Kalkbrenner's offer of a three-year course of study. Chopin's family in Poland and his composition teacher Józef Elsner advised otherwise; Chopin ultimately did not study with him, and by

the 1840s Kalkbrenner was paying court to Chopin. While Kalkbrenner's music (mostly of the salon variety) has not endured, his pianistic aesthetic—a restrained, elegant and historically French approach to the keyboard—was the kind with which Chopin was in greatest sympathy.

More corroboration of Chopin's affinity for the caressing touch comes in the form of his reaction to the playing of Anna Caroline Oury, *née* de Belleville. Belleville-Oury, born to a French family, had been a student of Carl Czerny in Vienna between 1816 and 1820. According to the English critic William Gardiner,

In the hands of Mademoiselle de Belleville, the piano-forte becomes another instrument. Her mode of treating it is strikingly new; a bystander is impressed with the novel position of the hands, whether perpendicular, horizontal, or oblique—every motion leads to effects hitherto unheard. The fingers range not in the accustomed track, but strike and rest upon the keys in every part; often sliding from back to front, as in the act of wiping them. This singular motion imparts to her adagio unspeakable richness.¹⁵

This description clearly situates her playing in the *carezzando* tradition, and Chopin admired it. As it happened, he heard her play in the 1830s, and the impression was still strong in late 1842. In a letter to her of 10 December 1842, he remembered

your elegant assemblies where you interpret so marvellously the Masters we all recognise, all the great composers like Mozart, Beethoven and Hummel. Hummel's *Adagio*, which I heard you play at Erard's in Paris some years ago, still rings in my ears, and I can assure you that, in spite of all the grand concerts here, few piano performances can make me forget the pleasure of having heard you that evening.¹⁶

Neither Chopin nor Belleville-Oury had studied in France, yet both employed the caressing touch. Since a similar technique was mentioned in connection with 18th-century German clavichord playing, its origin probably antedated the invention of the piano. The pianists who used it were those with a quiet technique based on hand and wrist motion (as opposed to arm motion and weight), and who shied away from theatricality and bombast. It was clearly known and practised in more places than France, though it was in Paris that the caressing manner of play seems to have been most common, and finally did come to be formalized.

Antoine de Kotski and the *carezzando* touch

The individual who codified the *carezzando* style had, like Chopin, been reared in a provincial Polish environment, and thus originally schooled in a non-Parisian tradition. Antoine de Kotski (1817–1899), born Anton Kątski in Kraków, was a musical prodigy, and his family (he had four similarly precocious siblings) moved to Warsaw when he was six or seven.¹⁷ From there, he followed the prodigy's traditional track of performances, teaching and composition, taking lessons with John Field in Moscow (1829–30) and later settling in Paris. Strikingly similar to Chopin in some ways, such as his Polish background and the 'great delicacy of his touch',¹⁸ he was in other respects the complete opposite. His compositions (of which the salon piece *Le reveil du lion* was the most famous) have been almost entirely forgotten, and he seems to have been something of a huckster, willing to play fast and loose with facts when it suited him. For example, in an article about his teacher which he wrote for a Russian publication, he completely falsified Field's (Irish) origins as a bow to Russian philo-Gallicism. Field, he stated, was originally a Frenchman named Jean Champs; when he had gone to London, his teacher there (Muzio Clementi) told him to translate his given name because of English animosity to the French.¹⁹ Chopin's feelings for his slightly younger countryman, to judge by his correspondence, were apparently not friendly.²⁰

Of particular interest to us is Kotski's piano treatise, *L'indispensable du pianiste*, which was first published in Paris in 1845 and subsequently went through several printings (though seemingly without exerting much influence).²¹ Like other treatises of the period, it presented such exercises as scales in contrary motion, chromatic scales, chords, chromatic 3rds and so on. Kotski's preface and commentary are written in a florid and somewhat vain style, and he devotes a great deal of space to a discussion of practice-machines, which enjoyed a vogue at the time.²² What sets Kotski's treatise apart from all others is its discussion of *carezzando*. Kotski's pianism was quiet, like that of Adam, Kalkbrenner and Chopin. Like Kalkbrenner, he felt that one should never play from the arm (that is, the whole

arm), and that the forearm should be used only in certain circumstances, such as in playing vigorous chordal passages, or in phrasing 'when one wants to sing, caressing the keys'. Kontski is more explicit about the *carezzando* touch than any other author (indeed, he seems to have coined the term for it), and it is mostly for this that he is remembered by historians of piano technique. For him, *carezzando* depended on both finger and forearm; not only did the finger draw inward after striking the key, but the forearm drew back as well. His description is shown as document 1.

Legacy and aftermath

Although this manner of playing seems never to have been in wide use, Kontski and the *carezzando* style were by no means forgotten. Adolf Kullak, in a work first published in 1860, summarizes this aspect of *L'indispensable*,²⁴ and according to Oscar Bie, writing at the end of the 19th century, 'carezzando, or stroking of the keys, was a favourite practice of Kalkbrenner and Kontski in Paris. Today [Edouard] Risler is perhaps alone in this school with his pure sensuous charm of touch.'²⁵ A hint of the extent to which Kontski's influence has since been eclipsed may be found in Reginald Gerig's compendious *Famous pianists and their technique* (1974), in which the references to Kontski and *carezzando* are derived from Kullak and Bie; the author apparently could not lay his hands on the original treatise.²⁶

The *carezzando* style did survive into the 20th century, but (as Bie implied) it was never widespread, and when mentioned in treatises it was never presented as a basic technique. For example, Marie Jaell (*née* Trautman; 1846–1925), an Alsatian-born pianist who moved to Paris and took first prize at the conservatory at the age of 15, wrote in 1897 of 'des attaques glissées et roulées', identified the sliding technique as coming from J. S. Bach,²⁷ and taught it until her death. Due to other eccentricities in her approach, she became increasingly marginalized in the pianistic world.²⁸

In 1919 Jaell's student Blanche Selva wrote about two different kinds of sliding touches. One was the *touche de répercussion*, which was intended to enable the pianist to reiterate a note without fully striking it. Her example for this was the famous passage in

the third movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A^b major, op.110, which is generally considered to be a pianistic counterpart of the *Bebung*, the clavichord technique that enabled pitches to be re-sounded without being fully restruck. Selva describes the touch in some detail: the hands are on the keyboard with the fingers gently extended, resting on their pads (not the fingertips). The shoulder and back are tensed, which prevents the weight of the arm from sinking into the keyboard, as it otherwise would do. A sudden relaxation of the shoulder and back enables the weight and the finger to creep or slide (*couler*) on the key. She cautions that, since the key is released only one-half to three-quarters of the way, this can be accomplished only on pianos in good working order; the effect would not be possible on inferior or worn pianos.²⁹ Of particular interest is her explicit connection of this kind of technique with the *touche lourée*, otherwise called *porté* or *portamento*. A caressing touch is also required for Selva's *touche vibratoire*, which is 'particulièrement de mise dans les cantilènes lentes et doucement ou ardemment expressives' ('particularly appropriate for slow cantilenas or sweetly or ardently expressive passages'). To produce this touch,

Les doigts reposent sur les touches par le gras du doigt, en toucher [sic] caressant ou ardemment pressant, selon la nature expressive du passage ou de la note à réaliser

The fingers rest on the keys on their pads, and play *caressingly* or *ardently pressing*, according to the expressive nature of the passage or of the note to be played.³⁰

Even though Selva (inexplicably) places her discussion of these touches in the preparatory volume for her four-volume piano method, *L'enseignement musical de la technique du piano* (1916–24), sliding and caressing the keyboard was clearly an advanced method, as it was for her teacher Jaell.³¹ Furthermore, her explicit connection of such a touch with *notes portées* and ardent *cantabile* playing accords with Kontski's description of *carezzando*, and suggests very strongly that, romantic effusion aside, this was the touch that enabled pianists to produce dependable *notes portées*, which were necessary for varied, expressive articulation in the *cantabile* style, something for which (as we have seen) Chopin was renowned. Selva's teaching of these kinds of touches

Il faut bien faire attention de ne jamais jouer du bras, le bras doit rester étranger à tous les mouvements. Quant à l'avant-bras c'est tout différent, il peut et doit se lever et se baisser avec facilité et souplesse pour aider la main dans la transportation d'une place à l'autre, dans l'attaque vigoureuse des Accords, ou bien encore [p 16] lorsqu'on veut chanter, en caressant les touches Et pour qu'on sache quand et comment j'emploie cette manière de toucher, j'ai pris la liberté d'employer pour cela le signe (o) au dessus des notes, et d'en donner [sic] ici une explication détaillée

Ce signe (o) veut dire 'Carezzando' (caressant) et les notes qui en sont marquées doivent être attaquées d'une manière très délicate avec le gras du doigt et le poignet baissé, en glissant le doigt depuis le milieu jusqu'au bas de la touche comme si on la carressait, ce mouvement ne doit point se faire du doigt seul, au contraire le doigt une fois posé, c'est l'avant-bras qui doit se retirer en arrière, et par-là le doigt glissera de lui-même jusqu'au bas de la touche

Les notes marquées Carezzando perdent en apparence presque le quart de leur véritable valeur Dans ce temps on lèvera gracieusement la main et l'avant-bras pour la conduire sur les touches suivantes; mais le son ne cesse point, car il est soutenu par les pédales jusqu'à sa pleine valeur; pareil à harmonica en verre or au son de flageolet du violon Comme la partie élastique du doigt attaque la touche du piano qui est aussi élastique, cette double élasticité fait que le son devient lui-même doux et élastique, et par conséquent perd toute la dureté et la sécheresse qu'il a ordinairement lorsqu'on attaque la touche avec le bout du doigt Par cette manière du toucher le son du Piano acquiert une vibration si sensible et si sympathique qu'on ne peut dire ce qu'on disait anciennement 'le Piano est un instrument sur lequel il est impossible de chanter ou d'émouvoir' Oui, dis-je, il est possible de chanter, mais il faut savoir chanter! C'est donc à l'Artiste d'animer cet instrument si sec; c'est donc l'Artiste qui doit rendre cet instrument capable de Chanter en le touchant de manière à faire de lui ce qu'il veut qu'il soit, c'est-à-dire, en le faisant chanter, pleurer, gronder, etc. etc.—tout cela est donc dans la manière de s'y prendre et l'instrument obéira aussitôt, grâce à la combinaison de la pédale, du toucher, et surtout de la dose de sensibilité que possède celui qui joue Car, qui veut émouvoir Ceux qui l'écoutent, doit lui-même être ému, doit lui-même sentir bien vivement ce qu'il veut faire sentir aux autres! Ainsi ces Deux choses réunis, le toucher, et le sentiment, rendent la musique irrésistiblement entraînant, et ce n'est qu'alors que la Musique

One must make sure never to play from the arm; the arm must stay removed from all movements. With the forearm it is totally different, it can and must raise and lower itself with facility and suppleness in order to help the hand in moving from one place to another, in the vigorous playing of chords, or indeed [p 16] when one wants to sing, while caressing the keys. And in order that one knows when and how I use this manner of playing, I have taken the liberty of employing for that the sign (o) above the notes, and of giving a detailed explanation here

This sign (o) means 'Carezzando' (caressing) and the notes which are so marked must be struck in a very delicate manner with the pad of the finger and with the wrist lowered, while sliding the finger from the middle to the end of the key as if one was caressing it, this movement must not be done with the finger alone, on the contrary once the finger is in place, it is the forearm which must draw backward, and from that the finger will slide to the end of the key.

The notes marked Carezzando lose, seemingly, almost a quarter of the real value During this time one will gracefully raise the hand and forearm in order to guide it to the following keys, but the sound will not cease at all, for it is sustained by the pedals to its full value, like the glass harmonica or the sound of the flageolet As the flexible part of the finger touches the piano key, which is also flexible, this double flexibility makes the sound itself gentle and elastic, and thus it loses all of the hardness and dryness which it ordinarily has when one strikes a key with the end of the finger. By this manner of touch the sound of the piano acquires a vibration so sensitive and so agreeable that one can no longer say, as was said formerly, 'The Piano is an instrument on which it is impossible to sing or to move [anyone]!' Yes, I say, it is possible to sing, but it is necessary to know how to sing! It is therefore for the artist to animate this very dry instrument, it is the artist who must render this instrument capable of singing by touching it in such a manner as to make it do what he wants, that is to say, to make it sing, weep, growl, etc. etc.—all that is therefore in the manner one sets about the instrument, and the instrument will obey immediately, thanks to the combination of the pedal, of touch, and especially of the amount of sensitivity possessed by him who plays. For whoever wants to move those who listen to him must himself be moved, must himself vividly feel what he wants the others to feel. Thus these two things in tandem, touch and sentiment, make the music irresistibly stirring, and it is only then that music

devient une langue divine, une langue intime du Coeur!—Que vaut un Artiste qui ne fait que des Notes plus ou moins rapides, que des traits plus or moins difficiles? rien!—car pour être Artiste dans toute l'étendue du mot, il faut avoir de Nobles sentiment[s] et du Coeur, pour comprendre et faire comprendre la mission sublime de la musique.

Voici des exemples tirés de ma 'Résignation' Op 131, page 6 et 8.

becomes a divine language, an intimate language of the heart. Of what value is an artist who plays only more or less rapid notes, or more or less difficult figuration? Nothing! For in order to be an Artist in the full meaning of the word, one must have noble sentiments and a heart, in order to understand and to make understood the sublime mission of music.

Here are examples taken from my 'Résignation', op.131, pages 6 and 8.

Si le Chant marqué de Carezzando est écrit en doubles notes comme dans l'exemple ci-après, il faut conserver le mouvement de la main et du bras, comme dans celui de notes simples.

If the melody marked as Carezzando is written in double notes as in the following example, it is necessary to maintain the motion of the hand and arm, as in that of single notes

survived further into the 20th century; Jean-Joel Barbier (1920–94), who studied with two students of Blanche Selva, Louise Terrier and Libussé Novak, described learning what he called Selva's 'scratch' technique, 'in which the finger, pulled toward the edge of the key as it went down'.³²

By the second half of the 20th century, however, varieties of articulation, like varieties of touch, were approaching the status of a historical footnote, despite their signal importance in the Parisian school during the first half of the 19th century. Though not explicit about a caressing touch, the piano methods of Louis Adam (1800), Alexis de Garaudé (1820), Henry Lemoine (1827), and Kalkbrenner (1831) all set forth four different levels of articulation: *piqué* (notes marked with vertical wedges, and with one-quarter of the full duration consisting of sounding tone and the remaining three-quarters consisting of silence), *détaché* (notes marked with dots, half tone and half silence), *porté* (notes marked with dots under a legato slur, 'to be played as if with one finger' according to Kalkbrenner, three-quarters sound and one-quarter silence), and *lié* (legato, notes marked with a slur indication, tone for the full duration).³³ To these gradations may be added both notes with no articulation mark at all and Chopin's 'heavy staccato' (in Kleczyński's words), which is marked with vertical or horizontal accent wedges under a slur indication (whether there was a distinction between these two is unclear).³⁴ It is the ratio of three-quarters sound to one-quarter silence in *notes portées* that Kontski specified for *carezzando* playing, so the connection between articulation and this touch is clearest in that case. Nevertheless, it seems likely that the varieties of *carezzando* facilitated all these different levels of articulation, offering pianists a dependable mechanism for achieving tiny differences in duration and space between notes. Because pianos are so different now, though, it is difficult to achieve similar effects.

It is clear, however, that today's vocabulary of articulations and touches is, by comparison with that of the previous century, monochromatic. Just how painfully monochromatic it has become is illustrated by Seymour Bernstein, who suggests that the sustaining pedal is an effective agent for achieving

the legato touch, and that the actual articulation can remain disconnected. Protesting perhaps a bit too much—admitting rather more than he would like about modern pianism—he explains:

I have been persuading you to indulge in a practice that some pianists view as sinful—namely, to rely on the pedal for legato instead of on your fingers. If you can achieve the same effect with your fingers, do so, of course. You should know, however, that some of our greatest pianists create persuasive legato effects in the way I have just described—by disconnecting with their fingers and connecting with their pedal.³⁵

Bernstein's approach is encountered far too often. It should be remembered, though, that the relative absence of different touches, timbres and articulations is due in large part to circumstances beyond the individual pianist's control. Because contemporary live pianism depends upon performances in large halls, and on instruments that can be heard over large orchestras, subtle differences in touch and articulation become indiscernible. The recording process, too, makes subtle distinctions of touch infeasible. An accurate final product requires multiple takes; were pianists to cultivate the varieties of touch and freedom of interpretation from performance to performance that once were so celebrated, the necessary consistency of phrasing and note duration from take to take would be virtually unattainable.

Given the differences in pianos and performing circumstances, the *carezzando* touch—which awaits revival and reintroduction into modern playing—can only be used with care and after substantial experimentation, since its practical relevance to modern pianism is (frankly) far from evident. What is clear, however, is that *carezzando*, if not widespread, was at least an important aspect of the pianism shared by several widely admired pianists such as Kalkbrenner, Belleville-Oury, Kontski and, most importantly, Chopin himself. Such pianists sought subtlety and polish, not broad dramatic effects, and their approach to the piano has all but disappeared. The case of Chopin is particularly ironic, given the plethora of contemporary testimony such as that of Berlioz and Pierre Zimmerman, who each wrote that one did not know Chopin's music until one had heard the composer's

unique way of performing it.³⁶ The inescapable conclusion, then, is that for more than a century the pianistic world has been single-mindedly pursuing an aesthetic utterly opposed to Chopin's own.

The unabated popularity of Chopin's music makes it especially challenging to reconceive our understanding, as was done with traditional 'early'—that is, pre-1750—music. For those committed to performance practices, however, the tasks are familiar: one re-creates the aesthetic as much as rediscovers the technique, and designs and implements appropriate practice strategies. The eye- and ear-witness accounts of Chopin's playing, the testimony of his students, and the correlating information about *carezzando* touch and the varieties of

articulation from Kontski and the other Parisian pianists all indicate that we are a very great distance from Chopin's own performance aesthetic—without which, his contemporaries assure us, his music cannot be understood. The successes of the early music movement in the past three decades illustrate how historically informed, artistically accomplished performances can transform the awareness (and indeed popularity) of formerly peripheral, obscure historical repertoires. Perhaps, before too long, the music of the most popular, most beloved piano composer will likewise benefit from a re-examination of performance style and aesthetic. If so, a major role should be played by the *carezzando* touch in the *cantabile* style.

1 Quoted from J.-J. Eigeldinger, *Chopin pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils*, trans. N. Shohet with K. Osostowicz and R. Howat, ed. R. Howat (Cambridge, 3/1986), p. 279.

2 E. J. Hipkins, *How Chopin played, from contemporary impressions collected from the diaries and note-books of the late A. J. Hipkins*, F. S. (London, 1937), p. 23.

3 According to Emilie von Gretsche, Chopin insisted that 'Il faut chanter avec les doigts' (quoted from Eigeldinger, *Chopin*, p. 45); Jacques Durand reports Debussy's similar view that 'Above all, make me forget, as I listen to you, that the piano has hammers' (quoted from Eigeldinger, *Chopin*, p. 103 n.39).

4 Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Ueber Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke* (Leipzig, 1802, R/Kassel, 1968), p. 32; Frédéric Kalkbrenner, *Méthode pour apprendre le piano-forte à l'aide du guide-mains* (Paris, 1831, R/1850), p. 12.

5 Quoted from Eigeldinger, *Chopin*, p. 94 n.14.

6 Quoted from Eigeldinger, *Chopin*, p. 31.

7 Wojciech Sowiński, quoted from Eigeldinger, *Chopin*, p. 163.

8 Czartoryska's remarks are quoted from Eigeldinger, *Chopin*, pp. 30, 31 (my emphasis).

9 Quoted from Eigeldinger, *Chopin*, p. 276.

10 Quoted from Eigeldinger, *Chopin*, p. 81.

11 Hipkins adds a footnote here 'The finger slides from the back of the key towards the front.'

12 Hipkins, *How Chopin played*, p. 23. The Forkel passage about J. S. Bach cited in n. 4 above may be the ultimate source of the sliding finger among 19th-century scholars and writers. Hipkins calls the sliding of a finger for soft effects *Abzug*, which is also mentioned by C. P. E. Bach (*Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Berlin, 1762), trans. W. Mitchell as *Essay on the true art of playing keyboard instruments* (New York, 1949), p. 88) and by Daniel Gottlob Türk (*Clavierschule* (Leipzig, 1789, R/1967), p. 218). Actually, *Abzug* is the softer resolution of the principal note of an appoggiatura, and has nothing to do with sliding a finger on the key. In translating C. P. E. Bach's treatise, Mitchell blandly uses the word 'release' for the 'undecorated, lighter tone' that follows the appoggiatura, there being no English equivalent. Hipkins's comment about Kleczyński probably refers to the latter's identification of 'the fluent

legato in the first place so thoroughly vocal, brought out by gliding fingers' as one of the most striking features of Chopin's playing (Jean Kleczyński, *Chopin's greater works how they should be understood*, trans. N. Janotha (London, 1896), p. 19).

13 C. Timbrell, *French pianism a historical perspective* (Portland, OR, 2/1999), p. 37. 1831 is the usual date given for Kalkbrenner's *Méthode* (see *New Grove, MGG*, etc.).

14 Kalkbrenner, *Méthode*, p. 12 (my translation). In 1800 Louis Adam mentioned 'different ways of striking the keys' ('différentes manières d'attaquer les touches') and the need for students to choose the right one according to the expression of the passage, but he did not go into detail about how such touches were to be realized (Louis Adam, *Méthode de piano* (Paris, 1805; R/Geneva, 1974), p. 149).

15 William Gardiner, *The music of nature* (London, [1832] 1837), pp. 240, 245.

16 *Selected correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin*, trans. and ed. A. Hedley (London, 1962), p. 225.

17 His music is often indexed with the Polish spelling or with the first name 'Antoni'. I use the spelling with which Kontski published his treatise and much of his music.

18 P David and D Libby, 'Kątski', *New Grove II*.

19 Anton Kątski, 'Proshedshago 1 nastoyashchago stoletiya, 1 vliyanie ikh na muzykal'noe iskusstvo' ['Outstanding composer pianists of the present day and their influence on musical art'], *Teatral'nyi i muzykal'nyi viestnik* (St Petersburg), v (1858), pp 55–6. I am grateful to Amie Margoles for her translation from Russian

20 For example, on 6 August 1848 Chopin referred in correspondence to two other pianists (Osborne and Sowiński) as 'excellents amis', and he continued 'plus que du représentant rebutté [sic] Antoine de Kątski, français du Nord, animal du Midi' (Chopin, *Correspondance*, collected and revised by B E Sydow *et al*, 3 vols (Paris, 1981), III, p.360) A northern Frenchman was a Polish expatriate resident in Paris, which would likewise have described Chopin, perhaps that is why Kątski is somehow his 'representative', even if 'repellent' (*rebuté*) The precise implication of 'southern beast' (*animal du Midi*), which seems to be a euphemistic idiom, is not clear.

21 I. Poniatowska, 'Antoni Kątski jako pianista i kompozytor muzyki fortepianowej', in *Chopin w kręgu przyjaciół* [*Chopin among his friends*], ed. I. Poniatowska and D. Pistone (Warsaw, 1999), p.110 Following the 1845 Paris edition, *L'indispensable* was reissued in revised and expanded form as a parallel-text edition in French and German (Antoine de Kątski, *L'indispensable du pianiste*, op.100 (Berlin, c 1851)) Subsequently, there was also a French and Russian edition (St Petersburg, 1854), and a German one without the preface (Berlin, 1877)

22 These included the Guide-Mains, the Chirogymnaste, and the Dactylon Kątski was violently opposed to all such devices

23 Kątski, *L'indispensable du pianiste* (c 1851 version), pp 15–17, my translation.

24 Adolf Kullak, *Asthetik des Klavierspiels* (Leipzig, 1861), trans. T Baker as *The aesthetics of pianoforte-playing* (New York, 1893/R1972), p 79

25 O Bie, *A history of the pianoforte and pianoforte players*, trans E. E. Kellett and E W Naylor (London, 1899), p.190

26 R Gerig, *Famous pianists and their technique* (Washington, 1974), pp 132, 236, 315.

27 M. Jaell, *Le mécanisme du toucher* (Paris, 1897), pp 110ff, esp p 126, for Forkel reference see n 4 above

28 The physical mechanism of piano playing became something of an obsession with Jaell, who eventually advocated some even more exotic touches She used a compass to orientate her piano, and the study of inked fingerprints on the keys was central to her approach Her method is still maintained by a few teachers in France.

29 B Selva, *L'enseignement musical de la technique du piano Livre préparatoire, pt II* (Paris, 1922), pp 291–3

30 Selva, *L'enseignement musical*, p 305.

31 The first volume of Selva's *L'enseignement musical* (1916) begins with three basic touches: *jeu appuyé*, *jeu éclatant*, and *jeu indifférent* None of these has anything to do with a sliding or caressing touch.

32 Timbrell, *French pianism*, pp 203–6

33 Louis Adam, *Méthode nouvelle*, pp 154–6, Alexis de Garaudé, *Méthode complète pour le Piano Forte* (Paris, 1820), p.96; Henry Lemoine, *Méthode pour le Piano* (Paris, 1827), p 119; Kalkbrenner, *Méthode*, p 6

34 Kleczyński, quoted from Eigeldinger, *Chopin*, pp 33–4

35 S. Bernstein, *With your own two hands* (New York, 1981), p 145 This is not to say that varieties of articulation are gone forever the recently reissued Albéniz recordings of Esteban Sánchez provide excellent counter-examples to this trend

36 Hector Berlioz, 'Concerts', *Le rénovateur*, 11/345 (15 Dec 1833), quoted from Eigeldinger, *Chopin*, p 272; Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman, *L'encyclopédie du pianiste compositeur* (Paris, 1840), p.59

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