

Chopin's Singing Melody: Coloratura and Beyond

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Abstract

“Cantabile” melodies, with ornaments similar to vocal coloratura, are commonly seen in Frédéric Chopin’s music. Even in his early years, Chopin was familiar with a diverse range of arias from operas. He attended operatic performances, accompanied operatic rehearsals, improvised on themes from arias, and composed variations on themes from operas. His song-like melodies contain different types of ornamentation which can be traced back to different singing practices. This paper compares some of Chopin’s melodies to vocal passages from different sources to demonstrate the influence from operatic music and singing traditions. Various aspects of Chopin’s melodies are classified in accordance with different types of vocal ornamentation and vocal compositional techniques, such as variations on a theme, progressions of parallel thirds and sixths as used in operatic duets, and extended melodic lines with rhythmic tension at climaxes as in Vincenzo Bellini’s operas. The comparison and classification function to suggest possible ways of rendering Chopin’s music through the knowledge of how contemporaneous singers, who are often the muse of his inspiration, performed and improvised those melodic aspects. Different sources that commend how his music should be rendered are studied, including the performance practice of operas in Chopin’s time, notated variations from composers and singers, and written records of Chopin playing the piano.

Keywords: Frédéric Chopin, singing melody, coloratura, vocal practice, performance practice

蕭邦的歌唱旋律：花腔及其他

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摘 要

帶有類似於聲樂花腔裝飾的「如歌」旋律，在蕭邦的音樂中很常見。蕭邦年輕時即已熟悉各類型歌劇詠唱調。他參與歌劇演出、擔任歌劇排練的伴奏、拿詠唱調的主題來即興，並根據出自歌劇的主題來創作變奏曲。他那些歌曲似的旋律，包含不同類型的、可追溯到不同歌唱傳統的裝飾法。這篇文章挑選若干蕭邦譜寫的旋律，來和不同的聲樂段落進行比較，以展示歌劇音樂和歌唱傳統造成的影響。蕭邦旋律的許多面向都根據不同類型的聲樂裝飾法和聲樂作曲技巧進行了分類，例如根據主題譜寫變奏、如同歌劇二重唱那樣以平行三度和六度進行，以及如同貝里尼歌劇那樣，在高潮處以帶有節奏張力的旋律線條延展向前。藉由觀察作為蕭邦靈感來源的同時代歌者，如何演唱和即興這些旋律面向，這些比較和分類將可提出演繹蕭邦音樂的可能方式。本文也研究了蕭邦時代的歌劇表演實踐、作曲家和歌者記下來的變奏，以及蕭邦鋼琴演奏的書面記錄，以提供演繹蕭邦音樂的參考。

關鍵詞：蕭邦、歌唱旋律、花腔、聲樂實踐、表演實踐

1. Introduction

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) attended operatic performances beginning in his early years in Poland. These included Gioachino Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in 1825¹ and in 1828,² *La gazza ladra* in 1826,³ and Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz*, which was one of Chopin's favorites, in 1828.⁴ During his Berlin visit in 1828, he saw Gaspare Spontini's *Fernand Cortez*, Domenico Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*, George Onslow's *Le Colporteur ou L'Enfant du bûcheron*, Weber's *Der Freischütz* again,⁵ and Peter von Winter's *Das unterbrochene Opferfest*.⁶ He proceeded to Vienna for Giacomo Meyerbeer's *Il crociato in Egitto* in 1829.⁷ He worked as an accompanist for operatic rehearsals, in addition to playing piano accompaniment for singers in concerts. These rehearsals included Rossini's *Il turco in Italia* and Ferdinando Paër's *Agnese*, with the latter featuring Konstancja Gładkowska, Chopin's beloved, playing the title role.⁸

From 1830 onward, his exposure to operas broadened significantly. He was keen on performances of operas, which he often hurried to see.⁹ He attended

¹ Iwo Załuski and Pamela Załuski, *Chopin's Poland* (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1996), 76.

² Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 115.

³ Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 86.

⁴ Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 116.

⁵ In his letter from Berlin to his parents dated September 20, 1828, he wrote "Tomorrow will see the fulfilment of [one of] my most earnest wishes: 'Der Freischütz' is to be performed. I shall then be able to compare our singers with the singers here." See Moritz Karasowski, *Frederic Chopin: His Life and Letters*, trans. Emily Hill, 3rd ed. (London: William Reeves, 1938), 55.

⁶ Chopin's visits to these operas were mentioned in Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 119.

⁷ Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 145.

⁸ Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 160.

⁹ For examples of these, see Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 170. He chose to catch the end of Winter's *Das unterbrochene Opferfest* and Daniel-François-Esprit Auber's *La Muette de Portici* rather than missing them entirely.

operatic performances regularly when he was in Dresden¹⁰ and Vienna.¹¹ In Paris, the center of opera culture during the first half of the nineteenth century, Chopin immersed himself in the world of singing. He wrote to his teacher Joseph Elsner in Warsaw, “only in Paris can one learn what singing really is.”¹² He was fond of many singers: soprano Henrietta Sontag, whom Chopin came to know personally in Warsaw in 1830¹³ and whose voice Chopin praised as producing “so powerful an impression”;¹⁴ Gładkowska, whom Chopin praised for her “bell-like purity of her intonation, and true warmth of feeling”;¹⁵ Giuditta Pasta, about whom Chopin wrote, “They say that Pasta’s voice has rather gone off, but I never in my life heard such heavenly singing as [hers]”;¹⁶ and Maria Malibran, whose voice Chopin described as “wonderful” and her style “unique and fascinating.”¹⁷ Nonetheless, Malibran paled in Chopin’s eyes to Madame Laure Cinti-Damoreau, whom Chopin praised for her perfect execution of chromatic scales and coloraturas.¹⁸ The composer also praised several tenors: Giovanni Battista Rubini for his incomparable “mezza-voce”,¹⁹ Luigi Lablache for his fine performances of Rossini’s *Barbiere* and *Otello*,²⁰ and Jean-Baptiste Chollet, the first tenor of the “Opéra comique”, about whom Chopin wrote, “He charms universally [with] his sympathetic voice.”²¹

¹⁰ Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin’s Poland*, 171.

¹¹ Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin’s Poland*, 172.

¹² Chopin to Józef Elsner, Paris, December 14, 1831, in Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 240.

¹³ Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin’s Poland*, 160-161.

¹⁴ Chopin to Tytus Woyciechowski, Warsaw, June 5, 1830, in Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 138.

¹⁵ Chopin to Woyciechowski, Warsaw, August 31, 1830, in Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 142. Chopin was smitten by Gładkowska who inspired many of his compositions.

¹⁶ Chopin to Woyciechowski, Paris, December 16, 1831, in Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 246-247.

¹⁷ Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 247.

¹⁸ Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 248.

¹⁹ Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 247.

²⁰ Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 246.

²¹ Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 248-249.

The number of his works directly influenced by operas is also considerable, but some of them are lost or unpublished. His sets of variations based on themes from operas, some of which were probably a product of written-out improvisations, include *Variations for Flute and Piano* (B. 9, 1824) based on the Finale of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, *Variations on "Là ci darem la mano"* (op. 2, B. 22, 1827) from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, "*Je vends des scapulaires*" *Variations* (op. 12, B. 80, 1833) from Ferdinand Hérold's *Ludovic*, and the sixth variation of *Hexaméron* (S. 392, 1837, a collaborative composition composed by Franz Liszt together with five other composers) based on the March from Bellini's *I puritani*. Other compositions include a polonaise on themes from Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (1825, now lost),²² the *Polonaise in B-flat minor* (B. 13, 1826, published posthumously in 1878 without an opus number) of which the trio section is based on an aria from Rossini's *La gazza ladra*,²³ and *Grand Duo in E major for Piano and Cello* (B. 70, 1832) on themes from Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable*.

Many of Chopin's original compositions emulate singing. "Cantabile" melody is one of his distinctive features. This melody is often decorated with ornamentation, which varies each time it reappears. Embellished "cantabile" melody together with Chopin's famous "tempo rubato" playing style create freedom between the pianist's two hands—the hand that plays the singing melody is free from the other hand that plays the accompaniment with a steady pulse. This freedom in the singing line is similar to the operatic vocal line, which, in practice, is semi-improvisatory. Another feature of Chopin's melody is its progression in parallel thirds or sixths. This composition method recalls duet passages in operas. Moreover, Chopin's later works often include an extension of phrases, especially at climaxes. This extension heightens the tension in music, suppressing the advance of the melodic line with rests or tied notes, resulting in an emphasis on upbeats or weak beats. This creates an effect that is similar to the

²² Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 76.

²³ Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 86.

“bel canto” operas of Bellini, who was Chopin’s good friend between 1832 and 1835.²⁴ With comparisons between Chopin’s music and passages from operas, this research aims to demonstrate the operatic influences on Chopin’s melody, introduce the performance practice of operatic singing in Chopin’s time and suggest a new possible rendering of Chopin’s music on the piano.

2. Ornamentation or Coloratura

The Italian term “coloratura” literally means “coloring”. In music, the term denotes ornamentation or florid figuration which can be classified into two types: one with notes added without altering the pulse or length of the entire piece and the other with an extension of time within a measure by the addition of the equivalent in time of a measure or more.²⁵ Coloratura generally refers to vocal ornaments, but in this paper, the term is also used to describe ornaments in instrumental music that imitate those of vocal music or that are otherwise transferred to the instrumental realm.

Improvised ornaments in operatic singing during Chopin’s lifetime also show a similar shape and contour to the ornaments Chopin employed in his piano music. Chopin’s coloratura can be described with the following terms appropriated from the realm of vocal music, especially the practices that had begun in the seventeenth century and reached their peak during the early nineteenth century.²⁶

²⁴ Bellini died in 1835, and before Chopin died, he requested to be interred next to Bellini. See Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 362.

²⁵ Owen Jander and Ellen T. Harris, “Coloratura,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, published online 2001, accessed April 2, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.06154>. Jander and Harris refer to Christoph Bernhard who categorizes coloratura into two different types. The type that has an extension beyond the bar line or that adds bars is what Bernhard refers to as a cadenza that always leads to the closure of music.

²⁶ According to Martha Elliott, these practices refer to the fashion of making changes and adaptations for each operatic production, and “the art of improvising florid embellishments” associated with Italian singers. See Martha Elliott, *Singing in Style: A*

(1) “Trillo” and “Parlando”

A “trillo”, an ornament in vocal music of the seventeenth century, consists of the same note in succession which resembles a tremolo in instrumental music. Lucas Harris noted that a “trillo” normally quickens at the end rather than slowing down.²⁷ Giulio Caccini emphasized that a “trillo” “is upon one note only”;²⁸ it begins with a quarter note which is followed by shorter note values until it reaches the final whole note as shown in Example 1.²⁹ Christoph Bernhard recommended that a “trillo” be neither too fast nor too slow; a medium speed is the best, but if there had to be an error between too fast and too slow, Bernhard preferred to hear the former.

Example 1. A “Trillo”.³⁰



In Chopin's melodies, there are passages that are similar to the “trillo” (see Examples 2-5). Unlike Caccini's description of an acceleration toward the end, the piano score equalizes every note in a subdivision of the regular tempo. It is possible that (1) the written score only records approximate execution, and there can be more freedom in playing, which allows gradual acceleration toward the end; (2) execution on the piano is more exact than with the voice, and the equalized rhythm in the notated score makes it logical to read and fits with the accompaniment.

Guide to Vocal Performance Practices (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 127 and 149.

²⁷ Lucas Harris, “Vocal Ornaments in the Seventeenth Century,” Toronto Continuo Collective, prepared September 2002, accessed May 13, 2019, <http://www.continuo.ca/files/Vocal%20ornamentation%20in%20Italy.pdf>.

²⁸ Harris, “Vocal Ornaments.”

²⁹ Harris, “Vocal Ornaments.”

³⁰ Harris, “Vocal Ornaments.” All examples in this article are newly typed by the author.

Example 2. Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2 (1830-1832).

(a) m. 10.



(b) m. 18.

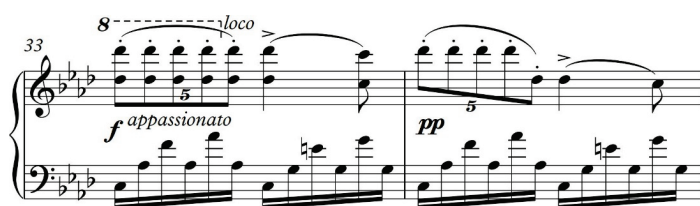


Example 3. Chopin: Etude, Op. 10, No. 9 (1830-1832).

(a) mm. 29-30.



(b) mm. 33-34.



(c) mm. 61-62.

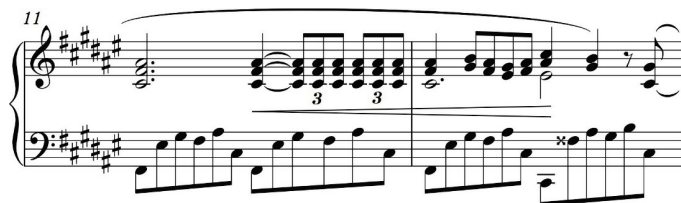


Example 4. Chopin: Prelude, Op. 28, No. 13 (1838-1839).

(a) mm. 3-4.



(b) mm. 11-12.



Example 5. Chopin: Mazurka, Op. 17, No. 4 (1833).

(a) mm. 11-14.



(b) mm. 27-30.



These repeating-note figures in Chopin’s melody also recall the “parlando” style. “Parlando” literally means “speaking” and is very common in recitatives (see Example 6). Unlike “trillo”, “parlando” has a rather slow or moderate tempo, and Chopin’s repeating-note figures reflect this tempo. They also render the melodic lines more similar to those of recitatives.

Example 6. Bellini: *Norma*, Act I, Scene IV.

(a) Norma’s recitative, excerpt.



(b) Oroveso’s recitative, excerpt.



(2) Unequal Rhythms

One way for singers to create variation is to provide rhythmic variety, for example equal eighth notes or sixteenth notes may be sung in a dotted rhythm.³¹ Chopin also experimented with this technique of variation. When comparing

³¹ Harris, “Vocal Ornaments.”

different appearances of the same melody, such as in Example 5, measure 13 is notated with a dotted rhythm, while measure 29 has an equal rhythm. Rhythmic variety is also found in different publications. Measure 18 of Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2 (see Example 2(b)) also appears in other publications as a rhythmic variation of the previous melody, as shown in Example 7.

Example 7. Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2, a variation on m. 18.³²



The dotted rhythm also adds color to the same melody that reappears near the end of a piece. Comparing measures 61-62 (Example 3(c)) to measures 33-34 (Example 3(b)) of Etude, Op. 10, No. 9, I find that the dotted figure creates diminution, quickens the repeated notes that precede it and heightens the sense of theatricality before the piece comes to its end. Rhythmic variety also occurs in measure 4 and measure 12 of Prelude, Op. 28, No. 13, shown in Example 4. The quickening of the notes is similar to the way singers vary passages in performance.

(3) “Gruppo”

A “gruppo” looks like an upper-neighbor trill with a turn at the end. In singing traditions, this ornament is often placed at the cadence.³³

In Nocturne, Op. 55, No. 2, Chopin added tension at the start of the piece with a long trill over a dominant ninth chord. The trill ends with a turn that leads

³² See Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, “Nocturnes Op. 9, Bar 18,” *Online Chopin Variorum Edition*, accessed March 29, 2020, <http://www.chopinonline.ac.uk/ocve/browse/barview?workid=6394&pageimageid=72815&barid=18>.

³³ Harris, “Vocal Ornaments.”

to a resolution to the tonic harmony in the next measure. It can be said that Chopin added interest to the piece by introducing a cadence before the piece truly starts.

Examining measure 1 of the nocturne (see Example 8(a)), I find that the ornament in the right hand has the same shape as the vocal ornament “gruppo”. This trill with a turn is used again in measure 34 (see Example 8(b)) and is extended and heightened. As expected, it leads to a resolution, as in a cadence, in the next measure.

Example 8. Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 55, No. 2 (1842-1844).

(a) mm. 1-2.



(b) mm. 34-35.



Another example of a “gruppo” figuration appears in Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2 (see Example 9). Chopin created this variation using the technique of diminution as in singing. Measure 26 is a variation of measure 25; the same idea is repeated in measures 29-30. Measure 26 and measure 29 show the “gruppo” figuration. I find this Chopin melody resembles the embellishments added by the French soprano Laure Cinti-Damoreau in Rossini’s *Tancredi* (see Example 10).

Example 9. Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2, mm. 25-30.

25
p
pp
poco rubato
sempre pp
dolcissimo

28
p
con forza
stretto

Example 10. Rossini: *Tancredi*, No. 3, Tancredi's recitative, excerpt, vocal part, embellishments by Cinti-Damoreau.³⁴

et - re Ah! je me

(4) “Cascata”

“Cascata” literally means “fall”, which is characterized by a descending scale. Example 11 shows the variation that Gaetano Donizetti made in his arrangement for voice and piano of Nemorino’s “Una furtiva lagrima” from the opera *L’elisir d’amore* (1832). The piece has two strophes with variation inserted in the second strophe. Donizetti added a “cascata”, which contrasts with the first strophe in the original version.

³⁴ Will Crutchfield, “Improvisation, II. Western Art Music, 5. The 19th Century, (ii) Vocal Music,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, updated September 3, 2014, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13738>.

Example 11. Donizetti: *L'elisir d'amore*, “Una furtiva lagrima,” excerpt from the second stanza, vocal part, a comparison between Donizetti’s variation and the original.³⁵



In Chopin’s Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 1 (see Example 12), measure 11 and measure 73 are variations of measure 3. The “cascata” figure at the beginning of measure 11 and measure 73 also shares the same pitches with Donizetti’s variation in Example 11.

Example 12. Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 1.

(a) m. 3.



(b) m. 11.



³⁵ Philip Gossett, *Divas and Scholars: Performing Italian Opera* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 297.

(c) m. 73.



(5) “Cercar della nota”

“Cercar della nota”, or “searching for the note”, is a vocal ornament that can be used at the beginning or in the middle of a phrase. At the beginning of a phrase, one note below the initial note is added. It can be a note immediately below the initial note moving stepwise upward,³⁶ or it can be a leap moving up to the initial note.³⁷ In the middle of a phrase, it can occur between two notes of the same pitch or two notes a leap apart.³⁸ If between two notes of the same pitch, the added note can be above or below, moving stepwise to the second note.³⁹

According to the definition above, this type of ornament is common in Chopin's mazurkas. The characteristics of “cercar della nota” in Chopin's mazurkas are as follows: (1) the added note is often the same pitch as the preceding note, and (2) the move to the next note often involves a large leap. Example 13 demonstrates this type of ornament. Although it is not characteristically identical to the vocal ornament because of its large leap, these ornaments in Chopin's melody reflect the technique of “searching for the note” of “cercar della nota”.

³⁶ Harris, “Vocal Ornaments.”

³⁷ According to Giovanni Battista Bovicelli (1594), the added note can be a third or a fourth below the initial note depending on the other parts. See Ellen T. Harris, “Cercar della nota,” *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, published online 2001, accessed April 2, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.05292>.

³⁸ Bernhard (1649) quoted in Harris, “Vocal Ornaments.”

³⁹ Harris, “Vocal Ornaments.”

Example 13. Chopin: Mazurka, Op. 17, No. 1, mm. 41-60.

41
p
dolce.
48
dim:
54
loco.
D.C.

(6) Combinations of Different Types of Ornaments

Often, singers improvise variations with combinations of different types of ornaments. For example, in Example 10, Cinti-Damoreau added a “gruppo” followed by a “cascata”. In Chopin’s Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2 (Example 9), the “gruppo” figure in measure 26 is also followed by a “cascata”. Another comparison between vocal practice and Chopin’s variation is in Example 14.

In Manuel García’s version, he added a trill with a turn at the end, then repeated a note and made a leap followed by a “cascata”. In measures 7-8 of Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2, Chopin put a trill with a turn at the end, then repeated a note, and afterward inserted a leap followed by a “cascata”.

Example 14.

- (a) Cimarosa: *Il matrimonio segreto*, No. 13, Paolino's aria, excerpt, vocal part, a comparison between García's version and the original.⁴⁰

The image shows a musical score for a vocal excerpt from Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*. It compares two versions: García's (top) and the original (bottom). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The original melody starts at measure 8. García's version includes several performance instructions: *piano, soutenu* (piano, sustained), *tr* (trill), *forte* (loud), *mezzo respiro* (half breath), *port de voix énergique et rapide* (energetic and rapid port of voice), and *ritenuto rinforzando* (retained, strengthening). The lyrics for both versions are: "che - ti a len - to pas - so a len - - - to pas - so".

- (b) Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2, mm. 7-8.

The image shows measures 7 and 8 of Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2. Measure 7 begins with a trill (tr) on the right hand. The piece is in B-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with a trill and a descending scale, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

Example 15 compares measure 6 of Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2 to García's variation of Otello's recitative (No. 1) from Rossini's *Otello*. Measure 6 of the nocturne is a variation of measure 2. When repeating the same melody, Chopin varied it with the figure of "échappé".⁴¹

⁴⁰ Crutchfield, "Improvisation."

⁴¹ Here, it is in the figure of an escape tone. However, in vocal music, the term "échappé" (or "accento") is used to denote another type of vocal ornament. Neither García's nor Chopin's versions is a normal "échappé". According to Bernhard, "échappé" is used in a descending line moving by seconds and thirds. For instance, if the line is A–G–F, singers can sing a diminution as A–Bb–G–A–F–G.

Example 15.

(a) Rossini: *Otello*, No. 1, Otello's recitative, m. 13, vocal part, a comparison between García's version and the original.⁴²



(b) Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2, m. 6.



Example 16 also shows the figure of “échappé”, but the lines descend and progress by leaps. Example 16(a) is the variation Rossini wrote for Madame Grégoire, from “Oh patria! ... Di tanti palpiti,” in Act I, Scene II of *Tancredi*. Both the Rossini and Chopin examples are coincidentally in measure 73.

⁴² Manuel García, *Traité complet de l'art du chant en deux parties* (Paris, 1847), reproduced in Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 305.

Example 16.

- (a) Rossini: *Tancredi*, No. 3, Tancredi's recitative, m. 73, vocal part, a comparison between Rossini's variation for Madame Grégoire and the original.⁴³

The image shows two staves of musical notation for measure 73 of Rossini's *Tancredi*, No. 3. The top staff is labeled 'variation' and the bottom staff is labeled 'original'. Both staves are in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The lyrics are '- si - - o, ca - da un'. The 'variation' staff features a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G, A) followed by a quarter note (B) and a half note (C), marked with a forte (ff) dynamic. The 'original' staff features a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G, A) followed by a quarter note (B) and a half note (C), marked with a forte (ff) dynamic.

- (b) Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 1, m. 73.

The image shows the musical notation for measure 73 of Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 1. The notation is in B-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. The melody is marked 'legatiss.' and features a triplet of eighth notes (F, G, A) followed by a quarter note (B) and a half note (C). The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Example 17 shows ornaments in the shape of an upper turn with an ascending scale (and followed by a descending scale in Example 17(c) and Example 17(d)). Example 17(a) is the variation that Rossini made for Giuseppina Vitali in measure 134 of Ninetta's cavatina (No. 2) from *La gazza ladra*. It is the standard pattern which Rossini used to conclude a cavatina.⁴⁴ Example 17(b) shows the same shape as in Example 17(a). It is Rossini's own variation for Mathilde Juva of measure 113 of Rosina's cavatina (No. 4) from *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Example 17(c) is the notated version of Cenerentola's final aria, measure 99 that precedes a cadenza in measure 100. The notated version and variations that Rossini made indicate how melodic lines would be shaped in performance, and Chopin, as shown in Example 17(d), also used the same technique as observed in Rossini's coloratura.

⁴³ Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 314.

⁴⁴ Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 319-320.

Example 17.

(a) Rossini: *La gazza ladra*, No. 2, Ninetta's cavatina, m. 132-135, vocal part, a comparison between Rossini's variation for Vitali and the original.⁴⁵

variation 132
- drò, al - fin go - drò!

original
[go] - drò, al - fin go - drò, al - fin go - drò, al - fin go - drò!

(b) Rossini: *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, No. 4, Rosina's cavatina, m. 113-114, vocal part, a comparison between Rossini's variation for Juva and the original.⁴⁶

Juva 113 *ff*
- car, fa - rò gio - car.

original
- car, fa - rò giuo - car.

(c) Rossini: *La Cenerentola*, Cenerentola's final aria, m. 99, vocal part.⁴⁷

original 99
co-me un ba - le - no

(d) Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 3, m. 27.

27
dolciss.

⁴⁵ Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 320.

⁴⁶ Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 329.

⁴⁷ Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 326.

Example 18 compares Rossini's coloratura to that of Chopin. Both passages combine the figures of an ascending-descending scale and neighboring note with a leap. Lengthy coloratura is often reserved for the concluding section of a piece. Example 18(a) is the end of Cenerentola's final aria, and Example 18(b) is the last passage from the principal theme of Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2.

Example 18.

(a) Rossini: *La Cenerentola*, Cenerentola's final aria, mm. 99-100, vocal part.⁴⁸



(b) Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2, mm. 51-52 (1836).



The comparisons in this section show that Chopin created variations of his melody and combined different types of ornaments similar to those passages in operas. His diminutions in the melodic line followed the same techniques of vocal practice.

3. Parallel Thirds and Sixths

Chopin sometimes presented his melody in parallel thirds or sixths, such as in Example 19. These passages recall duet numbers in operas. Example 20 is an

⁴⁸ Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 326.

excerpt from the duet “Mieux vaut mourir! ... Amour sacré de la patrie” from Daniel-François-Esprit Auber’s *La Muette de Portici* (1828). Chopin particularly liked this opera as he improvised on a theme from it in a concert in Breslau in early November 1830⁴⁹ and rushed to see a performance in Dresden on the same day of a musical soirée he was invited to attend.⁵⁰ The duet progresses mainly with parallel thirds and sixths. To compare the excerpts in Example 19(b) and Example 20, both pieces share not only parallel sixths but also melodic lines in the same direction. Both excerpts contain two periods (4 two-measure phrases in Auber and 4 four-measure phrases in Chopin), and the melodic lines of one period can be reduced to mi–fa–mi–re–si, re–mi–re–do in Auber and mi–fa–mi–re–do, si–do–si–la–sol in Chopin. The first phrases of both pieces are similar to the typical chord progression I–IV–V. While Auber remains diatonic in his chord progression in the second phrase, Chopin distorted it further with submediant chord in first inversion and a secondary dominant chord and raises the melodic line up, displaying more freedom in writing for the piano with the wider pitch range of the instrument.

Example 19.

(a) Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2, mm. 10-12.



⁴⁹ Chopin to his parents and sisters, Breslau, November 9, 1830, in Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 162.

⁵⁰ In a letter to his family dated November 14, 1830 from Dresden, Chopin wrote that he quietly slipped away from the soirée and rushed to the opera. See Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 164-167.

(b) Chopin: Waltz, Op. 34, No. 1, mm. 17-32 (1834-1838).

Example 20. Auber: *La Muette de Portici*, “Mieux vaut mourir! ... Amour sacré de la patrie”, vocal score, excerpt.

For this waltz, Chopin follows the common practice of using regularity of phrases as in his early nocturnes (the genre most associated with “cantabile” arias), so that melodic lines can be divided into units with an equal length. This regularity tends to decline in his later nocturnes, similar to the progression of opera styles from Rossini to Bellini. The regularity of phrases is common in “cantabile” arias by Rossini, while phrase extension is an interesting feature of Bellini’s arias.⁵¹ This will be discussed in more details in the next section, which compares Chopin’s later nocturnes.

4. Phrase Extension and Rhythmic Tension

Bellini heightens his music by extending the melodic line at climaxes, as is evident in “Casta diva” from *Norma*. The aria is in ternary form: ABA’, where A, excluding the orchestral introduction, is measures 16-31, B is measures 32-40, and A’ is measures 41-60. The only difference between A and A’ in the melodic line of the notated score is that A’ includes a cadenza. This melodic line in section A begins with regular four-measure units (see Example 21). Bellini starts to extend the melodic line at the climax. In Example 21, from measure 48, the line is extended and raised, reaching the highest note, Bb, in measure 53 at *ff*. The line continues toward the end, and the orchestra concludes the piece with a tonic triad in measures 58-60. Bellini created tension at the climax by not only stretching the phrase and raising the pitch but also accenting off-beats (measure 52) with rhythmic tension in the melodic line placed over chromatic harmonies. At the peak of the climax, the tension is released with rhythmic stability; Bellini accents every downbeat (measures 53-54) and employs sequential writing.

⁵¹ Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker observed that Bellini, unlike Rossini with symmetrical melodic patterns, often broke his melodic line with “lingering and pauses.” With this method, Bellini could prolong his long melodic line and this feature became his trademark. See Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, *A History of Opera: The Last 400 Years* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 234-236.

Example 21. Bellini: *Norma*, “Casta diva,” mm. 41-60, vocal part.

41 *pp*
Tem - pra, o Di - va, tem - pra tu de' co - ri ar - den - ti,

45
tem - pra an - co - ra, tem - pra an co - ra, tempra, ancor lo ze - lo au,

48 *pp*
da - ce, spargi in ter - ra ah! quella pa - ce, spar - gi in ter - ra, spargi in ter - ra quella.....

52 *cres. sempre al..... ff*
pa - ce che re - gnar, reg nar tu fai, tu fai nel

55 *pp*
ciel, tu..... fa - i

57 *pp*
nel..... ciel.....

The poignancy that Bellini created at this climax is similar to Chopin's emotional expression in his compositions. In Nocturne, Op. 55, No. 2 (Example 22), Chopin employed similar rhythmic tension in measures 17-18, 43-44, and 51-52. The theme in Example 22 is stated three times in the nocturne, and the excerpt is the last statement leading to the coda. Although the passage is not the most emphatic climax in the piece—measures 34-38 with the beginning theme presented at *ff*, seem to be the peak—this excerpt in Example 22 creates equal tension and becomes climactic when the melodic line is extended with rhythmic tension, where Chopin puts a long note on beats 2 and 4. The rhythmic tension ends in measure 53, coincidentally the same measure number as Bellini's “Casta diva” in Example 21, with the first note coming on the first downbeat of the measure. Both Chopin and Bellini put a nonharmonic note here: A \flat in Chopin

over G \flat major harmony, and B \flat in Bellini over D minor harmony. The rhythmic tension is released here when the rhythm emphasizes all downbeats of the 12/8 time, the meter commonly shared in these two pieces.

Example 22. Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 55, No. 2, mm. 47-55.

A similar phrase extension with rhythmic tension is also found in the climax of Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2. This nocturne is in strophic form with three strophes, and one strophe can be divided into theme A which is followed by theme B. The excerpt in Example 23(b) is theme B of the second strophe. While theme A consists of eight measures, showing one period (see Example 23(a)),⁵² the phrases in theme B are more challenging to define. The melodic line is extended, and rhythmic tension is introduced in measures 42-44.⁵³ Chopin marked *sf* on the off-beat note G \flat , the highest note in the passage. The tension is similar to the climax of "Casta diva", and it is released when these accented off-

⁵² The excerpt here is theme A from the first strophe. Chopin varied theme A in the second strophe but retained the same phrase structure.

⁵³ This kind of tension happens only in the second strophe, a variation of the first strophe.

beat notes end in measure 45. The third strophe comes in measure 46, and like Bellini, who introduced a cadenza, Chopin wrote a cadenza-like passage here for the last statement of the theme. The third strophe is shorter than the previous ones and briefly leads to a coda section.

Example 23. Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2.

(a) mm. 2-9, right hand.



(b) mm. 34-53, right hand.



The influence of the genre of opera in Chopin's music suggests that the way Chopin wrote his melodic lines at climaxes might have been inspired by Bellini. Evidently Chopin was familiar with "Casta diva" because there is a sketch of piano accompaniment he made for this aria, possibly for the singer Pauline Viardot.⁵⁴ It was also discovered recently that Chopin transcribed "Casta diva" into a piano version.⁵⁵ The sketch and the transcription confirmed that Chopin was fond of this aria. The poignancy that Bellini created and that Chopin demonstrated in the two nocturnes is also reminiscent of what was recorded about rhythmic tension in Chopin's improvisations. Elisa Fournier wrote to her mother on July 9-10, 1846, describing Chopin's improvisation on July 9 at George Sand's salon at Nohant. After detailing many pieces of music that Chopin improvised in many different moods, Fournier wrote that Chopin then imitated on the piano a little music box, and he "played a melody [...] with a missing note in the music box so that each time it should have been played there was a hiccup."⁵⁶ Chopin's compositions in notated form passed down to us today surely include some of his refined improvisations, passages that show what he might have absorbed.

5. Playing as Singing

Now that the influences of operatic singing on Chopin's melodies have been examined, this section discusses how performers could interpret his music. Chopin himself revealed some thoughts on how his music should sound. He often

⁵⁴ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*, trans. Naomi Shohet, Krycia Osostowicz, and Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 111 n75.

⁵⁵ See Frédéric Chopin, "Casta Diva (Chopin, Frédéric)," *International Music Score Library Project*, uploaded by Janno, October 15, 2010, accessed April 17, 2020, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Casta_Diva_\(Chopin,_Frédéric\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Casta_Diva_(Chopin,_Frédéric)).

⁵⁶ Translated and quoted in John Rink, "Chopin and Improvisation," in *Chopin and His World*, ed. Jonathan D. Bellman and Halina Goldberg (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 253.

associated music with singing. He remarked “music ought to be song,”⁵⁷ “You must sing if you wish to play,”⁵⁸ and “You must sing with your fingers!” (“Il faut chanter avec les doigts!”).⁵⁹ He always advised his students to listen to good singers. As Jean Kleczyński remarked, Chopin advised that pianists follow the rules that “guide vocalists” and that to perfect this, one should hear good singers.⁶⁰ Chopin’s views, as recorded by Moritz Karasowski, were that “naturalness in performance” could be achieved by listening “frequently to Italian singers.”⁶¹ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger wrote that Chopin “constantly presented Rubini as a model for pianistic declamation.”⁶² Chopin himself wrote about Rubini:

Rubini, a capital tenor, makes no end of “roulades”, and often too many “coloratures”, but by his incessant recourse to the trill and “tremolo”, he wins enormous applause. His “mezza-voce” is incomparable.⁶³

The quality that Chopin praised in “mezza-voce” singing, or singing with half the power of the voice, was also reflected in his playing. Ignaz Moscheles described Chopin’s playing in 1839 in a letter to his wife: “[H]is ‘piano’ is so delicate that no very strong ‘forte’ is required to give the desired contrast.”⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Chopin to an anonymous Scottish lady, in James Cuthbert Hadden, *Chopin*, 6th ed. (London, 1934), 159, quoted in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 44.

⁵⁸ Chopin to Madame Rubio, in Frederick Niecks, *Chopin as a Man and Musician*, 3rd ed. (London, 1902), 2:187, quoted in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 45.

⁵⁹ Chopin to his student Emilie von Gretsck, in Maria von Grewingk, *Eine Tochter Alt-Rigas, Schülerin Chopins*, (Riga, 1928), 20, quoted in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 45.

⁶⁰ Jean Kleczyński, *How to Play Chopin: The Works of Frederic Chopin, Their Proper Interpretation*, trans. Alfred Whittingham, 6th ed. (London, 1913), 55, quoted in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 44.

⁶¹ Moritz Karasowski, *Friedrich Chopin: Sein Leben, seine Werke und Briefe* (Dresden, 1877), 2:93, quoted in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 44.

⁶² Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 111.

⁶³ Chopin to Woyciechowski, Paris, December 16, 1831, in Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 247.

⁶⁴ Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 305.

Alfred James Hipkins also described Chopin's playing with similar emphasis on his soft tone:

His "fortissimo" was the full pure tone without noise, a harsh inelastic note being to him painful. His "nuances" were modifications of that tone, decreasing to the faintest yet always distinct "pianissimo".⁶⁵

This soft sound seems to be a trait that Chopin always admired. He praised the singer Jenny Lind with similar admiration as he held for Rubini: "Her singing is invariably pure and true, but what I admired most is her *piano*, which is indescribably fascinating."⁶⁶ The soft touch of his playing has been identified since his youth. The *German Musical Journal*, on 18 November 1829, praised "his exquisite delicacy of touch."⁶⁷ This delicate touch was interpreted by the *Vienna Theatre News* in the same year as akin to "conversing among clever people."⁶⁸

It is true that music for Chopin was akin to speech; his pupil Carl Mikuli remarked, "Chopin insisted above all on the importance of correct phrasing,"⁶⁹ and with correct phrasing, it is as if one speaks a mother tongue and the speech is intelligible.⁷⁰ The prosody in Chopin's music, conceivably like words and meaning combined with music in arias, can be summed up with two interrelated

⁶⁵ This description was gathered by Edith J. Hipkins in *How Chopin Played, From Contemporary Impressions Collected from the Diaries and Notebooks of the Late A. J. Hipkins*, quoted in Jonathan Bellman, "Chopin and His Imitators: Notated Emulations of the 'True Style' of Performance," *19th-Century Music* 24, no. 2 (Autumn 2000): 150. In terms of Chopin's "pianissimo" playing, Bellman suggested the recordings of Raoul von Koczalski, a student of Chopin's pupil Carl Mikuli. Bellman reasoned that Koczalski studied mainly only with Mikuli whose teaching was "strictly based on Chopin's method" and that Koczalski's playing was "closely approximate [to] Chopin's pianism as described by the composer's contemporaries." See Bellman, "Chopin and His Imitators," 151 n9.

⁶⁶ Chopin to his friend Grzymala, London, May 11, 1848, in Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 347.

⁶⁷ Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 138.

⁶⁸ Załuski and Załuski, *Chopin's Poland*, 138.

⁶⁹ Carl Mikuli, *Vorwort to Fr. Chopin's Pianoforte-Werke*, ed. Mikuli (Leipzig, 1880), 4, quoted in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 42.

⁷⁰ Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 42.

considerations: (1) pauses at the ends of phrases and (2) the flow of the whole musical idea. The ends of phrases are so distinctive, according to Kleczyński, that

without them music becomes a succession of sounds without connection, an incomprehensible chaos, as spoken language would be if no regard were paid to punctuation and the inflection of the voice.⁷¹

In order to engage the flow of the whole idea, Chopin urged, “[D]o not play by too short phrases”;⁷² he advised his students “not to fragment the musical idea, but rather to carry it to the listener in one long breath.”⁷³ These two characteristics are considered and conveyed through an analogy to the clarity and intelligibility in singing based upon well-balanced pauses for breath.

If singing is a model for playing Chopin's melodies, another important feature to consider is the role of improvisation,⁷⁴ which is part of the performance practice of operatic singing during the first half of the nineteenth century. Before the mid-nineteenth century, operatic composers knew and expected that singers would improvise ornaments during the performance; thus, music was written in a manner that gave singers opportunities to improvise. For instance, Rossini often included repetition, whether it is “of short phrases, entire sections, or even cadential formulas.”⁷⁵ This provided singers with the

⁷¹ Kleczyński, *How to Play Chopin*, 49, 50-53, quoted in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 43.

⁷² Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 43.

⁷³ Karasowski, *Chopin: Leben, Werke und Briefe*, 2:94, quoted in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 44.

⁷⁴ According to Gossett, “true improvisation was rare.” He reasoned that with orchestral accompaniment musicians could not modify their parts to accommodate the singer unless it involved a single instrument, and the singer might stray from the harmonic path and create unpleasant dissonances. There might be, however, accomplished singers who could excellently improvise on the spot. Gossett also observed that variations of different singers show striking similarities, and when Rossini wrote out ornaments, “he tended to repeat himself.” One might have a set of variations and use it consistently. See Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 330-331. Thus, the term “improvisation” here encompasses both variations that are worked out beforehand and real improvisation on the spot.

⁷⁵ Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 310.

opportunity to create variations. Chopin often wrote his melody in the same manner. He repeated a phrase or an entire section, which provided opportunities to create variations.

With these melodic repetitions, the answer to the question “Should we improvise variations to Chopin’s melody?” is clear. Chopin himself, as observed by Hipkins, “*never* played his own compositions twice alike, but varied each according to the mood of the moment, a mood that charmed by its very waywardness.”⁷⁶ Improvisation, which was common among other musicians of his time, was part of Chopin’s performing practice. Questions such as “How should we improvise?” or “How should we create variations on his melody?” ensue. These questions can be answered variously. First, simply follow what is notated in the score. This instruction may sound contradictory, especially as the term “improvisation” literally means “to perform without prepared music.” According to Gossett, musicians in the past were like modern musicians in that some of them were capable of improvising on the spot, whereas others needed to work their variations out beforehand.⁷⁷ Performers unable to improvise may rely on those variations given by Chopin himself in the score. Chopin already created variations for his repeated melody, and he sometimes created other variations for his students.⁷⁸ What Chopin notated in the score was surely the best in his opinion.⁷⁹ This practice might also be the reason why Rossini, unlike his

⁷⁶ Rink, “Chopin and Improvisation,” 254.

⁷⁷ See Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 331.

⁷⁸ See *Online Chopin Variorum Edition* and Connie Luk, “A Historically Informed Approach to Teaching Chopin’s Nocturnes on the Modern Piano” (unpublished paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on Performance and Creativity: Historical Keyboard Music 1700-1850, Hong Kong, May 27-29, 2019), abstract.

⁷⁹ This idea came from C. P. E. Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (1753-1762), 165, quoted in Robert D. Levin, “Improvisation, II. Western Art Music, 4. The Classical Period, (i) Instrumental Music, (a) Improvised Embellishments,” Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, updated September 3, 2014, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13738>. Bach wrote that “many variants of melodies introduced by executants in the belief that they honour a piece, actually occurred to the composer, who, however, selected and wrote down the original because he considered it the best of its kind.” However, Bach continued, “Today varied reprises are indispensable, being expected to every performer.” In Chopin’s time,

predecessors, dictated his detailed embellishment in the score.⁸⁰

Second, if performers decide to create their own variations following Chopin's performing practice, they can find patterns of ornamentation that Chopin used, as discussed in the previous sections, including different types of ornaments, combinations of ornaments, the use of parallel thirds and sixths, or additional embellishment that does not strictly follow the meter, i.e., making the measure longer in time.⁸¹ We may end up with a relatively fixed set of variations, just as Gossett observed that different singers in Chopin's time made their variations with "striking similarities" and Rossini "tended to repeat himself" when writing out his ornaments.⁸² For another good reason to create our own variations, I would refer to Cinti-Damoreau, who did not write variations for singers but suggested that they invent their own according to their natural talents.⁸³ The suggestion of this contemporary singer of Chopin's time can apply to the performance of Chopin's piano music because his melody was rooted in singing traditions, and with that in mind, pianists can be more comfortable with certain passages.

However, creating one's own variations still requires careful consideration. The style of Chopin's music and his playing is to be retained. The following statement from Joseph Nowakowski, Chopin's student, conveys this fundamental concern:

improvisation was still common among performers. Although Chopin thought that it might be the best to write down the notated variations, variations made during a performance were still expected.

⁸⁰ See Adele Phillips, "Rossini's Reform: The Controversy Surrounding the Use of Embellishment" (bachelor's thesis, University of Tasmania, 1999), accessed December 10, 2018, <https://eprints.utas.edu.au/18486/>.

⁸¹ Rossini sometimes added this kind of ornament and indicated "col canto" to direct the orchestra to follow the singer. For Chopin, some of his variations contain many notes that result in uncommon rhythmic subdivisions. This addition, however, when played by one performer, is easier to coordinate as the pianist can work out how the melody and the accompaniment would go between his or her own two hands.

⁸² See Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 330.

⁸³ Gossett, *Divas and Scholars*, 301.

One evening [in June 1843], when they [a large number of artists including Liszt, the singer Pauline Viardot-García, the painter Eugène Delacroix, many actors and writers, and some people from the neighborhood] were all assembled in the “salon” [in Nohant], Liszt played one of Chopin’s nocturnes, to which he took the liberty of adding some embellishments. Chopin’s delicate intellectual face [...] looked disturbed; at last he could not control himself any longer, and in that tone of sang-froid which he sometimes assumed he said, “I beg you, my dear friend, when you do me the honour of playing my compositions, to play them as they are written or else not at all.”⁸⁴

Liszt then asked Chopin to play himself. Chopin answered, “With pleasure.”

Then he began to improvise and played for nearly an hour [...]. When he left the piano his audience were in tears; Liszt was deeply affected and said to Chopin, as he embraced him, “Yes, my friend, you were right; works like yours ought not to be meddled with; other people’s alterations only spoil them. You are a true poet.” “Oh, it is nothing,” returned Chopin gaily, “We have each our own style; that is all the difference between us.”⁸⁵

Last but not least, to understand Chopin’s style and play his music accordingly, one may follow the advice Chopin gave his students: “to listen frequently to Italian singers.”⁸⁶ Chopin even made one of his students take lessons in singing.⁸⁷ Adequate knowledge with the vocal practices of the early nineteenth century also helps to understand his use of “tempo rubato”, an influence that Chopin obviously received from singing conventions, from the

⁸⁴ Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 308.

⁸⁵ Karasowski, *Chopin: Life and Letters*, 309.

⁸⁶ Karasowski, *Chopin: Leben, Werke und Briefe*, 2:93, quoted in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 44.

⁸⁷ Niecks, *Chopin as a Man and Musician*, 2:187, quoted in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 45.

seventeenth-century “sprezzatura”⁸⁸ to the practice of nineteenth-century singers,⁸⁹ emphasizing freedom in rhythm and tempo to heighten expressivity.⁹⁰ When the suggestions discussed above can be properly employed in the performances, the distinctive style and qualities of Chopin's singing melody can be well ensured.

⁸⁸ According to Elliott, “tempo rubato” in singing was “introduced as ‘sprezzatura’ in the seventeenth century” then “used throughout the eighteenth century” and “was a particularly important expressive device throughout the nineteenth century.” See Elliott, *Singing in Style*, 134.

⁸⁹ According to García in his *Hints on Singing* (quoted in Elliott, *Singing in Style*, 133), “the works of Donizetti and Bellini contain a great number of passages which, without bearing the sign of the rallentando or accelerando, yet require their use.”

⁹⁰ Elliott, *Singing in Style*, 159.

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