

Chopin's Singing Melody: Coloratura and Beyond

Ampai BURANAPRAPUK

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

安派·布拉納普拉普魯克

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

Bibliography

I. Sources

- Auber, Daniel-François-Esprit. *La Muette de Portici*. Paris: E. Troupenas, [1828?]. Accessed May 11, 2019. http://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/2/28/IMSLP815089-PMLP33723-Auber_-_muette_de_Portici,_La_-_fs2b-BNF.pdf.
- Bellini, Vincenzo. *Norma*. Milan: G. Ricordi, [1898?]. Accessed May 15, 2019. [https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/7/7a/IMSLP130342-PMLP15092-Bellini_-_Norma_-_Act_I_\(orch._score\).pdf](https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/7/7a/IMSLP130342-PMLP15092-Bellini_-_Norma_-_Act_I_(orch._score).pdf).
- Chopin, Frédéric. “12 Études. Op. 10.” In *Fr. Chopin's Sämtliche Pianoforte-Werke*, edited by Hermann Scholtz, vol. 2, 401-439. Leipzig: C. F. Peters, [1879?]. Accessed May 14, 2019. https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/7/7a/IMSLP37119-PMLP01969-Chopin_Klavierwerke_Band_2_Peters_Op.10_600dpi.pdf.
- . *24 Préludes pour le Piano*. Paris: Catelin, n.d. Accessed May 14, 2019. https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/5/5e/IMSLP628279-PMLP2344-chopin_preludes_13-24_catelin.pdf.
- . “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)).
- . “Drei Nottornos für das Pianoforte. Op. 9.” In *Friedrich Chopin's Werke*, vol. 4, *Nottornos für das Pianoforte*, 2-13. Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1880. Accessed May 14, 2019. https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/6/61/IMSLP113996-PMLP02312-FChopin_Nocturnes,_Op.9_BH4.pdf.
- . “Nocturne No. 16, Op. 55, No. 2.” In *Chopin: Nocturnes*, edited by Raoul Pugno, 78-81. Vienna: Universal Edition, [1905?]. Accessed May 13, 2020. https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/c/c6/IMSLP443801-PMLP722055-Chopin_Nocturnes_Pugno.pdf.

- . “Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2.” In *Frederick Chopin's Works*, edited by Theodor Kullak, vol. 5, *Nocturnes for the Pianoforte*, 28-31. New York: G. Schirmer, 1881. Accessed May 11, 2019. https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/e/e1/IMSLP80836-PMLP02305-FChopin_Nocturnes_Op27.pdf.
- . *Quatre Mazurkas pour le Pianoforte. Op. 17*. Paris: Maurice Schlesinger, [1834?]. Accessed May 14, 2019. https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/c/c9/IMSLP398169-PMLP02281-BnF_btv1b52500413m.pdf.
- . “Waltz, Op. 34, No. 1.” In *Frederick Chopin's Works*, edited by Theodor Kullak, vol. 6, *Waltzes for the Pianoforte*, 10-17. New York: G. Schirmer, 1880. Accessed May 11, 2019. https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/f/fc/IMSLP82141-PMLP02370-FChopin_Waltzes_Op34.pdf.

II. Secondary Literature

- Abbate, Carolyn, and Roger Parker. *A History of Opera: The Last 400 Years*. London: Penguin Books, 2015.
- 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>.
- Bellman, Jonathan. “Chopin and His Imitators: Notated Emulations of the ‘True Style’ of Performance.” *19th-Century Music* 24, no. 2 (Autumn 2000): 149-160.
- Crutchfield, Will. “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>.
- Eigeldinger, Jean-Jacques. *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*. Translated by Naomi Shohet, Krysia Osostowicz, and Roy Howat. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Elliott, Martha. *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance Practices*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006.

- Gossett, Philip. *Divas and Scholars: Performing Italian Opera*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- Harris, Ellen T. "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>.
- Harris, Lucas. "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>.
- Jander, Owen, 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>.
- Karasowski, Moritz. *Frederic Chopin: His Life and Letters*. Translated by Emily Hill. 3rd ed. London: William Reeves, 1938.
- Levin, Robert D. "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>.
- Luk, Connie. "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.
- Phillips, Adele. "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/>.
- Rink, John. "Chopin and Improvisation." In *Chopin and His World*, edited by Jonathan D. Bellman and Halina Goldberg, 249-270. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.
- Załoski, Iwo, and Pamela Załoski. *Chopin's Poland*. London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1996.

Ampai BURANAPRAPUK holds a Master of Music Studies in Performance and Teaching (University of Melbourne) and a PhD in Musicology (Mahidol University, Thailand). She is currently teaching at the College of Music, Mahidol University. Her research interests encompass music from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, musical hermeneutics, and music history pedagogy. She received a Fulbright scholarship during her PhD study.

安派·布拉納普拉普魯克，墨爾本大學音樂演奏與教學碩士，泰國瑪希敦大學音樂學博士。目前任教於瑪希敦大學音樂學院。研究領域包括十九世紀至二十世紀初的音樂、音樂詮釋學和音樂史教學法。攻讀博士期間榮獲傅爾布萊特獎學金。