

Summary

This diploma dissertation is concentrated on Frederick Chopin as a piano player and pedagogue. His approach to piano pedagogy was visionary as concerns the physiology of the hand and the body's coordination with the instrument. As a musician and pianist he was deeply admired by his contemporaries. His individual style of playing captivated his listeners. This knowledge will ultimately help performers to understand and interpret Chopin's works.

The first chapters are focused on Chopin's biography and compositions in chronology. In chapter two we see Chopin as a composer, his choice of genres, his inspirations and early influences as well as what characterizes his works. Chapter three is concerned with Chopin's style of playing (3.1), his opinion about other musicians (3.2) and his relationship with other pianists (3.3). Chapter 3.4 deals with the major issue in Chopin's life which was his reluctance to perform in public. Chapter 3.5 presents in detail Chopin's concerts and repertoire and the following Chapter 3.6 focuses on Chopin's skills as improviser.

Chapter four examines Chopin as a teacher and the important role teaching played in his life. Two separate chapters concentrate on Chopin's students (4.2) and the repertoire studied with their teacher (4.3). The testimonies of Chopin's students provide us with a picture of how Chopin was as a teacher, and what his advice was as regards technique and the interpretation of music. Chapter five is devoted to Chopin's *Projet de Méthode*, his unfinished piano method. The following chapter six is concerned with Chopin's principles for playing the piano: technique, posture and hand position, daily practice, independence of fingers, flexibility and suppleness, evenness in execution, scales and arpeggios, fingering, tone production and dynamic, legato and cantabile, phrasing, tempo rubato, ornamentation and pedaling.

Chapter seven compares Chopin's piano method and principles to three chosen piano methods of the nineteenth century. Chopin's method is compared to that of Hummel's (7.1), Kalkbrenner's (7.2) and Liszt's (7.3). Through this comparison, we are able to examine in what terms Chopin's method was similar or different to these piano methods, and in which ways Chopin's ideas were revolutionary and innovative, thus in a way predicting future pianism.

The conclusion of this diploma dissertation is concerned with the interpretation of Chopin's music. The concluding ideas are based on the knowledge of Chopin as a pianist and his own advice as regards interpretation.

Lastly, the appendices provide a presentation of Chopin's line of students which helps trace Chopin's tradition and influence. The graph of Chopin's mode of compositions also provides an interesting scope to Chopin's compositional output and accentuates the fact that the majority of his compositions were written for the piano. The appendices also include the supplementary notes to the chapters and the index names of personalities mentioned in former chapters.