

Commentary

Frontispiece. We display the title page of **F2**, which differs from **F1**, where the dedication, on two lines (*à Madame Nathaniel | de Rothschild.*), is put above 4.^e | *Ballade* (cf. ACCFE pp. 386 and 733). ACCFE shows the Teutonic frontispiece of **G** too (*ibid.*, plate 148, p. 734). Regarding the title page of **E**, with no dedication, cf. *ibid.* p. 388 (about the title pages of the first editions by Wessel, see GRAB.[2001]).

1÷2. The slur of the quavers in l. h. is not only in \mathcal{A}^4 , like Samson gives to understand, but also in **E**.

8. It is not clear why here and in m. 46 **E** has *mf* instead of *m.v.* Since in these cases Chopin's writing is very clear, we are forced to think about arbitrariness of the engraver.

11. Here, and in all similar places, between \mathcal{A}^4 and **E**, on one hand, and **F**, on the other, there is no substantial difference:

the dot on the second quaver specifies—better than the simple slur of **F**—that the first quaver is the last syllable of the previous music word, while the second quaver is the first syllable of the next one. All the performers ignore this fact!



16, 21, 30 and 36. According to Ekier in m. 16 a variant would be allowable, like in m. 30; but, given the agreement of the sources, no variant is allowed. Müllemann think that mm. 21, 30 and 36 are parallel places (*Parallelstellen*) of m. 16; really, the parallel place of m. 16 is the only m. 30, while that of the m. 21 is given by m. 36. The fact that in \mathcal{A}^4 F^4 of the only m. 30 is deleted does not authorize, from a philological point of view, any variant in m. 16. On the contrary, the *varia lectio* of **E** has to be pointed out (m. 30).



Yes, of course, it may be an inattention of the composer, but we cannot exclude a different interpretive suggestion, which, while preparing \mathcal{A}^3 , he had forgotten.

21. See comm. to mm. 16 etc.

26÷27. In \mathcal{A}^4 (*v. apparatus*) the *crescendo* hairpin is crossed out and **E** does not carry it. This prompted the editors to remove it, although you find it in **F**. We keep it, because—as we noted in the introduction (*v. supra*, p. viii*b*)—Chopin, while proofreading, devoted a particular attention to the hairpins. Now, since that hair-

pin suggests a deep breathing for the transition to the key of $A\flat$, we believe that Chopin left it deliberately. It is also to be noted that, if the single slur (missing in **E**) of \mathcal{A}^4 across mm. 26÷27 in l. h. actually could justify the deletion of the hairpin, both the slurs of **F** give it a clear meaning.

30. See comm. to mm. 16 etc.

36. See comm. to mm. 16 etc.

42. We entered the Ped. of **G** ($<\mathcal{A}^4$) by analogy with that of m. 38 you find both in **F** and **E**.

43÷44. Ekier suggests understanding the omission of ties in \mathcal{A}^4 as *varia lectio*. Samson puts those ties in brackets. Müllemann reports them only in a footnote. But it is a glaring careless omission by the composer—as Bronarski had already guessed (cf. *PW* p. 75)—certainly not a variant.

46÷49. In our opinion the phrasing of **G** and **E**, which derives from the same source, is not congruent with the meaning expressed by the music text. We believe that—just to these only measures—the manuscript used to prepare \mathcal{A}^4 and \mathcal{A}^3 was completed carelessly, so, when Chopin was inserting slurs, dots and hairpins, repeated mechanically the signs of the previous section, no noticing that the agogic-dynamic acceleration needed a different phrasing. The indications of **F**, instead, which come from a manuscript most meditated at the piano, suggest a phrasing wholly congruent with the music text.

Our fingering (mm. 47 and 49), with the middle finger surmounting the ring finger, more than any other one maintains the hand in a perfect balance.

49. The dot at A^4 means—unlike m. 47—that the note should not be slurred to C^6 , which, together with subsequent $B\flat$, will constitute a new music word.

50. Recommendation for the execution of the trill:



51. Samson writes in *PE* (p. 44) that the *varia lectio* is only in \mathcal{A}^1 and **F** (without dot on the first $A\flat^2$), whereas that *v.l.*, which in our opinion is a mistake of Chopin, is only in **G** ($<\mathcal{A}^4$) and the dot on $A\flat^2$ is both in **F** and **E**.

53÷55. The first quaver in both hands of m. 53 is dotted in **G** and **F**, while **E** puts the dot only on F^2 . **F** puts a dot also on the first quaver of both hands in m. 55. Such a differences are to be ascribed to inattention during copying. We have integrated a dot even on the first quaver of m. 54. The meaning, emphasized by

slurs, is evident: those quavers, which are like the last syllable of the word embraced by slurs, are not to be performed neither ‘staccato’ nor fading out, but ‘portato’.

55÷56. We preferred the Ped. of G, because that of F (*v. apparatus*) requires mastery that only Chopin had.

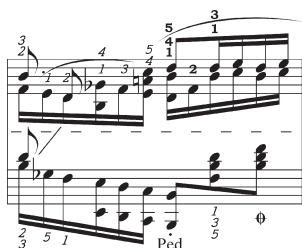
55÷57. The single slur of G (< \mathcal{A}^4 , *v. apparatus*) looks over-hasty in comparison with F.

56. According to Ekier “in the last chord FE mistakenly omits $e\flat^1$.” However, the printed score keeps traces of a correction: in fact the engraver engraved G^4 instead of F^4 . Chopin pointed out the mistake during proofreading. Therefore, unless we admit that the engraver made a second mistake, we have to conclude that it was the composer himself who suppressed that $E\flat^4$. With mm. 56 ÷ 57 ends the first part of the *Ballade*. Everything dies down, as underlined by the *diminuendo* hairpin. Each quaver has no more than three sounds. If we add $E\flat^4$, we would have four only here. Besides, $E\flat$ is already in the melody. Therefore, we think that in F there is no error.

62. With our fingering we entrusted $A\flat^3$ to the right hand, not arbitrarily indeed, but because it is the composer himself wanting that, as demonstrated by autographs (*v. apparatus*). In \mathcal{A}^1 , $A\flat^3$ is a minim; in \mathcal{A}^4 , it is a crotchet even dotted (G has a dotted quaver: from where did the engraver copy it?). Since Chopin was a pianist, a great pianist, he could not think that the left hand could hold down that key and play at the same time the octaves too; on the other hand, the right thumb, if necessary, could hold down that $A\flat^3$, as \mathcal{A}^4 wants, and play simultaneously the first six semiquavers. The dotted quaver of the first editions reduces the commitment of the right hand.

63. We preferred the reading of F, because it is a refinement of the reading of G and E, which follow \mathcal{A}^1 .

66. As in m. 62, also here Chopin gives $D\flat^4$ a length of time ($\frac{1}{4}$) that the link hand cannot support, but the right hand, too, cannot play. Since, however, $D\flat^4$ has to be repeated by the right hand, it is requested an exchange, which for clarity we illustrate in the following example:



68÷70. The phrasing of this passage displays the same

sources’ intersection that the collation of the three first editions reveals throughout the *Ballade*. M. 68 of G agrees with F versus E (the tie of G is a misunderstanding of the engraver). M. 69 of G agrees with E versus F, where the wrong placement of *ritenuto* is perhaps due to Chopin himself, while the slurs are to be attributed to the engraver: probably—as in m. 68 of E—the composer intended to slur to the first semiquavers of m. 70 not only the last quaver, but the last two quavers. M. 70, however, apart from details not identical but equivalent, agrees in the three first editions: it is likely that Chopin, inserting *ritenuto* in \mathcal{A}^2 , let his mind wander for a moment and wrote it in the hairpin of m. 69 instead of 70.

72. Chopin seems undecided about the middle note in the chord of the eighth semiquaver, which is *E flat* in \mathcal{A}^1 F E, while in \mathcal{A}^4 G it is *D flat*. In our opinion the apparent indecision concerns only the name of the chord. In other words, when Chopin wrote *E flat*, he meant *E double flat*; when, instead, wrote *D flat*, he meant *D natural*. The harmonic progression leaves no doubt:



As you can easily observe in the sequence of the middle (blank) notes, the missing one, signalled by a question mark, can only be *E double flat*. Mikuli, as sometimes he does, goes further: in fact, he lowers arbitrarily the last $B\flat^4$ a semitone. But he makes is a hypercorrection, which has no philological justification; moreover, that *B double flat* makes less vigorous the passage.

74. L.h.: in G, C^5 is dotted. We preferred the solution of F. In general, however, note that in Chopin a dot rarely means *staccato*: most of the time it means not *legato*. This explains the many differences in the sources. In effect, Chopin does not seem to give much weight to this detail, because a musician understands by himself where he has to slur and where not.

82÷83. We have not added to the list of p. viii^b the hairpins of F, since in \mathcal{A}^4 they are crossed out; therefore, those hairpins were not added while proofreading, but they were already present in the common source of \mathcal{A}^2 and \mathcal{A}^4 .



87. Unlike m. 85, where the *v.l.* of F is real, we believe that in G (< \mathcal{A}^4) the absence of ties in the last chord is not a variant, but a careless omission of the composer.

92÷94. While proofreading (> F) Chopin cancelled the hairpin below the lower staff (\mathcal{A}^4 , *v. apparatus*) and rewrote it between staves.

96. Arguably, when Chopin corrected the hairpins in mm. 91÷94, he changed the value of the first octave in link hand.

99. As we have repeatedly noted, the editors confuse because of ignorant negligence the vertical squiggle with the vertical slur. Chopin distinguishes both options: if the stroke of the pen shows a veering, it means a vertical squiggle; if the stroke is continuous, it means a vertical slur, which, differently from the *arpeggio*, breaks the chord, almost always, in two parts. Much, of course, depends on the taste of the interpreter.

100÷101, 104÷105. E contains a hint of interpretation ignored by editors, that is the accent to the notes played by the thumb of r.h. Being only in E, those accents are not mandatory, but the user of a ‘critic’ edition has the right to be informed about.

110÷111. Mikuli adds the ties to the sixth C^5 - A^b , but Chopin deletes them in \mathcal{A}^4 and none of the first three editions has such a ties.

112. Recommendation for the trills’ execution:



112÷114. Even here the editors neglect the *v.l.* of E.

120. Recommendation for the execution of the trill:



124. In *HN*, published after *WN* and *PE* (*v. Bibliography*), Müllemann adds to the text the following note: “ $\flat c^2$ or $\flat f^2$? See *Comments*.” Obviously, the student expects the editor to answer in the *Comments* the question he seems to ask himself. Here is the answer: “No accidentals before c^2 and f^2 in A_2 ; earlier in the same measure is an uncanceled \flat before c^2 and an uncanceled \flat before f^1 , which may also apply to the f^2 (Chopin was not always consistent about repeating accidentals in upper or lower octaves). F has no accidental before the c^2 , and has \flat before the f^2 . E has \flat in front of both notes.” (p. 73). Apart from the absurd and boring verbal description, which musicologists like so much, there is no answer to the question asked in the

note to m. 124 (*v. here below*). “It remains unclear



**) $\flat c^2$ bzw. $\flat f^2$? Siehe *Bemerkungen*.

(*ungeklärt*)—continues Müllemann—whether the \flat in F and E are from Chopin. The later editions (Mikuli, Scholtz, Paderewski) all have \flat .” Müllemann, therefore, to justify his choice, insinuates an artful doubt, thus invalidating F and E, and calls for help Mikuli, Scholtz and Paderewski, but he refrains carefully from considering the arguments of Ekier in defense of F.

The textual problem posed by this measure dates from Tellefsen and Mikuli, both pupils and editors of Chopin. They follow F, but the former thought the \flat before F^5 was correct, while the latter thought that it was due to a misreading of the Parisian engraver in place of a \flat (*v. apparatus*). However, the \flat before F^5 in E suggests that the engraver made no mistake, because E was based on \mathcal{A}^3 , one of autographs written by Chopin, and the proofs of F1 were corrected by the composer himself; whence, the complete independence of these two sources forces to think that those naturals come just from Chopin. Tellefsen, however, not only agrees to the \flat before F^5 , but he adds a second \flat before C^5 (*v. apparatus*), conforming to E. Hence, the only question that we may ask, is: why Mikuli, who appropriates almost always the original readings of Tellefsen (*v. m. 94*), did not trust his fellow student in this case. In our opinion, the answer is in their, so to speak, harmonic bigotry, albeit on different fronts. In fact, what is wrong with F? Let us read the passage as follows:



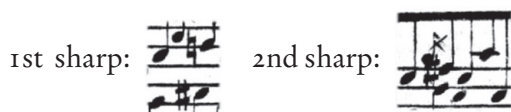
that is, like three inversions of a simple dominant seventh chord, each of them with an *appoggiatura*. Now, which law does require that, if C^5 is flat, must be flat F^5 too, or, conversely, if F^5 is natural, also C^5 must be natural? The answer is: the obtuse law of grammarians. Well, we think that both C^b of Tellefsen and F^b of Mikuli are due to a ‘corrective’ intervention.

In conclusion, the version of F is perfect as it is and, according to our taste, it is far better than Mikuli’s or Tellefsen’s solution.

127. Ekier prefers here the reading of E, since you “cannot exclude the possibility that the [A1] (\rightarrow FE) version, copied in A_3 [= \mathcal{A}^4], is only an earlier notation, deformed by the overlooking of a tie sustaining

Ab on the third eighth.” A reasoning, this, which is based on unproven personal beliefs that have nothing to do with philology.

134. The editors are more interested in the error of the engraver of **G** than in the arabesque. In fact, Ekier (**WN**) and Samson (**PE**) seem to ignore the nice variant of **E**, where the arabesque is written entirely in *A* major. Even Bronarski (**PW**) had given some information about. Müllemann is the only one who remembers it: “Cadenza: In **E**, all *f* notes are given as *f*♯.” But, then, such a *Bericht* gets nowhere! In **E**, the two sharps are not a misreading of the engraver for two reasons: first, because the second sharp was added after that **FA**5, with its *acciaccatura*, had already been engraved; second, the first sharp is located just below a natural:



Of course, such a reading requires that the *G* notes too must be sharp. Chopin probably had this idea during copying *A³: he corrected the text just written and made one of his characteristic and dense patches, which bewildered the engraver, who perhaps called for help the proofreader. In any case, the *varia lectio* is clear and must be considered like that.

135÷151. Describing in words—as the most of scholars fond of sterile *kritische Berichte* like to do—the many differences, detected by collating the three first editions, of slurs and hairpins is so absurd as to become almost ridiculous. Therefore, in order not to overload the apparatus, we give here below, in the order, the text of **F2 G** and **E**.

G



F2



E



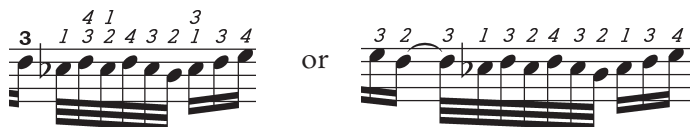
144. **F2** contains only two corrections (we have already dealt with m. 7, *v. intr. p. VIIa÷b*), the second of which is in this measure. The separation of the voices in **E** (*v. apparatus*) is a refinement of the lesson of **G**, but Chopin corrected **F1** several months after sending his manuscripts to publishers. Since there is no contemporaneity, the lesson of **F2**, having received an almost exclusive attention, makes the others decrease in value.

153. Bronarski maintains that “analogy with the preceding and subsequent bars demands a quaver rest here.” But this is not a philological argument, so it has to be rejected. We have included in the main text the lesson of **F** just because we prefer it, but, from a strictly philological point of view, it is not more valid than that of **G**.

154. Already Bronarski argued that “by mistake the G. E. has a C as the last semiquaver instead of an A flat”, followed by Ekier (“the last semiquaver in GE is most probably the mistaken c^2 ”) and Samson (“This was certainly a misreading by the German editor of A⁴”). On the contrary, Müllemann adopts the lesson of G and makes a remark: “ c^2 is from G; possibly an engraver’s error (*möglicherweise Stichfehler*), but note the descending top notes up to M 155: $c^2-bb^1-ab^1$.” However, the value of such observation vanishes, if you only consider that Bb^4 in m. 155 is demanded by G^4 in the right hand. In other words, there is not any descending line.

160. The fingering of G is **2 1**, that of F is **2 2**. Ekier does not comment; Samson again gives wrong information (“Fingerings printed in the first editions,” but **2 2** are only in G). Müllemann thinks of an engraver’s error (*wohl Stichfehler*). Mikuli puts no fingering: was he uncertain? Tellefsen agrees with **2 2**. Now, the fingering of G is trite indeed. We may not ascribe to Chopin such a platitude. The pair C^5-Bb^4 is a clear *appoggiatura* and must be performed like that: with fingering **2 2** Chopin wanted to make sure that Bb^4 was well audible and did not fade, as usually happens.

161. Recommendation for the execution of the trill:



164÷165. According to Samson “G has b in bar 164, b in bar 165”, but, again, it is a wrong information, because—as Müllemann writes—“G has no accidental before a^3 ” (*v. apparatus*), “but—continues Müllemann— b before the a^2 indicates that b is also intended before the a^3 ”. Ekier asserts that those naturals are “one of the most frequent arbitrary revisions of those editions”. In our opinion, in G, the very absence of b in m. 164 and its insertion in m. 165 next to a b rule out the intervention of a proofreader, because the latter should have add b —as in E—in m. 164 too, and not omit to enter the change of key in l. h.! Judging by the spaces between the notes, the flats of F—and not just those before A^5 and A^6 —were added by Chopin during proofreading: as in the two previous measures the A and E notes have a natural, in m. 164 Chopin added both a b before Eb^6 and Ab^6 and a b before the second Ab^5 , whereas in m. 165 he added just a b before Ab^5 . Therefore, it is likely that Ekier is right, but G commands the reporting of the variant.

174. In our view, the lesson of F is a mistake. It is arduous to determine how it was generated.

175. We preferred the phrasing of F, because it distin-

guishes much better the Chopinian movements: the new clause starts from Bb^4 , not Gb^5 , which is the last syllable of the word began in the previous measure, if anything.

175÷176. Since in the entire clause embracing these measures Chopin seems to want the unison from octave avoided, the lesson of E, *i.e.* penultimate semiquaver in l. h., is not an error of the engraver.

178. Contrary to what is implied by Samson (“Upstems from F”), the voices’ separation is also in E, not only in F.

185. According to Ekier in the second triplet of l. h. “FE has the most probably mistaken db^5 and Bb^5 .” Müllemann repeats the same thing. That an engraver mistakes two notes it is not impossible, but they should be contiguous and in a position deceiving the eye. Since those notes are spaced by a correct Gb^5 and their position is particular, a mistake is very unlikely. Indeed Db^4 and Bb^5 justify each other and sound better.



Though the octaves Gb^5-Gb^5 and Bb^5-Bb^5 are not at all, strictly speaking, parallel octaves, for some reason we feel them as such, so believe not only that the lesson of F is not an engraver’s error, but also that it is an improvement making better the harmonic mixture of the passage.

186. No one seems to have noticed the lesson of F. In fact, while in the m. 185 the last chord of the r. h. is properly vertical aligned between the last two semiquavers of l. h., here the last chord is vertical aligned exactly with the last semiquaver of the triplet; while revising the engraver added, albeit clumsily, the second series of dots. The result is an approximate, but in use, chronometry. The right time division should be as follows:



Note, then, as you can realize from the apparatus, that in G and E the slur ends on the first crotchet of m. 187.

189. In G, the slur (*v. apparatus*) is not interrupted until the first quaver of m. 191.

190. The change in fourth triplet of l. h., which probably Chopin made while proofreading F, improves so much the text of G and E (*v. apparatus*)—valid up to that moment—, both from a pianistic and expressive point of view, that F cannot be considered a variant, but the only version, we have to approve of.

191. The *crescendo* that begins in m. 187 and ends on first chord of this measure, is repeated in G and E right here, where the arpeggios begin, whereas in F the hairpins added during proofreading indicate, more suitably, a waving dynamic.

191÷194. None of the three first editions arranges homogeneously the simple accents and the intensive ones. We have, so to speak, completed the picture with the only exception of the intensive accent of E (v. apparatus) put under the third triplet of m. 191 (l. h.), the meaning of which actually escapes us.

201÷202. The meaning of the *stretto* that increases until

the paroxysm and ends traumatically in m. 202 is graphically better expressed by E. From the apparatus, the student can draw the demonstration of that. (*En passant*, we will notice that the episode ending here seems to mean that the entire fourth *Ballade* is the story of the tragedy of a soul or, better, of a conscience: most likely the one of the composer.)

217. The harmonic effect of the reading of F (l. h., third triplet) is, in our opinion, preferable.

221. Although Müllemann adopts the text of G (second triplet in l. h.), it is a question of mechanical error, as rightly Ekier supposed.



WHAT HAD BEEN THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF CHOPIN DURING WINTER 1843-1844?

A short notice published in “*La France Musicale*” on Sunday, March 3rd, 1844, p. 70, indirectly informs us about:

Un malheur de famille vient de frapper un de nos plus célèbres facteurs de piano, M. Pleyel a perdu sa mère, qu’il aimait de la plus profonde affection. Les arts, la littérature et l’industrie étaient représentés au convoi, qui a eu lieu mardi, par les hommes les plus éminents. Chopin, quoique gravement malade, s’était fait traîner jusqu’au bords de la tombe, et là, s’est passé une scène de plus touchantes. M. Camille Pleyel, en apercevant son ami à ses côtés, s’est jeté dans ses bras, et tous les deux, la voix étouffée par les sanglots, se sont mis à verser d’abondantes larmes. Nous regrettons de n’avoir pas assez de place pour nommer tous les hommes de cœur qui étaient venus offrir à M. Pleyel hommage de leur estime et de leurs sympathies.

A family misfortune has just befallen one of our most famous piano makers: Mr Pleyel lost his mother, whom he loved with the deepest affection. The most eminent men represented the arts, literature and industry in the cortege, which took place on Tuesday. Chopin, although seriously ill, made himself drag to the edge of the grave and there happened one of the most touching scenes. Mr Camille Pleyel, seeing his friend at his side, threw himself into his arms and both, the voice choked with sobs, began to pour copious tears. We regret not having enough space to name all the men of heart who came to pay their tribute of respect and sympathy to Mr Pleyel.

