



TAMPEREEN
AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

FREDERIC CHOPIN – 4 BALLADIA

RAPORTTI KONSERTIN TOTEUTUKSESTA

Viktor Pella

Opinnäytetyö
Toukokuu 2018
Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Esittävä säveltaide



ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Culture and Arts, Music
Option of Performing Arts

PELLIA, VIKTOR:
Frederic Chopin – Four Ballades
Report on the implementation of the concert.

Bachelor's thesis 26 pages, appendices 6 pages
May 2018

The author made his thesis in a concert form. The concert “Frederic Chopin – Four Ballades” was held on 10.10.2017 at Tampere Music Academy’s Pyynikki Hall. The concert consisted of only Chopin’s music and all the works were performed by the author of the thesis. The program was following: Frederic Chopin – Four Ballades: No.1 in G minor, Op. 23, No.2 in F major, Op. 38, No.3 in A-flat major, Op. 47, and No.4 in F minor, Op. 52. After the Ballades, Frederic Chopin's Mazurka in A minor Op. 17 No.4 was performed as an encore.

The main objective of this thesis was to delve into making a musically interesting and professional concert, which includes the whole cycle of works by one composer. The aim of this written report was to clarify the practicing process and the progress of the concert itself. In the report, the author tells about the composer, introduces the pieces played in the concert more closely, and explain the working process in detail. The ways of practising were gathered by participating in piano master-classes and collecting the advices of many teachers from different countries.

More attention has been paid to author’s own ideas and experience. As sources the author used biographies, general dictionaries, music analyses of composer’s works and different music scores. The poster, program and the video of the concert are found as attachments in the thesis. The results show that the performer and members of the audience were satisfied with the performance and the evaluator’s opinions gave interesting information for the developing process.

Key words: implementation of the concert, practising process, Frederic Chopin.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction.....	4
2	Composer and Works	5
2.1	Frederic Chopin.....	5
2.2	Ballades	7
2.2.1	Op.23, G minor	7
2.2.2	Op.38, F major	8
2.2.3	Op.47, A-flat major.....	8
2.2.4	Op.52, F minor.....	9
3	Starting the Project and the Practising Process	9
3.1	Selection of the works.....	9
3.2	Steps of practising	10
3.3	Practical arrangements	14
4	Concert.....	15
4.1	Preparing for the concert day	15
4.2	The course of the concert	15
5	Goals and Objectives	17
	SOURCES	19
	ATTACHMENTS	20
	Attachment 1: Poster.....	21
	Attachment 2: Program.....	22
	Attachment 3: Link	26

1 Introduction

The main purpose of this work was to make a musically interesting and professional concert, which includes the whole cycle of works by one composer. The main focus is on the concert and the preparations for it. An integral part of this concert has been the responsibility for the choice of repertoire and practising for the performance, as well as reserving place, making the concert programs and posters, and also pre-ordering special equipment to record this performance.

The thesis concert was held on 10.10.2017 in the Pyynikki Hall of Tampere Music Academy. The concert consisted of the following works: Frederic Chopin (1810-1849) – Four Ballades: No.1 in G minor, Op. 23 (1831-1835), No.2 in F major, Op. 38 (1836-1839), No.3 in A-flat major, Op. 47 (1840-1841) and No.4 in F minor, Op. 52 (1842). After the Ballads, Frederic Chopin's Mazurka Op. 17 No.4 in A minor was performed as an encore. The author of the thesis performed all the works.

The choice of above works for the concert was made because of many reasons: these pieces are very rich both musically and technically, they are some of the most challenging pieces in the standard piano repertoire, and in many people's opinions, these works are the best pieces of music. The author of the thesis has performed all these Ballads at various concerts before, but in this concert they were all assembled together.

The main theme of this thesis is the piano, because Frederic Chopin, virtuoso pianist and composer who wrote primarily for the solo piano, is one of the major composers in the repertoire of many great pianists. As the starting material for this report, the author of the thesis has used a variety of articles and publications about the composer's life in English, Polish and Russian, as well as printed sheet music. In addition, he tries to express his own views on these works. Many well-known musicians, such as Yakov Flier, Daniel Barenboim, Heinrich Neuhaus, Arthur Hedley, Nikolai Medtner, Alfred Cortot, and many others have analysed these Ballads before. Some pianists even came to the conclusion that it is such an ingenious piece that it is better to prohibit performing it, as even a lifetime may not be enough to realise the depth of this music. But in my opinion, if any music can be played sincerely, from the heart, trying to convey all that a composer wanted to say, passing it through the prism of your own understanding, it will achieve the highest purpose of music - to touch people's hearts. Through his music, Frederic Chopin was able to achieve this goal like no one else.

2 Composer and Works

2.1 Frederic Chopin

Frédéric François Chopin (originally Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin, March 1¹ (according to different sources February 22), 1810 Żelazowa Wola – October 17, 1849 Paris)² was a Polish composer and virtuoso pianist. Frederic was born in Żelazowa Wola, near Warsaw. His father, Nicholas Chopin, a French emigrant since 1787, served as a French teacher in a school; his mother, Tekla Justyna Krzyzanowska, a distant relative of the Skarbek family (a Polish noble family), worked for the family. Chopin's parents were married in 1806 and after their son's birth, the family moved to Warsaw.

Already a child, Frederic showed vivid musical abilities, and he was considered a prodigy. By the age of seven, Frederic had begun giving public concerts, and in the same year was published a little Polonaise in G Minor composed by him. The first professional piano lessons he got from the Czech pianist Wojciech Zywny, and the lessons lasted from 1816 to 1822.³ Chopin soon became the favorite of the aristocratic salons of Warsaw.

The further development of Chopin's musical talent took place under the Czech musician Wilhelm Würfel. This renowned pianist and professor at the Warsaw Conservatory gave Chopin very valuable lessons of organ music. From 1823 to 1826, Frederic studied at the Chopin Warsaw Lyceum, where his father was a professor. In the autumn 1826, the young musician began studying music theory, figured bass and composition with Jozef Elsner at the Warsaw Conservatory.

At the beginning of 1829, Chopin first visited Vienna, where he gave a concert and received his first commendable reviews. Next year, he returned to Warsaw, where on March 17 at the National Theatre, the composer gave the premiere of his Piano Concerto in F Minor. In 1831, he left Poland for Vienna and then settled in Paris, where he spent much of his life. There he began to write his first scherzo and the Ballades, and started the first opus of etudes. At this time, the first signs of tubercu-

¹ Fryderyk Chopin Information Centre – The Life of Chopin 2002.

² Church fortified – History 2003.

³ Michalowski and Samson 2009.

losis appeared, with which the composer fought all his life.⁴ The beginning and the middle of 1830s in Paris was a fruitful time for the composer. He completed some of his most famous works, and regularly gave concerts, which received fantastic feedback. By the year of 1838, Chopin had become very famous in Paris.⁵ Among his closest friends were composer Vincenzo Bellini and artist Eugene Delacroix. His friends also included composers Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt and Robert Schumann, and although sometimes Chopin had criticised their music, he dedicated some of his works to them.

In the fall of 1836 in Paris, he met an outstanding woman - Baroness Aurore Dupin, who had at that time a wide literary fame under her pseudonym George Sand.⁶ Chopin was 28 years old, Madame Sand 34. Their union lasted eight years, and most of that time they spent in the writer's family estate in Nohant. In winter of 1838-1839, when he and Aurore Dupin lived together in Mallorca, the composer's health deteriorated significantly. A combination of bad weather and a disorder in the household had a disastrous effect on his lungs that were already affected by tuberculosis.⁷ In 1847, Chopin's relationship with Aurore Dupin finally ended as a result of the Chopin's intervention in Dupin's relationship with her daughter from her first marriage.⁸

The last time Chopin performed in public in Paris was on February 16, 1848. Eight days later, the Revolution broke out, and the composer's friends took him to England, where Chopin, being already very sick, played for Queen Victoria and gave a few concerts - the last of which took place on November 16, 1848.

A week later, he returned to Paris. Being no longer able to give lessons, Chopin was forced to accept the generous support from his Scottish admirer Jane Stirling.⁹ The composer's sister Ludwika came from Poland in order to care for the patient, and also his closest friends remained with him. Through most of his life, Chopin suffered from poor health. He died in Paris on October 18, 1849, at the age of 39. According to his will, Mozart's Requiem was sung at the funeral, held at the Church of the Madeleine in Paris. Chopin is buried in Paris at Pere Lachaise cemetery. Chopin's heart, according

⁴ Zamoyski 2010.

⁵ Iwaszkiewicz 1938.

⁶ Schonberg 1987.

⁷ Iwaszkiewicz 1938.

⁸ Michalowski and Samson 2009.

⁹ Zamoyski 2010.

to his will, moved back home - it rests in the Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw.¹⁰ Chopin had interpreted many genres in a new way: he revived the genre of Prelude on the romantic basis, he created a piano Ballade, he poeticized and dramatised dances, such as Mazurka, Polonaise, Waltz and Scherzo turned into an independent work. He enriched the harmony and piano texture and combined the form of classicism with melodic richness and imagination.

Chopin's composing technique is very unconventional and largely deviates from the rules and techniques accepted in his era. Chopin was a consummate creator of melodies: he was one of the first who brought the Slavic music system and intonation elements to the western music and thus undermined the firmness of classical modal-harmonic system, developed by the end of the 18th century. The same applies to rhythm: using the formula of Polish dances, Chopin enriched western music with new rhythmic patterns. He developed a highly individual, laconic, self-contained musical form that best suits the nature of his distinctive melodic, harmonic and rhythmic language.¹¹

2.2 Ballades

Jonathan Barrie Jones suggests that "amongst the works that Chopin intended for concert use, the four Ballades and four scherzos stand supreme".¹² Nicholas Temperley says that these works, which contain "immense variety of mood, thematic material and structural detail", are based on an extended "departure and return" form; "the more the middle section is extended, and the further it departs in key, mood and theme, from the opening idea, the more important and dramatic is the reprise when it at last comes."¹³

2.2.1 Op.23, G minor

The Ballade was composed in 1831-1835, and published in 1836, when Chopin was 26 years old. It is the largest creative achievement by Chopin at this time; a glowing masterpiece. Its dramatic content emerged after the uprising in Poland. By creating the first Ballade with its amazing contrast

¹⁰ Samson 1996.

¹¹ Mazel 1960.

¹² Jones 1998a.

¹³ Temperley 1980

between the struggle of light and somber images, Chopin built a distinctive, original form that uses elements of the sonata-allegro form and rondo. The greatness of the form of the first Ballade lies in its wholeness and dramatic tension. Chopin can develop and resolve shaped conflicts with surprising strength; his contradistinction is very humane and rooted in the very real drama of Polish patriotism.¹⁴

In his time, Robert Schumann understood the value of the first Ballade well: “I received a new Ballade from Chopin. It seems to be a work closest to his genius (although not the most ingenious) and I told him that I like it best of all his compositions.” After quite a lengthy silence he replied with emphasis, “I am happy to hear this since I too like it most and hold it dearest’.”¹⁵

2.2.2 Op.38, F major

The Ballade was composed in 1836-1837, published in 1840, and dedicated to Robert Schumann. A work of perfect proportion, it opens with a slow magical episode that quickly turns into a tempest, a wild and magnificent outburst. This Ballade is extremely concrete in its content, and it creates live associations with images of reality, and with a special force it acts on the imagination of the audience. Additionally, this Ballade marks a new stage in the development of piano technique. The power of the sound and the many colours in the timbre palette, which are required from the performer, are unprecedented. By using his own free "ballade" type of composition, Chopin showed an interest in coloristic variations, the detailing of musical language, and the improvisational manner of presentation. However, the characteristics of this Ballade are the solidity of form and a classical tendency of final recapitulations.¹⁶

2.2.3 Op. 47 A-flat major

The Ballade was composed in 1840-1841, and published in 1842. Chopin dedicated it to Mademoiselle Pauline de Noailles. This is a very characteristic work of Chopin. This piece is the essence of charm and warmth, with a sense of irony that surrounds the second subject.¹⁷ Dramatic contrast

¹⁴ Kremlev 1960.

¹⁵ From a letter by Robert Schumann to Heinrich Dorn, Leipzig 14 September 1836.

¹⁶ Tjulin 1968.

¹⁷ Niecks 1902.

is the same – the struggle between the light and dark, but the light here comes out as the winner. In this Ballade, the features of "symphonism" appear. This is the alternation of colliding and divergent waves, each of which excites another, but one wave prevails and fills everything around. Out of all the Ballads by Chopin, the third one is the most "choreographic" in the sense of constant orientation of intonations and rhythms on some plastic images, movements and gestures.¹⁸

2.2.4 Op.52 F minor

The Ballade was composed in 1842, published in 1843, and Chopin dedicated it to Madame la Baronne C. Nathaniel. This piece is the biggest of all Chopin's Ballades; it is one of his best creations.¹⁹ This is the final return of tragic heroism; the whole Ballade permeated by the poetry of nature, echoes of forests, water and rural life, and pastoral images. The Ballade remains a narrative but has an inimitable feeling of intimacy and Slavonic coloring, and demands a delicate rubato and virtuoso technique from its interpretator. Out of the four Ballades, it is considered by many pianists to be the most difficult, both technically and musically.²⁰ According to John Ogdon, "it is the most exalted, intense and sublimely powerful of all Chopin's compositions... It is unbelievable that it lasts only twelve minutes, for it contains the experience of a lifetime."²¹

3 Starting the Project and the Practising Process

3.1 Selection of the works

I planned my thesis work for more than three years. Already in 2013, when I was working on the fourth Chopin's Ballade, I had the idea to collect all four Ballades in one concert. While being a student at the music college in Petrozavodsk, I learned and performed the first and third Ballades, then in 2013, I played the fourth one, so it was only the second Ballade that I had to learn, and then gather them all together. But at that time, I still could not figure out where I could fulfil this idea, because I had played all previous Ballades at different times in various competitions and concerts,

¹⁸ Mazel 1960.

¹⁹ Kremlev 1960.

²⁰ Huneker 1921.

²¹ Beauchlerk 2014.

and to perform all four Ballades, some other event would be needed. And when I learned that students here as a thesis can make the themed concert and write a report on it - everything fell into place and I began to prepare to implement my plan in life. The thesis concert was to last for about 45 minutes, and each Ballade lasts a little more than 10 minutes, so the program is ideally suited for the thesis. My remaining task was just to learn the second Ballade and to perform it somewhere, first only one Ballade, and then all the Ballades as a whole, because it is one thing is to play one Ballade in a concert and quite another thing to play all four Ballades in a row. For pianists, this task is very serious and difficult. And especially because I wanted to perform the Ballades as a thesis, I had to have time to "test myself", to play them in some other concert before, so in the thesis it would not be the first time performance, but instead a professional and experienced performance. Therefore, when at the end of the previous year, I received an invitation to perform in the spring of 2016 at the Chamber Music Festival "White Nights of Karelia" in Petrozavodsk, with the chance to play a half of the concert solo, I knew what I would play. And I began serious preparations for this concert.

I really liked the idea to play all four Ballades, firstly because I had played each of them separately before, and secondly because this goal seemed to be very dignified, even for great and experienced pianists. And if this experiment is successful, it will be a very good, big and important step on my way of becoming a professional musician.

3.2 Steps of practising

The main difficulty in working on the Ballades was that each of them is an independent piece with a lot of difficulties and tasks. Therefore, with the Ballades (as with Chopin's Etudes), the method of "forget for a while and then just repeat" does not work. You need to work hard every time, almost as much as for the first time. Even if you are playing a Ballade for many years, you have to carry out the mental and technical work every time before a public performance, so every time this piece sounds like the first time, full of fresh ideas, very interesting and technically flawless. And it requires certain patience.

Therefore, despite the fact that I had played some Ballades in past, I had to have very seriously practise each of them, because I needed a fresh outlook. And thanks to a grant that I got from the

Finnish Cultural Fund for participating in master classes, I was able to get a lot of tips and ideas from famous and experienced musicians.

All the Ballades require hard and very detailed work, so I have played them with various musicians. After participating in the Kuopio Piano Competition in 2014, I got a lot of interesting and useful tips from the members of the jury: Valeria Resjan, Niklas Pokki and Teppo Koivisto. After that, I participated in Leevi Madetoja Piano Competition in Oulu and from there I got a very important and constructive feedback from Juhani Lagerspetz, as well as from Laura Mikkola, who were the members of the jury. I also took part in various master classes, where I got invaluable tips on working on the fourth Ballade from Julia Mustonen-Dahlkvist, Paavali Jumppanen, Henri Sigfridsson, Nicholas Carthy and Sergej Osadchuk. All the advice I received cannot be listed here, because it would require writing a whole book, but I received some very interesting and even unusual ideas from different teachers.

So, for example, when we were practicing with Julia Mustonen-Dahlkvist, she noticed that when I play without looking at my hands and keyboard, but looking at somewhere in the distance over the piano, imagining something and more listening to what I am playing, the result is much better and the difference is audible at once, especially in quiet and melodic parts. Sometimes it is very important to “step back” from the process of playing in the middle of a performance and try to hear what kind of sound goes to the audience. Another very important piece of advice that was repeated by several teachers was about the tempos in all Ballades. Chopin's main idea, as they said, is not virtuosity and the music that accidentally comes out of this virtuosity, but on the contrary, the musical idea is at the head, and virtuosity occurs as a by-product. The sense of this is very clear – you do not need to try to play the fast parts of the piece faster than you can, but it is better if you can hear every note of some passages and not lose a single turn of a phrase in a fast tempo. In that case, the result will be the real main idea of Chopin's music, and then the virtuosity will automatically follow, and there will be no need to spend so much physical strength and long hard work on it just to play something fast without any idea. This advice helped me a lot, because with such an obvious technical complexity of the performance of these Ballades, it is very easy to forget about the main thing – the idea and the music itself.

One of the most productive workshops was the time with maestro Konstantin Bogino in Raudaskylä. There we were able to work on all four Ballades and I received the most necessary and absolutely fresh ideas and tips that help me even now. Bogino is this kind of musician who can give each individual pianist the best advice for practicing each piece so that it will sound the most effective. It

seems like he knows how to reach the ideal in any music piece. We thoroughly looked at every Ballade, and he talked a lot about the production of sound, as in such works it is one of the fundamental things. Every Ballade and even every theme should have a special and thoughtful sound, and this sound does not come by itself out of nowhere; it can only be achieved by a lot of practicing and searching. You need to learn to listen to your own playing as an outsider.

I tried to memorise all the advice I received from various musicians, so that later, together with my teacher in Savonia, Kirsti Huttunen, we could use these things in practice. So, of course, the main contribution to my work on the Ballades was from her, and I am immensely grateful to Kirsti.

If we talk about the technical side of these works, it is a recognised fact that one of the most difficult places is the coda of each Ballade, because the coda is the concentration of all the ideas, themes, thoughts and feelings, which the whole work was filled with. This is a virtuosic part played with a very fast tempo with lots of melodic lines, harmonic weavings, with a constant change of structure, and with complex phrasing. Therefore, every time when I started practising, I played the coda very slowly to listen to all these cobwebs written by Chopin, and to get my fingers and hands used to all sorts of turns, jumps and so on.

The second thing is the structure of each Ballade. As already mentioned earlier, the Ballade is a story, a narrative, in which there are a lot of events and different things happening, but together they form one big story. Consequently, the difficulty is to connect different beautiful and parts fulfilled by many thoughts into one, so that they remain interesting, but subordinated to one general idea. To do this, you need to place the so-called “peaks” of the piece – that is the highest points, where the musical thought leads to – and “downs”, small pullbacks after surging waves, in their right places. It is certainly figurative, but this creative figurative thinking is necessary for performing such works as the Ballades.

The difficulties of each Ballade are not similar. **The first Ballade** is complicated by the fact that it is a very popular piece, even among non-musicians. Many people know it from the beginning to the end. And it is written in such a way that even if you are listening to it for the first time, any part that is not thought-out or any mistake will immediately be noticed by any listener. In addition, you should be able to perform it so that it will not sound boring and usual, but interesting and as fresh as possible. Furthermore, this popularity imposes a certain responsibility on the performance and presupposes some special work on this Ballade. In addition to this, you need to take into account that this is only the first Ballade, and if you play it immediately with too much expression, the rest of the Ballades

will not be as interesting to the public. Therefore, it is necessary to save the drama and to not reveal too much.

The second Ballade is not as well known to the public as the first one, but it does not make it easier to perform. It consists of several sections, and each one is unlike another, and they change very suddenly, as if it is the confrontation or fighting of different characters. The initial part has a very long choral theme, and Chopin wrote such a phrasing, to indicate that the whole episode should be played as one very long phrase without any accents (which is practically almost impossible to play). In addition to being technically very difficult, the dramatic episode has very interesting dynamics, since the right and left hands are not playing similar things in each bar. If the right hand is playing crescendo, the left hand is playing diminuendo and vice versa. This discrepancy combined with the tempo “Presto con fuoco” creates a very powerful effect, and as a result it is extremely difficult to play it. The last coda and the preparations for it is in my opinion one of the most difficult part among all the Ballades, although all the technical challenges are for the right hand.

This Ballade is my favorite: it is very much illogical, unusual for Chopin and for music in general, and apart from this Ballade there are not too many music pieces in the world, which begin in a major key (not just the introduction but also the main theme) and ends in a minor key. I think it adds some special tragedy and an occasion to reflect deeply.

There is a general opinion that **the third Ballade** is much easier than the others, and sometimes it has been played by students in music schools. In my opinion, this is a common misconception. This is the only joyful Ballade because it is written in a major key, and the ending is very solemn, almost exultant; all the other Ballades are more tragic. But behind the apparent simplicity of melodies is hidden a lot of "subtext", a great polyphony. This Ballade is most figurative; while listening to it, it is easy to imagine the scene, curtain, change of decorations, and each episode as a new act in a theatre. And it needs to be played sublimely, on the rise, and melodic themes more pathetically, avoiding similarity.

Now, after a long time of working on the Ballades, I can tell from my own experience that this is the one of the most difficult Ballades, if we consider the work as a whole. In any music, the themes in minor are a little “easier” to play, because melodies in minor affect such feelings as sadness, anxiety, and melancholy, even if you play them just simply. But Chopin's themes in major should always be played in a special way, because you need a little more effort to touch the feelings of joy, happiness,

celebration or kindness. And in particular, to extend this feeling to the whole work is a challenging task.

My relationship with **the fourth Ballade** is based on the opposition of love and hate. Sometimes it seems to me that this is the best music piece in the world and its fullness and meaning surpasses even Bach's music, and sometimes I want to throw out the music score of this Ballade and never play it again. In any case, I can say that my work on this Ballade from the very first performance has not stopped and it is possible that it never will.

According to the semantic content, this Ballade is the richest, full of thematic abundance, variety of playing techniques, and features of sound, simultaneously presenting an epic nature and a narrative intimacy – all this requires a lot of attention, serious technical ability, an open imagination, and a full immersion in this piece during the performance. Some tips that I have got during the master classes and competitions were completely opposite, which made me realise how great the number of possible variants of this Ballade is. Hence every performer can and should find his or her own way of comprehending its meaning. I hope I have found one.

3.3 Practical arrangements

The concert arrangement included also some practical measures such as making the programs, posters, booking the Pyynikki Hall and reserving special technology for the recording. The posters and programs (see appendices 1 and 2) for the concert were made by myself, as I already had a lot of experience of similar things, because throughout my studies, I have played in different concerts quite often, and I have always done these things by myself. Booking the hall was a little bit difficult, because there are a lot of events happening in the hall all the time. I wanted to do my thesis concert in the evening time, so that more people could come. I needed to find a suitable day when it is free, and when some other event or concert did not happen at the same time in the Music Academy. In the end I had to change the original plan because of the jury's timetable and the absence of possible time for the concert in the hall during the evening, so it took place in the daytime after all. For the recording, I reserved a Zoom – video and audio recorder and a stand from the janitors and I asked my friend to press the record button in time. The video of this concert was uploaded on YouTube, (see the link in appendix 3).

4 Concert

4.1 Preparing for the concert day

The concert day was October 10, 2017. Before the concert I practised quite a lot for a long time, but on the concert day I decided not to play much, because from my own experience, I knew that it is necessary to carefully distribute my energy and not get tired before the concert. Therefore, from the early morning I practiced slowly the cadence of each Ballade, and also I prepared the beginning of each piece, because it is the beginning that plays an important role in the performance of the work, even more important than the cadenza or some complicated parts. A good and confident beginning brings good feelings to the performer and the excitement disappears. After that, you can completely immerse yourself in music and enjoy it. In addition, I needed time for practical things, such as consulting with the doormen (janitors). I needed to put the audio and video recorder in the right place in the hall to be seen and heard well enough, and also to explain to my friend who helped with the recording to observe the volume meter (so that there is no overload or too loud sound on the recording). Since the concert took place during the day, I did not have much time to prepare for it on the concert day. When everything was installed, I looked through the piano score again, without playing, just watched through each Ballade, its structure, the main high-lights and complex technical parts.

4.2 The course of the concert

Finally, it was 12 o'clock, and it was time for the concert. Everything was ready, and I just waited until the last people sat on their seats. I was not sure how many people were interested in coming to the concert, so I printed quite a few programs so that they would not suddenly run out. I went on stage and the concert began. At first, there was very much excitement and nervousness, and I was very much disturbed by the thoughts about the audio recording device and whether everything would go well with the recording, because it was very important, so it was very difficult to cope with the excitement at first. But still I understood that the most important thing at the moment is music, and I was able to plunge into the performance almost completely. It was a very good feeling, because I could control the sound and I could hear the balance, namely how the sound reaches the audience.

The difficulty was that despite the fact that it was a cycle of four Ballades, each Ballade is an independent work. Therefore, I could not distribute forces, so that for example there would be something simpler at first, but at the end it would become more complicated. There was a lot of content in each Ballade, both simple moments and difficulties, technically and musically. Perhaps, therefore, the first Ballade, combined with an intense excitement, turned out to be very dramatic in my performing, which was also noted by Risto Kyrö, who was evaluating the concert. There could have been more storytelling and moments of "relaxation", and that way, the same drama would have had a more powerful effect. For me, the first Ballade was difficult to perform because it is well-known music, and when you perform it, it is very difficult not to play like someone else before, to avoid the same phrases and the structure of the work that many other performers use. To avoid this, I tried to put my own thoughts and feelings into the performance and to play as if people are hearing this for the first time, and I think it was quite successful.

The second Ballade is my favorite of all and also the "newest" for me, and I had not performed it at concerts as many times as the other Ballades. Therefore, in the second Ballade, I did not feel much nervous excitement and I could be completely involved in the performing process. There is always some excitement, of course it is impossible to get rid of it completely, so after listening the recording I realised that many fast and technically complicated parts turned out even faster than I expected, but this only improved the overall result. And after playing the second Ballade, I started to understand the complexity of performing the entire cycle of Ballades in one concert, because I had spent quite a lot of energy already, physically and spiritually, but there were still two Ballades ahead of me, which required no less (and maybe even more) zeal and concentration.

The third Ballade is in major, so it is very nice to play it from the very beginning, especially after the dramatic ending of the previous piece. In performing this Ballade, I felt free and I could show different images and characters of this work. It was like a breath of fresh air and a source of energy for me.

And finally it was time to play the last Ballade. This is certainly the culmination of the whole cycle, the most complex and most saturated work, from the technical viewpoint and from the feelings and immersing yourself into music. I knew that in this piece there is a danger of staying away (like on the outside) from what you are playing and using too much uncontrolled rubato, and at the same time I needed to avoid the steady boring pulse and rhythm, so I tried to clear my mind totally before starting to play. The main theme should be very melodic, without any unnecessary accents or so-called "bubbles" in the musical phrase, and the accompaniment should be equable and stable, but

"alive", which helps to unfold the melody. An introduction was also a big challenge. I had practised the beginning of this Ballade with different teachers and everyone agreed on the opinion that despite apparent simplicity, this is one of the most difficult parts in piano music in general. In my opinion, I managed to achieve this balance and after that during the whole piece I was absolutely immersed in music, I had no other thoughts. And as the audience and Risto Kyrö told me after the concert, this Ballade turned out the best: my playing included everything – storytelling, a drama, different characters and feelings.

In the end, I planned to play Chopin's Mazurka, to relax the audience and myself after such a huge program and the large-scale pieces. Mazurka is a miniature, so it is very pleasant to listen to and there are only light and nice feelings after that, so my choice of performing this Mazurka was deliberate. And the effect was exactly the way it was supposed to be.

5 Goals and Objectives

The main goal of my thesis was to offer a musically pleasant concert for the audience, an opportunity to hear all four of Chopin's Ballades in one concert, and also to test myself, as the performance of all Ballades at once is a very difficult task that even not many great musicians can do. I think that both goals were reached, which is evident based on the feedback of the evaluator and members of the audience. I understood that this concert is such a strong statement about myself, firstly, because it was one of my very first concerts during the first year of my studies in Tampere Music Academy, and secondly, the performing of such a program assumes a serious mastery of the piano. I cannot say that the concert was perfect, because I am pretty self-critical in nature and almost never satisfied with my performances. From the words of the evaluator, I realised that in my performance as a whole there was a lot of drama, but he would have liked to hear more storytelling. But overall I am pleased with the result, I knew that there is no such thing as an ideal concert and that it is almost impossible to perform such a great program flawlessly and without mistakes. Finally, I accepted the truth, and I gave myself a permission to play with mistakes and wrong notes. And I felt that this also somehow freed my performance and, thus, improved the quality of playing.

My performance was quite successful, and I was able to convey the beauty of this music and its value in the piano repertoire of the world to the listeners. I got a valuable lesson about what kind of feelings you get from playing such a big program at a concert, and I know what I should work on

in the future. In addition, planning the concert turned out to be not the easiest task, and I learned a lesson for the future that it should be treated no less seriously preparing for and performing the program. Another good lesson for me was the organisation and preparation of the recording. I realised that it is best if there is some responsible person you trust, who could make it all without a question – and then you could absolutely forget about it and relax so that these things and thoughts will not distract you during the playing. In the end, I got great pleasure from the whole concert (including preparation, performance, and feedback and so on).

Many positive reviews indicate that the concert was really good. And after such a test for myself, I realised that in the future I want to take on only such tasks that require me to take my abilities to the limit in all parameters, because only through this you can really see the progress, your own growth and the development of many qualities, both as a performer and as a person as a whole. Since it took me tremendous preparation for this concert, I am sure that I will perform these Ballades in future concerts, and after several decades I will try to play them all again in one concert and compare my feelings and the result.

The next time I perform these Ballades in one concert, I will be able to pay more attention to telling the story and more carefully listening to my own playing in the process of performance. After this thesis concert it will be much easier, because now I know that I can perform such a big program in one concert, now I will feel freer and try to reveal the main musical component of each Ballade, namely the melodiousness of every theme, the variety of characters, and the most carefully constructed plot, i.e. the plan of performing every piece. I also think that it will be much easier for people in the audience to perceive and feel each work through all their senses, if there is a break or some other piece of music between all the Ballades, so that the listeners can relax and clear their minds for the next piece. Through performing all Ballades in a row, one can get the impression of the sameness and similarity of these works, although each of them is worthy of independent thoughtful listening and even a whole concert.

Sources

Beauclerk, Charles 2014. *Piano Man: Life of John Ogdon*. Simon & Schuster UK.

Chopin, Fryderyk. Ballades Opp. 23, 38, 47, 52. Urtext. National edition, edited by Jan Ekier. Poland.

Fryderyk Chopin Information Centre 2002: *The Life of Chopin* (pol.) The Fryderyk Chopin Institute website. <http://pl.chopin.nifc.pl/chopin/persons/text/id/213>. Accessed 16.10.2016

Huneker, James 1918. *Chopin: The Man and His Music*. C.Scribner's Sons, New York.

Iwaszkiewicz Jaroslaw 1938.*Chopin*. Original *Fryderyk Szopen*. Rus. Regina Kasher. Muzgiz, Moscow-Leningrad 1949.

Jones, J. Barrie 1998a. *Piano music for concert hall and salon c. 1830–1900*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Kremlev, Julius 1960. *Frederic Chopin. Essay on life and creativity*. Muzgiz, Moscow-Leningrad.

Mazel, Leo 1960. *Chopin*. Muzgiz, Moscow.

Michałowski, Kornel; Samson, Jim (n.d.): *Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek*. Grove Music Online. Accessed 16.10.2016

Niecks, Frederick 1902. *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician*. Edinburgh.

Samson, Jim 1996. *Chopin*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Schonberg, Harold C. 1987. *Great Pianists*. Simon and Schuster, New York.

Temperley, Nicholas 1980. *Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek*. The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, vol. 4. Macmillan, London.

Tjulin Yuri 1968. *About the program in Chopin's works*. Myzika, Moscow.

Zamki i warownie (Castles and strongholds) 2003: *Brochów Church fortified* (pol.) <http://www.zamkipolskie.com/brochow/brochow.html>. Accessed 16.10.2016

Zamoyski, Adam 2010. *Chopin: Prince of the Romantics*. HarperCollins, London.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Poster


Attachment 2: Program

Attachment 3: Link


Attachment 1:

Chopin - 4 BALLADES

Viktor Pellian opinnäytetyökonsertti



*Frederic Chopin
(1810-1849)*



Viktor Pellia, piano

Pyynikkisali
10.10.2017 klo 12:00

Attachment 2:

Viktor Pellian opinnäytetyökonsertti
Chopin – 4 Balladia



Pyynikkisali

10.10.2017

12.00

Attachment 2:

Frédéric Chopin's four ballades are one-movement pieces for solo piano, composed between 1831 and 1842. They are some of the most challenging pieces in the standard piano repertoire.

The term ballade was used by Chopin in the sense of a balletic interlude or dance-piece, equivalent to the old Italian ballata, but the term may also have connotations of the medieval heroic ballad, a narrative minstrel-song, often of a fantastical character. There are dramatic and dance-like elements in Chopin's use of the genre, and he may be said to be a pioneer of the ballade as an abstract musical form. The four ballades are said to have been inspired by poet Adam Mickiewicz. The exact inspiration for each individual ballade, however, is unclear and disputed.

Ballades were composed before Chopin, in literature and Italian Renaissance music. But, Chopin invented the ballade as an abstract musical form. After Chopin, other composers such as Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms also wrote ballades.

Viktor Pellia (b.1991) began his piano studies at the age of 7 in Kondopoga (Republic of Karelia, Russia) music school and became a student of Petrozavodsk Music College in 2006, pupil of Viktor Gorin. He continued his studies in 2010 in Petrozavodsk State Conservatory as a pupil of Viktor Portnoy. From the autumn 2011 he has studied at the Savonia University of Applied Sciences with Kirsti Huttunen. Now Viktor is studying in Tampere University of Applied Sciences with Heini Kärkkäinen. Viktor has participated in many master-classes with: Fauré-Quartet, Konstantin Bogino, Paavali Jumppanen, Julia Mustonen-Dahlkvist, Nicholas Carthy, Evgeni Mikhailov, Henri Sigfridsson, Risto-Matti Marin, Niklas Pokki, Sergej Osadchuk. Also, Viktor has participated in several piano competitions, where he was awarded of different prizes. On the Chopin International Piano Competition in Petrozavodsk in 2009 he became the 3rd prize-winner, on the IX Leevi Madetoja Piano Competition in 2012 he reached the finals (as a soloist he played with the Oulu Symphony Orchestra of the Second Piano Concerto by Shostakovich). On the International Piano Competition in Gagny, France in 2013 he achieved the 3rd prize. Viktor won the 1st prize on the VII Piano Competition in Kuopio in the spring of 2014 and on the X Leevi Madetoja Piano Competition in Oulu in January 2015, he was awarded of 2nd prize. Viktor has played many concert programs in Finland, Germany and Russia, also in several music festivals (Kivijärvi Soi 2013 (Finland) and the White Nights of Karelia 2014-2016 (Russia)), he has played as a soloist with the Symphony Orchestra of the Karelian State Philharmonic in 2005-2010 and with the Russian-German Youth Orchestra in Germany 2013. With Kuopio Symphony Orchestra he played the First Piano Concerto by Sergei Prokofiev in 2015.

Attachment 2:

DHJELMA:

Frédéric Chopin – 4 Balladia:

Op. 23: Balladi g-molli, 1831

Op. 38: Balladi, F-duuri, 1836–1839

Op. 47: Balladi, As-duuri, 1840–1841

Op. 52: Balladi, f-molli, 1842

Attachment 2:

"Music was his language, the divine tongue through which he expressed a whole realm of sentiments that only the select few can appreciate... The muse of his homeland dictates his songs, and the anguished cries of Poland lend to his art a mysterious, indefinable poetry which, for all those who have truly experienced it, cannot be compared to anything else... The piano alone was not sufficient to reveal all that lies within him. In short he is a most remarkable individual who commands our highest degree of devotion."

Franz Liszt about Chopin.

Attachment 3:

Frederick Chopin - Four Ballades (and Mazurka):

<https://youtu.be/zzlmL9QETj4>