

J.S. Bach - Frédéric Chopin

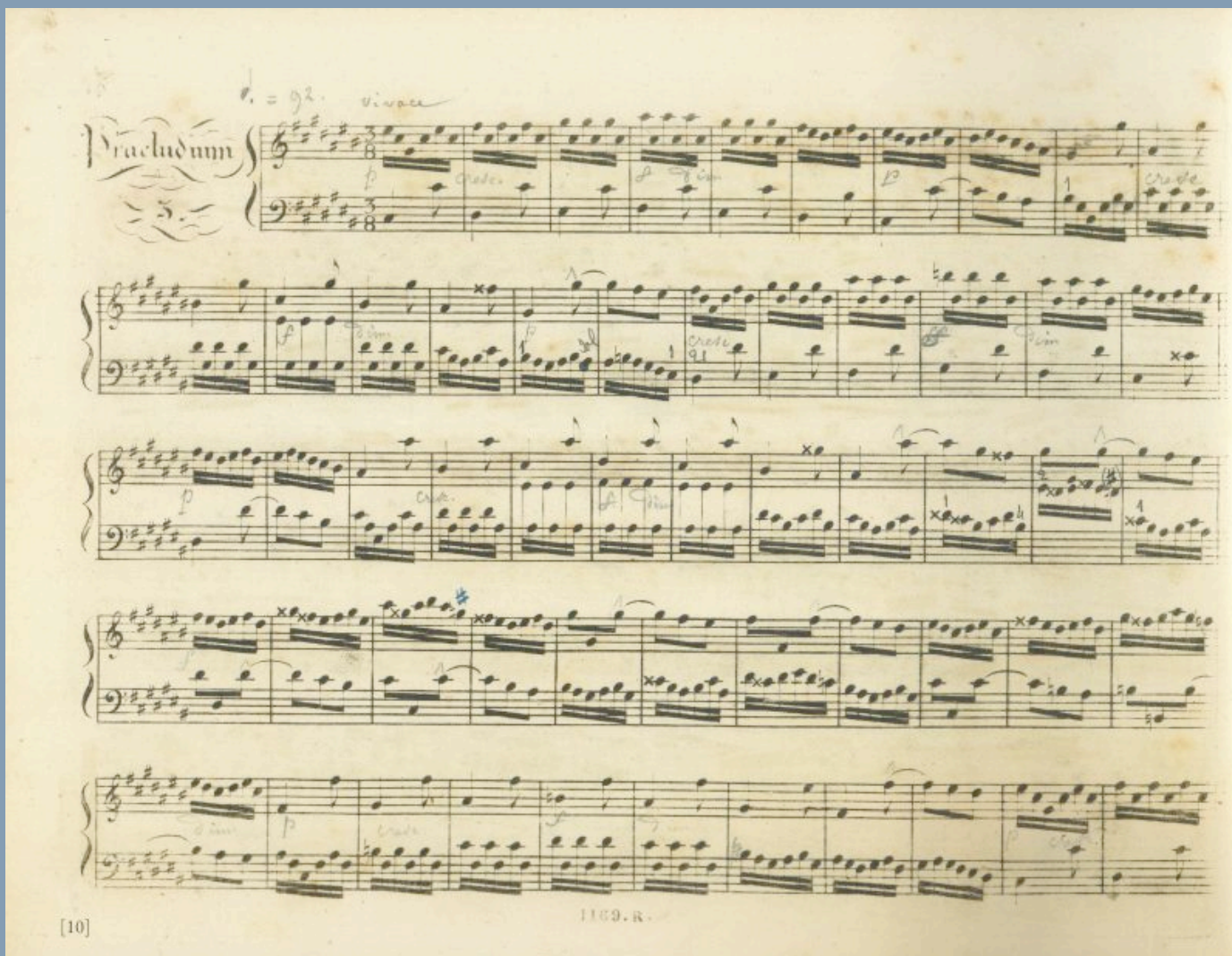
Vingt-Quatre Préludes et Fugues

(Le Clavier bien tempéré. Livre I)

Annoté par Frédéric Chopin

Commentaire de Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger

Paris, 2010. Format: oblong, 4° (29 x 21 cm), lxxii, 110 pp. Full-color reproduction of the Richault 1 edition (pl. nos. 1169.R & 1168.R) with Chopin's performing annotations. \$111



Chopin's relation to the cult of Johann Sebastian Bach forms an important and compelling chapter in the history of music—one that awaits more detailed work in the light of new sources and studies. How did the Polish master, who lived during a decisive period in the development of Bach scholarship, view the Leipzig Cantor at various stages in his life? What did he know of this music, and under what circumstances did he get to know it? Which works

This precious score, held in a private collection, emanates directly from Pauline Chazaren, a pupil of Chopin and teacher of Cosima Liszt. The score was probably purchased in Lyons around 1843 prior to Pauline's Parisian sojourn and was brought or sent to Paris, where it was used in the lessons with Chopin. The score shows no trace of interventions that could be ascribed to Pauline or anyone else.

did he play or hear in performance?

In his triple activity as composer, performer, and teacher, Chopin constantly turned to Bach as a supreme point of reference. The Well-Tempered Clavier is said to be the only score he took with him to Majorca in the winter of 1838-39, at the time he was completing his 24 Preludes op.28—in other words, at the heart of his career as a composer. The influence of Bach on Chopin's compositional style is indeed a powerful one. It can be detected at various levels throughout his works, from the youthful Sonata op.4 to the late, stark Sonata op.65 for cello. The essentially linear conception that predominates in his development of musical ideas—the logical, elegant voice leading—appears to stem from an intimate connection with the work of J.S. Bach.

Until now the important role played by the Well-Tempered Clavier in Chopin's teaching has been known on the basis of literary sources. The document published here for the first time confirms it with living proof of a different kind, a live record, so to speak, of his teaching.

Leafing through the pages of this copy of the Well-Tempered Clavier I, one cannot fail to be struck by the neatness with which the signs and words indicating tempo, metronome marks, phrasing, articulation, dynamics, left-hand octaves, and so on, have been notated. All of Czerny's indications (probably taken from the 1843 Veuve Launer edition), save fingerings, have been copied out by Chopin. The systematic copying stops after Prelude 7, as do the sporadic indications in ink.

The comment made by Georges Mathias in 1897, a professional pupil of Chopin, sheds light on Chopin's interpretation of the masters: "Chopin, exécutant de génie, interprétait Mozart, Beethoven, avec le sentiment de Chopin, et c'était très beau, c'était sublime. Il n'était pas de la catégorie des exécutants critiques, historiques" / "Chopin, a genius of a performer, played Mozart and Beethoven in the spirit of Chopin, and it was very beautiful, indeed sublime. He was no critical, historical performer"). Commentary in Fr/Eng/Pol. Hardbound. (text adapted from J.J. Eigeldinger)

[\(see listing of other Chopin works\)](#)

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