

Daguerreotype of Chopin in 1849 by
Frères Bisson

with my parcel for London. As you are usually kind enough to send at the same time a bill to be paid two months later, please send it to me to sign if it's absolutely necessary. The price will go up this time to 30 pounds.⁶

Given the date of this package, its contents and its Paris destination, it seems likely that Delacroix conveyed it along with the package for Franchomme.

On September 9, Chopin wrote Léo that he was "eager to return Wessel's contract"⁷ and on the 13th he wrote Franchomme:

I am very angry that Brandus is away and that Maho is not yet able to receive the manuscripts that he often asked me for this winter. One must wait, therefore, but I beg you to kindly return there as often as seems possible, because I would not like this affair to drag on, having sent my copy to London at the same time as to you.⁸

On September 22, Chopin again wrote Franchomme, this time thanking him for meeting Maho and for sending him the money from Brandus. He added that "the date chosen for publication seems excellent, and I only have to ask you to watch that Brandus doesn't fall asleep on my account."⁹

Thus, we know that by August 30, Chopin had prepared a total of nine manuscripts, three copies each of Opp. 60, 61, and 62. The reason for this was his wish to achieve simultaneous publication in different countries, the publishers for these works being Brandus et C^{ie}. in Paris, Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig, and Wessel and Co. in London. This practice, which was common at the time, allowed composers to prevent their works from being pirated by unscrupulous publishers.

The first edition of the *Barcarolle* was Wessel's, which was registered at Stationer's Hall on October 7 and deposited at the British Museum on

October 13.¹⁰ Chopin had neither requested nor received proof copies from Wessel. Brandus sent Chopin proofs of their edition by October, and they announced its publication in the Paris press on November 8 and registered it at the Bibliothèque Nationale (*Dépôt légal*) on November 13.¹¹ On November 11, Chopin returned to Paris from his five-month stay at Nohant, and a few days later he wrote Breitkopf & Härtel to acknowledge receipt of their payment for Opp. 60, 61, and 62.¹² Their edition of the *Barcarolle*, of which Chopin did not request or receive proofs, appeared before the end of the year, probably in November. All three editions are dedicated to Chopin's friend Madame la Baronne de Stockhausen. Her husband, the Hanoverian ambassador in Paris, had been the dedicatee of Chopin's *Ballade in G Minor*, Op. 23. (See "About This Edition" for further discussion of the manuscripts and first editions.)

Chopin performed the *Barcarolle* at his final concert, at the Salle Pleyel on February 16, 1848. Although quite ill, he was said to have played beautifully. The program also included some of his preludes and mazurkas, a waltz, a nocturne, an étude, the *Berceuse*, Op. 57, the last three movements of his Cello Sonata, Op. 65 (with Franchomme) and a Mozart piano trio. The pianist Charles Hallé (1819–1895), who attended this concert, remembered some years later that:

Chopin played the latter part of his Barcarolle, from the point where it demands the utmost energy [measures 84 ff.], in the most opposite style, pianissimo, but with such wonderful nuances, that one remained in doubt if this new reading were not preferable to the accustomed one. Nobody but Chopin could have accomplished such a feat.¹³

⁶ Ibid., 239 (letter of 30 August 1846).

⁷ Ibid., 241 (letter of 9 September 1846).

⁸ Ibid., 241 (letter of 13 September 1846).

⁹ Ibid., 243 (letter of 22 September 1846).

¹⁰ Information kindly supplied in a communication from Dr. Christophe Grabowski, dated 11 January 2005.

¹¹ Christophe Grabowski, "Les éditions originales de Frédéric Chopin," *Revue de musicologie* 82, no. 2 (1966), 225.

¹² *Correspondance*, III: 254 (letter of 19 November 1846).

¹³ C. E. and Marie Hallé, *Life and Letters of Sir Charles Hallé, Being an Autobiography (1819–1860) with Correspondence and Diaries* (London: Smith & Elder, 1896), 36.

Performance Issues

Ornamentation

Regarding trills, Mikuli observed that Chopin “mostly began them with the [upper] auxiliary note.”²⁹ In his edition of Chopin’s complete piano works, however, Mikuli’s trill fingerings often begin on the principal note. In the absence of first-hand information from Chopin’s other students, this editor usually favors beginning the trills in the *Barcarolle* on the principal note. The reasons for this are evident from the musical contexts, where a smooth elision with the preceding melodic note is desirable. Also, it should be observed that Chopin’s rare fingerings for trills in the autographs of the *Barcarolle* suggest that beginning them on the auxiliary is the exception rather than the rule.

Grace notes should generally be played before the beat, so that they contribute to the flowing character of the melody. This practice is followed on recordings of this work by such noted Chopin players as Vladimir de Pachmann (1848–1933), Alfred Cortot (1877–1962), Arthur Rubinstein (1887–1982), Benno Moiseiwitsch (1890–1963), Vladimir Horowitz (1903–1989), Shura Cherkassky (1909–1995), and Jan Ekier (born 1913), among others. Chopin’s pedaling in measure 111 also confirms this practice. Grace notes played on the beat would often interfere with the rhythms in the left-hand part, and in measure 86 such an execution would be physically impossible for many pianists.

On the other hand, arpeggiated chords (as in measure 8) and grace notes written before strong beats (as in measure 10) should be played on the beat, so that the harmony they provide is caught by the pedal. In measures 34 and 51 in the Dubois copy referred to above, Chopin drew lines to connect right-hand grace notes with the corresponding left-hand strong beats. In the present edition, these two instances are indicated by solid lines. Related instances are indicated by editorial dashed lines, as are the lines from arpeggiated chords.

Pedaling

This editor has performed the *Barcarolle* several times on a restored Pleyel grand piano of 1844 and can verify that Chopin’s indications for the damper pedal are well suited to that instrument. Modern pianists should bear in mind that printing conventions during Chopin’s time prevented the indication of syncopated pedaling, for the sign used to indicate the raising of the pedal (*) always had to be printed a certain distance before the next pedal (“Ped.”) sign. Also, it should be noted that the absence of pedaling in the autographs does not necessarily mean that Chopin wanted none to be used. (The first such places are at the end of measure 1 and the beginning of measure 2).

In general, Chopin’s pedal indications in the British Library autograph are more precise and refined than those in the earlier Kraków autograph. For example, in measures 16 and 17 in the earlier autograph, his pedal changes occur on the strong beats, but in the later autograph they occur on weak beats in order to assure that the appoggiaturas (non-harmonic tones on strong beats) are not caught by the pedal. However, even the later autograph contains lapses and ambiguities.

For these reasons, two sets of pedaling are given in this edition: the upper one being Chopin’s as it appears in the British Library autograph, and the lower one being this editor’s. (Neither set includes indications for the use of the *una corda* pedal, which Chopin is known to have used quite often, even though he never indicated it in any of his autographs.) Ultimately, the performer must use the damper pedal according to what the ear, the instrument, and the acoustics dictate. On large instruments, shallow pedaling should be considered for the climactic passages.

²⁹ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher As Seen by His Pupils*, tr Naomi Shohet, Krysia Osostowicz, and Roy Howat, ed. Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 58–59 and 131–134. See also Mikuli’s preface to his edition of Chopin’s complete piano works (Leipzig: Kistner, 1879, reprinted New York: G. Schirmer, 1916).

Dedicated to Madame la Baronne de Stockhausen

Barcarolle

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Op. 60

Allegretto (♩ = 54)

Measure 1: *f* (dim.) *mp*

Measure 4: *p*

Measure 8: *cantabile*

Measure 12: *p*

- Ⓐ Chopin's pedal indications for the introduction are not wholly satisfactory on modern instruments, since the opening octave—which is the root of the dominant-ninth harmony that underlies these measures—should not evaporate suddenly. This editor plays the octave *mf* and holds it with the sostenuto pedal until the last note of measure 3, during which time the damper pedal may be changed when the ear dictates, sometimes partially.