



The Music of Frederic Chopin

Examining Differences Among Available Editions

"Why are you playing from Urtext when you can get the Paderewski edition?"
- Menachem Pressler, masterclass at CCM

Differences between editions:

There are many differences than can result in different editions, including:

- Dynamics
- Ornamentation
- Articulation
- Pedaling
- Pitches
- Fingering
- Pedagogical material (explanations of markings, technical exercises, etc.)
- Presentation/Setting

How did they become so different?

Chopin would often create three different fair copies (clean copies meant for publishers) of his music from manuscript for three different publishers – Wessel in London, Brandus in Paris, and Breitkopf in Leipzig. Throughout the years, each of these original editions has since been edited, with each edition having the possibility of changes.

Each subsequent edition would use the previous editions to arrive at a 'correct' consensus. Carl Mikuli, a student of Chopin's, added many things from his memories of studying with Chopin.

Why should you examine different editions?

There are many reasons to look at different editions, such as:

- Authenticity – some editions have a better claim to being what the composer actually wrote, and explain their research in a preface.
- Pedagogical – editions by Cortot and Palmer contain very useful pedagogical exercises and explanations.
- Increasing musical ideas – changes in dynamics and articulation could give you different ideas of how to perform the music

Where to find different editions?

Many of the different early editions are available for free on IMSLP (www.imslp.org), including Breitkopf, Brandus, Mikuli, Merkte, Klindworth, Scholtz, Cortot, Joseffy, Reinecke, and (some) Paderewski.

Chopin's original manuscripts and fair copies are available online at <http://chopin.lib.uchicago.edu/>