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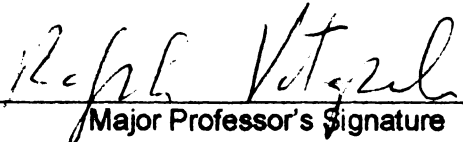
A STUDY OF KAROL SZYMANOWSKI'S MUSICAL
EVOLUTION IN SELECTED PIANO WORKS

presented by

WEI-QIN CLAIRE TANG

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of the requirements for the

Doctoral degree in Music Performance


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**A STUDY OF KAROL SZYMANOWSKI'S MUSICAL EVOLUTION
IN SELECTED PIANO WORKS**

By

WEI-QIN CLAIRE TANG

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

School of Music

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF KAROL SZYMANOWSKI'S MUSICAL EVOLUTION IN SELECTED PIANO WORKS

By

WEI-QIN CLAIRE TANG

Inside Poland, Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) is recognized as the major composer after Chopin, and the Father of Polish contemporary music. Beyond the Polish country border, his music still remains largely unknown to the international audiences, despite the fact that it has interested more and more musical scholars and artists in the recent years.

Szymanowski's sixty-two published works encompass different musical styles and include compositions for the piano, voice, chamber groups, symphony, ballet and opera. Like many composers of his time, Szymanowski's musical style experienced different stages of evolution: during the early years, he strongly attached to the Romantic and late-Romantic traditions; in the middle period, he favored the impressionistic, oriental and mystic qualities; and in his late years, he searched musical inspiration from the folk resources of his native land.

The goal of this dissertation is to trace the time-line of the composer's life, and explore the evolution of his musical styles through a study of three separate piano works: Four Etudes, Op. 4 (1900-1902); Twelve Etudes, Op. 33, (1916); and Mazurkas, Op. 50, Nos. 13-16 (1924-1925). This dissertation includes a study of the historical background of the composer, the major artistic and social influences towards his musical styles, as well as theoretical analysis of the three presented works.

To my teachers and my families...

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I wish to give my sincere gratitude to every teacher in my life for helping me become the person and the musician I am.

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INTRODUCTION

When we think about Poland and Polish music most of us immediately picture the nineteenth-century piano poet, Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849). Polish composers after Chopin were greatly overshadowed by his imperative musical heritage. Not until decades after Chopin's death, did another composer, Karol Szymanowski, succeed in reintroducing Polish music to the Western European musical arena in the early part of the twentieth-century.

Szymanowski was born in Tyomiszówka, Ukraine - a territory of the former Polish kingdom,¹ on October 3rd, 1882. As the elder of five siblings, he was raised in a conservative yet artistically inclined Polish landowner's family. His early musical education was first received at home, and later continued at a music school founded by his uncle (Gustav Neuhaus) in Elisavetgrad. From 1901-1904, Szymanowski studied composition with Marek Zawirski and Zygmunt Noskowski in Warsaw.

In 1905, Szymanowski and three other young composers (Grzegorz Fitelberg, Ludomir Różycki and Apolinary Szeluto) formed the "Young Poland" in music to encourage progressive trends in Polish art music. The group was generously supported by the wealth of Prince Wladyslaw Lubomirski (a student of Fitelberg), and by the talents

¹ As a unified kingdom, Poland's history began in D.C. 966. The time around 966-1770 was the glorified "golden age" in Polish history. The territory of the Polish kingdom extended to the Black Sea and part of today's Ukraine, and was claimed geographically as one of the largest countries on the European map during this period. However, due to its geographic position, Poland had been "a pawn on the tactical chessboard of Eastern Europe." (Samson, p. 11) In the seventeenth century, Poland was under attack by the Swedes, fought with the Turks, and endured a Cossack rebellion in the southeastern region. In the late eighteenth century, Polish territory was divided among Russia, Prussia and Austria. The tri-partition was signed in 1772, 1893 and 1895 respectively. The political suppression from Russia was the most significant among the three. Two armed Polish uprisings were attempted in 1830 and 1863, but both resulted in failure. Only until November 11th 1918 at the end of the First World War, did Poland regain independence from the nearly 150 years of socio-political suppression by the partitions. The Polish territory was once again remapped under the Versailles Treaty.

of famous musicians such as, Artur Rubinstein and Pawel Kochanski. Szymanowski's music in this early period reflects his interests in the Romantic and late Romantic styles.

During 1909-1914, Szymanowski traveled extensively to many places both within and outside the European continent. He was exposed to different European musical trends at the time, and gained tremendous interest in "exotic" cultures such as those of the Mediterranean and the Arab regions. During the four-year period of the World War I (1914-1918) Szymanowski remained in Tyomiszówka. His musical style of this war time period "somehow draws together the refined sonorities of Debussy, Ravel and late-Scriabin and the impassioned late-Romanticism of the New German School."²

Following the reunification of Poland, Szymanowski returned to Warsaw in 1919. After the first few difficult years, he reached a new turning point in his musical creativity. He regained interest in the Tatra highlander's music that he once rejected. The works of this period generally bear either obvious or subtle folk inspirations.

In 1927, Szymanowski was appointed director of the Warsaw Conservatory. Only two years later, however, he was forced to give up the directorship due to the reoccurrence of severe mental depression and tuberculosis in both lungs. During his one-year intensive treatment and rest at the Swiss health resort in Davos, he dedicated himself to the writing an important treatise - *The Educational Role of Musical Culture in Society*.

1930-1931 were good years for Szymanowski. Along with the improvement of his health, his personal fame was also well achieved. He was appointed Rector of the Warsaw Academy of Music and received several honors and awards. Unfortunately, the following years resulted in the continuation of deteriorating health and financial

² Jim Samson, "Szymanowski, Karol" *The New Grove Dictionary of music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2002. Vol. 22), 894.

problems. On March 24th, 1937, Szymanowski died in a sanatorium in Lausanne at the age of 55.

Even though Szymanowski is well recognized inside Poland and is remembered as one of the foremost composers after Chopin, his name remains largely unknown to today's international audiences. Szymanowski's music is unique and exceptional, and it warrants our attention. His sixty-two published compositions include music for the piano, voice, violin, opera, ballet, as well as various chamber ensembles. Perhaps being a pianist himself, Szymanowski's had written a significant number of piano works among his compositions. As noted by Chylinska, "... this attachment to piano, as marriage of convenience, became permanent."³

The goal of this document is to trace the evolution of Szymanowski's creative life. Each chapter follows one of his main stylistic periods: Chapter I – Reflections of Romantic Idols (this chapter exemplifies how Szymanowski's early compositions are deeply influenced by the Romantic styles); Chapter II - New Direction (this chapter explores Szymanowski detachment to his early style and his interests in the new compositional trends, such as the use of polytonality); Chapter III - Folk Inspirations (this last chapter observes another shift in Szymanowski's compositional styles due to personal and political considerations). Three piano compositions are presented and analyzed to illustrate these stylistic transformations: Four Etudes, Op. 4; Twelve Etudes, Op. 33; and Mazurkas Op. 50, Nos. 13-16. Each composition is analyzed while looking for the composer's intentions and inspirations, but also taking into account the influences of various backgrounds: musical, cultural and personal. This document, however, is only

³ Teresa Chylinska, *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Works* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1993), 30.

intended as an introductory study rather than a comprehensive guide of Szymanowski's musical language.

CHAPTER I

REFLECTIONS OF ROMANTIC IDOLS

Four Etudes, Op. 4

The cultural development of Szymanowski's adolescent years was much influenced by his family's genuine appreciation of music and literature. As a young composer, Szymanowski was keenly aware of the aesthetics of the old masters. Among many, he had "a strong admiration for Wagner, ... the greatest love for Chopin, and among the contemporaries, he valued Scriabin."⁴ In literature, Szymanowski admired the Romantic poems of Byron, Baudelaire, and those of the "Young Poland" poets. Szymanowski was deeply inspired by the philosophy of "Art as religion" (the hierarchy of Art) advocated by the "Young Poland" poets, and attracted by the extravagant language as well as the nostalgic sentimentality of their poems.

The influences of these Romantic idols are witnessed in Szymanowski's early compositions written around 1898-1908. His compositions of this time were primarily written for the piano and for the voice. One graduate change in Szymanowski's musical and artistic tastes can be seen in his early works, namely, the shift from Polish orientation to Germanic inspiration. The selection of his song lyrics is a good "non-musical" example. (See Table 1) While the poems of Opuses 2, 5, 7 and 11 are Polish, those of Opuses 13 and 17 are German.

⁴ Teresa Chylinska, *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Works* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1993), 23.

Table 1. Early piano compositions and song cycles (1989-1908)

Piano compositions	Song cycles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nine Preludes, Op. 1 - Variations in B-flat minor, Op. 3 - Four Etudes, Op. 4⁵ - First Piano Sonata, Op. 8 in C minor - Variations on a Polish Theme, Op. 10 - Fantasy Op. 14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Six Songs, Op. 2 (poems by Tetmajer) - Three Songs, Op. 5 (Kasprowicz) - The Swan, Op. 7 (Berent) - Four Songs, Op. 11 (Micinski) - Five Songs, Op. 13 (Dehmel, Bodenstedt, Bierbaum) - Twelve Songs, Op. 17 (Dehmel Mombert, Falke, Grief)

Many of these early song cycles and piano works share certain stylistic parallels influenced by Romantic literature as well as music, namely, the emphasis on the dramatic content, and in particular, the nostalgic sentimentality. One example of stylistic parallels is shown between Six Songs, Op. 2 and Four Etudes, Op. 4, both written during the period of 1900–1902 when Szymanowski was studying composition in Warsaw.

The lyrics of Six Songs, Op. 2 are selected from the poems written by Kazimierz Tetmajer (1865-1946), a “Young Poland” poet. In accordance with the themes of “Young Poland” poetry, these poems in general depict “a hedonistic escape from the brutal realities of modern life and a yearning for Nirvana or death.”⁶ A translation from the lyric of Op. 2, No. 4 depicts a “withdrawn from the world” feeling⁷:

Sometimes when half-asleep I dream of a wonderful female voice
singing angelic hymns, more beautiful than all the songs in the


⁵ Four Etudes, Op. 4 was dedicated to pianist Tara Neuhaus, a cousin of Szymanowski and the sister of the prominent Russian pianist and pedagogue, Harry Neuhaus (1888-1964).

⁶ Jim Samson, *The Music of Szymanowski* (London: Kahn & Averill, Stanmore Press Ltd, 1980), 37.

⁷ Ibid.

world. I listen with my whole soul, while longing tears the heart
from my breast. I would follow this song to the ends of the earth. I
do not know if it is love or death which calls to me.

This “withdrawn from the world” aspect of the poem is reflected in the musical character of Op. 4, No. 3. Perhaps, it was Tetmajer’s poem that inspired the musical drama of this piano composition. Example 1 provides the score for mm. 40-58 of étude No. 3. The two following paragraphs provide a stylistic analysis of the musical content in relation to the dramatic implication of Tetmajer’s poem.

At mm. 40-43 (the scene right before the poem), the *fff* climax tension is suddenly frozen by a dramatic breakage on the B-flat minor chord (marked ^ and *sfff*). Then, the music resumes discreetly but painfully (marked *sub. ppp* and *mesto*) with the dissonant half-diminished seventh chord on C syncopated with the rhythmic motive (), and is supported by the dominant pedal on F that symbolizes the darkness. This leitmotiv idea is a direct influence of the Wagnerian musical tradition.

From mm. 43-58, where the scene related to the poem begins, the dramatic tension slowly resolves back to tonic B-flat through the dominant pedal supporting a chain of chromatic progression that suggests the transition from darkness to a “half-asleep” or hallucinated dream stage. Following is the reminiscence of Theme 1 – a beautiful hymn-like melody in octaves accompanied by a series of simple repeated chords. This time the upper voice of the octaves is outlined to illustrate “a wonderful female voice” and the “angelic hymn” of the “dream.” Supporting the somber melodic line, a half-diminished seventh chord and an unresolved French sixth chord on C are emphasized respectively in mm. 48-49, to stress the underlying pain “while longing tears the heart from my breast.”

With alteration, Theme 1 makes its last and partial appearance (mm. 53-54) in the tenor. The mood of the coda continues to darken. Finally, the pain represented by the B-flat minor is calmly resolved by the B-flat major through a Picardy third – a symbolic gesture of “transformation” that often occurs in Bach’s music. This passage from mm. 53-64 could correspond to the last two phrases of the poem: “I would follow this song to the ends of the earth. I do not know if it is death or love which calls to me.”

Ex. 1. Szymanowski, Op. 4, No. 3 (mm. 40-58)

40 *fff* *molto rall.* *mesto* *sub ppp*

43 *rall.* *Tempo I.* *pp semplice* *m.d.*

47 *ten.* *rit.* *più pp* *rall.* *pp* *a tempo*

poco a poco rall. e dim.

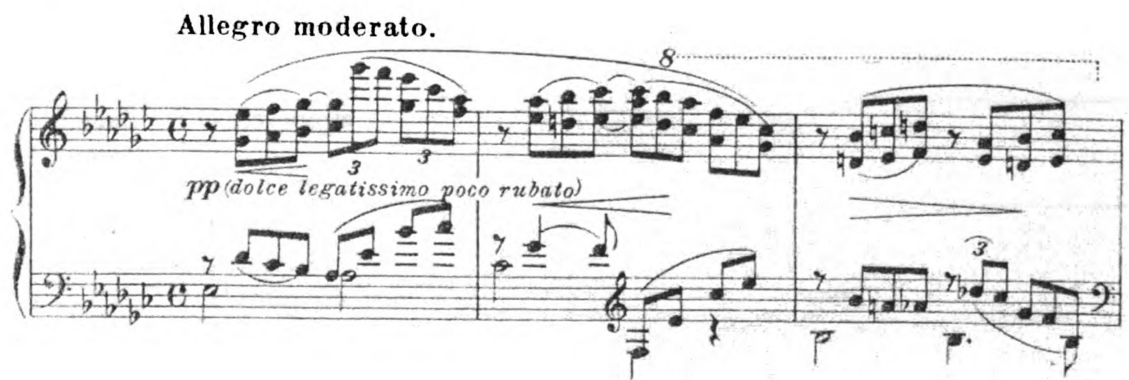
51 *cantando* *pp*

54 *(adagio)* *ten.* *rall.* *ppp* *finito*

Despite its generic title – *Etudes*, Szymanowski's Op. 4 emphasizes more importantly the musical drama rather than technique per se. Its pianistic writing reveals a synthesis of various Romantic models such as Chopin and Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) in particular.

Although the Examples 2a-b⁸ depict a textural parallel between Szymanowski's Op. 4, No. 1 and Scriabin's *Etudes*, Op. 8, No. 6 written in 1894, other evidences suggest the influence of several Romantic models prior to Scriabin such as Chopin, Brahms and Liszt. For example, the familiar Brahmsian vocabularies are the parallel sixths and the heterorhythm, as well as the technique of descending melodic movement in one voice in contrary motion with the other, and the use of melody to outline a chord (see Example 2a). While the contrapuntal style and the melodic embellishment are Chopinesque in flavor, the juxtaposition of parallel octaves, in combination with chordal reinforcements, is a signature of Lisztian climactic tactic (refer to Example 6b, p. 19).

Ex. 2a. Szymanowski, Op. 4, No. 1



⁸ This pair of examples was first cited by Jim Samson in *The Music of Szymanowski* (London: Kahn & Averill, Stanmore Press Ltd, 1980), 30.

Ex. 2b. Scriabin, Op. 8, No. 6



Szymanowski's Op. 4, No. 2, however, bears clear imprints of both Chopin and early Scriabin. For instance, Chopin's "Butterfly" études (Op. 24, No. 9) can well be a formal and stylistic model for Szymanowski's Etude No. 2 (Examples 3a-b). Table 2 illustrates a comparative overview of the two études. These two études share the same key, as well as several musical characteristics such as tempi and expressions. More importantly, they exhibit the same formal design and overall tonal scheme.

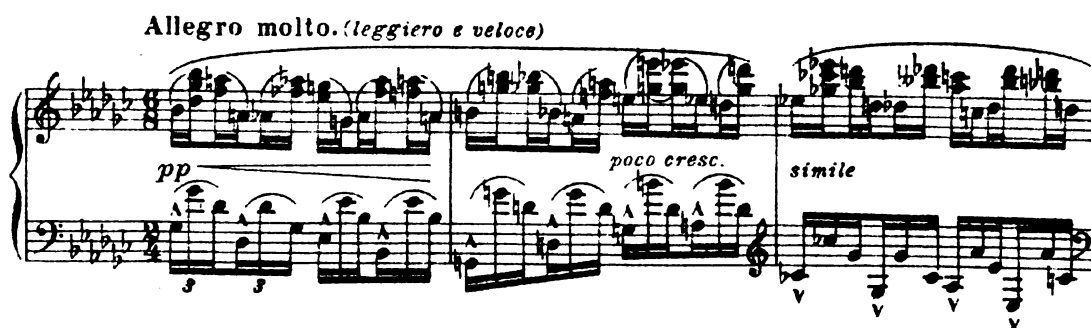
Table 2. Musical resemblance between the "Butterfly" étude and Op. 4, No. 4

Etudes	Chopin, Op. 24, No. 9	Szymanowski, Op. 4, No. 2
Expression marks	<i>Allegro assai (leggiere)</i>	<i>Allegro molto. (leggiere e veloce)</i>
Tonal center	G-flat major	G-flat major
Form	A (mm. 1-16) B (mm. 17-24) A' (mm. 25-36) Coda (mm. 37-51)	A (mm. 1-18) B (mm. 19-33) A' (mm. 34-50) Coda (mm. 50-64)
Stylistic treatments	Light character in both A and B with I-V progression; dominant pedal in B pushing towards the climax; climax reached and resolved on A'; tonic pedal dominates coda and leads to a <i>leggerissimo</i> ending.	Light character in both A and B modulates from tonic to various key areas with ample chromatic sequences; dominant pedal in B pushing towards the climax; climax reached and resolved on A', tonic pedal dominates coda and leads to a <i>leggerissimo</i> ending.

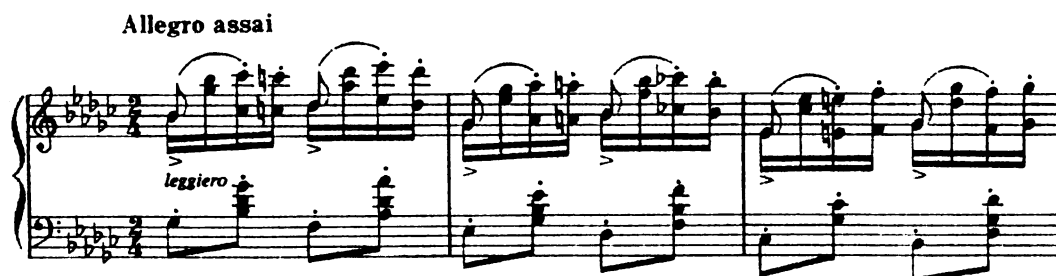
Despite the resemblances to Chopin's "Butterfly" étude, the chromatic double notes patterns in Szymanowski's Op. 4, No. 2 demonstrates an influence of Scriabin's Op. 8, No. 10 (see Examples 3a and 3d).

The textural design and the unique rhythmic display of Szymanowski's Op. 4, No. 2 resemble that of Chopin's Etudes, Op. 10. No. 10 (Example 3c). The idea of rhythmic entanglement is created in Szymanowski's Op. 4, No. 2 (Example 3a) by the use of polymeter: the right hand is 6/8 divided in six groups of sixteenth-notes (per measure), juxtaposing with the left in 2/4 divided in four groups of triplets.

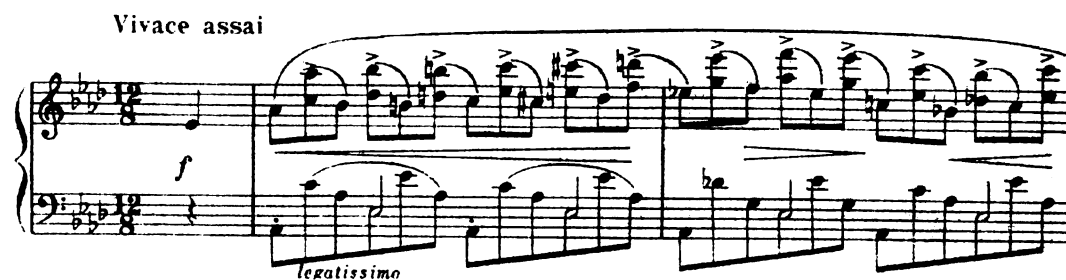
Ex. 3a. Szymanowski, Op. 4, No. 2



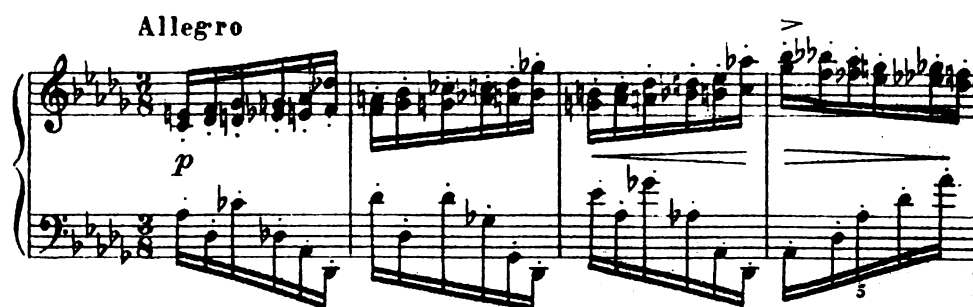
Ex. 3b. Chopin, Op. 25, No. 9



Ex. 3c. Chopin, Op. 10, No. 10



Ex. 3d. Scriabin, Op. 8, No. 10



From the first glance, the opening of Szymanowski's Op. 4, No. 3 (Example 4a) has obvious textual similarity to the beginning measures of Scriabin's Op. 8, No. 11 (Example 4b) as cited by Samson⁹. However, the thematic structure of the Szymanowski étude is even more closely related to the third movement of Scriabin's Sonata No. 3, Op. 23 (Example 4c). The similarities shared by Examples 4a and 4c are: the arch-like melodic descending sequences followed by a ascending gesture, the simple chordal accompaniment, as well as the rolled chords.

⁹ Jim Samson, *The Music of Szymanowski* (London: Kahn & Averill, Stanmore Press Ltd, 1980), 30.

Ex. 4a. Szymanowski, Op. 4, No. 3

Andante -In modo d'una canzone-
(con dolore)

ppp

legatissimo

m.d.

m.d. (rit.)

m.d.

(rit.)

m.d.

cresc.

mf

Ex. 4b. Scriabin, Op. 8, No. 11

p

3

3

p

3

Ex. 4c. Scriabin, Sonata No. 3, Op. 23 (3rd mvt.)



Szymanowski's Op. 4, No. 4 exhibits instances of Wagnerian influence in tonal structure as well as in motivic design. The key of C major is the tonal orientation. The overall tonal framework of Etude No. 4 is: IV(section A)-V(section B)-IV(section A¹)-I(coda). (In other word, section A is orbiting the key of F while section B is around the key of G, and the coda is in key of C.) However, the key areas in sections A, B and A¹ are often camouflaged by highly unstable chromatic melodies and sequences (see Example 5a). This succession of tonal instabilities is only resolved at the coda where the tonic on C is confirmed.

The stressed yearning motive in the first section (Example 5a) also recalls a Wagnerian vocabulary, namely, the persistent sequential statements of semitone progression that thirst for resolution. The similar kind of Wagnerian motivic gesture is also applied, in a larger scale, in the fourth movement of Scriabin's Sonata No. 3 (Example 5b).

Ex. 5b. Scriabin, Sonata No. 3, Op. 23 (4th mvt.)

Presto con fuoco $\text{♩} = 58$

legato

p

cresc.

mf

dim.

p

Ex. 5a. Szymanowski, Op. 4, No. 4

The image displays three systems of musical notation for Szymanowski's Op. 4, No. 4. The first system is for piano, with the tempo and mood marked as 'Allegro (ma non troppo) Affettuoso e rubato.' and 'legat.'. The piano part begins with a 'p' (piano) dynamic and a 'legatissimo' marking. The violin part enters with a 'poco cresc.' (poco crescendo) marking. The second system continues the piano part with a 'ten.' (tension) marking and a '(ril.)' (rilevato) marking. The third system shows the piano part with a 'cresc. e poco accel.' (crescendo and poco accelerando) marking. The violin part continues with various melodic and harmonic developments.

Overall, the opening passages of Szymanowski's Etudes Nos. 3 and 4 have clear characteristic resemblances to those of the third and fourth movements of Scriabin's Sonata No. 3. (See Examples 4a, 4c, 5a and 5b). Scriabin's musical ideas perhaps once again inspired Szymanowski. First of all, both Etude No. 3 and the third movement are somber yet tranquil, while the No. 4 and the fourth movement are restless and passionate. More importantly, the descending melodic gestures and ascending modulating sequences of the fourth movement are used in a similar manner in Etude No. 4: the sequential musical pattern starts with two identical statements of the theme followed by a thematic expansion, then the whole phrase modulates up a chromatic half-step intensifying the musical drama. (The brackets in Examples 5a-b indicate the stages of sequential movement, and the arrows point to the harmonic changes.)

The four études of Op. 4, despite the differences in melodic contents, share several common characteristics that unify them as a group. These common characteristics can be found in the use of form, tonality, dramaturgical design, and rhythmic treatment. Table 3 provides an overview of the four études including the general tonal scheme, formal design and duration.

Table 3. Tonal and formal relations among the four études of Op. 4

Etude	Tonal center / Form	A	B	A ^I	Coda
No. 1	E-flat minor	mm. 1-25	mm. 26-37	mm. 38-47	mm. 48-59
No. 2	G-flat major	mm. 1-18	mm. 19-33	mm. 34-48	mm. 49-64
No. 3	B-flat minor	mm. 1-15	mm. 16-30	mm. 31-44	mm. 45-58
No. 4	C major (in coda)	mm. 1-17	mm. 18-29	mm. 30-44	mm. 45-64

From the perspective of key relation, the tonal centers of these études indicate certain connection among the pieces. As shown in Table 3, the tonal centers can all be arranged to be a major or minor third apart [C-E^b-G^b-B^b]. The keys of E-flat minor, G-flat major and B-flat minor are closely related. The key of C major is related to the key of E-flat minor through a type of tonal network relation, namely, E-flat minor = E-flat major = C minor = C major. (The “=” means “is related to”). In that sense, C major and G-flat major are also “closely” related. Wagner applied this type of tonal network system in *Tristan und Isolde*.

Although the overall tonal scheme does not agree entirely with that of a multi-movement sonata, the general character of the four études suggest a quasi-sonata in design. The tempo marks of études Nos. 1-4 are indicated as *Allegro moderato*, *Allegro (leggero e veloce)*, *Andante*, and *Allegro* respectively, resembling those of a traditional *fast – fast – slow – fast* four-movement sonata.

The form of all four études is in conventional ternary A-B-A¹-Coda design. The distributions of section length are similar from piece to piece, as well as the arch-like dramaturgical design: (A) *low in tension* – (B) *building of tension* – (A¹) *reaching to climax and climax* – (Coda) *relaxation*. This dramaturgical design is supported not only by the use of related or contrasting materials in A and B along with a summary of these ideas in the Coda, but more importantly also by the dramatic musical “enhancement” in A¹. In all four études, A¹ is where the primary theme of the music returns and where the dramatic tension reaches a climactic stage.

Examples 6-8 demonstrate in a comparative style how Szymanowski transformed a dramatic low point (A) into a high point (A¹) via the same thematic materials derived from the Theme 1 of A.

Etude Op. 4, No. 1

Ex. 6a. Op. 4 No. 1, Section A (mm. 1-4)* (refer to Example 2a, p. 9)

*Nostalgic and lyrical in character, Section A of Etude No. 1 is indicated *pp* and (*dolce legatissimo poco rubato*). This four-bar phrase is in four-voice polyphonic texture: (in the right hand) the soprano and alto melodies consist of ascending parallel-sixth duplets and descending triplets in a antiphonal (call and respond) style and in sequential movements; (in the left hand) the tenor countermelody mirrors the melody in contrary motion, while the bass outlines a i-iv-ii-v⁷-i harmonic progression.

Ex. 6b. Op. 4, No. 1, Section A¹ (begins at m. 38)*



*Passionate and brilliant in character, Section A¹ of Etude No. 1 is indicated *ff-fff*, (*a tempo*), *accelerando* and *strepitoso*. The linear opening theme of Section A is now replaced by a heavy musical texture. Although the beginning thematic materials remain largely consistent with Section A, they are fortified by the juxtaposition of double octaves and chords. To increase the level of dramatic turbulence, a heterorhythmic mirror inversion between the right hand and the left hand is created in mm. 38-39.

Etude Op. 4, No. 2

Unlike the other three études, Etude No. 2 has no textual changes between Sections A and A¹. The only difference between their openings passages is the dynamic range, namely, *pp* in A and *ff* A¹.

Etude Op. 4, No. 3

Ex. 7a. Op. 4. No. 3, Section A (mm. 1-5)* (refer to Example 4a, p. 13)

*Calm and melancholic in character, Section A of Etude No. 3 is marked *In modo d'una canzone* – (*con dolore*), *ppp*, and *legatissimo*. This phrase consists of a hymn-like

melody doubled in octaves in the right hand and a steady conjunct chordal accompaniment in the left. An example of heterorhythm is illustrated by the dotted rhythm in the melody juxtaposed with the even rhythm in the accompaniment. Residing at the mid-register of the piano, the melody and accompaniment are rather close in range which lead to the frequent overlapping of voices.

Ex. 7b. Op. 4, No. 3, Section A¹ (begins at m. 31)*

*Section A¹ of Etude No. 3 is indicated *fff* and *passionate*. While the thematic material and the basic rhythmic pulse remain the same, the dramatic level is completely changed: the right hand is now combining the theme and the accompanying motive one octave higher than in A, the left hand is maximizing the drama by furnishing a chordal accompaniment in the mid-register of the piano supported by low octaves outlining the harmonic progression, as well as the dramatic ascending runs in thirty-second notes complete with trills.

Etude Op. 4, No. 4

Ex. 8a. Op. 4, No. 4, Section A (mm. 1-4)* (refer to Example 5a, p. 16)

*Marked *Affettuoso e rubato*, *p* and *legatissimo*, Section A of Etude No. 4 expresses a longing and unsettled emotion. This emotional uncertainty is created by various musical factors, such as: 1) the three-time emphasis on the sighing motive (7-6 suspension) of the right-hand; 2) the fluctuating melodic accompaniment of the left-hand; 3) the heterorhythm between the melody and its accompaniment.

Ex. 8b. Section A¹ (begin at m. 30)*, Op. 4, No. 4

The musical score for Section A¹ of Etude Op. 4, No. 4, starting at measure 30, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 30-32) features a right-hand melody with ascending double notes and a left-hand accompaniment of rolling chords. The second system (measures 33-35) continues the right-hand melody with 'ten.' and 'loco' markings, while the left hand has 'rit.' markings. Dynamics include 'ff (sempre)' and 'marcato con pass.'. The tempo/mood is marked '(legato)'.

*Section A¹ of Etude No. 4 (marked *marcato con passionato*, *ff* and *legato*) exhibits a different dramaturgical design from that of Section A. The opening theme is now stressed in the left hand (tenor) along with rolling chords (bass) on the first and the third beat of the measure. The right-hand counterpart dramatizes the melody with its intricate ascending double notes creating a massive polyphonic texture.

In addition to the textual changes between the A and A¹ sections, the musical drama of the four études is intensified by the abundant uses of extreme dynamic contrast (such as *subito p*, *subito f*, *pppp*, *fff* with *sfff*), tempo rubatos, and dramatic vocabularies (such as, *afflito*, *affettuoso*, *flebile*, *dolente*, *risvegliato*, *affanato*, *impetuoso*, *patetico* and *ardende amoroso*).

Four Etudes, Op. 4, as one example, illustrates the early stage of Szymanowski's creative life. During this time, the artistic influences of the Romantic and late-Romantic styles had a deep impact on the young composer. These influences are seen primarily in the adaptation of the nostalgic sentimentality derived from Romantic literatures, as well as the dramatic expressions of his Romantic musical idols. It is by no means saying that the early works of Szymanowski are copies of his role models. They are rather music creations based on an existing foundation and guided by the young composer's genuine talent.

Szymanowski's early compositions were well received inside Poland by the audiences as well as music critics, and he was recognized as one of the pillar figures of the "Young Poland" musical circle.

CHAPTER II

NEW DIRECTION

Twelve Etudes, Op. 33

Szymanowski's musical taste shifted more towards the late German-Romantic style after 1908. The young composer was then a great admirer of Richard Strauss (1864-1949). Despite his maturity in composition technique, his works of this time drew strong criticism for their obvious Germanic imprints and lack of individuality.

From 1909-1914, Szymanowski traveled extensively to places both within and beyond the European continent. He visited and periodically stayed in southern Italy, Sicily, Vienna, London and Paris, and traveled as far as Algeria and Tunisia in North Africa. This five-year extensive travel stimulated his musical creativity and inspired him to take on a new musical direction. This departure was characterized by the experiment of new sound, new color and other creative techniques as demonstrated, for instance, in Twelve Etudes, Op. 33 for solo piano.

Szymanowski returned to his family estate in Tyomiszówka just before the outbreak of World War I. During the whole war-time period of 1914-1918, he remained mostly in Tyomiszówka (also briefly in Kiev) and devoted himself to intensive compositional activities. A good number of important works were created during these productive four years. In various ways, these works echo Szymanowski's experiences from his five years of travel. On the one hand, the influence of Impressionistic musical color is one of the most prominent characteristics of his middle period compositions. Yet, as Samson noted, "unlike his earlier music, the works of the war years remain at a

safe distance from their models, drawing upon them judiciously and selectively.”¹⁰ On the other hand, the influence of “exotic” cultures (also a familiar element of the Impressionistic style) is clearly witnessed as well. The insinuation of “exotic” cultures, in Szymanowski’s case, points in particular to those of the Mediterranean (Italy, France and Greece) and the Arab regions. It was the mythologies and the fairy tales of these cultures that inspired the composer’s personal musical fantasies.

The four programmatic music cycles listed below represent the genesis of Szymanowski’s personal interpretation and selective adaptation of the “impressionistic” sonorities as well as the “exotic” and “mystic” ingredients.

1. *Metopes*, three poems for piano, Op. 29 (1915), subtitled *Isle of Sirens, Calypso, and Nausicaa*.
2. *Myths*, three poems for violin and piano, Op. 30 (1915), subtitled *Arethusa’s Source, Narcissus, and Dryads and Pan*.
3. *The Masks*, three pieces for piano, Op. 34 (1915-1916), subtitled *Scheherezade, Tantris the Clown, Don Juan’s Serenade*.
4. *Songs of Fairy Princess*, Op. 31. (1915).

Along with these instrumental and vocal compositions, a number of less programmatic works also depict the same musical language of the period. These works are: the Symphony No. 3, *Song of the night*, for tenor, soprano, mixed choirs and orchestra, Op. 27 (1914-1916); Violin Concerto No, 1, Op. 35 (1916); and Twelve Etudes, Op. 33 (1916).

¹⁰ Jim Samson, “Szymanowski, Karol”, *The New Grove Dictionary of music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie. (London: Macmillan, 2002. Vol. 22), 896.

Twelve Etudes, Op. 33 is a lesser-known and smaller opus of Szymanowski's middle-period. Consisting of twelve miniature pieces, Op. 33 is a musical entity which displays the composer's individuality as well as the pianist's technical and musical abilities.

Szymanowski's compositional intent for this set of études is not absolutely clear. One hypothesis has been put forward by Chylinska.¹¹ She theorizes that Op. 33 was possibly composed after Szymanowski's encounter with pianist Sasha Dubianski, a young protégé of Alexander Glazunov. Dubianski was the first to study the études, and was also the person to whom Szymanowski dedicated *Scheherezade* (from the *Masques*).

My opinion is that Twelve Etudes, Op. 33 could have a subtle relation to Chopin's Twelve Etudes Op. 10 and his musical legacy admired by the French. During the year of 1915-1916, Alfred Cortot¹² published a comprehensive study guide, the *édition de travail*, for Chopin's Op. 10. In the same year, Claude Debussy (1862-1918) published a set of twelve études in the memory of Chopin. Incidentally, also in 1916, Szymanowski's Twelve Etudes, Op. 33 was completed and dedicated to Cortot. This set of études was published in 1919, according to Maciejewski¹³. One can say, the Frenchmen (Debussy and Cortot) dedicated their contributions to honor the Pole (Chopin), and a Pole (Szymanowski) returned the favor to the two French musicians.

Whether or not Szymanowski knew about Debussy's Twelve Etudes is inconsequential. What is important is that despite their musical individualities, the two

¹¹ Teresa Chylinska, *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Works* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1993), 108.

¹² Cortot (1877-1962) was a leading French pianist, conductor, and pedagogue of the twentieth-century.

¹³ B.M. Maciejewski, *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Music* (London: Poet's and Painter's Press, 1967), 115.

sets of études share one common idea, namely, the combination of high artistic aim and pedagogic purpose. Chopin's two sets of twelve études were the first to achieve this revolutionary breakthrough in the nineteenth-century. Other examples include: Liszt's twelve transcendental studies, concert études, and Schumann's symphonic études. This idiom has become a stylistic norm in many twentieth-century works of the same category.

In the case of Debussy's études, the pedagogic goals are well indicated by subtitles as followed: 1. for the "five fingers" in the manner of Mr. Czerny; 2. in Thirds; 3. in Fourths; 4. in Sixths; 5. in Octaves; 6. for Eight Fingers; 7. in Chromatic Half-Steps; 8. for Ornaments; 9. for Repeated Notes; 10. for Contrasted Sonorities; 11. in Compound Arpeggios; 12. in Chords¹⁴. Debussy's musical language flourished around these technical focuses - much in the tradition of Chopin and Liszt.

Unlike Debussy's études, the training purposes of Szymanowski's études are less clearly defined. Although a few études are obvious (No. 1 for large stretches, No. 6 for chords and No. 12 for double intervals), others contain a mixture of different elements. Szymanowski's Op. 33 is not a typical type of "method book" per se, but rather a musical creation which is supported by mature pianism.

From a stylistic perspective, Szymanowski's musical vocabulary in Op. 33 differs greatly from that of his early period. A new musical style, deriving from the Impressionistic reservoirs, is seen in the adaptation to less restricted forms, the experimentation with polytonal or polymodal structures, the creative use of motivic gems, and the exploration in polyrhythmic designs.

¹⁴ These subtitles are translated and used in the *Debussy – Twelve Etudes for the Piano*, Schirmer edition, vol. 1987.

As can be seen from Tables 4-9, the application of form in this set of études is by no means conventional. The varieties of form are shown as: AA¹(coda) in Nos, 1, 2, 4, 7 and 10; ABA¹ in Nos. 3, 8, 9 and 11; AB(coda) in No. 6; ABC in No. 5; as well as ABB¹ in No. 12. Because of the polytonal harmonic nature of the music, these forms are generalized primarily through the distribution of melodic contents and “cadences” that are not guided by traditional tonic and dominant relations. In other words, the definition of cadence is used loosely as a reference to indicate any major changes of melodic gesture and bass movements.

Despite the fact that the tables give an impression that the études are designed under a “clear-cut” format, the music is sometimes in conflict with the rigid divisions of this labeling system.

Table 4. Two-part form (I)

Etude / Form	A	A ¹	Coda
No. 1	(a) mm. 1-8 (b) mm. 9-14 (transition) mm. 15-18	(a ¹) mm. 19-22 (b ¹) mm. 23-26 (retrans.) mm. 27-30	mm. 31-37
No. 2	mm. 1-13	mm. 14-27	
No. 4	(a) mm. 1-7 (b) mm. 7-12 (transition) mm. 13-15	(a ¹) mm.16-22 (b ¹) mm. 22-27	
No. 7	(a) mm. 1-5 (b) mm. 5-12.	(a ¹) mm. 13-19 (b ¹) mm. 19-28	
No. 10	(a) mm. 1-13 (b) mm. 14-28 (transition) mm. 28-35	(a ¹) mm. 36-50 (b ¹) mm. 51-58 (coda) mm. 59-68	

Table 4 shows the AA¹ form composed of section A - the statement of the contrasting themes or melodic ideas, and section A¹- the restatement of these contrasting themes (with some variations). However, not every piece is treated in this predictable format. Etude No. 1 is a good example. Although the melodic material of A¹ is obviously derived from A, it is melodically transformed by the freedom of inversions, contractions and redistribution. But more importantly, it is transposed. (By conventional understanding, A¹ is the return of A, and thus usually remains in the same tonal area as A.) In the case of étude No. 1, the true “tonal” reoccurrence of A is postponed until the coda.

Table 5. Three-part form (I)

Etude / Form	A	B	A ¹
No. 3	mm. 1-8 (transition) mm. 9-10	mm. 11-14	mm. 15-21
No. 8	mm. 1-10	mm. 11-16	mm. 16-21
No. 9	mm. 1-21	(a) mm. 22-32 (b) mm. 33-45	mm. 45-56
No. 11	mm. 1-2	mm. 3-6	mm. 7-9

Table 5 demonstrates the use of traditional ternary structure. In general, B brings thematic contrasts to the two outer sections, A¹ retains nearly the same materials from A with modulation and dramatic expansion (Etudes Nos. 3, 8, and 11). Comparing to the A to A¹, the thematic materials in A¹ of Etude No. 9 is condensed. In addition, an example of enharmonically spelling is observed in A¹ (the melody that starts on A-flat in section A is spelled on G-sharp in A¹).

Etude No. 3 is the most difficult to be divided into clear-cut sections because of its continuity in melodic and textual design from (mm. 1-14). Yet it does contain some kind of melodic progression within these measures. A dramatic reappearance of A on mm. 15 (with modulation and dramaturgical expansion) clearly defines A¹.

Table 6. Three-part form (II)

Etude / Form	A	B	C
No. 5	mm. 1-4	mm. 5-9	mm. 9-13

For the sake of consistency, Etude No. 5 is labeled in capital letters as a three sectional through-composed structure. Yet it is perhaps better described with the use of lower case letters *a*, *b*, and *c*, for each of the three sections consists of only a few measures of music. They are closer to three different melodic ideas than actual “sections.” However, because of the slow tempo these “sections” sound much enlarged. Etude No. 11 (see table 5) is also characterized in the same way.

Table 7. Two-part form (II)

Etude / Form	A	B	Coda
No. 6	mm. 1-14	mm. 15-23	mm. 23-34

Like Etude No. 3 (in table 4), Etude No. 6 is also melodically and textually related among sections. Yet the last section of No. 6 is defined as a coda because of the use of a quasi-tonic pedal and the lack of thematic development.

Table 8. Three-part form (III)

Etude / Form	A	B	B ¹
No. 12	(a) mm. 1-12 (b) mm 15-25	(a) mm. 26-35 (b) mm. 35-46 (c) mm. 46-58	(a) mm. 59-66 (b) mm. 66-78 (d + coda) mm. 78-99

In Etude No. 12, the division between B and B¹ is elusive. This is because the thematic materials from two individual subdivisions collide into each other and become one musical entity. Musical unity, rather than contrast, is emphasized within each of the études in Op. 33, with the exception of Etudes Nos. 4 and 9 in which the thematic materials in A and B are different.

Besides the use of less restricted form, the harmonic language and the melodic contents in Op. 33 are both unique and innovative. The latter two factors play a prominent role in the forging of this set of études.

Even though Op. 33 exhibits certain Impressionistic influences, its style is rather unlike those of Debussy's and Ravel's that we are more familiar with. The most important indication of the Impressionistic influence is indicated by the use of the whole-tone¹⁵ and the pentatonic¹⁶ pitch collections as well as the octatonic¹⁷ collection. The octatonic collection is more difficult to detect, however, because it is often camouflaged by the pervasive chromaticism present throughout the music. The diatonic collection is also included in this composition but only as a supporting and contrasting color.

Despite of the reminiscences of Impressionistic sonorities, Op. 33 is not simply a reproduction of any specific kind of Impressionistic style. It is rather a musical *collage* in which the composer creates his own musical language in reference to a selection of Impressionistic ingredients. As an example, Etude No. 3 (see Example 10b), the G-flat pentatonic collection on the right hand overlaps with the C diatonic collection on the left almost throughout the piece. However, because the two keys are one tritone apart, the

¹⁵ The whole-tone pitch collection includes both the even set [0,2,4,6,8] and the odd set [1,3,5,7,9].

¹⁶ The pentatonic, also referred as the "black keys", consists of only one transposable set, [0,2,4,7,9].

¹⁷ The Octatonic collection includes three different sets, [0,1,3,4,6,7,9,10], [1,2,4,5,7,8,10,11] and [2,3,5,6,8,9,11,12].

dissonance is maximized. This kind of unique bitonal treatment is not unusual in Op. 33. Even though Debussy and Ravel also applied (to some extent) the idea of bitonality in some of their works, the constant and distinctive dissonant quality of Op. 33 did not agree with their musical styles.

Instead, the dissonant sound in Op. 33 previews more closely the tonal language of Scriabin's late works in which the tritone, minor second, major seventh and major ninth, as well as tone clusters and bichords (chords on white keys and black keys simultaneously) are common vocabularies. However, despite the ample use of tritone/Perfect fourth combinations in Op. 33, there is no literal application of the famous Scriabin "mystic" chord [C,F[#],B^b,E,A,D].

The simultaneous use of several tonalities, or polytonality is pervasive in Op. 33 as well. However, the polytonal structure is demonstrated not by the layering effect like in the bitonal treatment, but rather by a mixture of the different tonalities in one entity. Despite its tonal ambiguity, there is usually one dominating pitch pervading the whole polytonal syntax.

Because of its dissonant and polytonal contents, it is difficult to determine whether to call Op. 33 a polytonal work or an atonal work. The absence of key signatures (in most of the pieces) together with the enormous number of accidentals does not suggest one way or the other.

However, there is one piece that suggests Op. 33 is polytonal rather than atonal. In the key of E-flat, Etude No. 5 is the only piece in the whole set that uses key signatures. Despite the fact that it modulates four times within a thirteen-measure duration, the tonal structure still holds. The question is why did Szymanowski include a

tonal piece into this basically “atonal” sounding work? Szymanowski may have used the Op. 33 as an experiment of different tonal colors and possibilities. For example, despite of their dissonant nature, each of the twelve études has some kind of “key orientations” for instance, the octatonic flavor in Etude No. 1, the chromatic contours in Etude No. 2, the pentatonic quality in Etude No. 3 and the whole-tone gestures in Etude No. 7. Therefore, it is completely justified to have one piece solely for the demonstration of the “traditional” diatonic major and minor keys. This piece of evidence is enough to suggest that Op. 33 is by no means entirely “atonal.”

Ironically, although Etude No. 5 is tonal, it sounds unstable in comparison to the rest of the set. This is because once the ear adjusts and adapts to the dissonance as a form of stability, what comes in contrast to this stability will sound unstable. In other words, the traditional understanding of tonal stability and instability is being challenged in this case.

While the polytonal structure provides an overall musical framework, the use of polyrhythmic gestures as well as the creative manipulation of derivative melodic and motive ideas highlights the unity of Op. 33. Just as Szymanowski experimented with polytonal musical language, he explores polymetric structure in Op. 33 as well. Several études use interchangeable polymeters, for example, Etudes Nos. 4 and 7 (6/8 and 7/8), No. 8 (4/8 and 2/8), No. 10 (4/8, 5/8, and 3/8) and No. 11 (12/8 and 9/8).

The subtle use of rhythmic elision is also found, for instance, between the last measure of Etude No. 5 and the first measure of No. 6 (see [] in Examples 9a-b). Notice the Etudes No. 5 and No. 6 are marked 4/4 and 3/8 respectively. The final measure of No. 5 consists only of three quarter beats, while the opening measure of No. 6 contains

two eighth beats grouped together in quarter value. In short, the two eighth beats are the missing fourth beat of No. 5. This rhythmic emerging idea is united and reinforced by the harmonic and melodic elision in the same example. In this example, the two chordal sonorities that conclude Etude No. 5 are, at the same time, the anticipation of the parallel chordal movements in No. 6. To expand the idea of rhythmic interplay, Etude No. 6 demonstrates an intriguing rhythmic sonic illusion, namely, the triple meter 3/8 is diverged by the eighth-note groupings in 2/8 throughout the piece.

Exs. 9a-b. Etudes Nos. 5 and 6

The image displays two musical excerpts. The top excerpt, labeled '5.', is for Etude No. 5. It is written for piano in 3/8 time. The notation includes a treble and bass staff. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'sub ppp dolce rit.' and 'dimin. e rallent.'. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the instruction 'attaca.'. The bottom excerpt, labeled '6.', is for Etude No. 6. It is also for piano in 3/8 time. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'Vivace. (Agitato e marcato. Vigoroso.)'. The piece begins with a piano 'p' dynamic and includes a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking. Both excerpts feature complex rhythmic patterns and chordal structures.

The use of derivative thematic and motivic ideas is shown in several different ways. The first is in a global “theme and variation” style. For example, Etudes Nos. 1, 3 and 4 clearly share one thing in common, namely the “black and white key” motive conceived in the first measure of Etude No. 1. This motive consists of a pentatonic/octatonic melody over a whole-tone/diatonic accompaniment (Example 10a). This thematic structure is first transformed in Etude No. 3 and applied in No. 4 (Examples 10b-c). Although the musical textual designs are different between the

opening passages of Etudes Nos. 3 and 4, the thematic and harmonic focal points are identical: the right hand pentatonic motive remains in the same register and the diatonic chordal emphasis is in different octaves with the same notes. Etude No. 6 (Example 9b) also applies the same motivic gesture.

Ex. 10a. Etude No. 1 (the “black and white key” bitonal motive)

1. *Presto.*
ppp legatissimo

Exs. 10b-c. Etudes Nos. 3 and 4

3. *Vivace assai. (Agitato.)*
pp

4. *Presto. Delicatamente. sempre ppp*
relocissimo

Another illustration from the same type of “theme and variation” idea is represented by a different kind of melodic motive, namely, the three-note motive [C,B,D]

collected from the last bass-notes (quasi-tonic) of Etudes Nos. 1, 2 and 3 respectively. This melodic motive is recalled mainly in the second half of Op. 33. Examples 11a-d depict the reencounters with this particular motive ([0,1,3] in prime form) and its transformations in Etudes Nos. 8, 9, 10 and 11. The three-note motives are grouped separately by the following symbols: ○ and □.

Exs. 11a-d. Etudes Nos. 8-11

8. *Lento assai mesto.*

9. *Animato. (Capriccioso e fantastico)*
pp leggiero e saltando

10. *Presto. (molto agitato) Tempestoso.*
pp
il basso legatissimo

11. *Andante soave. (rubato)*
ten.
pp dolciss. ed espr.
poco cresc. mp
riten.

The image displays four musical excerpts from Chopin's Op. 33, numbered 8 through 11. Each excerpt is presented on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Excerpt 8 is marked 'Lento assai mesto.' and 'pp'. Excerpt 9 is marked 'Animato. (Capriccioso e fantastico)' and 'pp leggiero e saltando'. Excerpt 10 is marked 'Presto. (molto agitato) Tempestoso.' and 'pp', with the instruction 'il basso legatissimo' for the bass line. Excerpt 11 is marked 'Andante soave. (rubato)' and includes performance markings: 'ten.' (tension), 'pp dolciss. ed espr.' (pianissimo, sweetest and expressive), 'poco cresc. mp' (slight crescendo to mezzo-piano), and 'riten.' (ritardando). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

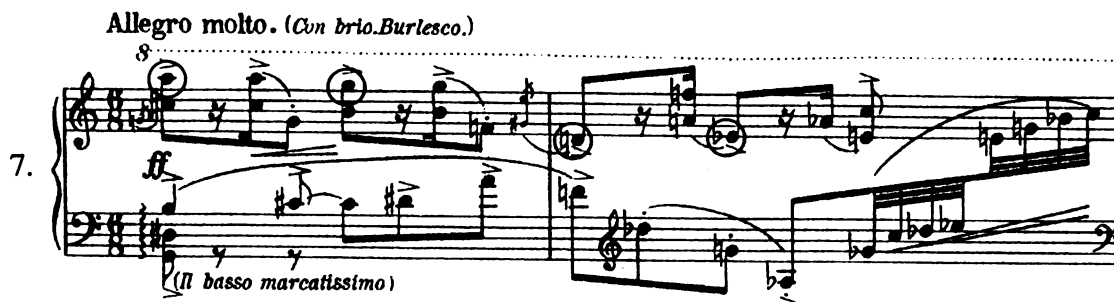
The second type of derivative motive idea is more localized and restricted between two consecutive pieces. In Examples 12a-b, the E minor motive [G^b-B^b] introduced in the second theme of Etude No. 4 is adopted as the opening motive of Etude No. 5 in E major. In Examples 13a-b, the descending melodic gesture [A^b,G^b,D^b,E^b] from Etude No. 6 is transformed into [A,G,D,E^b] at the opening theme of Etude No. 7.

Exs. 12a-b. Etudes Nos. 4 and 5

The image shows two musical excerpts, labeled 4 and 5. Excerpt 4 is for Etude No. 4 in E minor, marked with a tempo of *(rubato capriccioso)*. It features a piano introduction with a tenor (ten.) line and a piano (ppp) line. The piano part includes a *(Sostenuto)* section. Excerpt 5 is for Etude No. 5 in E major, marked *Andante espressivo.* It begins with a piano (pp) and *dolce* section, followed by a *rit.* (ritardando) section. Both excerpts share a common melodic motive, which is a descending line of four notes: G^b, B^b, D^b, and E^b in the key of E minor (or its major equivalent, E major).

Exs. 13a-b. Etudes Nos. 6 and 7

The image shows a musical excerpt labeled 6, for Etude No. 6 in E minor. It is marked *fff (sempre)* (fortissimo, always). The excerpt features a descending melodic gesture, which is a transformation of the motive from the previous examples. The melody is played in a piano (p) part, and the accompaniment is in the right hand (RH) and left hand (LH).



In addition to their motivic connections, the twelve études of Op. 33 are linked together by different types of melodic relations between the ends of one piece and beginning of the next. These relations are made more prominent by the fact that all but the last étude is marked *attaca*. Examples of the types of melodic connection are: chromatic relation (Etudes Nos. 1-2, 2-3), common tone or octave equivalent relation (Etudes Nos. 3-4, 4-5, 7-8, 10-11), and cadential relation (Etudes Nos. 11-12). While the first two categories give a musical continuity to the set, the latter provides tonal satisfaction to the equal tempered polytonal structure.

While the chromatic and common-tone relations are typical in Op. 33, the cadential relations are sparse. Two important kind of cadences relation (Examples 14a-b, c-d) are found between Etudes Nos. 11 and 12. The V-I cadence (Examples 14a-b) is found between the low F in No. 11 and the low B-flat in No. 12, providing a smooth transition to the finale of the Op. 33. The IV-I relation is found between the same F (in Example 14a) and the C (in Example 14c), providing a final closure to the entire composition.

Another interesting V-I cadential relation is revealed by relating the G (in the last measure of Etude No. 12 to the C in the first measure of Etude No. 1 (refer to Example

14c and Example 10a). This V-I relation, though it is not obvious, links the music back to where it first departed. It is an ingenious cyclic idea.

Exs. 14a-c. Etudes Nos. 11 and 12, V-I and IV-I cadential relations

The diagram illustrates the relationship between three musical excerpts. At the top is Excerpt 11, featuring a piano piece with markings *dolciss.* and *ppp*. Below it, two excerpts are shown: Excerpt 12 on the left, marked *Presto. (Energico.)* and *p*, and Excerpt 13 on the right, marked *(a tempo)*, *sf*, and *ten. sf*. Arrows indicate harmonic connections: a line from the end of Excerpt 11 to the beginning of Excerpt 12 is labeled 'V-I (local)', and a line from the end of Excerpt 11 to the beginning of Excerpt 13 is labeled 'IV-I (global)'. The word 'etc.' is placed between the two bottom excerpts.

Twelve Etudes, Op. 33, despite the absence of a programmatic counterpart, summarizes Szymanowski's musical vocabulary and taste during his middle period. Although Szymanowski's early interest in tonal complexity, polyphonic structure and intricate rhythmic interplay still remain largely in place in Op. 33, the musical appearances are changed and updated. This new musical path resides in the exploration and experimentation of non-traditional musical treatments in form, harmony, melody, and rhythm derived from the Impressionistic tradition. However, Szymanowski's unique musical individuality expanded far beyond its influences.

CHAPTER III

FOLK INSPIRATIONS

Mazurkas, Op. 50, Nos. 13, 14, 15 and 16

On November 11, 1918, Poland finally reclaimed its independence after nearly 150 years of socio-political control of the partitions. The years following the rebirth of the Polish state witnessed great changes inside Poland. The new Polish Republic “offered a challenge to all of its citizens. It animated all spheres of public life, including musical life.”¹⁸ The new changes within the Polish musical circles were seen such as, the nationalization of musical institutions, and the encouragement of compositions by young Polish composers.

The beginning changes inside Poland also affected Szymanowski, who was living outside of the Polish territory. During the First World War, the Szymanowski family remained in Tyomiszówka (still Ukraine territory at the time) until it was destroyed by battles in 1918. Homeless, the Szymanowski family decided to move back to Poland with the hope of starting a new life, and perhaps a more promising one. However, despite the political promises of the new Polish government, Szymanowski’s personal situation was not as satisfactory as he had hoped. With the help of old friends, concerts for Szymanowski and his new works (from the middle period) were arranged. Unfortunately, most of these middle period compositions were not well received. On the one hand, they were too complex and too dissonant for general appreciation. On the other hand, they did not fit the nationalistic theme of the new Poland. Szymanowski was

¹⁸ Jacek Rogala, *Polish Music in The Twentieth Century*, (Krakow: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne SA, 2000), 14.

emotionally torn between his life-long artistic aim of “the hierarchy of Art” and the public acceptance of his music. The general rejection of his music, the financial crisis, and the deterioration of his health (suffering from chronic tuberculosis and severe depression) quickly brought him to a creative paralysis.

In 1921, he left Warsaw for a concert tour in the United States with his long-time friends and colleagues, Artur Rubinstein and Pawel Kochanski. In the same year he met Igor Stravinsky, and the next year Béla Bartók. Szymanowski’s admiration and interest towards the music of these two composers intensified after these encounters. Perhaps it was these two encounters that triggered the breakthrough in Szymanowski’s compositional crisis. In the summer of 1921, he wrote an (unpublished) article on Stravinsky, praising his ingenious “synthesis” of folkloristic inspiration and artistic individuality. Szymanowski stated:

... as Chopin once did for us, he probed in search of inspiration the depths of his soul, inevitably finding there the genetic heritage of the race, accumulated over generations – and, discarding the superficial disguise of the folksy garb, found in that treasure the priceless ore from which he forged his greatest visions.¹⁹

While Bartók and Stravinsky contributed musical and philosophical influences, Chopin’s legacy reinforced Szymanowski’s decision to turn towards the “universality” of Polish music. In his essay *Fryderyk Chopin* completed in February 1923, Szymanowski argued:

¹⁹ Jim Samson quoted and footed “Teresa Chylinska, p. 196” in his *The Music of Szymanowski* (London: Kahn & Averill, Stanmore Press Ltd, 1980), 156. However, this quote is not found in the same page of the translated version of Chylinska’s *Karol Szymanowski*. Samson possibly took the quote from the original Polish version.

Chopin recognized that only by setting his art free from the dramatic and historical content he could ensure the preservation of its truly Polish character and endow it with the most lasting value. Such an approach to the question of ‘national music’ (...) elevated his music to the category of universal art.²⁰

During the period of 1920-1934, Szymanowski produced a series of works that carry folkloric themes. Famous works include, the four-act opera - *King Roger*, Op. 64 (1918-1924); the piano solo album - *Mazurkas*, Op. 50 (1924-1925); the vocal orchestral work - *Stabat Mater*, Op 53, (1925-1926); and the ballet *Harnasie*, Op. 55 (1923-1931).

Several musicologists have described the time between 1920-34 as Szymanowski’s nationalistic period. However, the terms “nationalistic” and “nationalism” could sometimes cause confusion. A recent study of musical nationalism is presented by the author Thomas Turino. He noted that musical nationalism of the twentieth-century exists in two common forms. First is the “state-sponsored musical nationalism” such as in military music, patriotic songs and national anthems. The second form is “the reformist fusion of local, non-cosmopolitan instruments, sounds, and genres within a largely cosmopolitan aesthetic, stylistic, and contextual frame.”²¹ However, in Szymanowski’s case, the line between the two categories Torino describes was not always clear-cut. Although Szymanowski’s works from 1920-34 did not “serve” any political regime in a direct way, they did embraced some “fashionable” political color of the new Polish republic, such as the elevation of the people and the “folk” culture.

²⁰ Karol Szymanowski, “*Fryderyk Chopin*” from *After Chopin: Essays in Polish music*, ed. Maja Trochimczyk (Los Angeles: Polish Music Center at USC, 2000), 60-1.

²¹ Thomas Turino, “*Nationalism and Latin American Music: Selected Case Studies and Theoretical Considerations*”, *Latin American Music Review*. 24. (2): 175.

Among his piano solo works of this period, Mazurkas, Op. 50 is the most significant example. In 1926, the twenty mazurkas of Op. 50 were published in five different volumes. Mazurkas Nos. 13-16 of volume IV, dedicated to Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz²², are selected to represent Szymanowski's personal reinterpretation and adaptation of this "folk" genre.

To understand the musical standpoint of Szymanowski four mazurkas, it will be helpful to first look at a brief history of the mazurka. Mazurka was originated in the province of Mazovia around the fifteenth-century, at the "golden age" of Poland. In the seventeenth-century, this folk dance genre began to gain a large popularity among all social classes both inside Poland and beyond its national borders. During the tri-partition period in the eighteenth-century, mazurka was adopted by the Russian courts as well as the peasantry. Unlike the polonaise which was reserved only as a symbol of the monarchical elite, the mazurka has long been received as the dance of the people from all classes.

Mazurka is characterized by three different types of dance styles, namely, *Oberek* (or *obertas*) – a rapid tempo danced by couples whirling in circles; *mazur* (or *mazurka*) – less fast but lively; and *kujawiak* – a slower dance with music that is characterized by long melodic phrases with a melancholy mood. The traditional mazurka musical ensemble consists of violins, drums, harmonium(s) and Polish bagpipe. The most distinctive characteristic of mazurka is the accented second beat or third beat in a 3/4 triple meter.²³

²² Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz (1894-1980), a well-known twentieth-century Polish poet and writer, was the librettist of Szymanowski's opera *King Roger*.

²³ The general information for mazurkas is found under "Mazurka" written by Downes Stephen in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie. (London: Macmillan, 2002. Vol. 16), 189.

While many of the mazurkas are functional music to accompany the dance, others are highly stylized and elaborate artistic creations. Above all are the mazurkas of Chopin which were much applauded by the Parisian high society at the time of the early nineteenth-century. Chopin's mazurkas as well as his polonaises were, on the one hand, his personal nostalgic response towards his homeland and the Polish pride oppressed by the tri-partition. On the other hand, they are genuine artistic creations that demonstrate his attachment to a Romantic bourgeoisie taste.

About one century following Chopin, Szymanowski responded to mazurkas with a different attitude. In the genesis of the Mazurkas Op. 50, the political and musical context as well as Szymanowski's personal situation were rather different from those of Chopin.

Politically, following the rebirth of the Polish Republic, Polish culture of the people, as opposed to that of the elite, became a national theme of the new Republic. Musically, the search for inspiration from indigenous folk culture was also one of the popular global themes in the early part of the twentieth-century. While Stravinsky was shaking the world with his "Rite of Spring," Bartók and Zoltán Kodály²⁴ were searching for folk samples in the heartland of the Hungarian plains. Szymanowski's compositional intention for these mazurkas was greatly affected by these political and musical conditions of the time. It is perhaps why, although both the mazurka and the polonaise were seen as national symbols, Szymanowski chose to focus on the people's music rather than the elite's.

²⁴ Interestingly, Szymanowski, Stravinsky and Kodály were all born in the same year 1882. Bartók was born one year earlier in 1881.

Another motivation may have been personal recognition. For a composer, personal recognition means survival. Szymanowski's middle-period compositions did not please the new Republic audience. However, he was determined to retain his musical individuality and artistic high aim. Adopting a more popular and symbolic musical genre seemed like a possible solution for this personal crisis, but also risky for the mazurkas of Chopin have been already highly valued. Szymanowski's synthesis of the folk inspirations and personal artistic style begins with these complicated conditions, and are reflected in the music of Op. 50, Nos. 13-16.

While the folkloric sound in these four mazurkas is obvious, Szymanowski's adaptation of the folk sources is, however, rather free. This is evidenced in the use of the title, the musical texture, the dance form, the thematic and harmonic structure, and the rhythmic design.

Although he adopted the name of mazurka, Szymanowski's mazurkas are linked mostly to the symbolic meaning of the genre, namely, the symbol of national Polish music. Szymanowski's intension was to create a kind of twentieth-century national Polish music rather than yet another type of stylized dance piece. In an interview of 1936, Szymanowski states: "Folklore has only one meaning for me, a fertilizing function. My aim is to create a Polish style, We have at times, some ties to the Tatra folklore in the Mazurkas, but also loose...."²⁵ The extended interpretation of *mazurka* allowed Szymanowski to "relocate" mazurka music from its birth place, the Mazowsze plains, to the highland of the Tatra Mountains. Szymanowski's mazurkas are inspired by the Góral music - the music of the Tatra mountaineers.

²⁵ Cited by Teresa Chylinska, *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Works* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1993), 196-97.

Musically, a general folk influence is seen, at first, in the textural design of Szymanowski's mazurkas No. 13-16. In comparison to his earlier compositions, the texture of these four mazurkas is generally much thinner and more linear in design. However, no matter how much Szymanowski tried to adapt to the linear texture the folk melodies, he retained his interest in polyphonic structure like in his earlier styles. Examples 15-16 demonstrate, for instance, the use of thin melodic design as well as the application of polyphony in the linear texture. (See Examples 15 and 16)

Ex. 15. Mazurkas, Op. 50, No. 13 (mm. 1-12), simple polyphonic design



Ex. 16. Mazurka Op. 50, No. 15 (mm. 29-34), complex polyphonic design



The use of traditional dance form is also personalized in Mazurkas Nos. 13-16. Although the general three-part dance form is retained as a basic model for the four

mazurkas, each mazurka is treated with stylistic individuality. Tables 9-12 provide the detailed formal design of the four mazurkas as well as their general musical characteristic.²⁶

Table 9. Mazurka Op. 50. No. 13

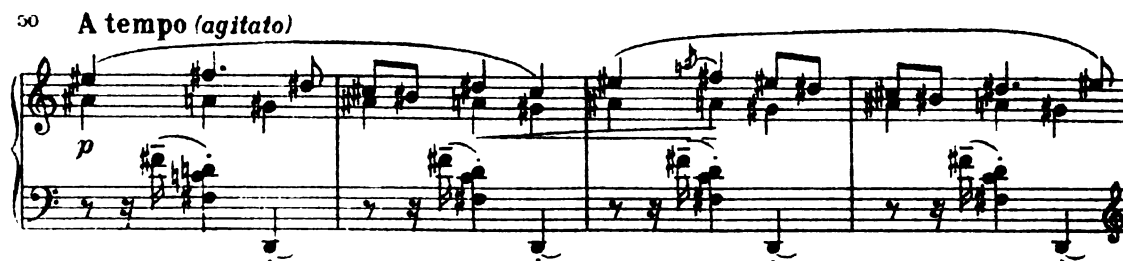
Form	Tempi & Expressions	Types of mazurka applied
A a (mm. 1-12) b (mm. 13 – 26) a ¹ (mm. 27 – 30)	Moderato	Kujawiak (melancholic yet profound)
B c (mm. 31- 72)	A tempo (agitato) - Sempre avvivando – Tempo I	Mazur (quicker and more rhythmical)
A ¹ a (mm. 73 - 84) b (mm. 85 – 98) a ¹ (mm. 99 – 102)	A tempo	Kujawiak

Mazurka No. 13 demonstrates a use of compound ternary structure (“form within form”, untypical for traditional folk dance music): Section A (as well as Section A¹) consists of a small ternary structure within itself (aba¹) while remaining in the overall ternary structure (ABA¹).

The “overlapping bridge” idea between Sections A and B is also unique. (see Example 17). This idea is displayed at the beginning measures of Section B: the melodic line continued the theme of Section Aa in the soprano, and the new accompaniment (created by two different types of descending ostinati) anticipates the rhythmic characteristics of the B section.

²⁶ The three types of mazurkas, *Kujawiak*, *Mazur* and *Oberek*, are categorized by their musical characteristics according to the information provided by the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie. (London: Macmillan, 2002. Vol. 16), 189.

Ex. 17. Mazurka Op. 50, No. 13 (mm. 31-34)



Ex. 18. Mazurka Op. 50, No. 14 (mm. 12-15)

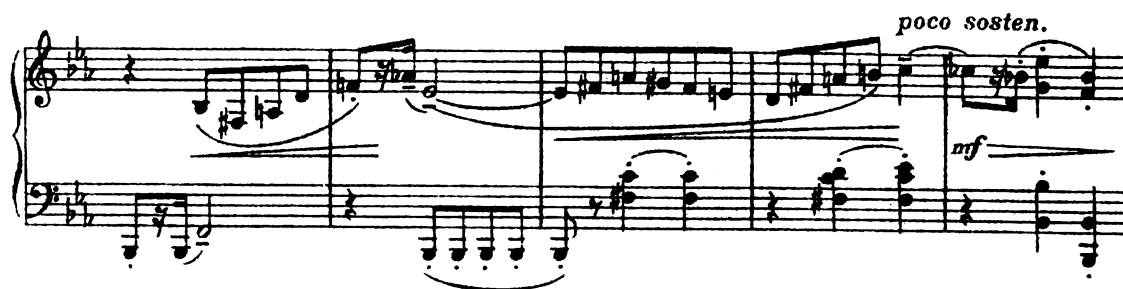


Table 11. Mazurka Op. 50, No 15

Form & Sections	Tempi & Expressions	Type(s) of mazurka applied
A a (mm. 1 – 8) + b (mm. 9 – 18)	Allegretto dolce - Sub. più animato	Kujawiak (sentimental and lyrical) Oberek (very quick and rhythmical)
B (ternary) c + d (mm. 19 – 28) e + f (mm. 29 – 42) c ¹ + d (mm. 43 – 60)	A tempo (agitato) - Sempre avvivando – Tempo I	Kujawiak and Oberek (the two contrasting themes are derived from Section A)
A ¹ a (mm. 61 – 68) + b + codetta (mm. 69 -76)	A tempo - Poco animato	Same as section A

Mazurka No. 15 extends the idea of thematic paring to another level, namely, the pairing of two drastically contrasting melodic styles, or dance types, so to speak. The first theme is characterized by the descending lyrical melody, while the second is highlighted with the distinctive rhythmic impulses and the bagpipe drone in the sustaining open fifth (see Example 19). Both the descending melodic shape and the sustaining open fifths are common elements in Góral music of the Tatra highlanders.²⁷

²⁷ The Góral influences in Szymanowski's mazurkas has been described by Maciejewski, Samson, and Chylinska.

Ex. 19. Mazurkas, Op. 50, No. 15 (mm. 1-18)



Notice also in Table 11, the idea of “form in a form” applied in Mazurka No. 13 is now adopted in Section B of No. 15. Although it seems more elaborated because of the pairing of the contrasting ideas, it is generally a small ternary form (cbc¹).

Table 12. Mazurka Op. 50, No. 16

Form & Sections	Tempi & Expressions	Types of mazurka applied
A a (mm. 1 – 15) b (mm. 16 – 37) c (mm. 38 – 52)	Allegramente. Vigoroso Poco piu mosso	Mazur (rhythmic, bold and vigorous)
B (mm. 53 – 73)	Poco meno mosso	Kujawiak (sensual, lyrical and sentimental)
A ¹ a (mm. 74 – 88) b (mm. 89 – 111) c (mm. 112 – 119) coda (m. 120 – 142)	Tempo I	Mazur (same as Section A)

The “form within form” compound structure is used again in Mazurka No. 16. While the overall structure of Mazurka No. 16 is a typical ternary form (ABA¹), the substructure within Sections A and A¹ are both through-composed (abc).

In comparison, the thematic and textual contrasts between Sections A and B in No. 16 are the most distinctive among the four mazurkas. While Sections A and A¹ are characterized by the heavy rhythmic gestures (refer to Example 22) along with the two-voice distant parallel movement (refer to Example 20), Section B provides a linear and lyrical melodic contrast.

Another folk influence of the four mazurkas is seen in the use of modality. Unlike Chopin's mazurkas, modality is much favored in Szymanowski's Op. 50, Nos. 13-16 than traditional diatonic colors. Each of the mazurkas has at least one "preferred" modal center. (For example, the C-flat or B Lydian/Mixolydian [0, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10]²⁸ in Nos. 13 and 16, E-flat Pentatonic [0, 2, 4, 7, 9] in No. 14, and D Aeolian [0, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10] in No. 15. These modal centers are, however, often camouflaged by the use of "tonal saturation," a result of polytonality or polymodality. The polytonal and polymodal technique brings to mind the Etudes, Op. 33. Similar to Op. 33, polymodality is found in various forms. It can be seen staggered between left and right hands creating two melodic planes, or mixed within a melodic line. Examples 20-21 demonstrate instances of the two different polymodal effects.

Ex. 20. Mazurka No. 14, (mm. 17-22), polymodal layering effect*



²⁸ Integer notation is used as opposed to letter notation in order to limit the burden of applying ample accidentals.

* The two “tonal” planes are: D-sharp minor on the left hand and E pentatonic on the right. Double-inflections are found in this passage.

Ex. 21. Mazurka No. 16, (mm. 38-43), polymodal mixed effect*




* The pitch collections from D-sharp minor and D-sharp Locrian are mixed in this passage. “Tonal saturation” effect is created.

While the modal scales are treated freely, the triple rhythm of mazurka dances is adapted according to the composer’s own will. Szymanowski’s adaptation of the mazurka rhythm is rather unconventional in Op. 50, Nos. 13-16. Notice the traditional mazurka music is characterized by the accented second beat or third beat in a regular triple meter. Chopin, on the one hand, respected this characteristic of the folk genre while artistically stylizing its music. Szymanowski, on the other hand, created a synthetic rhythmic impulse in his mazurkas in order to obtain a more dramatic musical effect. Although from time to time the “true” mazurka accent is being called upon, it is in most case overshadowed by ample irregularly placed accents (>) and tenuti (-) dominating the music.

Furthermore, Szymanowski synthesized the rhythmic impulse of the Tatra mountaineers' music (Góral music) with the triple meter of the mazurka dance. This musical cross-fertilization is seen the opening of Mazurka No. 16 (Example 22). The vigorous and weighted rhythmic gestures recall some type of "field song" than dance music. The vigorous sound of this mazurka also reminds us of the first movement ("Bagpipe") from Bartók's Sonatina.

Ex. 22. Mazurka Op. 50, No. 16 (mm. 1-10)



This cross-fertilization between two different kinds of folk sources, though musically unique, is also distant from its original syntax, *mazurka*. However, one important element from the original folk genre is preserved in Szymanowski's mazurkas, namely, the signature dotted rhythm (). This rhythmic gesture is applied pervasively throughout the four mazurkas as if to insure the music is indeed derived from the original folk source.

As stated by Stephen Downes, Szymanowski's mazurkas "represent a personal synthesis of mazurka triple meter rhythm with melodic shape derived from Góral music.

This is symptomatic of the change in function of the title 'mazurka' from its original regional connotations to a symbol of Polish national identity."²⁹ However, despite the socio-political influences or personal motivations, the artistic originality in Szymanowski's mazurkas is highly admirable. By synthesizing his own musical language and folkloric inspirations, Szymanowski succeeded in bringing his national Polish music to the international stage of the twentieth-century.

²⁹ Stephen Downes, "*Mazurka*" *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie. (London: Macmillan, 2002. Vol. 16), 190.

CONCLUSION

In the nearly forty-years of his creative life span, Szymanowski's musical styles experienced several drastic changes. These changes in one way or another are affected by the artistic complexity and diversity of the first part of the twentieth-century.

His early years (around 1889-1908) depict the influences of the Romantic and late Romantic models, both literary and musical. One important literary influence is by the "Young Poland" poetry. The nostalgic sentimentality of the poems is reflected in Szymanowski's early songs and piano pieces. His pianistic writing, as demonstrated in Four Etudes, Op. 4, bears various imprints of Chopin, early Scriabin, Brahms, and Wagner. While remaining within the boundary of traditional forms and tonality, Szymanowski ventured into the reservoir of the late-Romantic dramatic musical language such as the application of thick polyphonic texture, intricate polyrhythmic display, extreme chromaticism, as well as abundant dramatic contrasts.

During his middle-period (around 1908-1918), Szymanowski's compositional style witnessed a shift from the late-Romantic Austro/Germanic influences to a synthesis of Impressionistic ingredients and personal artistic taste. This stylistic cross-fertilization is seen in the use of less restricted forms, the exploration of unique sonorities and colors such as polytonal syntax, as well as creative rhythmic and motivic treatments. Twelve Etudes, Op. 33 is a clear illustration of this synthesis.

A last stylistic turning point was established around 1921, after his return to the newly formed Second Polish Republic. The compositions of this time are motivated by nationalistic considerations. Folk sources from Poland are adapted and rendered with

Szymanowski's own personal style and color during this period, as demonstrated in selective mazurkas of Op. 50.

Despite dramatic changes in musical appearance, Szymanowski's artistic styles retain certain consistencies, namely, the taste for musical complexity as well as sensual experience. These characteristics became the hallmark of his musical language throughout his compositions. Although Szymanowski may appear as a follower of musical trends rather than a genuine creator, his talent in merging these influences with his artistic individuality makes his music unique and exceptional. As Jacek Rogala noted:

Even today, historians have trouble defining the significance of Karol Szymanowski's work. His greatest contribution: elevating the standard of Polish music to European level (so important in the early part of the century) made his outstanding creative output seem less significant. For many it was enough to say that Szymanowski was the first artist after Chopin who succeeded in creating a modern national Polish style. A universally appreciated style, placing the composer among the leading European artists of the first half of the twentieth century.³⁰

In the past twenty years or so, Szymanowski's music has interested more and more musical scholars as well as concert artists both within and beyond the Polish country border. The International Szymanowski Piano Competition has been held every

³⁰ Jacek Rogala, *Polish Music in The Twentieth Century*, (Krakow: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne SA, 2000), 20.

four years in Poland since 1981. Several of his violin works are selected as required pieces in various international violin competitions. In addition, his music has been recorded by an increasing amount of international artists.

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