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*On the trail of a trail, the trace
of a trace.
Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer's
Cień Chopina and its compositional
interpretations*

ABSTRACT: At the beginning of this article, the author points out how quickly the image of Chopin as an artist who wrestled all his life with a mortal sickness (Chopin as a “singer of Weltschmerz”) took shape – an image which was subsequently taken up by European art of the *fin de siècle*. Attention then turns to the poem *Cień Chopina* [Chopin’s shadow], by the poet Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, highly fashionable during the Young Poland period, which can be ascribed to the “Weltschmerz current”. In contrast to earlier interpreters of this lyric, the author does not identify the lyrical subject of Tetmajer’s poem with the shadow (that is, the soul) of the Polish composer, but – referring to the observations of Barbara Sienkiewicz, who applied the Heideggerian formula of the “trace of a trace” to her exegesis of Tetmajer’s works – maintains that its hero is the shadow of Chopin’s shadow (or the shadow of his soul). Going on to analyse four song settings of this poem composed during the period 1900–1926 by Władysław Żeleński, Stanisław Lipski, Juliusz Wertheim and Ryta Gnus, and also the composition *Cień Chopina* by Witold Friemann (1913–46), scored for piano, baritone and orchestra, the author arrives at the conclusion that four composers – Żeleński, Wertheim, Gnus and Friemann – interpreted Tetmajer’s lyric in a way that is not entirely in keeping with the poet’s intentions. These composers, employing stereotypical Chopin formulas (a quasi-folk drone or chords imitating bells) or allusions to specific Chopin works, treated the lyrical subject of Tetmajer’s poem as identical to Chopin’s soul. Only Stanisław Lipski, who in his song forged a “pastoral scene”, referring to some extent to the most important features of the pastoral idiom elaborated by Beethoven on the pages of his *Sixth Symphony*, interpreted the figure of the lyrical subject of Tetmajer’s poem, listening to voices from the past, as a “double epiphenomenon” – a shadow of Chopin’s shadow.

KEYWORDS: Fryderyk Chopin, Kazimierz-Przerwa-Tetmajer, Władysław Żeleński, Stanisław Lipski, Juliusz Wertheim, Ryta Gnus, Witold Friemann, song, Young Poland music, national style and pastoral style in music

1. Fryderyk Chopin as a singer of *Weltschmerz*

Charles Rosen recently wrote:

Chopin's concentration on the genres of salon music considered trivial – nocturnes, mazurkas, waltzes – placed him among the miniaturists. Critics could not grant unqualified approval to his often unconventional forms, and to the disconcertingly modern chromatic harmony of his last pieces. These compositions, they felt, were the morbid work of a sick, dying man – this was even the verdict of Liszt, who wrote a little book on Chopin soon after his death (most of it actually put together by his mistress the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein). Liszt regretted this judgment soon after, but even in the book he had observed that the sick and morbid works had the most interesting and fascinating harmonies.¹

So quite rapidly – the book signed with Liszt's name was produced in 1851 – Chopin became a singer of *Weltschmerz*², and in many countries at the same time. In Russia, for instance, Anton Rubinstein considered tempo rubato to be a symptom of Chopin's *morbidezza*, and Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, who did not deny the influence of Chopin's music on his own melody and harmony, liked to warn his pupils against the morbid sweetness and femininity of the Polish composer's music.³ The same occurred within the Francophone cultural sphere, where the myth of Chopin as an artist for whom suffering was a source of inspiration resonated, for example, in the work of the Belgian Parnassian Albert Giraud, in the miniature *Valse de Chopin* from the widely-read verse cycle *Pierrot lunaire* (1884). In his famous melodramatic vocal cycle of the same title, written almost three decades later, Arnold Schönberg laced this lyric of Giraud's – in keeping with its title – in waltzing stays; and a most singular figure it cut, as a "dance" with the "morbidly" disturbed, barely detectable, "pulse" of a Waltzer rhythm.⁴ This perception of Chopin in Europe was so widespread that it would be worthy of a separate study, or even a monograph. Let us here just point to one of its climactic points, connected with a reflection by Stanisław Przybyszewski. It was this "brilliant Pole" who, in his *Zur Psychologie des Individuums*, published in 1892, presented what he claimed was a direct link be-

¹ Charles Rosen, 'Happy Birthday, Frédéric Chopin!', *The New York Review of Books* 6/24 (2010).

² Magdalena Dziadek's term from *Polska krytyka muzyczna w latach 1890-1914. Koncepcje i zagadnienia* [Polish music criticism 1890–1914. Concepts and issues] (Katowice, 2002).

³ See Stephen Downes, *Russian miniaturism: Scriabin, Lyadov and the Chopinesque*, in *Music and Decadence in European Modernism: The Case of Central and Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, 2010).

⁴ By comparison, in his song *Valse de Chopin* (1909), to the same text, Joseph Marx tried not to disturb the pulse of the titular song.

tween the genius of the creative artist and a state of sickness, usually grave or even (“at best”) mortal.⁵ This peculiar topos, poisoned with a decadent pessimism, was then taken up with similar alacrity by German creative artists (the case of Thomas Mann’s well-known novella *Tristan*, from 1902) and their Polish counterparts, including Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer and a number of writers from the inter-war years – Kazimierz Wierzyński, Roman Brandstaetter and Jan Lechoń.⁶

2. Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer and music

Tetmajer, whose poem *Cień Chopina* [Chopin’s shadow] is the focus of our attention in the present sketch, was one of those Young Poland⁷ poets who – as is indirectly attested by Justyna Bajda’s excellent monograph – found inspiration much less often in music than in the fine arts.⁸ That did not mean, however, that he remained insensitive to the art of sounds. The development of the poet’s musical taste (his works included *Sluchacze* [Listeners] (1894) and *Elegia na wiolonczelę* [Elegy for cello] (1912)) was certainly favoured by his contact with the Żeleński family; at that time, Władysław Żeleński, in whose home the Chopin cult was nurtured, was renowned as the most outstanding – alongside Zygmunt Noskowski – Polish composer alive. One may suppose that this distinguished musician, whose artistic sensibilities lay decidedly within the sphere of Romantic phantasms, had more than one tête-à-tête with the budding poet, which bore fruit in the form of ten songs to words by the patron of Polish decadence. Another musical stimulus for Tetmajer’s imagination, perhaps even more important than his contact with Żeleński, was his friendship with Ferdynand Hoesick, whom we best remember today as the author of a fundamental monograph of Chopin. As Hoesick recalled:

In the dedication that he wrote for me in the first volume of his *Poezje*, Kazimierz Tetmajer called me his “dear, only friend”, which at that time, when I was living

⁵ Stanisław Przybyszewski, *Zur Psychologie des Individuums* (Berlin, 1892).

⁶ See Maria Cieśla-Korytowska, *Romantyczne przechadzki pograniczem* [Romantic walks on the border] (Kraków, 2004), 215.

⁷ Young Poland (Młoda Polska) is a period in the history of Polish literature, usually dated 1890–1918, which corresponds to European symbolism or *fin de siècle*. In Polish music, phenomena to which Young Poland features could be attributed were slightly behind their literary equivalents: the musical Young Poland covers the thirty-year period 1896–1926. See Marcin Gmys, *Harmonie i dysonanse. Muzyka Młodej Polski wobec innych sztuk* [Harmonies and dissonances. Young Poland music and the other arts] (in print).

⁸ See Justyna Bajda, *Poezja a sztuki piękne. O świadomości estetycznej i wyobraźni plastycznej Kazimierza Przerwy-Tetmajera* [Poetry and the fine arts. On the aesthetic awareness and pictorial imagination of Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer] (Warszawa, 2003).

with his parents, but also later, when we were not cohabiting, was indeed indisputable. The *Preludia* he dedicated to me in his second tome, written under the influence of my music and the *Preludes* of Chopin, are like a poetical seal on the student period of our lives, on our friendship of those days.⁹

In Tetmajer's output, the cycle of poetical *Preludia* included in his second series of *Poezje* (1894) became, as Krystyna Zabawa maintains, "almost emblematic of his work"¹⁰. This cycle, originally comprising forty-five lyrics, reduced to forty works in the final version, may be seen as an attempt at a free poetical transposition of Chopin's opus 28, in which

Attention to the tonal, musical aspect [...] was not solely aimed at creating a mood, but also helped to express existential concerns and brought out the deepest meanings of the works.¹¹

One of those lyrics – the seventh of the forty pieces – is even a faithful representation of the properties of the *Prelude in A major* (also the seventh in the cycle),¹² and at the same time – on account of the presence of the most crucial motif of the spirit – something of a companion piece to *Cień Chopina*.

⁹ Ferdynand Hoesick, *Powieść mojego życia* [The story of my life], i (Wrocław and Kraków, 1959), 439. "W swej własnoręcznej dedykacji, skreślonej mi na pierwszym tomiku swoich *Poezji*, nazwał mnie Kazimierz Tetmajer "swym drogim, jedynym przyjacielem", co w owych czasach, gdy mieszkaliśmy u jego rodziców, a jeszcze i później, gdyśmy nie mieszkali razem, rzeczywiście nie dało się zaprzeczyć. Dedykowane mi przezeń w tomie drugim *Preludia*, pisane pod wpływem mojej muzyki i *Preludiów* Chopina, są jakby poetyczną pieczęcią, zamykającą studencki okres naszego życia, naszej ówczesnej przyjaźni."

Hoesick was a talented pianist, a pupil of Żeleński's friend Kazimierz Okolski. Elsewhere in his memoirs, he mentions how Żeleński (who *nota bene* published a number of his songs and his *Szkola na fortepian* [Piano-playing school] through Hoesick's publishing firm), after listening to him play, was prepared to give him free lessons; at the same time, the composer advised him to set aside his beloved works by Chopin for a while, "[...] since, in his opinion, one's study should end, not begin, with Chopin. In spite of this, he ascribed to me all the makings of a Chopinist. He also encouraged me to enroll at the conservatory". Ibid., 430. On the subject of Hoesick, see, Irena Poniatowska, 'Ferdynand Hoesick (1867-1941) – muzykograf z przełomu stuleci' [Ferdynand Hoesick (1867-1941) – a musicographer from the turn of the century], in Poniatowska, *Historia i interpretacja muzyki. Z badań nad muzyką XVIII i XIX wieku* [The history and interpretation of music. From research into the music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries], 2nd edn (Kraków, 1995), 165-186.

¹⁰ Krystyna Zabawa, 'Preludia – "muzyka [...] duszy" i zaduma "nad istnieniem"' [The Preludes – "music [...] of the soul" and "pondering existence"], in *Poezja Kazimierza Tetmajera. Interpretacje* [The poetry of Kazimierz Tetmajer. Interpretations], ed. Anna Czabanowska-Wróbel, Paweł Próchniak and Marian Stala, (Kraków, 2003), 103.

¹¹ "Dbałość o stronę dźwiękową, muzyczną [...], nie miała jedynie funkcji nastrojowo-twórczej, ale wspomagała wyrażanie problematyki egzystencjalnej, uwydatniała najgłębsze sensy utworów." Ibid., 119.

¹² Ibid., 107.

3. In the magic circle of epiphenomena: Tetmajer's *Cień Chopina*

It is not known exactly when *Cień Chopina* was written, but one cannot exclude the possibility that it dates from as early as the end of the 1880s.¹³ It consists of six stanzas with cross-rhymes, in which a ten-syllable line with caesura after the fifth syllable alternates with a four-syllable line:

To orchards blooming, to countryside groves,
fields by a stream,
at nightfall his shadow, deathly pale goes,
soft as a dream.

It listens to trees breathe o'er the river
shrouded in haze;
bass viols bellow, violins quiver
there, far away.

It listens to whispering aspen sough,
mallow, lilac;
and to a girl's sobbing, sighing breath: bowed,
elegiac.

In watery reeds, as the moon glimmers,
shivers and shakes,
a water nymph's pale gaze on him shimmers
out of the lake.

It listens to moaning funeral tolls,
and mourning cries,
the flicker of stars – celestial souls,
wand'ring the skies...

It listens to heartbreak, pain undisguised,
helpless, distraught – –
listens to all that his own soul comprised
when he still walked...¹⁴

¹³ This work appeared in the first series of Tetmajer's *Poezje* (1891).

¹⁴ Apologies for the caesurae (tr.).

“Na wiejskie gaje, na kwietne sady,
na pola hen,

According to Kazimierz Maciąg, the most competent student of the “Chopin legend” in our literature today, the last stanza of the poem is supposed to suggest that

[...] the Chopin of the poem in question appears to be taking part in some special rite resembling Mickiewicz’s *Dziady* [Forefathers’ eve], yet he is not, like the protagonists of the second part of that play, a penitent awaiting redemption from the punishments that weigh upon him or a sorcerer wishing to save souls threatened by damnation, but rather a powerless observer of the tragedies that are played out around him and also those taking place midst “the flicker of stars...”¹⁵.

Maciąg’s ultimate conclusion boils down to the assertion that in the case of the Tetmajer poem under discussion, we are observing not so much a Romantic with a rebellious attitude towards reality as a sitting tenant of the opulent gallery of “neurotics” from the end of the nineteenth century, paralysed by a sense of the decadent’s hopelessness.¹⁶ Although the interpretation proposed by

idzie nocami cień jego blady
cichy, jak sen.

Słucha, jak szumią nad rzeką lasy
owite w mgły;
jak brzęczą skrzypce, jak huczą basy
z odległej wsi.

Słucha, jak szepcą drżące osiny,
małwy i bez;
i rozpłakanej słucha dziewczyny,
jej skarg, jej łez.

W wodnych wiklinach, w blasku księżyca,
w północny chłód,
rusałka patrzy nań bladolica
z przepastnych wód.

Słucha jęczących dzwonów pogrzebnych,
i wielkich łkań,
i rozplyniętych kędyś, podniebnych,
gwiazd błędnych drgań...

Słucha, jak serca w bólu się kruszą
i rwą bez sił – –
słucha wszystkiego, co jego duszą
było, gdy żył...”

¹⁵ Kazimierz Maciąg, “Naczelnym u nas jest artystą”. *O Legendzie Fryderyka Chopina w literaturze polskiej* [‘The foremost artist among us’. On the legend of Fryderyk Chopin in Polish literature] (Rzeszów, 2010), 211.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Maciąg seems quite striking, it is difficult to embrace it unreservedly, since he appears to ignore the unique ontic status of the lyrical subject of this work. For we are dealing here not with the composer himself, but – as both the title and the first stanza unequivocally indicate – with his reflection, his shadow – and a blurred, indistinct, “pale” shadow at that. At this point, it occurs to the interpreter that this pallor might be read as the result of Tetmajer’s intention of inscribing the whole series of images he has devised within the modernist topos of sickness. At the same time, we may also be dealing with a reflection (of which the poet was not necessarily aware) of convictions that held sway in ancient Egypt, where a shadow – and especially its partly transparent form, as distinct from the black shadow, identified with man’s other self – was treated as a way of visualising the human soul.¹⁷ According to Justyna Bajda¹⁸, the shadow wandering through the other world was furnished by Tetmajer with pre-Raphaelite features, among which she numbers the motif of “listening”. That motif should be regarded as the most crucial one in the whole lyric. It opens as many as four of the six stanzas, absent only from the first and the fourth. That last stanza brings a startling, albeit momentary, change of perspective: we follow – parenthetically, as it were – not so much the further “steps” of the titular hero as the behaviour of the water nymph observing him. Let us note, also, that these two subjects – the shadow and the nymph – are marked by a similar condition: they are both characterised by a stark pallor, an indistinct contour that is the property of all epiphenomena; the water nymph’s paleness is certainly heightened by the moonlight, which was often (e.g. in Giraud’s *Pierrot lunaire* and Oscar Wilde’s *Salome*) a sign of sickness and decay.¹⁹ And it is the notion of the epiphenomenon that seems key to Tetmajer’s lyric: whilst dealing with a visual epiphenomenon, a shadow, at the same time the poet suggests (since – happily! – he does not state it directly) that we are in “contact” also with its “structural”, tonal “twin” – an echo.

At this point, it is worth returning to the question of the identity of the lyrical subject. Can the titular shadow indeed be identified with Chopin’s soul? The matter would appear to be more complex, and we are guided towards its solution by the valuable remarks of Barbara Sienkiewicz, who, examining the Young Poland poet’s attitude to reality as expressed in his lyrical output, noticed that the highly problematic question of the author’s ontological settling in “the world understood as being” arises from the entire oeuvre of

¹⁷ Cf. Victor I. Stoichita, *Krótką historia cienia*, tr. Piotr Nowakowski (Kraków, 2001), 19; [Eng. orig. *A Short History of the Shadow* (London, 1997)].

¹⁸ See Justyna Bajda, “The place of music in the poetry of Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer”, in the present volume, p. 195.

¹⁹ According to Bajda, the origins of Tetmajer’s water nymph may reach back to the paintings of Böcklin and may also constitute a parallel to motifs familiar from the work of Jacek Malczewski and Witold Pruszkowski. *Ibid.*, 195.

the author of the *Melodie mgieł nocnych* [Tunes of the nightly mists].²⁰ In support of her theses, Sienkiewicz cites several poems, from which I shall quote excerpts of two, perhaps the most significant.²¹ In the ending of *Dusza w powrocie* [A soul's return] (1900), we read the following:

Some shadow, pale ghost, paltry spectre appears –
smiles at me sadly, timidly, fearfully
beyond the mist – I look at it senselessly,
within me stirs dread, like some nightmare it rears!

That phantom – it is – my own spirit!? It's my
soul!? That phantom?! That shadow!? That agony!?
That is my soul!? An abyss all around me
And mists... it is: it is she. She says: 'tis I.²²

Then this in the last strophe of *Myśli* [Thoughts] (1924):

I grasp my impressions and my life's shifting phantoms –
But I'm my own shade – – I see the shade of my phantom
flying into the Light – – no live substance within it.²³

According to Sienkiewicz, the essence of Tetmajer's poetry is that

Tetmajer's subject makes manifest not [...] that which is "outside", that which exists with relative permanence, objectivised through the sphere of the senses, but the shadow of a shadow, the trail of a trail, Heidegger's trace of a trace. Unable to relate to "hard" externality, the subject proves to be indistinct, internally empty, and begins to resemble the shadow of a shadow, the trace of a trace.²⁴

²⁰ Barbara Sienkiewicz, "Tetmajer – między obecnością a jej śladem" [Tetmajer – between the presence and its trace], in Sienkiewicz, *Poznawanie i nazywanie. Refleksja cywilizacyjna i epistemologiczna w polskiej poezji modernistycznej* [Cognition and appellation. Civilisations and epistemological reflection in modernist Polish poetry] (Kraków, 2007), 78.

²¹ Ibid., 80.

²² "Jakiś cień, mara blada, znikła zjawą –
smutno się trwożnie, bojaźliwie do mnie
zza mgły uśmiecha – patrzę nieprzytomnie,
strach mi wśród piersi zrywa się i wstawa!

To widmo – to jest – moja dusza!? Moja
dusza!? To widmo?! Ten cień!? To konanie!?
To dusza moja!? Naokół otchłanie
I mgły... tak jest: to ona. Mówi: to ja."

²³ "chwytam moje wrażenia i życiowe zjawy –
Lecz jestem cieniem własnym – – widzę cień mej zjawy
lejący w Światło – – żywej nie mający treści."

²⁴ Ibid.

Such a vision of the world, as the examples put forward by Sienkiewicz indirectly attest, was to be confined essentially to a first-person lyric. Yet we note a similar thing in *Cień Chopina*, since of crucial significance for determining the ontic status of the lyrical subject would appear to be the ending of the last stanza – “listens to all that his own soul comprised / when he still walked”. From this, it ensues quite unequivocally that not only the equating of the shadow with the person of the composer, but also the identification of the shadow with his soul would be an interpretative abuse. For this is “merely” the shadow of a soul, and so indeed the trace of a trace derived from Heidegger’s *Holzwege* or – to stick more closely to Tetmajer’s “terminology” – the shadow of a shadow. Only when all those instances of “listening” that so completely absorb the attention and fill the epiphenomenal existence of the lyrical subject have occurred can the phenomenon that was once the soul of the genius be reconstructed, at least in part, in the reader’s imagination. But even then – as we might have supposed – it will never be a perfect, faithful, complete representation.

Let us return to the principal leitmotif of *Cień Chopina* – that of listening. It is worth noting that we have in this poem a quite peculiar instance of that action, since the shadow of the composer’s soul “picks out” sounds that reach it from afar. One may even speak in this case of a poetical realisation of the topos of “music from afar”, “Musik aus weitester Ferne”²⁵, perfectly familiar in instrumental music of the nineteenth century and also exceptionally fashionable during the musical *fin de siècle*. This idea was cultivated in Poland by such figures as Karol Szymanowski (the songs of his opus 2, to words by Tetmajer)²⁶ and Eugeniusz Morawski (in the symphonic poem *Nevermore*, from 1911)²⁷, and in Europe – to name but two examples – by Richard Strauss (the last scene of *Elektra*, in which the titular heroine hears a curious music inside her)²⁸ and Franz Schreker, who wrote the once celebrated opera *Der ferne Klang* (1912), whose protagonist, the composer Fritz (the *alter ego* of the

²⁵ See Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler II. Mahler und die Symphonik des 19. Jahrhunderts in neuer Deutung* (Wiesbaden, 1977), 151–159.

²⁶ Bartosz Dąbrowski has recently published some interesting remarks on this topos in the Szymanowski oeuvre, in *Szymanowski. Muzyka jako autobiografia* [Szymanowski. Music as autobiography] (Gdańsk, 2010).

²⁷ The work by Morawski, perhaps the foremost Polish composer of the first half of the twentieth century (Szymanowski apart), was based on Charles Baudelaire’s French translation of Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Crow*; as we know, Poe’s poem speaks of both an echo and a shadow cast by the demonic bird; as ensues from the ending of this poem, the lyrical subject will not be able to free himself from under the sway of this other epiphenomenon.

²⁸ See e.g. Lawrence Kramer, *Fin-de-Siècle Fantasies. “Elektra” and the Culture of Suprematism*, in Kramer, *Opera and Modern Culture. Wagner and Strauss* (Berkeley, 2004), 196.

composer of this “operatic phantasmagoria”)²⁹, vainly pursues the tonal *idée fixe* that torments him.

In *Cień Chopina*, Tetmajer’s “music from afar” takes on various forms. At times, it is the sphere of *Naturlaut* (the sougning of meadows and forests), of an early Romantic provenance, at times “quivering” violins or basses that “bellow” in the distance, and occasionally – in its starkest form – the clamour of funeral bells and of the “mourning cries” that vibrate together with them, to which the poet imparts barely the cosmogonic value of *musica mundana* (“the flicker of stars – celestial souls, / wand’ring the skies”). The appearance of bells and the harmony of the spheres is certainly not accidental. After all, bells are one of the crucial *symbols clés* of the entire epoch, albeit – quite astonishingly in the context of the remarkably burgeoning area of research into Young Poland literature – only recently described (by Ireneusz Sikora).³⁰ Bells, which functioned during this literary period in two varieties, the mood-associative (e.g. Tetmajer’s *Anioł Pański* [The Angelus]) and the individualist-activist (e.g. Leopold Staff’s poem *Dzwony* [Bells] and Lucjan Rydel’s play *Zaczarowane koło* [The magic circle], modelled on Gerhardt Hauptmann’s *The Sunken Bell* (*Die versunkene Glocke*)), can – in the latter case – take on self-thematic meanings. The semanticisation of an idiophonic “poetical prop” – when that process is orientated in just such a way – is effected through somewhat fanciful means: “identifying the world with the shape of a bell and the lyrical subject with its clapper, striking the rim and expressing its essence through sound”³¹. The case of Tetmajer’s *Cień Chopina* – if we agree to Sikora’s proposition – is perhaps a borderline one. In this lyric, it is as if both functions were combined: the episodic reference to a bell may be regarded as a substitute for the mood-associative function, whilst the passive character of the lyrical subject, contradicting the individualist-activist version, should be ascribed – in spite of everything – to the realm of art, since that subject is an epiphenomenon of an epiphenomenon of the greatest Polish creative artist in history. Finally, bells are one of the most popular attributes in the whole of European music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one which fascinated many composers, to mention – passing over Chopin’s own *Marche funèbre* from the *B flat minor Sonata* – only Liszt (*Funérailles* and *Les cloches de Genève*), Wagner (*Parsifal*), Richard Strauss (*Tod und Verkürung*), Claude Debussy (*La cathédrale engloutie*), Maurice Ravel (*La vallée*

²⁹ Adrian Daub, ‘Adorno’s Schreker: Charting the Self-Dissolution of the Distant Sound’, *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3 (2006).

³⁰ See Ireneusz Sikora, *Łabędź i lira. O symbolice autotematycznej w poezji Młodej Polski* [The swan and the lyre. On self-thematic symbolism in Young Poland poetry], in Sikora, *Łabędź i lira. Studia i szkice o literaturze Młodej Polski* [The swan and the lyre. Studies and sketches on Young Poland literature] (Zielona Góra, 2001), 78–81.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

des cloches), Sergey Rachmaninov (*The Bells*) and also – among Polish composers – Mieczysław Karłowicz (*Stanisław and Anna Oświecim*), Ludomir Różycki (the operas *Boleslaus the Bold*, *Eros and Psyche*, *Beatrice Cenci*) and Karol Szymanowski (*Fantasy in C major* for piano, Op. 14, the operas *Hagith* and *King Roger*).³²

The juxtaposing of the music of the spheres and the topos of the bell further reinforces the presence in *Cień Chopina* of the self-thematic topos (incidentally, Tetmajer also combined the self-thematic topos with the idea of cosmic music in his quasi-programmatic poem *Orzeł* [The eagle] (from series I), where the titular bird – in accordance with the convention of the day imposed by the shadow of Charles Baudelaire's *Albatross* – symbolises the lonely artist who flies up “gdzie wyje groźny wichrów róg / i brzmi melodia sfer” [where blows the winds' wild horn / and sounds the melody of the spheres].³³ The musical sensitivity of Chopin's soul in Tetmajer's portrayal is aptly grasped and synthesised by one of the most versatile Young Poland critics and writers: Cezary Jellenta (1860–1931).³⁴ In a text not directly referring to the lyric of interest to us here (let us compare, incidentally, the motif of the bell and the music of the spheres at the beginning), but certainly well known to Tetmajer, Jellenta writes:

Bells constitute that ubiquitous music of the spheres, which most frequently unveils Chopin's soul. [...] Chopin, in feelings and mental figures, at once, directly,

³² Incidentally, during the European *fin de siècle*, the sound of bells was brought to the surface even when they were not expressly mentioned in a text, as in Ernest Chausson's song *Les Heures* to words by Camille Maucclair, on which Katherine Bergeron inspiringly wrote in her recent monograph *Voice Lessons. French Mélodie in the Belle Epoque* (Oxford, 2010) (chapter 'Unsung Symbols').

³³ See Marian Stala, *Rozbita dusza i jej cień* [The shattered soul and its shadow], in Stala, *Pejzaż człowieka. Młodopolskie myśli i wyobrażenia o duszy, duchu i ciele* [Man-scape. Young Poland ideas and representations of the soul, spirit and body] (Kraków, 1994), 136. On this subject, cf. Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Symbolizm i symbolika w poezji Młodej Polski* [Symbolism and symbols in Young Poland poetry], 2nd edn (Kraków, 1994), 153–154.

³⁴ Jellenta inscribed his name in both the history of Young Poland criticism (together with Maria Komornicka and Wacław Nałkowski, he wrote *Forpocztę* [Outposts], regarded today as one of the most important literary manifestos of the end of the nineteenth century in Poland) and Polish art history (here, he came to prominence as a precursor of the proto-expressionist manifesto termed “intensivism”; see on this subject Wiesław Juszcak, *Malarstwo polskiego modernizmu* [Art of Polish modernism] (Gdańsk, 2004)). Associated during the Berlin period of his work (1905–1908) with debuting members of the group of composers known as “Young Poland in music” – chiefly Ludomir Różycki, as well as Karol Szymanowski, Grzegorz Fitelberg and Apolinary Szeluta – Jellenta also wrote competently (he was an amateur singer, performing, for example, in recital with Różycki) and glibly on musical subjects on the pages of many periodicals (including *Ateneum*, *Rydwani* and *Białe Pawy*, of which – at various times – he was the editor-in-chief).

sees and hears the pulse of hearts, the rhythm of beating blood, and so he does not symbolise reality in tones and chords, but perceives it at once in bell-like terms. He felt the universality of the bell, not as a companion of good and ill fortune, of ceremonies happy and sad, à la Schiller, not as the association of notions, as recollections, but as the pulse of gloomy and funereal states of mind and as a constant musical artery of those things which press upon the human soul. [...] As for Shelley – “everything plays – if only men would hear” – so for him bells are everywhere – if only men would hear. Always and everywhere, that sound hovers over us and within us, simple but full, extensive but lofty, bright but serious, piercing, resounding and echoing, like the song of the nightingale, when it echoes against the silent filigree of a stream, and shimmering in its thousand-fold timbres and tones, like *The Bells* of Edgar Allan Poe.³⁵

4. Compositional readings of *Cień Chopina*

According to Anna Nowak, *Cień Chopina*, alongside the *Preludia* [Preludes], *Zawód* [Disappointment], *Limba* [The stone pine] and *Mów do mnie jeszcze* [Speak to me still], were among the Tetmajer lyrics which composers were most fond of setting.³⁶ Nowak lists four songs for voice and piano written between 1900 and 1926, composed by Ryta Gnus, Stanisław Lipski, Aleksander Wielhorski and Władysław Żeleński, and also two works for choir *a cappella* by Zbigniew Pruszyński from the end of the 1940s.³⁷ To these, one should add at least two more compositions: *Cień Chopina* for voice and piano by Juliusz Wertheim and *Cień Chopina*, a fantasy for piano, voice and orchestra by Witold Friemann. Considered below will be works by five composers: one of the doyens of Polish music on the threshold of the twentieth century, Żeleński, and four artists linked to the generation of Young Poland composers, namely Lipski, Wertheim, Gnus and Friemann.³⁸

³⁵ Cezary Jellenta, *Dzwony Chopina* [Chopin's bells], in Jellenta, *Grający szczyt. Studia syntetyczno-krytyczne* [The musical peak. Synthetic-critical studies] (Kraków and Warszawa, 1912), 77–79. This text, with a different version of the ending and under the title *Dusze niektórych melodyj. I. Chopin* [The souls of certain melodies. I. Chopin] (the second part was devoted to Schumann), was published in *Ateneum* 1–3 (1905).

³⁶ One of these compositions – *Cień Chopina*, a poem for male choir *a cappella* – was published in 1949 by PWM. See Anna Nowak, “Tetmajer”, in Elżbieta Dziębowska (ed.), *Encyklopedia Muzyczna PWM. Część Biograficzna* [PWM Encyclopaedia of music. Biographical part], vols. v–t (Kraków, 2010), 70.

³⁷ Pruszyński apparently wrote an unknown poem and the work *Na wiejskie gaje* [To countryside groves] (both from 1948–1949, doubtless with the centenary commemorations of Chopin's death in mind).

³⁸ We will omit the choral compositions by Pruszyński and Wielhorski – works to which I have unfortunately not gained access.

Władysław Żeleński's *Cień Chopina* was published in 1902 in Warsaw³⁹, but it may have been written a decade or more earlier, even prior to the publication of the first tome of Tetmajer's verse (1891), since we know that the composer, friendly with the young poet's family, was familiar with Tetmajer's work from manuscript. But regardless of the exact date we might give for this work's composition, there is no doubt that it should be afforded priority before the other songs by Young Poland composers. Zofia Chechlińska has noted that this lengthy composition, numbering 156 bars, contains a number of allusions to the work of Chopin. These include the metre and rhythm peculiar to the mazurka, fifths drones (which Chechlińska links to early mazurkas by the composer of the *Polonaise-Fantasy*), the polymelodic accompaniment that characterises some mazurkas and the adoption from the mazurkas of certain phrases.⁴⁰ Whilst concurring fundamentally with Chechlińska, it is worth adding that references to his mazurka idiom do not exhaust the arsenal of Chopin allusions. Already in the instrumental introduction (particularly from bar 4 onwards), which subsequently recurs several times over the course of the work and rounds it off like a postlude, one notes a textural allusion to Chopin's *Waltz in A minor*, Op. 34 No. 2, which Mieczysław Tomaszewski numbers among the composer's most important works, designated a *valse mélancolique*⁴¹ (see Examples 1 and 2 on page 240). Żeleński's song has a rondo design and – of course – does not respect the specific pattern of the poem, in which the first and fourth stanzas, depicting the shadow's wanderings from different perspectives, are juxtaposed with the remaining four stanzas and the motif of listening. The odd-numbered stanzas were based on the same theme in the vocal part, whilst the part of the accompaniment alters, and the vocal part's phrase "At nightfall his shadow, deathly pale goes" will echo thrice more: first in the third stanza ("And to a girl's sobbing, sighing breath: bowed"), then in the fifth ("The flicker of stars – celestial souls") and finally in the sixth ("Listens to all that his own soul comprised"). Despite this schematic approach, Żeleński endeavours to differentiate the stanzas, listening closely to the meanings they bear. The "breathing" of the trees is imitated without undue blatancy by quaver figurations in the right hand (similarly, but more forcibly, to the figurations in the softest stanza – *ppp* – about the water

³⁹ The lithograph on the cover was produced by the firm of C. Witanowski; the song was dedicated to Ludwika Marek-Onyszkiewiczowa.

⁴⁰ See Zofia Chechlińska, 'Pieśni Żeleńskiego do słów Tetmajera' [Żeleński's songs to words by Tetmajer], in *Pieśń polska. Rekonesans. Odrębności i pokrewieństwa. Inspiracje i echa* [Polish song. A reconnaissance. Distinguishing features and affinities. Inspirations and echoes], ed. Mieczysław Tomaszewski (Kraków, 2002), 75.

⁴¹ See Mieczysław Tomaszewski, *Chopin. Człowiek, dzieło, rezonans* [Chopin. The man, his work and its resonance] (Poznań, 1998), 365. This association is not the work of accident, given that Żeleński also chose the key of A minor for his *Cień*.

nymph); the “bellowing” basses are accompanied by regular (crotchet) empty fifths in the left-hand part, onto which short quaver motifs with a characteristic Lydian fourth are occasionally superimposed; finally, the key stanza about the “moaning funeral tolls” contains very discrete imitations (in which Żeleński’s *Cień Chopina* is close to another “bell” song by the same composer, *Na Anioł Pański* [The Angelus])⁴², in the form of an empty fifth in the bass, oscillating in every bar in two different octave registers (these fifths complement chords of an octave divided by a fifth in the right-hand part) (see Example 3 on page 241). All these illustrative means somehow mollify the effect of the elimination of the verbal-musical relations that would undoubtedly arise from the use of a rondo form. Żeleński’s song leaves us in no doubt that the composer understands Tetmajer’s text in terms of mourning. The consistent application of the key of A minor, the repetition at the end of the last two words of the poem, with an accent on the word “walked”, extending over two bars, and finally the repeated allusion to the melancholy *Waltz in A minor* entitle us to form just such an interpretation of this work.

A completely different interpretation of this same Tetmajer lyric was produced ten years after Żeleński by his pupil Stanisław Lipski (1880–1937).⁴³ Although during the period when Lipski composed his song, the ties of pupil-teacher dependency on Żeleński had long been severed, one can hardly suppose that in setting *Cień Chopina* Lipski could have been unfamiliar with Żeleński’s song, which was quite popular at that time. Lipski’s *Cień Chopina* is part of a collection of twelve songs, Op. 9⁴⁴, to words by various poets, published in 1912 in three separate books – a collection about which the contemporary music critic and musicologist Józef W. Reiss wrote that

[...] it is a powerful expression of the composer’s waxing talent; the overall value of the collection is very high, albeit uneven: among the most beautiful songs are those whose tone and mood require a certain simplicity and unelaborate means; in them, the composer places a great deal of sentiment and noble melody, which he colours with a breath of folk traditions and wraps in a robe of refined harmony (*Łabędź* [The swan], *Jesień* [Autumn], *Cień Chopina*, *Jesienią* [In autumn]).⁴⁵

⁴² Żeleński employed the imitation of bells in his work rather sparingly (or not at all, as in the orchestral composition *Trauerklänge*); this predilection is brought out by a comparison of his song *Na Anioł Pański*, to words by Tetmajer, with Mieczysław Karłowicz’s melodeclamation with the same title. On this subject, see Gmys, *Harmonie i dysonanse*.

⁴³ Lipski studied with Żeleński from childhood (1892–1900).

⁴⁴ This work opens the whole opus and is dedicated to the singer Wanda Hendrichówna, well known at that time (and later also during the inter-war period); Lipski’s opus 9 was published by A. Piwarski & Co.

⁴⁵ Józef W. Reiss, ‘Publikacje muzyczne’ [Music publications], *Rydwani* (1912/10), 119.

In contrast to his mentor, Lipski proposed a radically different reading of Tetmajer's poem. The young composer designed his 69-bar song in the "form" of a short scene – a pastoral scene, as is immediately indicated by the performance marking placed above the song: *Andante pastorale* (see Example 4 on page 242). It would not be an exaggeration if, in characterising this version of *Cień Chopina*, we were to assert that it is more deeply indebted than the work of Chopin to the music of... Beethoven, the composer of the "Pastoral" *Symphony in F major*, No. 6. After all, it is from this *sinfonia caratteristica* that perhaps all the most important "emblems" of the late Classical pastoral style were drawn. Availing ourselves of the statements of F. E. Kirby⁴⁶, it is worth enumerating those emblems here:

1. a clear, uncomplicated key (although Lipski turns not to F major, but to G major – a key which, together with F major and D major, comprised the Classical "pastoral triad"⁴⁷),
2. the metre (6/8) and pulse of the sicilienne, disturbed only in the stanzas referring to the nymph and the bells⁴⁸,
3. fifths drones in the left-hand part (the only Chopinian feature in this song),
4. the frequent use of trills (bird-like formula),
5. imitations of the sighing of trees and of "whispering aspens" (the marking *murmurando* in bars 13 and 21, directly associated with the initial motif of listening in stanzas 2 and 3)⁴⁹,
6. imitations of the sound of bagpipes, but in the guise not only of a drone harmonic ground, but also of melodic phrases (marking *à la cornemuse* in bar 65).⁵⁰

Two stanzas are clearly freed from the sicilienne dance rhythm that dominates the song. The composer underpins what is perhaps the most enigmatic ("Böcklinian") stanza, namely the fourth (Lipski defined it as *misterioso*), with conventional "aquatic passages" in the accompaniment, played on the right pedal (*una corda*) at the same time as discreet disturbances of the metre (two breaks from 6/8 to 3/8). The strains of the "funeral tolls" that resound

⁴⁶ F. E. Kirby, 'Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony as a Sinfonia Characteristica', *Musical Quarterly* 4 (1970).

⁴⁷ Let us recall: in the key of D major is the *Piano Sonata*, Op. 28, also known as the "Pastoral".

⁴⁸ Although 6/8 dominates in these stanzas, as well.

⁴⁹ In the third stanza, besides *murmurando pianissimo*, we also find the term *armosioso*, falling on the bitonal combination of a C major chord and a doubled tritone *e-a sharp*, emphasized by right pedal (the bar preceding the sentence "And to a girl's sobbing, sighing breath: bowed").

⁵⁰ Bagpipes were an almost obligatory attribute of the *symphonie caractéristique* devoted to nature, the sounds of which composers imitated with woodwind instruments, usually given more prominence than the brass.

after this (the next stanza – *Poco maestoso*, 6/8) are imitated more clearly by Lipski than by Żeleński with chords of the right hand, from the mass of which the pianist should bring out the hidden melodic voice (see the most apt remark *marcato la melodia* and the marking *quasi campana* that smacks of tautology (see Example 5 on page 243).

Lipski, like Żeleński, decided against couching his song in a modern, through-composed formula, but he ultimately chose its substitute – a cross between a through-composed and an arch form (A-B-C-D-E-A'). This pattern inevitably leads to at least a partial ignoring of the structure of Tetmajer's poem, to the detriment – albeit to a lesser degree than in the Żeleński setting – of the area of verbal-musical relations. For instance, the sentence "It listens to heartbreak, pain undisguised, / helpless, distraught" in the last stanza dismally overlaps with a phrase in the rhythm of a rustic sicilienne, wholly in keeping with the sense of the words "To orchards blooming, to countryside groves, / fields by a stream". Fortunately, less flawed in Lipski's song is the playing with the key motif of listening. The sentence from the second stanza "It listens to trees breathe o'er the river / shrouded in haze" is answered with a kind of echo in the last stanza by the phrase "Listens to all that his own soul comprised / when he still walked". Despite the repetition of the last two words ("still walked"), which – let us recall – in Żeleński sealed the funereal reading of the poem, such effects as *à la cornemuse*, a bird-like trill and fifths in the bass that wander across three octave registers – elements bound together by an unalloyed G major – clearly confirm Lipski's surprisingly cheerful reading of *Cień Chopina*, taken – if we wish to compare this work (fittingly?) with the other settings – to the opposite pole of Tetmajer's intentions.

The 75-bar *Cień Chopina* by Juliusz Wertheim (1880–1928)⁵¹, written most probably around the same time as Lipski's song, is not marked by such a far-reaching "eccentricity" in its approach to Tetmajer's text. Wertheim – it is worth emphasising in advance – was the only one of the five interpreters of this lyric to notice and seek to bring out that feature of Tetmajer's narrative whereby the first and fourth stanzas are in some way opposed to the remainder. Consequently, he gave his song a through-composed form, ensuring substantial cohesion by means of three solutions:

⁵¹ Wertheim, who successfully pursued simultaneous careers as a pianist, conductor and composer, belongs to the numerous figures from the musical life of those times over whose output a practically complete – not to say sepulchral – silence has descended. Besides vocal music (around forty extant songs), Wertheim also wrote symphonic and operatic music, unfortunately not published during his lifetime and consequently mostly lost. His place in music history is also ensured as the composition and conducting teacher of Paweł Klecki. *Cień Chopina* was published by Gebethner & Wolf (catalogue no. 2927).

1. reprising melodic material in the vocal part,
2. repeating instrumental motifs,
3. the use of tonal plans.

The disposition of the melodic material in the vocal part does not cause any problems. The composer employs two ideas, the first of which, assigned to the opening words ("To orchards blooming, to countryside groves"), will be recalled in the fourth stanza ("In watery reeds, as the moon glimmers"). In this way, the composer stretches out a distinct symbolic cord that binds together the narrative plan in which Tetmajer concentrates on the behaviour of the "pale shadow" and its kindred spirit – the "pale water nymph". Additionally, this same motif, in a much altered form of hymnic character (augmentation), occurs at the end of the song, with the words "all that his soul comprised / when he still walked, still walked"⁵². The other melodic motif of the vocal part is an idea assigned to the opening words of stanzas III (which are to be sung *andantino*, *molto espressivo* and *pianissimo*) and V (here, by contrast, *maestoso* and *forte*, to underscore the majesty of the funeral bells, imitated by piano chords played *non piano e pesante*).

In considering the tonal plan of this work, let us begin by stating that Wertheim chose for his song the key of E major, which during the nineteenth century, beginning with Beethoven's *Fidelio*, was most readily applied to contexts related to the sphere of Eros, but which could also function as a symbol of the Absolute⁵³ and – the significance that best suits the symbolic layer of Tetmajer's text – a symbol of the final farewell. Although the latter semantic field was only associated consciously with E major by Johannes Brahms and Hugo Wolf in their later work⁵⁴, it may be tentatively ascribed also to Chopin, who wrote in that key his last nocturne (Op. 62 No. 2), enveloped in an aura of nostalgia that is perhaps exceptional even for him, and also – perhaps more significantly – his short variation for *Hexameron*, a peculiar homage to Bel-

⁵² Wertheim, like Żeleński and Lipski, repeats the last two words.

⁵³ See Eric McKee, "Tonacja E-dur a duchowość w instrumentalnej muzyce Beethovena" [The key of E major and spirituality in the instrumental music of Beethoven], tr. Roman Kowal, in *Beethoven 2. Studia i interpretacje* [Beethoven 2. Studies and interpretations], ed. Mieczysław Tomaszewski and Magdalena Chrenkoff, (Kraków, 2003).

⁵⁴ The key of E major was sometimes used with such a significance by Johannes Brahms (in the middle section, in passacaglia form, of the "mournful finale" of his *Fourth Symphony*, based on the theme of the chaconne from J. S. Bach's Cantata No. 150 "Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich"), and in the song *O Tod wie bitter bist Du*, the third number in the *Vier ernste Gesänge* op. 121, written with the presentiment of his approaching death. See Constantin Floros, *Johannes Brahms. "Frei, aber einsam". Ein Leben für eine poetische Musik* (Zürich and Hamburg, 1997). E major was seen in a similar way by Hugo Wolf, who assigned it to his last completed song, *Fühlt meine Seele* (the third of the *Drei Gedichte von Michelangelo*, written in March 1897, several days before his descent into madness).

lini.⁵⁵ In the barely eighteen-bar *Hexameron* variation (*Largo* tempo, *sotto voce* dynamic) – a composition that seems somehow detached (“merely” the Romantic poetic of the fragment or a metaphor of the premature death of the composer of *I puritani*?) – in a segment moved into G sharp major (bars 10–13)⁵⁶ one hears a discreet imitation of bells, triggering associations with the hieratic *Prelude in E major* from opus 28. The tonal plan of Wertheim’s song is as follows: E – f sharp – a – E – c sharp – e / E. From this configuration, it is clear that on this level too (the axial E major) the composer respects the earlier distinguished – thanks to the common melody of the voice – affinity between the first and fourth stanzas⁵⁷, at the same time rendering the remaining stanzas, inscribed in the topos of “music from afar”, in minor keys. Finally, the composer splendidly heightens the distinctiveness of the poetic structure by means of a recurring four-bar instrumental preface, the shape of which – the interval of a perfect fifth in the bass (drone) and a melody led in thirds and sixths – may be associated with Chopin’s early mazurkas.⁵⁸ (See Example 6 on page 244.) This preface appears again directly before the fourth and sixth stanzas and at the end of the whole song, as a kind of postlude. However, the shape of this introduction is not identical throughout. At the beginning of the song this periodic structure (two 2-bar motifs played *piano* and *dolce*) is based on something like a Schubertian contrast of mode (E major with a brief incursion into E minor), and before the fourth stanza it is “squeezed into” a two-bar formula in the key of C sharp major (*pianissimo*, with the bells that ring out after it in a contrasting minor mode and *forte* dynamic). (See Example 7 on page 245.) Before the sixth stanza – also in a two-bar form – this idea sounds *molto piano* in the key of E minor (auguring the main tonal plan of the final stanza), with the grace note *a sharp* preceding the

⁵⁵ For the sake of accuracy, let us add that E major was also connoted in Chopin with the affect of love, the best example of which is the youthful *Romanza* from the *Piano Concerto in E minor*, in which the principal cantilena idea is led after some time in parallel thirds – a clear nod to the vocal convention of *a due canti*, so popular in bel canto love duets.

⁵⁶ Danuta Jasińska has noted that this shift signifies – after taking account of enharmonic changes – a momentary concordance of the key plan of this variation with the tonal centre of gravity (A flat major) of the remaining parts of the cycle, written by other composers. See Danuta Jasińska, “Hexameron” – uwagi o formie wirtuozowskiej i “Wariacji E-dur” Chopina’ [Hexameron. Remarks on virtuosic form and Chopin’s Variation in E major], in *Muzyka w kontekście kultury* [Music in the context of culture], studies dedicated to Mieczysław Tomaszewski on his eightieth birthday, ed Małgorzata Janicka-Słysz, Teresa Malecka and Krzysztof Szwałgier (Kraków, 2001), 73.

⁵⁷ The key of E major will not be restored until the end of the final stanza – in the postlude (and not at once).

⁵⁸ This is only an association, and a superficial one at that (Wertheim’s song is in duple time): a similarity (drone!) may be indicated with the trio of the *Mazurka in F major*, Op. 68 No. 3 or the opening of the *Mazurka in E major*, Op. 6 No. 3.

drone *e-b* stirring associations with the depressing hurdy-gurdy “concerto” in the last, “self-thematic” part of Schubert’s *Winterreise* (*Der Leiermann*). Most interestingly of all, however, the final iteration of the preface, restored to its full four-bar version – that “postlude” – fulfils a different scenario than at the beginning: the key of E minor (*pianissimo*) with lowered II degree is timidly replaced (*pianissimo possibile*) by the closing, “farewell” E major.

Wertheim’s song contains one more important symbol. In the first stanza, between the words “fields by a stream” and “at nightfall his shadow”, there occurs a brief little passage, based on a harmony of fourths and tritones, emphasised by a *pianissimo* dynamic and *misterioso* expression, which brings irresistible associations with the leitmotif of the “augur of death” from Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and which occurs again in the last stanza. Here, played *pesante e piano* (cf. performance marking from the “death knell” stanza!), it precedes the words “listens to all”, but more important is the phrase it succeeds, namely “listens to heartbreak, pain undisguised, helpless, distraught”. The sense in introducing this reminiscence becomes quite clear in the context of Tetmajer’s poem and also in the context of Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung*, where the leitmotif in question reveals its powers of portent with particular intensity in the scene with the Norns that opens the last part of the Tetralogy, where the “thread of life” that was hitherto intricately spun breaks off. Shown in such a symbolic configuration, the shadow of Chopin’s soul as sketched by Wertheim can indeed – as Kazimierz Maciąg wished, identifying the hero of the poem with the figure of the musician himself – be regarded as the epiphenomenon of a soul belonging to a decadent who is powerless against fate.

Ryta Gnus (1881–?), the great-granddaughter of Ignacy Feliks Dobrzyński (1807–1867), a friend of Chopin’s from his studies at the conservatory, is the composer least known among all those discussed here.⁵⁹ Her music, with the exception of works for teaching purposes, has seemingly never enjoyed particular success, as is attested indirectly by the fact that during the inter-war years she published only minor works – at her own expense.⁶⁰ Gnus’s *Cień Chopina* is a through-composed song in the overall key of B minor. (With the exception of the fourth stanza, in A flat major, the minor mode will reign here supreme.) The composition opens with a seven-bar introduction, in which we first hear (bar 1, left-hand part) the “rhythmic leitmotif” that will be of key importance to the whole song and that may be deemed a rhythmic reminiscence of the mournful chaconne from Beethoven’s *Seventh Symphony in A*

⁵⁹ Today, Gnus is mentioned chiefly in publications devoted to the history of music teaching in Poland.

⁶⁰ *Cień Chopina*, together with the song *Odpuścić* [To rest] (also to words by Tetmajer) was published in Warsaw in 1926 and dedicated to A. Wojciechowska; it was lithographed by the firm of “J. F. Konarzewski & J. Mękowski”.

*major*⁶¹ (see Example 8 on page 246). This leitmotif will be presented in all its glory in the first stanza, and given that this rhythmic pattern will be subsequently reiterated in several further parts of the song, it would perhaps not be an abuse to call it a motif of death.

The whole of Gnus's song adheres to the lowest dynamic registers. Of the eighty-one bars, only three, from the "funeral" stanza (the words "and mourning cries"), reach the level of *forte*; otherwise, the performers are confined to the range of *pianissimo* – *mezzo piano*, occasionally descending to the level of *ppp*. Gnus did not attempt to differentiate the narrative plans of the poem (as did Wertheim), but followed each stanza individually, adhering at times to rather trite, conventional illustration (the fourth stanza being an exception). To the "murmuring" segment of the second stanza (the same will also apply to the third), she assigns tremolandos in the piano, before introducing – when the violins and basses are mentioned – a conventional drone, which in the context of the previous songs begins to take on the status of the most resonant "echo" of Chopin's music. The fourth stanza seems just as conventional. Although it opens with a reminder of the "death motif", this is followed by an imitation of bells, triggering textural associations with the *Marche funèbre* from Chopin's *B flat minor Sonata* – associations that are further justified by the tonal plan (oscillating around B flat minor, suspended – after a passage evoking the idea of the music of the spheres – on the tonal fulcrum of *e flat*). The last stanza, preceded by a one-bar rhythmic "death motif" and restoring the opening key of B minor, is based on augmented gestures from the first stanza, before reprising, in a two-bar instrumental postlude, the "funeral knell chords" from the fifth stanza, leaving not a morsel of space for the listener's imagination. (See Example 9 on page 247.)

The songs discussed thus far – despite their varying degree of originality and artistic value – have represented a quite conventional manifestation of compositional activity. Clearly distinguished against this background – although not necessarily in terms of its artistic qualities – is the never published, and apparently never performed, *Cień Chopina*, Op. 77 (a "fantasy for piano and solo voice [baritone] with orchestral accompaniment to words by Tetmajer") by Witold Friemann (1889–1977).⁶² This is a work of a rather

⁶¹ Although we do not have an ostinato formula here: the pattern of crotchet – two quavers – two crotchets is disturbed in every third bar.

⁶² Friemann, a pupil of Zygmunt Noskowski and Aleksander Michałowski in Warsaw and of Max Reger and Joseph Pembaur junior in Leipzig, of a similar age to Young Poland composers, was indeed one of the most conservative composers of his times, clinging tightly in his song output – cultivated for almost seventy years – to the model of Romantic song. See Anna Nowak, 'W tradycji romantycznej. O lirycie pieśniowej Witolda Friemanna' [In the Romantic tradition. On the lyric songs of Witold Friemann], in *Muzyka w kontekście kultury*, 275–280.

complicated genesis. As is indicated by a note placed on the title page of the autograph⁶³, a piano sketch of the work was made in 1913–14 in Iwankowce, Podolia⁶⁴, whilst its instrumentation was completed much later: on 25 August 1937 in Białystok.⁶⁵ The whole work with Tetmajer's text was supposedly elaborated in 1948, although – as should be emphasised – Tetmajer's title apparently featured already in his original version.⁶⁶ Friemann's *Cień Chopina*, scored for the standard symphonic forces of the beginning of the twentieth century⁶⁷, falls into two essentially equal parts: a 68-bar virtuoso instrumental introduction and a 45-bar "song-cantata" part. Leaving aside the Brahmsian orchestra, the poetic of the work as a whole is rooted in the world of the romanticism of the first half of the nineteenth century, as is particularly evident from the piano texture, which stirs associations with the opening phase, preceding the famous "recitative", of the *Larghetto* from Chopin's *F minor Piano Concerto*⁶⁸ and also with "brilliant"-style Chopinian virtuosity. The instrumental section is divided into several short segments of homogeneous material but different key: E major (opening), F major (No. 5), G flat ma-

⁶³ Both its manuscript and a microfilm copy are held in the Biblioteka Narodowa in Warsaw, catalogue number BN Mus. 514 (mf. 44561); the autograph contains seventeen sheets, written on both sides, measuring 36 x 27 cm, with a piano reduction of the score notated simultaneously on the bottom two staves on each page.

⁶⁴ The original version of *Cień Chopina* was written close to time of Friemann's *First Piano Concerto* (1910–1913), itself composed under the guidance of Max Reger. The autograph of this score, containing a note in Reger's hand on the last page, like other Friemann manuscripts, is held in the Biblioteka Narodowa in Warsaw (catalogue number BN Mus. 519 Cim; mf. 45015).

⁶⁵ In her abridged catalogue of Friemann's compositions, Elżbieta Szczepańska-Malinowska writes that in 1937 there existed a "fantasy for piano and orchestra" under the title *Cień Chopina*, whilst supposedly written in 1949 was *Cień Chopina for piano, baritone and orchestra to words by Przerwa-Tetmajer*. In reality, of course, these are two versions of the same composition. Cf. Elżbieta Szczepańska-Malinowska, 'Friemann Witold', in Elżbieta Dziębowska (ed.), *Encyklopedia Muzyczna PWM. Część Biograficzna* [PWM Encyclopaedia of Music. Biographical part], vol. efg (Kraków, 1987), 164.

⁶⁶ Incidentally, Tomaszewski's classification of this work as a cantata composition should be regarded as a misunderstanding, doubtless resulting in part from the confusion surrounding the complicated genesis of this composition. Cf. Tomaszewski, *Chopin*, 150. The complex process of this work's composition is attested by the fact that the apparent analogy between Friemann's "fantasy" and Beethoven's *Fantasy* for choir, piano and orchestra, Op. 80 or the Finale of Busoni's *Piano Concerto* is in fact unjustified.

⁶⁷ 3 flutes (including piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, timpani, tam-tam, string quintet; plus the two solo parts, of course – piano and baritone.

⁶⁸ The piano texture of *Cień Chopina* is also reminiscent of the texture of Friemann's one-movement *Second Piano Concerto*, completed in 1931, in Katowice, but sketched in 1914–1920. See Witold Friemann, *II Koncert fortepianowy*, Op. 165, BN Mus. 2062 (mf. 45828).

for (six bars after No. 7), B major (Nos. 10–13). A more detailed characterisation of this section, from the perspective adopted in the present sketch, would appear to be largely superfluous: the section as a whole forms a quite effective “germ” of a piano concerto, and only the segment in B major, beginning with number 11, allows us to look at this work from a perspective other than the absolute. In that particular segment, the composer introduces the telling term *melancolico*. This falls on arpeggios sustained in the left-hand part, which the composer allows to sound at greater length, perhaps evoking even a short-lived illusion of a distant sound or echo (overlapping with these effects are virtuosic, thickly chromaticised semiquaver figurations).⁶⁹

In number 14, when the key of B major suddenly comes into power, the vocal part enters, although its first, “pastoral” sentence at first fails to make any particular impression on the orchestra part. A similar situation where the composer seems unreceptive to the impulses sent by the poetical text occurs in subsequent stanzas: the second (No. 16, the change of key to G flat major), third (No. 17, from which the key of E major returns for good) and also the fourth (from No. 19).⁷⁰ A more distinctive trace of verbal-musical interdependence does not occur until the penultimate stanza (No. 21), and it is not difficult to guess that Friemann illustrates there the sound of funeral bells. He does this without the participation of the piano part, availing himself solely of the rather unsophisticated means offered by the forces of the symphony orchestra. On the stave hitherto assigned to the part of the timpani, the composer notates nine notes of a tam-tam – the conventional augur of death in the modern symphony orchestra.⁷¹ (See Example 10 on pages 248–249.) More interesting from the “epiphenomenal” perspective is the ending of the work, which may in some sense persuade one to defend the conception of this peculiar score. The words “listens to all that his own soul comprised / when he still walked” bring a radical change of texture; the figurations vanish, and for the last nine bars the composer reinforces the tonic of the work, “casting” long-sounding, elaborate arpeggios (an echo effect that might also be associated with swinging bells), much more elaborate than in the *melancolico* passage that constitutes the textural prototype of this segment, over the whole com-

⁶⁹ Similarly in a further fragment (No. 12).

⁷⁰ As already mentioned, in this stanza, where the water nymph is evoked, the composer sets the greatest technical demands on the soloist (figurations in both hands). So it is difficult to discern any illustrative elements here, as well, except perhaps for the performance marking placed at the beginning: *In tempo non troppo, delicato*.

⁷¹ Judging by the character of the script, one may cautiously advance the hypothesis that the tam-tam was not added until 1948, together with the part of the voice. If that is the case, it would explain how the music so frequently fails to tally with the sense of the poetic text (this would be the third and final version of *Cień Chopina* – an occasional piece composed ad hoc).

pass. The melancholy of transience (perhaps Friemann's E major could also be interpreted – as with Wertheim – in terms of a key of farewell?)⁷² is underscored by the low dynamic level (*pp*), with muted brass. (See Example 11 on page 250.)

5. An attempted summary

The five compositional interpretations of *Cień Chopina* discussed here can be divided into three categories. In the first, which is characterised by a funereal reading of Tetmajer's text, one should place the compositions by Żeleński and Gnus; in the second, in which the mournful accents, despite an awareness of the inexorable approach of death, are ultimately vanquished (the role of the Brahmsian-Wolfian tradition of the "farewell E major", perhaps even reaching back to the music of Chopin), one should include the works by Wertheim and Friemann. Finally, a separate category belongs to the composition by Lipski, who transformed Tetmajer's poem into a pastoral tableau, albeit not entirely free from the shadow of the melancholy which characterises Antoine Watteau's *Voyage to Cythera*.

There are at least three common features to be found in all the works by the five composers. Firstly, the fact that the work closes in the lowest possible dynamic registers. The composers are in complete agreement that the mood of the poem, and of its closing images in particular, requires silence as the element that will finally put an end to Tetmajer's "realm of epiphenomena". And that realm is essentially "threatened" in all the works concordantly: solely at the point where the poet mentions the funeral bells (the second common feature). So despite certain differences (and in Friemann's case, also a different medium), the bells are given a stereotypical interpretation, without evoking the effect of musical tautology. The third feature common to all five works might appear rather surprising: none of the composers even attempts to illustrate the music of the spheres that is connected with the bells, as is so splendidly sensed, for example, by Jellenta. This is surprising in that this motif was well known to Polish creative artists of that period, to mention but Karłowicz (*Pieśń o wszechbycie* [Song of Eternal Being] from the *Odwieczne pieśni* [Eternal Songs]) and Szymanowski (*Third Symphony* ("Song of the Night")), and also to foreign composers (Schönberg's oratorio *Jakobsleiter*).⁷³

⁷² In that case, Friemann would belong to those composers who were conscious of the manifold ways in which E major functioned symbolically. In his song *Cudne oczy* [Wondrous eyes] to words by Tetmajer, composed in March 1918, which during the inter-war years in Poland became a "hit" well beyond the domain of "high" musical culture, the key of E major functions, of course, as a musical indicator of the erotic.

⁷³ These three works – the Karłowicz, Szymanowski and Schönberg – are linked by the symbolism of the harmonic series.

It only remains to consider the most important question of the understanding of Tetmajer's intentions – especially those relating to his “epiphenomenal” perception of reality. It might not be a glaring oversimplification if we were to regard the compositions by Żeleński, Gnus, Wertheim and Friemann as deficient and – despite the quite ingenious symbolism and even close adherence to the narrative structure of the poem (Wertheim) that they occasionally display – defective. The feature most characteristic of these four composers is their use of “stylistic epiphenomena” of Chopin's music, which rarely come “dangerously” close to particular compositions by the “singer of *Weltschmerz*” (e.g. Żeleński's textural allusions to the *Waltz in A minor* or Gnus's to the *Marche funèbre*)⁷⁴, but most often oscillate around his early mazurka idiom (Chopinian drones with Żeleński, Wertheim and Gnus), or else – exceptionally – around the *style brillant* (Friemann). All four composers appear to read Tetmajer's lyric as if – as the title suggests – the shadow was a reflection (or the soul) of Chopin himself.

So it would seem that only Stanisław Lipski got to the heart of the poem in his quite eccentric – at first glance – interpretation. He was the only one – whilst admittedly disregarding the narrative subtleties of Tetmajer's poem – to create an epiphenomenon of the epiphenomenon of Chopin's music, and so a double deformation. With Lipski, Chopin's shadow is a real Heideggerian trace of a trace, a Tetmajerian shadow of a shadow and echo of an echo, a metaphor that chimes with the worldview of the author of *Anioł śmierci* [Angel of death]. Chopin's shadow according to Lipski is “merely” the reflection of a shadow, the reverberation of a shadow, an entity with a deformed form, typical of modernism, such as we recall, for example, from Giorgio de Chirico's *Melancholy and Mystery of a Street* (a “metaphysical painting” on which the shadows do not fall in accordance with the natural “logic” of the refraction of the sun's rays)⁷⁵, but which was also well known to Young Poland culture – suffice it to mention the “Bible” of the Polish decadent novel, Wacław Berent's *Próchno* [Rotten wood] (here, the oft-repeated motif of the echo is frequently answered directly by its acoustic-semantic deformations)⁷⁶, and in the musical domain, Karol Szymanowski's *King Roger*, where in Act III the

⁷⁴ I stress the word “dangerously” since if a fragment of Chopin's music was quoted – in the context of Tetmajer's poem – we would speak not of the composer's shadow, but of his own, “non-epiphenomenal”, embodiment.

⁷⁵ See Stoichita, *Krótką historia*, 139–143.

⁷⁶ On this subject, see Tomasz Swoboda's most inspiring remarks in *Refren i echo* [Refrain and echo], in *To jeszcze nie koniec? Doświadczenie czasu w powieściach o dekadentach* [Is it not finished yet? The experiencing of time in novels about decadents] (Gdańsk, 2008).

king's "animated echo" – the voice of the bacchante Roxana – reacts to his call with its own words, utterly independent of the "source object"⁷⁷.

So let us repeat once again, like an echo: Lipski processed not the idiom of Chopin's works, but the tradition of the late Classical pastoral⁷⁸, to which the "real" Chopin, brought up on the Viennese Classics and rather partial to the "idyllic-angelic tone" of Bach, must have listened with rapt attention. Inevitably, paying no heed to the funereal context of Tetmajer's poem⁷⁹, the Cracow composer created a song-metaphor that accurately captured the essence of the other-worldly existence of such an ontically opaque lyrical subject: of the shadow listening to "all that his own soul comprised when he still walked"...

Translated by John Comber

⁷⁷ E.g. Szymanowski in his youth read *Próchno* [Rotten wood] with flushed cheeks, and it is from this novel that he took the text of the sonnet *Łabędź* [Swan], which in 1904 he set to music virtually at the same time as Grzegorz Fitelberg.

⁷⁸ Of course, the pastoral is just one of the many conceivable traditions of late classicism that Lipski chose, most probably prompted by the first stanza of Tetmajer's poem.

⁷⁹ Although the composer does illustrate the sounds of bells, they do not sound so portentous as in the works by the other composers.

Examples

GRANDE VALSE BRILLANTE
Op. 34 Nr 2
FRYDERYK CHOPIN

Lento

Example 1. Chopin, *Grande Valse Brillante* op. 34 No. 2, bars 1-8

Pani Ludwice Marek-Onyszkiewiczowej.
CIEŃ CHOPINA.
Słowa Kazimierza Tetmajera. Muzyka W. Żeleńskiego.
Andantino.

ŚPIEW.

FORTEPIAN.

Na wiej - skie ga - je, na kwie - tne sa - dy, Na

Example 2. Żeleński, *Chopin's Shadow*, bars 1-14

6

Tempo I.

p

poco a poco cresc.

Słu - cha je - cza - cych dzwo - nów po -

p

poco piu lento e espress.

grze - bnych, ich wiel - kich i kań, I roz - pły - nię - tych

poco piu lento

kę - dys pod - nie - bnych Gwiazd błę - dnych drgań.

poco piu mosso

Tempo I.

Słu - cha jak ser - ca wbo - lu się kru -

cresc. poco a poco

141

Example 3. Żeleński, *Chopin's Shadow*, bars 103-129

2

Wandzie Hendrichównie.

Cień Chopina.
Chopin's Schatten.

Słowa Kazimierza Tetmajera.
Deutsch von Margarete Pick.

St. Lipski, Op. 9. Nr. 1.

Andante pastorale.

CANTO.

PIANO.

Nawiej-skie ga - je, nakwie-tne sa-dy, Na po - la hen, — I - dzie no - ca - mi
Dor - jes wie-sen, auf Blü-ten-mat-ten, Der Fel-der Saum. — Wan - delt nachts sein

cien je - go bla - dy. Ci - chy, jak sen. — Słu-cha, jak szu - mia, nad
blei - cher Schat-ten, Still wie ein Traum. — Lau-schet am Flus - se der

p *pp* *p* *murmurando*

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Example 4. Lipski, *Chopin's Shadow*, bars 1-13

5

Poco maestoso.
a tempo

Stu - cha ję - cza - cych dzwo - nów po - grze - bnych, Ich
Ho - ret die wim - mern - den To - len - glo - eken,

a tempo
molto rit.
marcato la melodia quasi campana
8va bassa

wiel - kich lkań, I roz - ply - nie - tych
Kla - gen und Wei - nen, Sie - het am Him - mel der

ke - dys pod - nieb - nych Gwiazd - błąd - nych drgań.
trä - gen - den Ster - ne Leuch - ten und Schei - nen.

rit.

Tempo I

Ł. P. Skł. 243

Example 5. Lipski, *Chopin's Shadow*, bars 39-51

248888

43251 III

Cień Chopina.
(K. Tetzmajer)

Juljusz Wertheim.

Moderato.

p e dolce
con Ped.

pp

p e legato

Na wiej - skie

ga - je, na kwiet - ne sa - dy,

rit. *Un poco più mosso, misterioso* *p molto allargando*

Na po - la hen, I - dzie no - ca - mi cień je - go

legg. e rit. *pp e misterioso*

bla - dy, Ci - chy, jak sen.

Tempo I.

Warszawa, Gebethner & Wolff

G. 2482 W.

69 x 102

ALL. G. WITANOWSKI, Drukarnia

Example 6. Wertheim, *Chopin's Shadow*, bars 1-15

6

p *ten.* *molto espress.* *rall.*

Ru-sał-ka pa-trzy nań bla-do-li-ca Z przepast-nych wód.

meno piano *rall.*

Andante. *f Maestoso.*

Słu-cha je-czą-cych dzwo-nów po-grzeb-nych,

pp *non piano e pesante*

Ich wiel-kich tkań, I roz-pły-nię-tych

p *ten.* *legato*

molto piano

kę-dyś, podniebnych Gwiazd błędnych drgań...

allargando *p* *pp e molto rit.*

G. 2927 W.

Example 7. Wertheim, *Chopin's Shadow*, bars 45-57

2

CIEŃ CHOPINA.

Poświęcone
Pani A. Wojciechowskiej.

Tekst K. Tetmajera.

Muzyka Ryty Gnus.

Andante.

ŚPIEW.

PIANO.

pp *ppp*

Na wiejskie ga-je, Na kwietne sa-dy Na po-la hen, I-dzie no-ca-mi Cień je-go bla-dy,

Ci-chy jak sen. Słu-cha, jak szu-mią Nad rze-ką la-sy,

Andantino mosso. *cresc.*

O - wi - te wmgły Jak brzęczą skrzypce, Jak hu-czą ba-sy

Andantino mosso. *cresc.*

ppp *pp*

Wszelkie prawa autorskie zastrzeżone.

R. 2 G.

Example 8. Gnus, *Chopin's Shadow*, bars 1-22

Recitativo a piacere.

f

Po - my - ślę, że się brzo - zy Roz - pła - ka ły wko - ło

p *piu lento*

Nad złą do - lą mych dro - gich,

f

molto piu lento

Nad złą do - lą mo - ją.

p *piu lento*

f *dim.*

R. 2 G.

Lit. J. F. Konarzewski i J. Mękowski w Warszawie.

Example 9. Gnus, *Chopin's Shadow*, bars 72-81

Handwritten musical score for rehearsal number 21. The score is written on multiple staves, including staves for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fag.), Bassoon (C-Fag.), Bassoon (Bassoon), Horn (Hr.), Trumpet (Tromp.), Trombone (Tromb.), Tuba (Tuba), Euphonium (Euph.), and Double Bass (D.B.). The score includes various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *cresc.*, *f*, and *p*. A circled rehearsal number "21" is visible at the top center of the page. The page number "248" is in the top left corner, and the name "Marcin Gmys" is in the top right corner. The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style.

Example 10. Friemann, *Chopin's Shadow*, rehearsal number 21

The image shows a handwritten musical score for rehearsal numbers 21 and 22 of the piece 'Chopin's Shadow' by Friemann. The score is written on multiple staves, with the rehearsal number 22 circled in the top left and middle of the page. The score includes parts for various instruments, including strings, woodwinds, and percussion. The notation is dense and includes many musical symbols, such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style, typical of a composer's draft or a conductor's score.

Example 10. Friemann, *Chopin's Shadow*, rehearsal number 21-22

Handwritten musical score for rehearsal number 24. The score is written on multiple staves, with the following instruments listed on the left:

- Fl (Flute)
- Ob (Oboe)
- Cl (Clarinet)
- Fag (Bassoon)
- C-fag (Contrabassoon)
- Cor (Cor Anglais)
- Tr (Trumpet)
- Tromb (Trombone)
- Timp (Timpani)
- Perc (Percussion)
- Celli (Celli)
- Bassi (Bassi)
- Wgngs (Wings)
- Pf (Piano)

The score includes various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *ppp* (pianississimo). The rehearsal number 24 is circled in the top left corner. The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style.

Example 11. Friemann, *Chopin's Shadow*, rehearsal number 24