

Chopin – Chants Polonais (1989)

Written by bluesever

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Chopin - Chants Polonais op. 74

- 01 - *Zyczenie* (1:54)
- 02 - *Wiosna* (2:35)
- 03 - *Smutna Rzeka* (3:33)
- 04 - *Hulanka* (2:37)
- 05 - *Gdzie Lubi* (1:16)
- 06 - *Precz z moich oczu* (3:54)
- 07 - *Posel* (2:39)
- 08 - *Sliczny Chlopiec* (2:38)
- 09 - *Melodia* (2:32)
- 10 - *Wojak* (2:22)
- 11 - *Dwojaki Koniec* (2:02)
- 12 - *Moja Pieszczotka* (2:16)
- 13 - *Nie ma czego trzeba* (5:31)
- 14 - *Pierscien* (1:51)
- 15 - *Narzeczony* (2:36)
- 16 - *Piosnka Litewska* (2:57)
- 17 - *Leci Liscie z drzeva* (5:48)
- 18 - *Czary* (1:56)
- 19 - *Dumka* (1:39)

Liszt - Transcriptions de Chants Polonais

- 20. *Zyczenie* (3:37)
- 21. *Wiosna* (2:31)
- 22. *Pierscien* (3:08)
- 23. *Hulanka* (1:55)
- 24. *Moja Pieszczotka* (3:57)
- 25. *Wojak* (1:26)

Leyla Gencer
Nikita Magaloff

Chopin's Polish Melodies, op. 74 (1828-45), were not published in his lifetime, and have remained among his least popular works, despite their high quality. Liszt, the inveterate transcriber, took six of the seventeen songs comprising the set and fashioned quite effective versions for solo piano. They are among his more popular pieces. Most are very short, lasting from a minute-and-a-half to about five minutes, the six together totaling only about a quarter-hour. Liszt dedicated the set to Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittengenstein, at the time his betrothed. The marriage never took place, however.

The first of the pieces is *Mädchens Wunsch* (The Maiden's Wish). It features a mazurka-rhythm and a melody that is both singable and, at least as Liszt has transcribed it, eminently suited to the piano. (It should be mentioned that the Chopin songs in the Polish Melodies collection are scored for piano accompaniment.) The subject matter of the original song text deals with love, beauty and flirtation, and the music is lively and full of high spirits. The second item is *Frühling* (Spring), which features a beautiful melody rather more autumnal than vernal. The music actually depicts a lament over the death of a loved one by someone strolling through a valley, reminded by its beauties of the deceased. The repetitive nature of the piece and its gloomy atmosphere impart a touching loneliness to the mood.

Das Ringlein (The Ring) features a brighter atmosphere, though there is a wistful and yearning quality about the melody. The text of the original song tells of a young man who notices the ring he had given to his erstwhile betrothed, now married to another man, still on her finger. Though its subject matter is heartrending the music never becomes overwrought, the disappointments always sounding bearable. *Bacchanal* (Merrymaking) is a jovial piece, part-love song, part-drinking song. Liszt's writing is colorful as the jaunty theme comes to life with glissando effects and subtle dynamics.

Meine Freuden again features a mazurka-rhythm and its subject is the irresistible beauty of a woman and her enamored lover. He is so captivated by her looks and charm, that he embraces and kisses her. The music is beautiful and full of passionate outpourings, Liszt's writing perfectly capturing the mood of love and infatuation in its swelling of emotions as the piece progresses. This is the longest of the six transcriptions in the set and among the most compelling. The final entry, *Die Heimkehr* (Homeward), is a dramatic short piece, whose original song text tells of a man riding on horseback through snow-covered terrain expecting to meet his lover, but unaware she is dead, awaiting him in her casket. The music is furious, full of anxiety and darkness, and here so perfectly suited to the piano, actually sounding as much like a creation by Liszt as by Chopin. ---Robert Cummings, Rovi

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