

**CHOPIN THE COMPOSER; HIS
STRUCTURAL ART
AND ITS INFLUENCE ON
CONTEMPORANEOUS MUSIC**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649006601

Chopin the composer; his structural art and its influence on contemporaneous music by Edgar Stillman Kelley

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EDGAR STILLMAN KELLEY

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CHOPIN
THE COMPOSER

HIS STRUCTURAL ART AND
ITS INFLUENCE ON CONTEM-
PORANEOUS MUSIC

BY

EDGAR STILLMAN KELLEY

G. SCHIRMER
NEW YORK AND BOSTON

1911

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TO MY FRIEND
NAPOLEON LEDOCHOWSKI

INTRODUCTORY COMMENT

So fierce was once the conflict between the classical and romantic schools of art and literature, that the former was popularly regarded as exclusively concerned with manner and form; the latter, as dogmatically devoted to the subject-matter regardless of structural laws. In the light of subsequent research and in the calm of impartiality we find that the truly great men of the classical school possessed romantic qualities, while the masters of romanticism were keenly sensitive to the essentials of form.

In reviewing the merits of a work of art there is such a strong temptation to fall into a recounting of one's prejudices or rehearsing one's preferences that a recent writer claims that criticism is frequently merely a criticism of the opinions of others, rather than an original estimate of a given phenomenon.

Indeed, Anatole France argues that all criticism must be subjective, and the candid man can only say, "I will now talk to you about myself with reference to Shakespeare, Pascal, Voltaire, etc." If we accept this dictum, we must despair of attaining aught else than a mere personal impression of a given work. Possibly the nearest approach to a fixed criterion, or standard of objective criticism, might be obtained by means of a species of spiritual triangulation; a sort of soul-survey from different altitudes.

Various brilliant literary productions dealing with Poland's composer from a biographical, pianistic or æsthetic standpoint, have graced the tables of the music-loving world from time to time. The apology for the appearance of a treatise like the present may be found in the fact that it will not be devoted to the expression of opinions concerning the import

of certain compositions and their interpretation, but rather to the discussion of that which admits of little or no dispute—the musical structure. It is to be hoped that this effort to scrutinize the subject from a point of view sufficiently divergent from the traditional, will render it of some assistance in making the trigonometrical measurement of the master's accomplishments.

Some years ago the author projected a series of essays, the object of which was to demonstrate that the music termed "romantic," as well as that which we call "classical," had its scientific justification. Among these essays may be mentioned "Classical Methods in Wagner's Music," "Tschaikowsky as a Symphonist," "Recent Developments in Musical Theory," and Sections I, XI, XIV and XV of the present work, which were published from time to time in the *Musical Courier*. The reception accorded these advance numbers of "Chopin the Composer" was such as to engender a belief that the remaining sections might also prove of interest.*

The suggestion might be made that the general reader apply himself to the beginnings and conclusions of the various sections, omitting all that appertains to the illustrations. By so doing he can rapidly seize the outline of the topics under consideration.

The writer wishes to thank the authorities of The Western College for providing him with the leisure and quiet requisite for the elaboration of the present work and making it possible for him to undertake other long-cherished projects.

He would also express his indebtedness to the Editor of "The Musical Observer" for the rare portrait of Chopin, which forms the frontispiece of the book.

*Much of this material has been remodelled from lectures delivered during several seasons at Albany (State University Extension), also from others prepared for Columbia and Yale Universities.