

Frédéric Chopin and the organ

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The distinguished organist, scholar and author outlines some little-known aspects of the work of the great composer, universally known for his piano music, and the organ, an instrument he played as the opportunity arose.

Prologue

19th-century Paris was a place where all important musicians wanted to perform, to be performed, to be seen and noticed. As we know, the Parisian organ world – thanks to Aristide Cavaillé-Coll's instruments and symphonic-school organ performers – kept this trend perfectly. This pattern also became a 20-year-old Chopin, who arrived in the city in 1830.

This article – written for the 170th anniversary of Chopin's death – is a collection of reflections from contemporary walks a. along the streets of Warsaw, b. around the church at the village Obory (Polish lands) and c. around the church of Notre-Dame-du-Mont, Marseille, France. There are many studies on this great artist, but our walks will concern organ matters only – both historical and contemporary ones. For us, organ performers and lovers, Chopin is an unusual inspiration. However it is worth stimulating our imagination by looking for little-known and interesting facts.

Chopin and the organ

We know without any doubt, that organ was generally an unfamiliar instrument for Chopin. He did not have any artistic interest in it, which can be explained by two facts. Firstly, organs of that time were almost certainly unable to realise the performance ideals (subtle dynamic changes, moodiness, intimacy) that Chopin was interested in. Secondly, he never showed any interest in religious life; even on his deathbed, he did not want to accept the last ministry of a friendly priest, Aleksander Jełowicki.¹

We can however find several confirmed facts about Chopin's interest in and contact with the organ. We know of his regular performances during obli-

tory masses for Warsaw Lyceum pupils and Warsaw University students in the church of the Nuns of Visitation at Krakowskie Przedmieście street. Secondly, he visited the organ loft at the church in small village Obory, where he spent some Summer holidays as a teenager. And thirdly, he certainly performed on the organ during a funeral in Marseilles. Sometimes, Chopin wrote about the organ in his letters, but it was always in metaphor. He said to one of his friends, when he realised that the Tsarist army had attacked the Polish Uprising, November, 1830 (Poland was not on the European map from 1792 until 1918): "My public work [as a concert pianist] is already finished. You have a small church in your village. Please, give me just some bread and I will play on the organ hymns to Mary, Holy Queen of Poland, until the end of my life."² But he did not fulfil this forecast and – as we known – he was artistically reborn for the second time in Paris.

Let's begin the trip.

Heart, Holy Cross Basilica, Warsaw

We start our walk on one of the oldest (and today) main touristic areas of Warsaw, Krakowskie Przedmieście street, which was the King's road from the main Royal Palace (the old town) to the Łazienki Palace, where the Summer royal residence was located. On the right, there is the Warsaw University; on the left we see Czapski Palace (head-

quarters of the Academy of Fine Arts today) and Holy Cross Basilica.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). According to the composer's wish, after his death, the heart was closed in a jar filled with alcohol (spirit or cognac), and brought by his sister, Ludwika Jedrzejewiczowa, under her clothes to Warsaw – in secret from the tsarist authorities. Ludwika laid the precious shipment in their parish church of Holy Cross – very close to their place of living. The priests were not delighted with the gift, because of the relationship between Chopin and George Sand. First, the heart was stored in the sacristy, then in the



The epitaph and the place of rest of Chopin's heart at the Holy Cross Basilica, Warsaw.



The Holy Cross Basilica and Krakowskie Przedmieście street, 18th century.



The Holy Cross Basilica and The Czapski Palace (right above the horse-drawn carriage) on the photograph by Konrad Brandel, ca. 1868-1881.

Source: Mazowiecka Biblioteka Cyfrowa.

catacombs. Only after 30 years was it honoured as a national relic and transferred to the upper church. Chopin's heart was located in a special recess on the first pillar of the church. Leonardo Marconi (1835-1899) and Andrzej Pruszyński designed the epitaph, which is made in Carrara marble, maintained as a Renaissance-Baroque (with eclectic elements) tombstone. In the culmination of the epitaph there is a beautifully carved bust of Chopin, and in the lower part a bas-relief with musical motifs with the image of a lyre, musical notebook, laurel twigs and Polish field poppies. A separate, modest plaque at the bottom closes the niche with the heart hidden in a double tin. Costs were covered by the income from a festive concert specially organised for this purpose by the Music Society in Warsaw at the initiative of its president, Władysław Zeleniński (1837-1921, Polish composer and organist). On January 12, 1945, the Nazis, on leaving Warsaw, took out the tin with the heart. However, they gave it to Bishop Szlagowski in Milanówek village, a few kilometres from Warsaw and it was returned safely to Warsaw, on October 17, 1945, to its previous position. Since then, it rests there calmly to this day.

The monumental Baroque Basilica of

the Holy Cross has two high towers which can be seen over the Krakowskie Przedmieście street. Although the church is not a cathedral, events surpassing its significance have taken place and continue to take place within it. It also played a part in many historical upheavals. In this church – besides Chopin's heart – there is also located the heart of Władysław Stanisław Reymont (1867-1925, the Polish writer) as well the ashes of aristocrats and politicians. The funeral services of Stanisław Moniuszko (1819-1872, the father of Polish national opera), Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937, composer and pianist), Marian Sawa (1937-2005, composer and organist) and many others Polish musicians occurred here.

During Chopin's lifetime the Holy Cross church had just two small organs. The first, built by rev. Michał Walther and Wawrzyniec Zadorski before 1731, 19/1M+P, (it was sold in 1850) was located at the main organ loft and the second organ was located in the Mary chapel (burnt down during the Warsaw Uprising, 1944).³ To this day, neither of these instruments has remained.

The present beautiful romantic organ – located very close to Chopin's heart on the loft above the main entrance – was built by "Cäcilia, Österreichische Orgel-

bau AG" from Salzburg, in 1926. It has 58 stops, 3M+P, pneumatic key and stop actions. Some changes and small rebuilds were made after the World War II, but the instrument is freshly renovated and now back to the fully original shape. Additional equipment: Reeds off, Pedal Automat, Crescendo, Swell III, 2 free combinations, Octaves off (Super & Sub), Piano, Mzforte, Forte, Tutti.

School worships, St. Joseph's Care church, Warsaw

Leaving the Holy Cross Basilica, where Chopin's heart finalised its earthly journey, we are approaching on the left the places where Frédéric spent the first years of his life: the Warsaw University campus (1817-1827) and the Czapski Palace (1827-1830). In both locations, Chopin's parents ran boarding houses for male students and here raised young Frédéric. On both locations we can find commemorative plaques. From September 1823 to 1826, he attended the Warsaw Lyceum, where – during the first year only – he received music lessons from organist and pianist Wilhelm Würfel (1790-1832).

We are going five minutes to the North and – on the right – approaching the Baroque-Rococo style Saint Joseph's Care church, which was and still is held

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The Cäcilia organ and the Chopin's heart epitaph (on the right), at the Holy Cross Basilica, Warsaw.

by Nuns of the Visitation. Here, young Chopin – replacing the organist – played regularly during obligatory masses for Warsaw Lyceum pupils and for Warsaw

University students. A special plaque, commemorating these performances, is above the left-side door to the church. During these services he met frequently

his first love, Konstancja Gładkowska (1810-1889), who sang during the services. Chopin's accompaniment often turned into endless improvisations – occasionally, the young boy forgot to such a degree that the churchwarden had to ask him to end the performances according to services' rules.

The Warsaw convent of the Sisters of the Visitation is the oldest house of the order in Poland. It was founded by the Parisian monastery with the help of the monasteries of Lyon-Bellecour and Troyes. Twelve nuns with superior Maria Catherine de Glétain came to Warsaw in the Summer of 1654 at the request of



The Cäcilia organ at the Holy Cross Basilica, Warsaw.



Exterior, the Holy Cross Basilica, Warsaw.



The Cäcilia organ and the Chopin's heart epitaph (on the right), at the Holy Cross Basilica, Warsaw.



The house where Chopin lived and composed between 1817-1827. One of the buildings at the Warsaw University campus.



The view from the gate of the Warsaw University on the Czapski Palace, where Chopin lived and composed between 1827-1830

Queen Ludwika Maria Gonzaga de Nevers (1611-1667), wife of the Polish king Jan II Kazimierz Waza (1609-1672). In 1727, the construction of the present church began. Baroque and Rococo – these two stylish features – can be clearly distinguished in it.

The organ played here by Chopin was very small; it had just 5 stops located on one keyboard (Bourdon 16', Flet kryty 8', Dubeltflet 8', Spitsflet 4') and a pedalboard (Pryncypał Bass 16', Subbas 16'); it had mechanical stop and key actions. We know that an Italian architect Henryk Marconi (1792-1863), during the church restoration in 1847, redesigned also the organ loft and organ case. The aesthetic effect of these works was the

white organ case with golden elements. In 1868, the organ was heavily worn and was slightly repaired. The works were probably not sufficient, because the instrument served in this shape only until 1869, when it was sold to another church outside Warsaw; unfortunately, it no longer is in existence. The next mechanical instrument (13/2M+P) was built by the Leopold Blomberg company, 1869, in the organ case made by architect J. Bem (or Behme); some repairs were made by the builder, 1884, and later by Leopold Hartman in 1900.⁴

The current organ, built at the main emporium by Antoni Szymanski in 1909 using the case and part of the pipes from the previous instrument by Leopold Blomberg, is marked by the builder with Opus number 128-50. It has 13 stops (plus 1 transmission) divided on 2 keyboards and a pedalboard. Key and register actions are pneumatic. The scale of manuals is C-f³; scale of the pedalboard: C-d⁴. The console is free-standing; the organist sits facing the presbytery. In 1960, Zygmunt Kaminski (one of the largest Polish organ builders of the 20th century) did some reparations and modifications in Orgelbewegung direction: in place of the stops of Aeolina 8' and Vox coelestis 8'



Saint Joseph's Care church, Warsaw, 18th century.



The organ today, built by Antoni Szymanski in 1909, at Saint Josep's Care church, Warsaw.

Specification

Manual I

1. Bourdon	16'
2. Pryncypal	8'
3. Gamba	8'
4. Gemshorn	8'
5. Flet	4'
6. Octava	4'
Copula M. I-II	
Copula Super Man. I	
Copula Sub. Man. II-I	

Manual II

1. Salcyjon	8'
2. Dubeltflet	8'
3. Vox celestis	8'
4. Traversflet	4'
5. Flet	2'

Pedal

1. Subbass 16'	
2. Bourdon Bass 16' [MI]	
3. Pryncypal Bass 8'	
Copula Ped. Man. I	
Copula Ped. Man. II	
Piano, Forte, Tutti	
Crescendo	

Specification of the current organ at Saint Josep's Care church, Warsaw.

Source: Own elaboration.

he put in the stops 4' and 2' and transformed Pryncypal Bass 16' into 8'. In 2016, his nephew, Andrzej Kaminski, reconstructed Vox coelestis 8', at the space of the former Aeolina 8' he inserted Traversflet 4', and added the Flute 2' to the Manual II. The instrument is today in a very good condition.

Leaving this quiet place of the nuns' eternal prayers, we are going straight to the West. In ten minutes, we can see a beautiful, freshly renewed rounded building of the Holy Trinity Lutheran church.

A chorister and performer, the Lutheran church, Warsaw

The king's banker, Piotr Tepper, made efforts to build the Lutheran church and in 1777 he obtained the appropriate privilege from King Stanisław August Poniatowski. The architect was Szymon Bogumił Zug (1733-1807). The design of the Lutheran church was however his biggest and most important architectural realisation highly estimated by his contemporaries. From the beginning, the design of the central building was based on the idea of the Roman Pantheon. The church was to have the

shape of a rotunda covered with a dome with four lower annexes. In the last version the dome carried the light lantern with ionic columns surmounted with the cross. The consecration took place on December 30th, 1781. This Lutheran church was the highest and at the same time one of the biggest buildings of 18th century Warsaw. It is considered to be a representative work of architecture of the second half of the 18th century in Poland and one of the first buildings in Neoclassical style in Europe.

Thanks to exceptional acoustics, the



The Holy Trinity Lutheran church, Warsaw, 18th century.

church gathered performers and lovers of classical music. With this temple, the names of famous Polish musicians – Józef Elsner (1769-1854, composer and music teacher), Karl August Freyer (1801-1883, composer, organist and pedagogue) and Stanisław Moniuszko, are connected. Camille Saint-Saëns also

gave concerts here. Many significant personalities of Polish culture and science were members of this Lutheran parish, including Samuel Bogumił Linde (1771-1847), author of the Polish dictionary and Wojciech Gerson (1831-1901), an outstanding painter who initiated the foundation of the Society

of Fine Arts, "Zachęta", located next to the church.

Chopin is connected with this place in several ways. We know that he sang in the church choir and participated in some concerts with his sister, Ludwika and his friend, Jan Białobłocki (1806-1828).⁵ Throughout the Warsaw period

Specification

I. Hauptwerk

1. Principal	8'
2. Quintaton	8'
3. Flaut	8'
4. Octava	4'
5. Flaut	4'
6. Quinta	3'
7. Superoctava	2'
8. Sedecima	1'
9. Mixtura	IV
10. Trompet	8'
11. Vox Humana	8'
Sperrventil zum Hw	
Bw/Hw	

II. Brustwerk

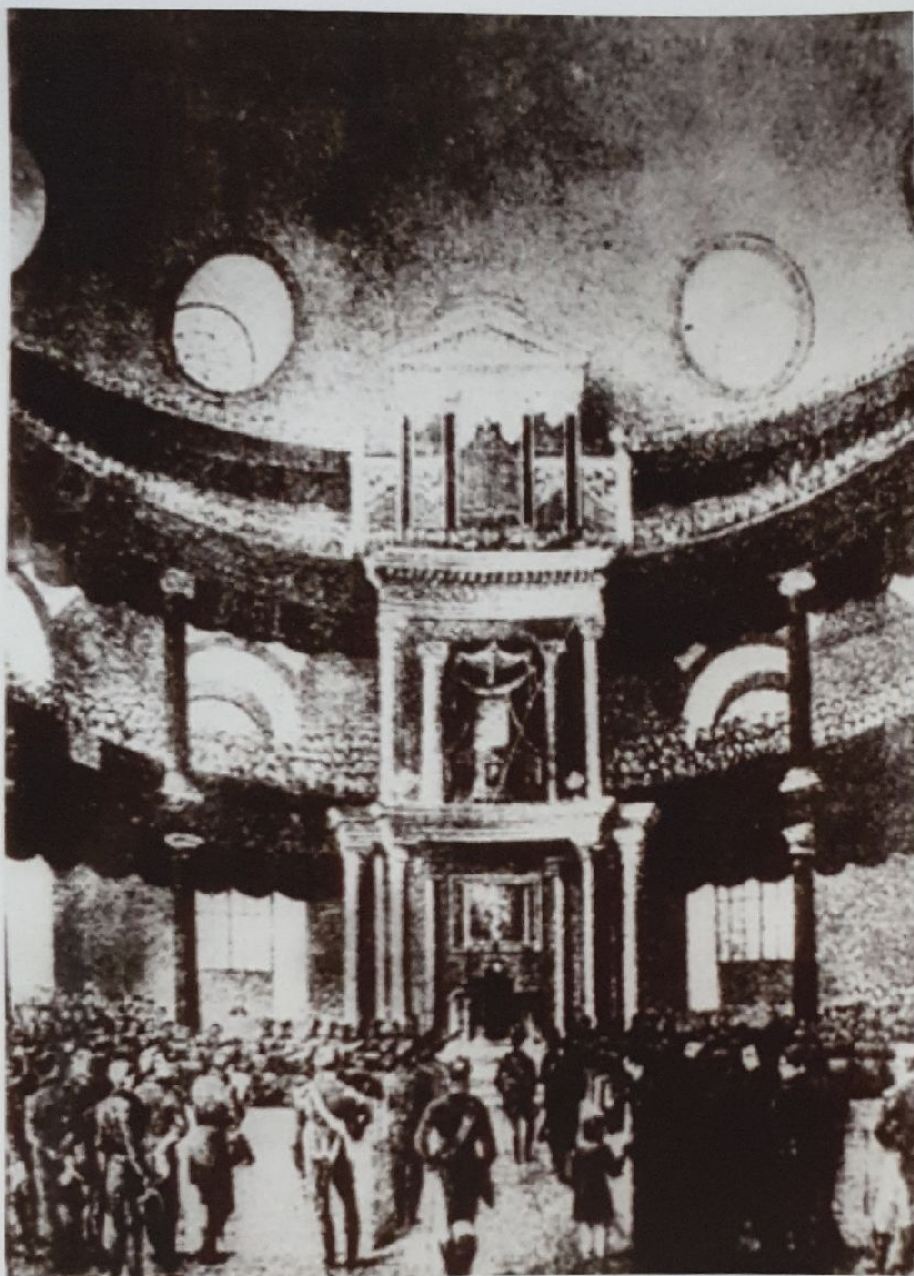
1. Flaut	8'
2. Lieblich Gedackt	8'
3. Prinzipal	4'
4. Flaut	4'
5. Quinta	3'
6. Octava	2'
7. Cornet	V
8. Mixtura	IV
9. Cornet	
10. Fagot	8'
Sperrventil zum Ow	

Pedal

1. Subbas	16'
2. Violonbass	16'
3. Quinta	16'
4. Octavbass	8'
5. Superoctava	4'
6. Mixtura III	
7. Posaun Bass	16'
Sperrventil zum Pedal	
Hw/Pedal	
Calcanten Glöcken	

Source: Gołos Jerzy, "Warszawskie organy", T II, Fundacja Artibus, Warszawa 2003, pp. 255-256.

Specification of the Schweinfleisch organ (1780) with added reed stops by Koscieniewicz (1817), Holy Trinity Lutheran church, Warsaw. No longer exist.



Schweinfleisch organ, built 1780, at Holy Trinity Lutheran church, Warsaw. No longer in existence.

Chopin gave piano and harmonium (different models were called as aeolomelodicon, aeolopantaleon) recitals in halls and salons of the city. One of his concerts was given on aeolomelodicon at this church before Tsar Alexander I, who was visiting Warsaw, 1825.⁶ The sources said that Chopin was dressed in the gala uniform of a Lyceum pupil, consisting of a blue jacket, short trousers, stockings, shoes with silver buckles and white gloves and played fragments of a Moscheles piano concerto and his own improvisation.

The Tsar was so astonished by his playing on the new invented instrument (by August Fidelis Brunner) that he gave Chopin and the aeolomelodicon's

constructor diamond rings.⁷ At the North entrance to the church we can find the commemorative plaque.

The organ at the Holy Trinity Lutheran church from Chopin's time was interesting and quite substantial in comparison to other Warsaw instruments. It was built by Friedrich Schweinfleisch on the base of 22-stop organ taken from the old Oratory nearby with an additional one stop, 1780, and cost 2,700 Thalers. It had finally 23 stops on two keyboards (C-c3) and a pedalboard (C-c1), the organ case – white with gilding in Classicistic style – was designed by the church architect, Zug, and – for some period – had a clock on the top.

The specification of the organ was

not common for protestant churches because of the lack of reeds. That is why, in 1817, the organ (and piano) builder Jakub Koscienniewicz (1786-1819) signed an agreement for important repairs and the addition of reeds: in Pedals: Posaun Bass 16', in Manuals: Fagot 8', Trompet 8' and Vox Humana 8'. These works took place between 1817-1818.⁸ The instrument in this shape would have been familiar to Chopin when he attended choir rehearsals and performances.

Between 1837-1838, there was another important rebuilding of the organ (in some documents we can read about building what is described as a new organ, 27/2M+P) made by M. R. Müller (at a cost of 23,000 Polish zloty). In 1864, Rierner added two string stops in a swell box. This instrument was finally sold by the parish between 1898-1902.

The next organ was truly worthy of this place; built by the "Walcker-Mayer Orgelbauanstalt", 1902, it had 50 stops on 3 Manuals (C-g³) and Pedal (C-f), pneumatic key and stop action. Unfortunately, nothing has remained of it. The church fell into ruin when it was bombed and burnt by the Nazis on September 16th 1939. Almost immediately after the Nazis' withdrawal, Warsaw Lutherans began to rebuild their church. On June 22, 1958, the ceremony of consecration of the reconstructed church took place. Much of the church was restored faithfully according to Zug's plans and drawings. The first instrument after the war was placed here in 1956 by "Theodor Kuhn Orgelbau", Muennendorf; it was Op. 571, 19/2M+P built in 1924 for one of Zürich churches.⁹

In 1998, the church, after a break of almost 60 years, again received an organ worthy of its former and rich musical tradition. The new organ is the work of a renowned organ company Hillebrand from Hanover, valued both for its excellent instruments and for model reconstructions of historical organs. The instrument has 30 stops, 2 keyboards (C-g³) and a pedalboard (C-f) and is fully mechanical. The stops are arranged in three sound plans: Hauptwerk (Manual



Walcker-Mayer Orgelbauanstalt" organ, built in 1902, at Holy Trinity Lutheran church, Warsaw. No longer in existence.

I), Oberwerk (Manual II) and Pedal. The specification of the organ refers to the era of German Baroque. The instrument maintained in this style is distinguished by its richness of colour, and the diversity of the character and colour of its individual voices enabling a clear rendering of the polyphonic structure of the work. The organ pitch is unevenly tempered (Neidhardt III). It is worth mentioning that Oberwerk, though Baroque at its disposal, is equipped with a Swell – the attribute of 19th-century instruments. This broadens the scope of the organ literature to a certain extent for what it is possible to perform. As in ancient times, only traditional materials have been used to build this instrument: high-quality wood, metal and leather; no plastics. It is now widely regarded as one of the best instruments in Poland.

Specification

Manual I		Super II/I		11. Clarinette		Pedal	
1. Principal	16'	Sub II/I		III/II	8'	1. Offenbass	32'
2. Bourdon	16'	Kollektivpedaln: Tutti und				2. Principalbass	16'
3. Principal	8'	Koppeln,		Manual III		3. Violonbass	16'
4. Bourdon	8'	Forte,		(Schwellwerk)		4. Subbas	16'
5. Hohlflöte	8'	Mezzoforte,		1. Quintatön	16'	5. Gedecktbas	16'
6. Gemshorn	8'	Piano		2. Geigenprincipal	8'	6. Principalbass	8'
7. Viola di Gamba	8'	3 free combinations		3. Lieblich Gedeckt	8'	7. Violoncello	8'
8. Quintatön	8'	Crescendo		4. Spitzflöte	8'	8. Gedecktbas	8'
9. Stentor Gamba	8'			5. Aeoline	8'	9. Stentor Gamba	
10. Octav	4'	Manual II		6. Voix céleste	8'		8' [Man. I]
11. Rohrflöte	4'	1. Lieblich Gedackt	16'	7. Fugara	4'	10. Oktav	4'
12. Violine	4'	2. Konzertflöte	8'	8. Flauto dolce	4'	11. Posaunenbass	16'
13. Quinte	2 2/3'	3. Principal	8'	9. Harmonia aetheria		12. Trompete	8'
14. Oktav	2'	4. Gedeckt	8'		III 2 2/3'	13. Tuba Mirabilis	8'
15. Mixtur V	2 2/3'	5. Salicional	8'	10. Oboe	8'		[Man. I]
16. Trompete	8'	6. Dolce	8'			I/P	
17. Tuba Mirabilis	8'	7. Principal	4'			II/P	
18. Clairon	4'	8. Traversflöte	4'			II/P	
II/I		9. Waldflöte	2'			Super P	
III/I		10. Cornetflöte	8'				

Specification of the "Walcker-Mayer Orgelbauanstalt" organ, built in 1902, at Holy Trinity Lutheran church, Warsaw. No longer exist.



Hillebrand organ, built in 1998, at Holy Trinity Lutheran church, Warsaw.

Warsaw Conservatory, The Field Cathedral of the Polish Army

We are leaving the white interior of the Lutheran church and going North, passing Saski Park, the Polish National

Opera building and some streets of the old town.

In the Autumn of 1826, Chopin began a three-year course at the Warsaw Conservatory (then affiliated with the

Warsaw University), studying music theory, figured bass and composition under Józef Elsner. Figured bass lessons with Elsner were generally held on the organ of the Our Lady of Victory and

Specification

I. Hauptwerk		II. Oberwerk		Pedal	
1. Bordun	16'	(schwellbar)		1. Prinzipalbass	16'
2. Prinzipal	8'	1. Gedackt	8'	2. Subbas	16'
3. Rohrflöte	8'	2. Gambe	8'	3. Oktavbass	8'
4. Octave	4'	3. Quintade	8'	4. Gemshorn	8'
5. Traversflöte	4'	4. Prinzipal	4'	5. Octave	4'
6. Quinte	2 2/3'	5. Holzflöte	4'	6. Nachthorn	2'
7. Octave	2'	6. Nasat	2 2/3'	7. Posaune	16'
8. Cornet V		7. Waldflöte	2'	8. Trompete	8'
9. Mixtur IV	1 1/3'	8. Terz	1 3/5'	9. Trompete	4'
10. Trompete	8'	9. Quinte	1 1/3'	HW/P	
OW/HW		10. Scharf	III 1'	OW/P	
		11. Dulzian	8'		
		Tremulant			

Specification of the Hillebrand organ, built in 1998, at Holy Trinity Lutheran church, Warsaw.



The Holy Trinity Lutheran church, Warsaw.

Saints Prim and Felicien church (today The Field Cathedral of the Polish Army) at Długa street or on the organ of Piarist Fathers palace (no information is currently available for this).¹⁰

The place where the Military Cathedral of the Polish Army is standing has been devoted to buildings of worship for three hundred years. By the will of King Władysław IV Waza (1595-1648) in 1642, the Piarist monastery built a small wooden church here in the name of Our Lady of Victory. During the Swedish wars, the church burned down. King Jan Kazimierz began the construction of a brick church in the Baroque style with the broad name of Our Lady of Victory and Saints Prim and

Felicien; the church – designed by Jakub Fontana – was consecrated on July 17, 1701. After the defeat of the November Uprising (1831), the tsarist authorities took vengeance, ordering the monks to leave the monastery and the church. From 1834, the Piarist church became the Orthodox Cathedral and was rebuilt and adapted to the Orthodox liturgy. With the resurrection of Poland in 1918, the church became Catholic again. On February 5, 1919, Pope Benedict XV appointed a suffrage to the Warsaw Bishop Stanisław Gall, the first Polish Army Bishop. The Baroque shape of the church was recovered in the years 1923-1927. During World War II, the insurgent hospital operated in the walls of the

Field Department of the Polish Army, which was bombed by the Nazis on August 20 1944. The church was rebuilt after wartime destruction, but the garrison remained only by name. Mother of all garrison churches, the Military Cathedral is a temple that becomes a place of important events in the life of the Polish nation.

Documents reveal nothing particular about the organ of Our Lady of Victory and Saints Prim and Felicien from Chopin's time. We know only that there was a previous renovation in 1700, and much vocal-instrumental music was performed with this instrument. Although the Orthodox liturgy does not use organs, it is known that in 1885 the

The church was rebuilt from wartime destruction, but the garrison remained only by name. Mother of all garrison churches, the Military Cathedral is a temple that becomes a place of important events in the life of the Polish nation.

organist's post existed here; we do not know, however, whether the instrument played was an organ or harmonium, or whether the latter instrument was used in the temple or in the rehearsal room. The first well described organ here, was a mechanical instrument (30/2M+P) made by Homan and Jezierski company, 1933. Unfortunately, this was totally demolished during World War II.¹¹

The current instrument was built by Ignacy Mentzel in 1729 for the evangelical church at Landeshut (Kamienna Góra) as a fully mechanical organ with positive (Rückpositif). On the wave of Romantic tendencies it was rebuilt twice, by Schlag und Söhne (1882) and Sauer (1905). After World War II, the instrument was relocated to the present church, but without the Positif section (probably it was destroyed or sold by the organ builder during the relocation process). The last rebuild and modification to the symphonic style was undertaken by the Kaminski Company in 2005. Today, the instrument has mechanical key action and electric stop action, 52 stops

divided on 3 manuals and a pedalboard. It is one of the best concert organs in Warsaw.

Now, we are leaving Warsaw and travelling for two-and-a-half hours by car to the small village of Obory, located on North-West of Warsaw near Torun.

Holidays in the countryside, Obory

In 1824, Frédéric finished the fourth grade of the Warsaw Lyceum with a public concert performance.¹² Additionally, he was awarded for "Moribus et Diligentiae / Federici Chopin / in Examine Publico / Lycei Varsaviensis / Die 24. Julia 1824". This dedication – for morals and attentiveness – embossed in gold letters, is on the cover of the book he received as a reward.¹³

At the end of July 1824, Frédéric undertook a longed-for holiday at the property of the Dziewanowski family in Szafarnia (near Torun). The owner of the surrounding villages near Szafarnia was Julian Dziewanowski, Dominik's father. From 1822, Dominik studied at the Warsaw Lyceum, he was a school friend of Frédéric and lived on a salary at the

Chopin family house. The boys became friends and, after successfully completing their studies, in the summer of 1824, they went together to Szafarnia for a vacation. In this beautifully located estate, Chopin stayed until September. It was a real country vacation, during which the hosts took care that the young man would provide all kinds of entertainment, without forcing him to give up his habits. In addition to a lot of free time, numerous walks and trips to explore the area, Frédéric also had time for exercise, or rather playing for pleasure. One of those nearby trips was a visit to the monastery in the village of Obory, about 20 minutes away by horse-drawn carriage from Szafarnia.

The first wooden church in Obory was built in 1605 at the highest peak in the village, thanks to the funds of Łukasz and Anna Rudzowski, and was given over to the Carmelite fathers. Then, the Carmelite convent built a brick church with a tower. The interior – which is still original – was created in Baroque-Rococo style, decorated with rich paintings and gildings.

Specification

Manual I		Manual II		Manual III		Pedal	
Hauptwerk		Hinterwerk		Schwellwerk			
1. Prinzipal	16'	1. Bourdon	16'	1. Lieblich gedact	16'	1. Majorbass	32'
2. Bourdon	16'	2. Prinzipal	8'	2. Geig. prinzipal	8'	2. Prinzipalbass	16'
3. Prinzipal	8'	3. Portunal	8'	3. Konzertflöte	8'	3. Subbas	16'
4. Holzflöte	8'	4. Gedact	8'	4. Aeoline	8'	4. Violonbass	16'
5. Gemshorn	8'	5. Salizet	8'	5. Vox coelestis	8'	5. Gambenbass	16'
6. Gambe	8'	6. Oktave	4'	6. Oktave	4'	6. Quintbass	10 2/3'
7. Oktave	4'	7. Traversflöte	4'	7. Flauto dolce	4'	7. Oktavbass	8'
8. Hohlflöte	4'	8. Oktave	2'	8. Nasat	2 2/3'	8. Bassflöte	8'
9. Spitzflöte	4'	9. Quinte	1 1/3'	9. Blockflöte	2'	9. Cello	8'
10. Quinte	2 2/3'	10. Kornet	V	10. Terz 1	3/5'	10. Oktavbass	4'
11. Oktave	2'	11. Zimbel III	1'	11. Mixtur I-IV	22/3'	11. Mixtur IV	4'
12. Mixtur IV-V	1 1/3'	12. Klarinette	8'	12. Fagott	16'	12. Posaune	16'
13. Trompete	8'	III/II		13. Oboe	8'	13. Trompete	8'
14. Clairon	4'					I/P	
II/I						II/P	
III/I						III/P	

Specification of the current organ, rebuilt in 2005, at The Field Cathedral of the Polish Army, Warsaw.



*The contemporary organ at
The Field Cathedral of the
Polish Army, Warsaw.*

Frédéric and Dominik, while visiting the monastery and the church, investigated the music gallery, where an organ was located. According to documents, Frédéric played this instrument while

Dominik pumped the air to the bellows manually.³⁴

The instrument which we can find here today is not very distant from Chopin's time. There is no information

about the organ builder. Although we know that it was rebuilt in 1966, and on that date the windchest was changed from mechanical to a conical-tubular system, the sound elements and the



Church in Obory village, Poland

organ case (kept in the 18th century Rococo style) are the same. Only the organ console is not the same; Chopin played on the mechanical keyboard (with short octave) built into the organ

case; today, the console is free-standing.

This visit by the young musicians is remembered in the Obory church which has a monument to Chopin and a commemorative plaque.



Organ at Obory church, Poland.



The plaque commemorating Chopin's visit at Obory church in the Summer of 1824.

Specification

Manual

1. Princypał 8'
2. Dolce 8'
3. Kryty 8'
4. Oktawa 4'
5. Salicet 4'
6. Mixtur III
- Tremolo

Pedal

1. Subbas 16'
2. Burdon 8'
- Pedalkopel

Specification of the contemporary organ at Carmelites church, Obory, Poland.

Source: Own elaboration.

From the village of Obory, we are moving to Marseille, South of France.

Notre-Dame-du-Mont, Marseille

The love affair between Chopin and Georges Sand (Amantine Aurore Lucile Dupin, 1804-1876, writer) begun in the early Summer of 1838. The scandal of their affair and the poor health of Chopin pushed them to spend the Winter in the South. Chopin left Paris on October 27, 1838, and met up with Georges Sand four days later in Perpignan. On November 2nd they were in Barcelona, on the 7th in Palma, and on the 15th they moved to Etablissements, but Chopin's condition barely improved. On December 15th, they settled at the



The organ of Bormes and Gazeau previously located at Notre-Dame-du-Mont, Montpellier; currently at Cathédrale, Eyguieres, France. Before the restauration in 2007.



Source: S.A.R.L Orgues P. Quoïrin, Saint-Didier.

Carthusian monastery of Valdemosa, Mallorca. The climate did not suit him. Chopin did not recover, he missed Parisian life and the local population was hostile to them. On February 13th, 1839, they embarked in Palma de Mallorca to Barcelona. The crossing was painful, because of Chopin's crisis of haemoptysis (pulmonary haemorrhage). They stayed in Marseille, for him to recover a little.

While here, news of Nourrit's own death in Naples reached them. Adolphe Nourrit (1802-1839) – a French operatic tenor, librettist, and composer – was one of the most esteemed singers of the 1820s and 1830s; he popularised Schubert's *Lieder* in France. The funeral (Requiem Mass) of the deceased – born in nearby Montpellier – was planned for April 24 in Marseille, in the church of Notre-Dame-du-Mont. Being both – Chopin and Nourrit – popular musicians in their fields, they knew each other fairly well, and this friendship led to Chopin deciding to play the organ during the Requiem mass. We know he performed, during the Elevation, an organ transcription of Schubert's lied "Die Gestirne".¹⁵

George Sand reports that there were many people crowding to hear Chopin; that to occupy a chair cost fifty centimes. Chopin was not familiar with the technique of playing the organs and that's why he disappointed the great crowd. As a pianist – accustomed to dynamic changes by means of key impact – he played with so much gentleness using just one delicate sound "and did not break not two nor three stops of the organ". At the end of the funeral, Chopin came to the priest and said, "This organ is worthless, sell it".

What do we know about the "Chopin" organ of Notre-Dame-du-Mont, Montpellier? It was built by the organ builders Bormes and Gazeau at the beginning of the 19th century in the French Classical style. There is no indication concerning its exact situation in this church; probably it was located on the edge of the gallery, as a "Positif de dos". Keyboards were situated in the rear of the building. The upper floor of the case was decorated with sculptures of 'Empire style', the lower case had a set of ornaments moulded in resin, stuck and nailed against the panels. The reed pipe bodies (Trompettes, Clairons,

Cromorne, Hautbois, Voix humaine) were entirely constructed of white iron. The white iron reeds have a lively, clear and powerful sound, with a lot of "Bourdon". Pipes were made of sleeves welded successively and of approximately one foot width; the last sleeve was made of forged lead. This type of reed stop was often met in Italy, but also in Flanders, sometimes in France (Roquemaure) in the 17th or 18th centuries.¹⁶

Around the year 1880, the parish – as Chopin suggested – sold the organ to the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce church, Eyguieres, a town in the North of Salon de Provence. The instrument was raised on a gallery in the bottom of the nave. This reassembly did not completely succeed; the arrangement of the instrumental parts suffered modifications for unknown reasons, and the installation of the Pedal pipes was impossible. Around 1920, almost all of the pipework was sold by the priest for the payment of the upkeep of the church's ground. Some pipes were however preserved and stored (the reed pipes of white iron and the facade) in one of the rooms of the presbytery, close to the church. All

Specification

Grand-Orgue (54 notes)		Positif (54 notes)		Récit (30 notes)		Pédale (25 notes, Fa ⁰ -Fa ²)	
Montre	8'	Flûte	8'	Bourdon	8'	Flûte	12'
Bourdon	8'	Flûte ouverte	4'	Flûte en bois	8'	Trompette	12'
Prestant	4'	Doublette	2'	Flûte	4'	Clairon	6'
Nazard	2 2/3'	Fourniture	II	Cornet	III		
Doublette	2'	Cromorne	8'	Hautbois	8'		
Tierce	1 3/5'	Trompette horizontale	8'				
Fourniture	III						
Cymbale III	1ère						
Trompette	8' 2ème						
Trompette	8'						
Voix humaine	8'						
Clairon	4'						
Coupler: Pos/G.O.							
Tremulant							

Specification (as it was in the beginning of 19th century) of Bormes and Gazeau organ previously located at Notre-Dame-du-Mont, Montpellier, and now at Cathédrale, Eyguieres, France.





The organ of Bormes and Gazeau previously located at Notre-Dame-du-Mont, Montpellier; from 1880 located at Cathédrale, Eyguières, France. After the restauration in 2007.

the instrumental part, in its entirety, stayed in position until 2009, when the complete reconstruction was begun and shortly thereafter finished.

After the sale of the Bormes and Gazeau organ on which Frédéric Chopin played, the Parisian factor Alexandre Ducroquet, successor of the house Daublaine and Callinet, established at the church of Notre-Dame-du-Mont, Montpellier, a new organ, more adapted to the dimensions of the interior and the aesthetic criteria of the time: two keyboards and a pedalboard. Just a few years later, in 1895, the Mader-Arnaud of Marseille undertook a restoration, adding three new stops (Gambe, Voix

celeste and Voix humaine) and reviewing the harmonisation. In 1910, a fresh restoration was entrusted to the Michel-Merklin and Khun factory from Lyon with the installation of a new console. The same factory carried out important works in 1926. From 1937, the organ was enlarged and modified to a neoclassical aesthetic. It was its last rebuilding following which memorable recitals were given by the greatest performers of the day. The instrument, silent since 1970, is waiting for a new restoration.

At the end of our trip, we are back to Paris.

Specification

I. Grand-Orgue

Bourdon	16'
Montre	8'
Bourdon	8'
Flûte harmonique	8'
Salicional	8'
Prestant	4'
Flûte	4'
Quinte	2' ² / ₃
Doublette	2'
Larigot	1' ¹ / ₃
Cornet	V
Plein-jeu	IV
Trompette	8'
Cromorne	8'
Réc./G.O. en	16'
Réc./G.O. en 8'	
Appel G.O.	
Appel anches: G.O.,	
Réc.,	
Péd. Trémolo,	
Crescendo,	
Combinaison libre	

II. Récit-expressif

Flûte	8'
Gambe	8'
Voix céleste	8'
Flûte	4'
Nasard	2' ² / ₃
Octavin	2'
Tierce	1' ³ / ₅
Plein-jeu	IV
Bombarde	16'
Trompette	8'
Hautbois	8'
Clairon	4'
Pédale	
Flûte	16'
Bourdon	16'
Flûte	8'
Bourdon	8'
Flûte	4'
Flûte	2'
Plein-jeu	IV
Bombarde	16'
Trompette	8'
Clairon	4'
Tirasse G.O. en 8'	
Tirasse Réc. en 8'	
Tirasse G.O. en 4'	
Tirasse Réc. en 4'	

Specification of the current organ in Notre-Dame-du-Mont, Montpellier.

Source: <http://orgue.free.fr> [2019/05/05].

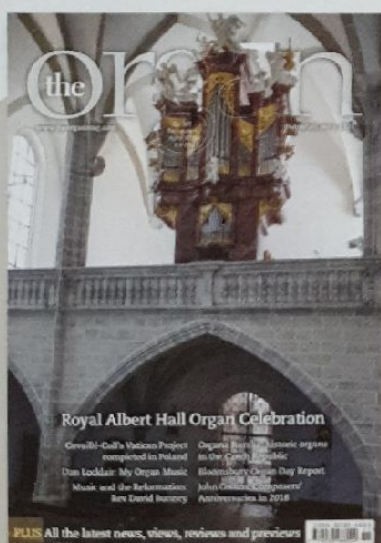


Chopin's grave at Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris.

Epilogue

October 30, 1849, at the prestigious temple of La Madeleine many aristocratic personalities from Paris, London, Berlin and Vienna as well as great musicians took a part in the funeral of Frédéric François Chopin, one of the most popular piano composers and performers, but also the most expensive piano teacher, in the city. The most influential organist of France at that time, Louis-James-Alfred Lefébure-Wély, performed on the new great symphonic Cavaillé-Coll instrument, two of Chopin's piano Preludes (No. 4 in E minor and No. 6 in B minor, Op. 25) during the Offertory.¹⁷ The audience was astonished and deeply moved on hearing the music of their beloved master who had left them just a few days before (October 17). The funeral procession to Père Lachaise Cemetery was a darkly laden with sadness and sorrow. Even the greatest personalities walked, their carriages decorated with family coats of arms following them.

It wasn't the end; it was just the beginning of the new eternal life of this extraordinary artist. ■



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1. The letter from George Sand to Etienne Arago, November 11, 1849. After: Zamoyski Adam, "Chopin. Książki romantyków", Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 2010, pp. 254-255.
2. Konmian A. E., "Przegląd Poznański", 1849, T.8, p. 687.
3. Gołos Jerzy, "Warszawskie organy", T II, Fundacja Artibus, Warszawa 2003, pp. 87-88.
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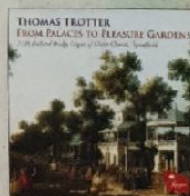
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