From ARTHUR HEDLEY

PRImrose 9353

5 Romney Court,
Haverstock Hill,
London N.W.3

20th ~~October~~ November, 1963

Dear Mr. Rubinstein,

Knowing how impossible it is for you to be indifferent to anything concerning Chopin, I am taking the liberty of sending you, as a slight expression of my admiration and gratitude to you as the man who has done more than anyone to reveal Chopin to our generation, a copy of my recently published "Selected Correspondence" - a book which, I am glad to say, has been very favorably received here. You will already know most of the letters it contains; but there are newly discovered facts and, especially, some letters of Karl Filtsch and his brother which will be new to you.

I also include some notes which I have made on your interesting edition of the Fantaisie-Impromptu. It was a great satisfaction to learn that you had acquired this precious autograph: it could not be in better hands.

Since I had the pleasure of showing you some things a long time ago at the Caunter's, I have been able to add many treasures to my collection, including:

Manuscrit de travail of the E major Nocturne Op.62
The lock of his hair which Chopin gave to George Sand when they became lovers in 1838.
Liszt's own corrected copy of his transcription of the Six Chants Polonais (1859).
Ring (gold and diamond) given to Chopin in 1848 by the Marquis de Custine. More letters, above all the famous one containing the reference to the Funeral March Sonata:"Ja tu piszę Sonatę...lewa ręka unisono z prawą ogaduią po Marszu...itd"
I have also located the original MS of the Tarantella (the manuscript at the Conservatoire is a copy made by Fontana.)

It is always a great joy to hear your splendid records at my special friends', Stanislas and Zofia Meyer.

Yours sincerely, Arthur Hedley

For Mr.Artur Rubinstein.

FANTAISIE-IMPROMPTU

The Impromptu was, as you say, composed in 1835 for Mme d'Este and written in the album which you possess. It is however improbably that the piece was paid for by this lady. The d'Estes were close personal friends of Chopin and he was often their guest. In 1836 he dedicated to Mme d'Este the Andante Spianato and Polonaise, Op.22. It would be most unusual for Chopin to have sold to a lady a piece of music destined for her personal album.

The Impromptu was certainly not reserved for Mme d'Este alone. Chopin gave copies to (among others):-

His pupil Karl Filtsch in 1842. Filtsch was also allowed to copy the G flat Impromptu before it was published and he was probably the first person to play it in public (London 1843).
His pupil, Mme Marie Roubaud, in 1847
His pupil, Juliette von Caraman (German relation of the French family) in 1847.
Princess Marcelline Czartoryska, in 1849
His sister Ludwika (date not known).

The Impromptu was known to the Chopin family as the "Fantazja dla p.d'Este" and this is undoubtedly the reason why, in 1855, Fontana united the two titles: Fantaisie and Impromptu (on Czartoryska's copy) to form "Fantaisie-Impromptu".

Since Chopin was too ill to write much in 1849, the Impromptu was copied out for Princess Czartoryska (obviously from Chopin's MS) by Auguste Franchomme. There is plenty of evidence that Franchomme was a most careful and scrupulous copyist - he would not alter a note. After Chopin's death he had the greatest hesitations about making a fair copy of the Last Mazurka, of which he possessed Chopin's 'brouillon'; and being afraind of making mistakes (as the MS was almost illegible) he omitted a section in F major, which I saw to my amazement when I visited Franchomme's descendants at La Croix-en-Touraine in 1951.

It is a fact that between 1835 and 1849 Chopin gave several copies of his Impromptu to friends; and in 1855 Fontana used Princess Czartoryska's copy for the publication as Op.66.

Fontana had seen Chopin for the last time in November 1841. He then went to America, returned for a short time in 1848, went back, and married a young English widow, by whom he had a son. The widow already had two daughters by her first marriage and their descendants are still in England. In 1855, therefore, it was fourteen years (at least!) since Fontana had heard Chopin play the Impromptu - probably more. He used Czartoryska's copy of 1849, but he relied on his own "memory" to supply the details. All the expression marks and most of the ornaments are "out of Fontana's head" - they are not in the MS. But the main text is there...and is, of course, different from the 1835 version; particularly in the left hand and in the Coda.

(I may add that Fontana did exactly the same thing with the Op.71 Polonaises, using the MSS which the Princess possessed. He simply made a rough guess at the dates; and practically every date which he gives in his edition of the Posthumous Works is wrong. When he said 1834 for the Impromptu he was merely guessing. His date of 1827 for the Polonaise in D minor Op.71 is simply nonsense (I have the MS); so is his 1843 for the F minor Waltz Op.70 ...and so on.

It is curious to note that the Princess did not let him have the MS of the little piece in C sharp minor, called Nocturne No.20, of which she had the only autograph manuscript. The current editions are based on a copy made by Ludwika Chopin in 1836 - it is in that "Album de Maria" in which everything (words and music) is in Ludwika's writing, not Fryderyk's.)

The Fantaisie-Impromptu had a special interest for the Princess and she gave the first public performance of it in Paris on 5th March 1855, that is before Fontana's publication. She played at a "Concert pour les Polonais Indigents et Malades"; and later in the year, 17th July 1855 she played it in London at her own concert in Park Lane. Early in 1850 made for her copies of other unpublished works...the "other" Funeral March, Mazurka Op.67 No.4 etc. I have all Czartoryska's MSS except the Mazurka Op.56 No.2 (now in the British Museum) and the notes for a Piano Method. The Princess died on 5th June 1894: I have her "funeral card" with a photograph:- Tellefsen

> Módlmy się za duszę ś.p. Marceliny z Radziwiłłów Czartoryskiej.
> Urodzona w Podłużnem na Wołyniu, dnia 30 marca 1817 r.
> Zgasła w Krakowie 5 czerwca 1894.

Your MS of the Impromptu is the only one in Chopin's hand which can now be traced - that is incontestable. But the known existence of a series of copies made between 1835 and 1849 creates the problem of "the definitive version".

Arthur Hedley