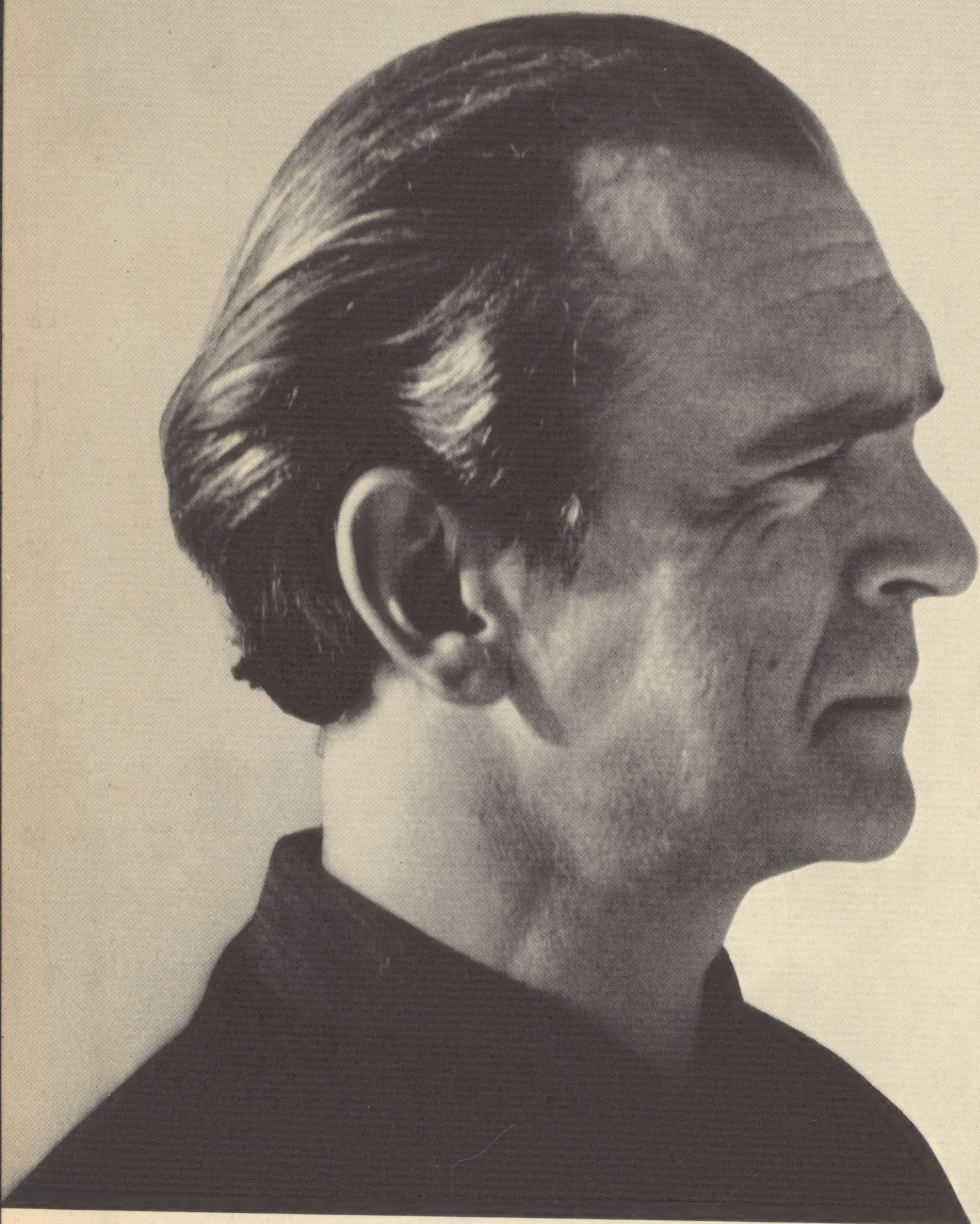


COMPOSER - C.



MALCUZYNSKI



CHOPIN 6 POLONAISES

CHOPIN: SIX POLONAISES

MALCUZYNSKI

SEP 7 1966

Record 33
786.4C549pom
Original

THE polonaise was still much in vogue in Poland during Chopin's early years as a national dance which had become a drawing room piece, and his first published example was written at the age of seven. The works in this recording all date from the composer's mature years after he had left Poland in 1830. Originally danced in national dress by the nobility, and a part of the life of the court in its time of glory during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the polonaise had grown in Chopin's hands until it had become the epic work which is here exemplified. These six, and Op. 22, are amongst his greatest and most eloquent works, vehicles for the deepest feelings of patriotism. Exiled from his country which had been overrun by the Russians, he expresses in them the tenderness of compassion, the anger which he feels for Poland's enemies, and faith in her greatness. Liszt wrote that Chopin's Polonaises "embodied the noblest traditional feelings of ancient Poland."

Side 1

NO. 1 IN C SHARP MINOR, OP. 26, NO. 1

In 1834-35 when this Polonaise (*allegro appassionata*) and the following E flat minor were written, the composer had already settled in Paris. Although still in the rhythm of the dance, the C sharp minor is far removed from the simple polonaise form. The first ten bars are divided into three sections, chords of great strength leading to a questioning passage which is answered briefly *pianissimo*. After a repetition of this opening, a rhythmical figure enters *sotto voce* and increases to *fortissimo* while flashing arpeggios are heard in the right hand. A simple, affecting melody (*meno mosso*) follows in D flat major, the first section ending with striking chromaticisms: a counter-melody steals in, in the bass, the two voices being handled with exquisite delicacy. The question and answer of the opening are now repeated, and the *sotto voce* figure brings the work to a close.

NO. 2 IN E FLAT MINOR, OP. 26, NO. 2

Sometimes known as "Poland's End," this Polonaise is possibly the most deeply tragic in expression of the six, the rhythm of the dance becoming a fierce utterance and sudden and dynamic changes of tempi marking the harassed feelings of the composer. A brooding *maestoso* figure opens the work and is followed by a second theme (*agitato*). In the next section in D flat major, the sound of trumpets can be discerned, and after a return to the opening themes, martial music is again heard, this time in B major (*meno mosso* and *sotto voce*). The same scheme is repeated once more, and a short, mounting coda follows, ending surprisingly in a little whispering figure, as if with a sigh.

NO. 3 IN A MAJOR, OP. 40, NO. 1

This is probably the most familiar of the Polonaises and is certainly the least complicated in structure. Known as *La Militaire*, it is consistently bold and brilliant, and its two subjects (both *allegro con brio*) in strict polonaise rhythm conjure up for us the glories and greatness of Poland. Liszt is said to have played it at all his concerts.



Side 2

NO. 4 IN C MINOR, OP. 40, NO. 2

In contrast, this is a poignant expression of Poland's downfall. The opening theme (*allegro maestoso*) is a dark and tragic utterance in the bass, possibly a reminiscence of the old Polish song "Welcome, O King." A second section has a restless rhythm marked by syncopations in the right hand. Then comes a return to the opening theme, and a trio-like section follows, similar to that in the C sharp minor and also embellished with chromatic passages: the contrasts in tone color in this section are remarkable. The opening theme returns, ending *fff*.

NO. 5 IN F SHARP MINOR, OP. 44

This is a monumental work, the biggest of the series. In a letter written in 1841, Chopin speaks of "a new manuscript — a kind of polonaise, but it is more a fantasia." With the F sharp minor the composer felt that the structure which had been adequate in Ops. 25 and 40 could no longer contain all he wanted to say. (Actually he did not use the title "Polonaise-Fantaisie" until his Op. 60). It is probably the least played of these six great Polonaises and it is easy to understand the reason, for it is extremely difficult and requires immense strength. It opens quietly (*moderato*) and rushing double octaves follow, as if in a mood of exasperation: this is an introduction to the immensely vigorous rhythm of the polonaise where all is turbulence and strain. After the thunderous excitement of the opening pages the tender mazurka steals in, a unique feature of the composition of this work being its inclusion as a trio. Here all is peace, but leaping upward scales and the double octaves of the opening return again and we are once more caught up in the anguish and agitation. The coda rushes to a climax and then dies away to end with a single loud chord like the crack of doom.

NO. 6 IN A FLAT MAJOR, OP. 53

Written in 1842, when Chopin was thirty-two, this large-scale tone-poem often bears the title *L'Héroïque*. Here one feels that the composer is supremely confident of his country's ultimate victory and rebirth. The arresting introduction of chromatic fourths and throbbing semi-quaver figures leads into the main theme, first heard *forte* and then, with the addition of octaves, *fortissimo*. In the middle section, the key suddenly changes, plunging from A flat major to the distant key of E major, and after two bars of loud spread chords, a figure of descending staccato semi-quaver octaves gives the impression of trampling horses, while the muted theme (*sotto voce*) recalls a military march heard in the distance and gradually approaching until it reaches its *fortissimo* climax. This section is repeated, after which a quieter interlude of sinuous scale passages bridges the gap and builds up towards a final triumphant return of the polonaise theme.

DAVID MONEY

WITOLD MALCUZYNSKI, personal pupil of Paderewski and himself a fine exponent of the great Polish keyboard tradition, was born in Warsaw in 1914. His innate love of music overcame his initial decision to study law and he enrolled at the Warsaw Conservatory, from which he graduated with high honors. Not long after, he became Paderewski's pupil, living and studying with the famous statesman-pianist at the latter's Swiss villa while he was working on the Centenary Edition of Chopin's works. Malcuzyński's American debut in 1942 was a major musical event; since then he has made numerous transcontinental concert tours, appearing as soloist and with the symphony orchestras of every major U.S. city. He is heard regularly in Europe and, indeed, in all the major capitals of the globe since, being an indefatigable traveler, he thinks nothing of a 50,000 mile concert jaunt. Fortunately he pauses now and again to make those Angel Records which have brought new admirers to his already huge audience. Although Malcuzyński knows no musical boundaries, he is especially famous for his Chopin performances and this recording of the Polonaises, together with his previous album of the complete Waltzes (Angel 35726), will testify to the deserved acclaim he has received for his devotion to the works of this composer.

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SIDE 1

35728
(XLX-X-828) 33 1/3

**CHOPIN
SIX POLONAISES**

(1)-No. 1 in C sharp minor, Op. 26 No. 1
(2)-No. 2 in E flat minor, Op. 26 No. 2
(3)-No. 3 in A major, Op. 40 No. 1

PIANO SOLO by MALCUZYNSKI
Recorded in Europe
Mfd. in U.S.A.

MONOPHONIC



Angel

SIDE 2

35728
(XLX-X-829) 33 1/3

CHOPIN
SIX POLONAISES

- (1)-No. 4 in C minor, Op. 40 No. 2
- (2)-No. 5 in F sharp minor, Op. 44
- (3)-No. 6 in A flat major, Op. 53

PIANO SOLO by MALCUZYNSKI
Recorded in Europe
Mfd. in U.S.A.

MONOPHONIC