Jeffrey Kallberg

Chopin and the aesthetic of the sketch: a new prelude in E♭ minor?

How, in Chopin's Paris of the 1830s and 1840s, might we measure the relationship between the aesthetic categories of 'sketch' and 'work'? The meaning and importance of a sketch—and more broadly the process of composition—in relationship to a finished work was a charged topic among creative figures at the time. Their aesthetic positions provide an instructive framework for the interpretation of a remarkable sketch that Chopin drafted around the time he was completing the Preludes, op.28, in Majorca. This, like only one other extant sketch of a composition that Chopin did not finish and publish, preserves the skeletal remains—or the embryonic beginnings—of a 'complete' piece, with a beginning, middle and end.[1] Notationally ambiguous, the sketch will here for the first time be published both in transcription and in realization. Will the result thereby yield a hitherto unknown work by Chopin? What kind of sense are we to make of the E♭ minor sketch?

Debates about the aesthetic merits of sketches and, more generally, pieces that display something of the 'unfinished' about them were particularly acute in the visual arts. According to Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, the canvases of such artists as Constable, Delacroix, Corot and Courbet helped promote a taste for the seeming spontaneity of the 'unfinished', a quality that stood in stark contrast to the 'licked finish' of the academic artists known as *pompiers*—so stark, in fact, that by 1855 John Ruskin could claim that the question of sketch versus finished work divided all the artists of Europe.[2] Those who preferred the supposedly spontaneous sketches of artists perceived in them something of the originality that lay behind artistic inspiration, whereas 'finished works' conveyed such values as probity, professionalism and discretion.

Delacroix, we know from his diary, worried often over the relative merits of the 'sketch' and the 'finished picture'. His appreciation of the heightened aesthetic potential of an artistic sketch gained some force from his admiration of spontaneity in literature, with Byron serving as his emblematic improvisatory figure. But even more important to him was the idea of extemporized music, and here none other than the example of Chopin stimulated his thoughts. That Chopin's activities at the keyboard might affect the way Delacroix thought about painting should come as no surprise, for an important element of their friendship revolved precisely around efforts by both men to grasp and somehow translate into their own creative endeavours expressive effects attained in the other's domain. Thus one evening at Nohant in 1841, after listening to a conversation between Delacroix and Maurice Sand about Delacroix's understanding of reflection and colour, Chopin responded at the piano with an improvisation that produced the celebrated 'note bleue' (as George Sand enigmatically termed a mystical effect that arose out of Chopin's modulatory playing).[3] And Delacroix in turn continued even after the composer's death to ponder painterly dimensions of the spontaneous element in Chopin's musical art. In an entry in his diary dated 20 April 1853 he recorded the gist of a conversation with Chopin's old friend Wojciech Grzymała:

Jeffrey Kallberg is Professor of Music History at the University of Pennsylvania and author of Chopin at the boundaries: sex, history, and musical genre *(Harvard University Press, 1996).*

We spoke of Chopin. He told me that his improvisations were much bolder than his finished compositions. It is the same, no doubt, with a sketch for a painting compared to a finished painting. No, one does not spoil the picture in finishing it! Perhaps there is less scope for the imagination in a finished work than in a sketch. One feels different impressions before a building that is going up and in which the details are not yet indicated, and before the same building when it has received its remainder of ornamentation and finish. It is the same with a ruin that acquires a more striking aspect by the parts that it lacks. The details are effaced or mutilated, just as in the building going up one does not yet see more than the rudiments and the vague indication of the moldings and ornamented parts. The finished building encloses the imagination within a circle and forbids it to go beyond. Perhaps the sketch of a work only pleases as much as it does because everyone finishes it to his liking.[4]

For Delacroix, the power of originality in a sketch essentially elevated it to the status of a work. (Many creative figures of his day, Baudelaire perhaps most notable among them, seconded this position.)[5] The inconsistency in Delacroix's statement (he defended the finished work by describing why the sketch pleased more) is, for the present discussion, less important than his likening of Chopin's improvisations to painterly sketches. (Curiously, Delacroix, who had heard Chopin improvise often and who possessed a refined ear, offered Grzymała's opinion on the boldness of Chopin's improvisations rather than his own, as if somehow his own hearing were not to be trusted.) Chopin's improvisations, we may deduce from Delacroix's remarks, provided listeners with even more profound insight into his powers of imagination than did his finished works.

But would Delacroix have made this same claim of a written sketch by Chopin? Might Chopin's sketches reveal some of the same spontaneous spark that gave life to his improvisations? What was the relationship between these two domains of 'improvisation' and 'sketch'? To begin to answer these questions, we might first recall George Sand's oft-cited testimony about the profound difficulties that, for Chopin, attended the transition from inspiration, either at the piano or in his head, to written notation:

His creativity was spontaneous, miraculous. He found it without seeking it, without expecting it. It arrived at his piano suddenly, completely, sublimely, or it sang in his head during a walk, and he would hasten to play it to himself, casting it down on his instrument. But then would begin the most heart-breaking labor I have ever witnessed. It was a series of efforts, indecision and impatience to recapture certain details of the theme he had heard. What had come to him all of a piece, he now over-analyzed in his desire to transcribe it, and his regret at not finding it again 'neat', as he said, threw him into a kind of despair. He would shut himself in his room for days at a time, weeping, pacing, breaking his pens, repeating and changing a bar one hundred times, writing it and erasing it with equal frequency, and beginning again the next day with meticulous and desperate perseverance. He would spend six weeks on a page, only to end up writing it just as he had done in his first outpouring.[6]

Although Sand's remarks concern specifically the composer's last year or two in Nohant (and perhaps thus tell us more about the decline of his powers during his late period), they may well only describe an extreme instance of what was always a troubled process. Far from representing any ideal of creative spontaneity, the written sketch, by Sand's account, would stand instead for the cramped suppression of Chopin's natural artistic inclinations. Sand, then, would appear to deny an ontological relationship for Chopin between improvisation (or inspiration) and written sketch in the sense that Delacroix might seem to imply it.

Yet the possibility remains that the 'rough edges' of one of Chopin's sketches might have held some aesthetic value to his associates, just as, in the 1830s, friends of Théodore Rousseau preferred his sketches to his finished canvases.[7] We might detect these sorts of sentiments lurking behind the decisions made by Julian Fontana and Auguste Franchomme to transcribe and (in the case of Fontana) publish as op.68 no.4 a sketch of an F minor Mazurka as part of the 'authorized' posthumous compositions. (We will return below to the specific relationship of the sketch for the Mazurka to the E♭ minor sketch.) Fontana in fact devoted particular attention to Chopin's improvisational skills in the written commentary he attached to the posthumous pieces:

From the most tender age he astonished by the richness of his improvisation. He took good care however not to parade it; but the few chosen ones who have heard him improvising for hours on end, in the most marvellous manner, without ever recalling a phrase from any other composer, without even touching on any of his own works—those people will not contradict us if we suggest that his finest compositions are only the reflections and echoes of his improvisation.

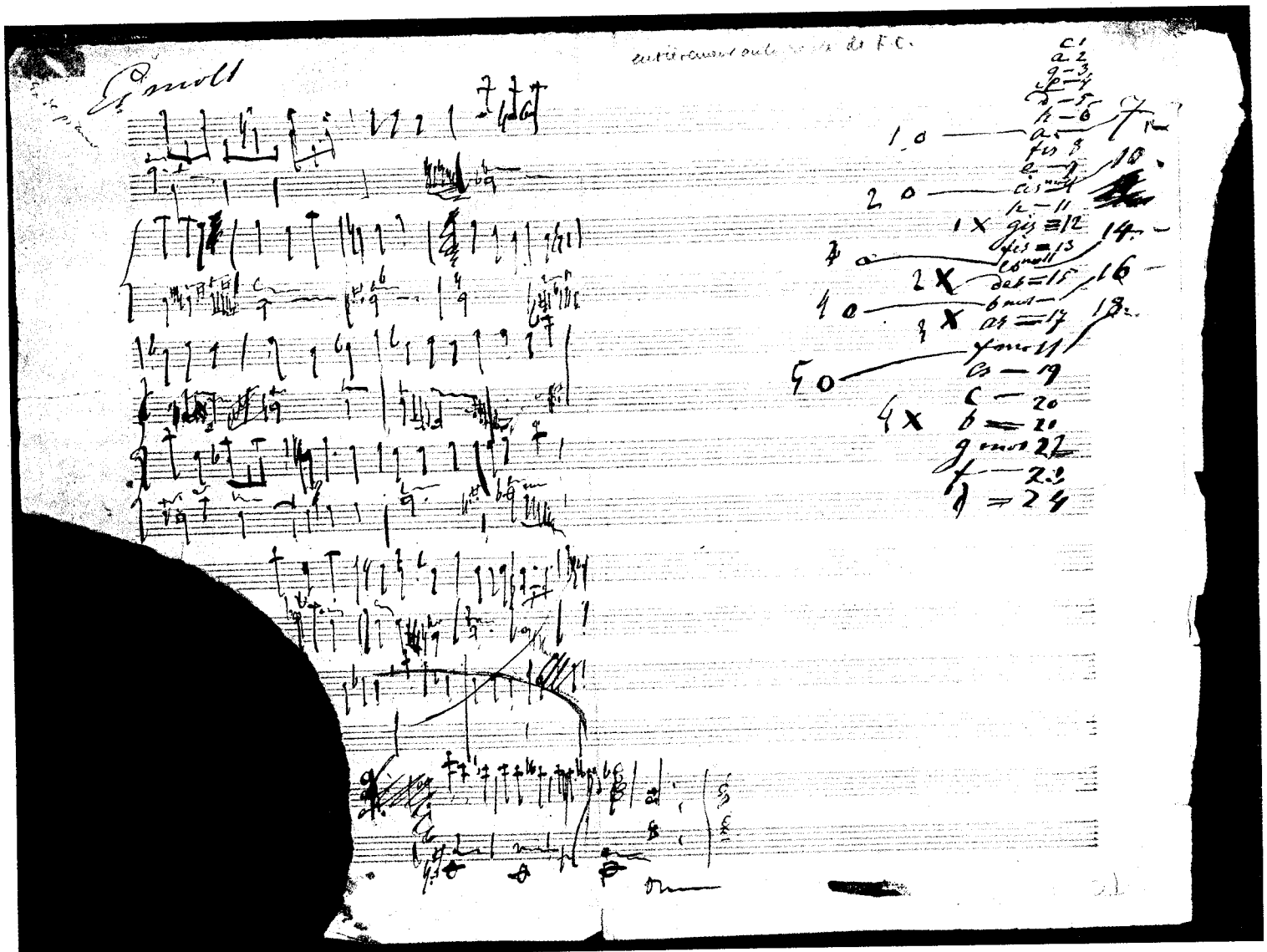
This spontaneous inspiration was like a boundless torrent of precious materials in turmoil. From time to time, the master would draw out of it a few cups to throw into his mould, and it turned out that these cups were full of pearls and rubies.[8]

Fontana published these remarks in 1855, in the same year that Ruskin claimed that artistic debates about the relative merits of sketches versus finished works were at their peak. In this context, then, Fontana's words should be read not as a curious detour from the task of the rest of the commentary of justifying the publication of pieces that Chopin himself did not see fit to publish, but rather as precisely part of this very validation. By borrowing an argument similar to the sorts of positions espoused in the world of art by proponents of the aesthetic value of sketches, Fontana lent credence to his inclusion of what he elsewhere styled Chopin's *dernière pensée musicale*, a piece transmitted only in the form of a sketch.[9]

In order to relate these aesthetic debates to the E♭ minor sketch, we need more closely to consider its peculiar physical state and its musical contents (see illus.1). Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger's hypothesis that the contents of the leaf and its paper type indicate a Majorcan provenance allows us to make sense of several unusual material features of the sketch.[10] The prominent tear at the lower left-hand corner of the leaf is consistent with the manuscript having been drafted on Majorca: in normal circumstances, with Parisian suppliers of paper close to hand, Chopin would presumably have discarded a ripped page rather than saving it for sketching purposes (and physical evidence confirms that the tear preceded the drafting of the E♭ minor sketch).[11] But the tear is not the only material feature of the sketch that suggests that the composer was conserving paper: so too does the physical layout. Chopin appears to have folded the leaf vertically in half, and to have drafted most of the sketch (until its very last bars) to the left of the fold. From this we may deduce that the tonal planning on the right half of the leaf (whereby, as Eigeldinger has ingeniously demonstrated, Chopin established which of the op.28 Preludes remained to be written) preceded the draft on the left half.[12] The need to sketch a prelude in E♭ minor arose precisely from this tonal plan (in other words, the abbreviation '3 o' [= 'terzo'] attached to the tonality of 'es moll' on the right half of the page told Chopin that the Prelude in E♭ minor was the third of those that still needed to be composed). And the presence of this tonal plan on the page prevented him from sketching in his normal fashion, using the entire page. Lastly, and because Chopin confined himself to a relatively small portion of the leaf, he drafted the majority of the systems in four-bar units.[13] The exceptions to this pattern (in the first, fifth and seventh systems) point to compositionally fraught moments of the piece.

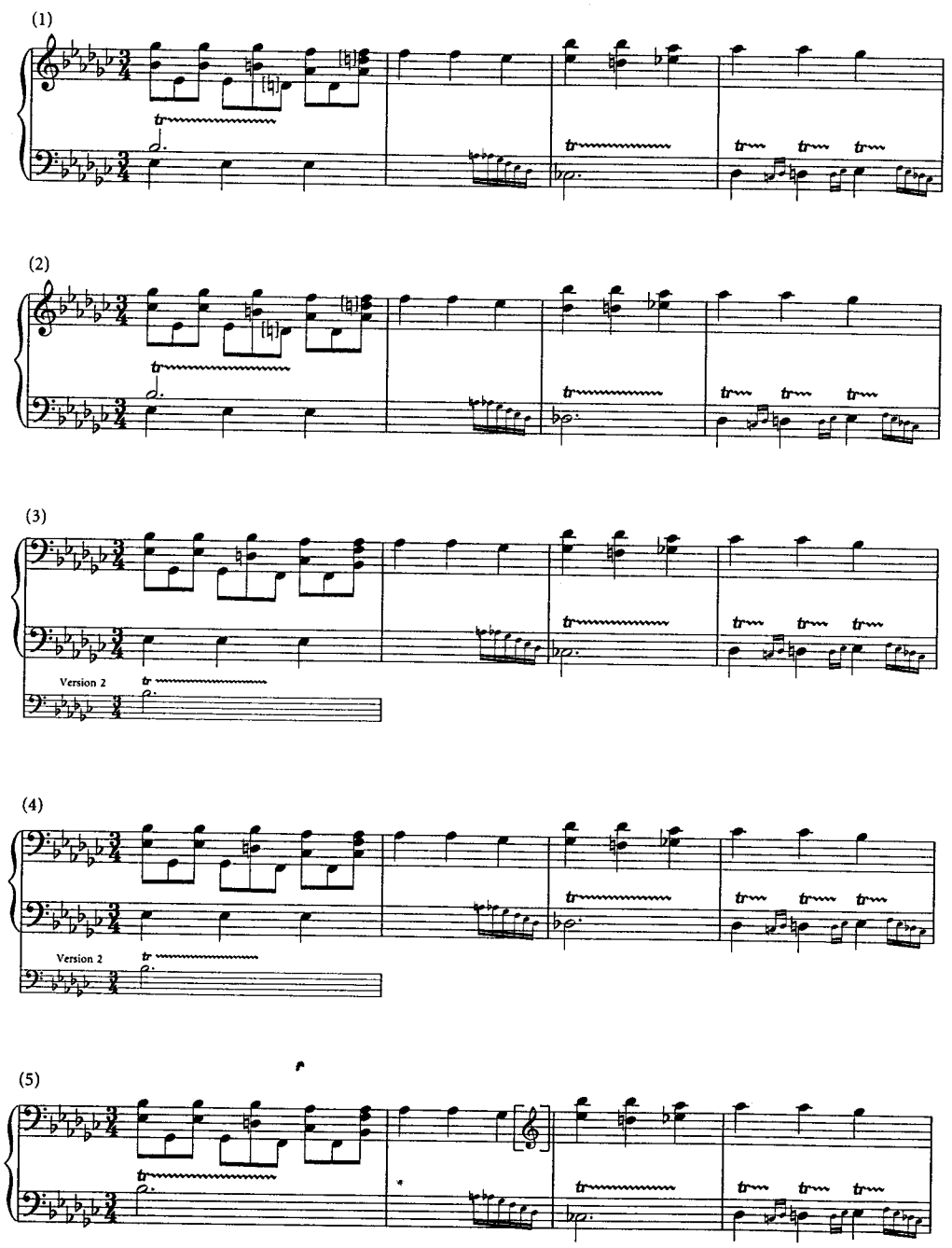
Chopin viewed his sketches as private documents whose notation need make sense only to him, and this particular draft displays some of the scribal shortcuts that he habitually used in such circumstances. Striving to transfer the sounds conceived at the keyboard onto paper, he seldom wasted time writing down aspects of the piece that were obvious to him. Thus he did not take special care with clefs and accidentals, since he knew what the notes were supposed to sound like. And when a pattern of some sort repeated itself, he did not fully write out what to him was a self-evident design. Hence in our sketch Chopin plainly intended the triplet pattern announced in the first bar (and reiterated in the fourth and fifth systems) to repeat in every bar of the piece save for the last three, and obviously intended trills to sound continuously in the left hand.

But, now in the public eye, this private document furtively cloaks some of its readings. To a certain extent the determinate aspects of the sketch are less striking than its indeterminate features. Many aspects of the piece resist definitive interpretation; pitches, rhythms and voice-leading fall onto the page with maddening imprecision. In some places, Chopin essayed more than one version of a given passage, and failed to leave any obvious sign as to which of them (if any) he preferred. Hence we discover three separate versions of the first part of the closural gesture (over the trilled dominant pedal), and two further versions of the very ending of the piece. And the opening four bars of the piece pose their own, very different, interpretative puzzles. Here the absence of clefs augments the customary ambiguities that arise from the inexact notation of pitch and the omission of implied accidentals.



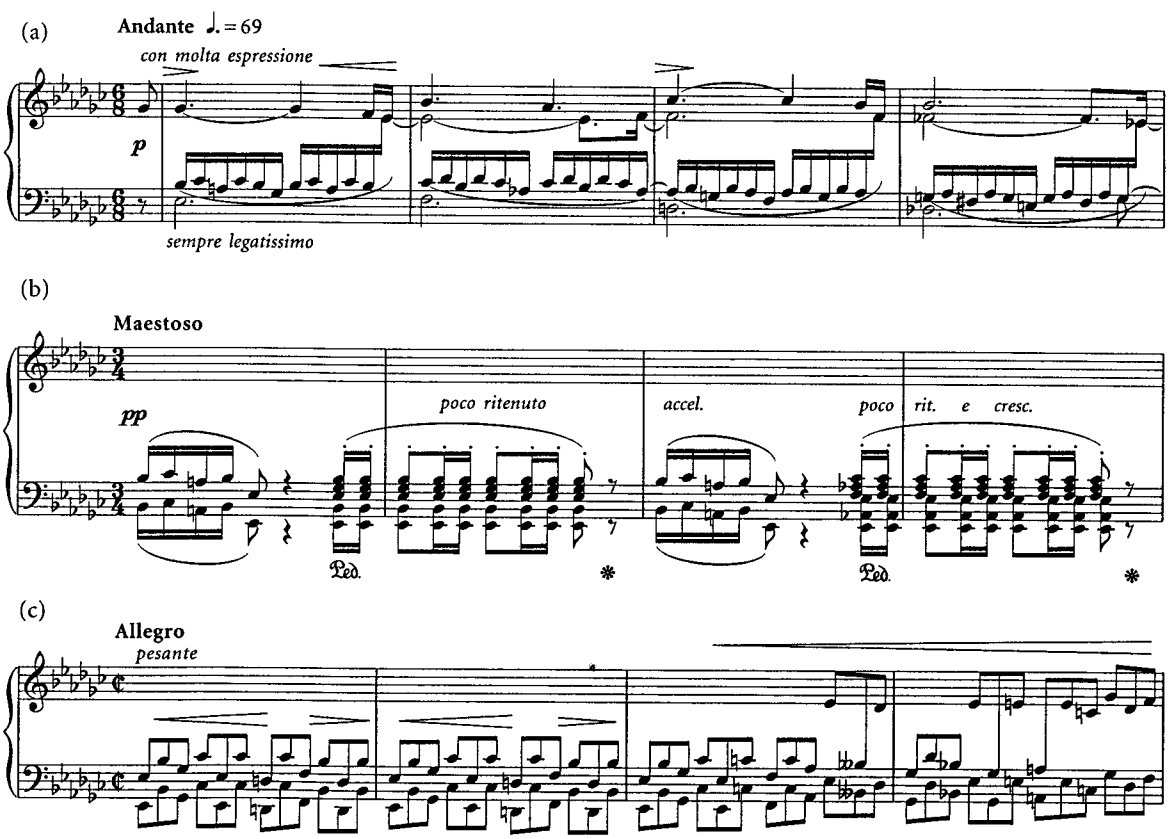
1 Sketch for a Prelude in E♭ minor (The Robert Owen Lehman Collection, on deposit at The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York)

Ex.1 Five interpretations of bars 1–4 of the E♭ minor sketch



Ex.1 shows five interpretations of Chopin's hasty scrawl (more readings of these bars are certainly possible); what is interesting is that some measure of dissatisfaction attaches to every one of them, since none includes every pitch that Chopin wrote at the level at which he apparently wrote it. Thus the accidentals in the top staff would seem to imply that the first two bars (and perhaps the next two as well) should be read in the bass clef (see versions 3–5 in ex.1); such an interpretation results in an ungainly overlap between the right and left hands, an overlap that can only barely make sense if we assume that the pitches in the lower staff represent successive, rather than simultaneous readings, with the upper B♭ replacing the lower E♭. Moreover, as important as a lower register seems to have been for Chopin's general conception of the key of E♭ minor (compare the Etude, op.10 no.6, the Polonaise, op.26 no.2, and of course the Prelude, op.28 no.14—see ex.2), it would be peculiar for him to place the opening two or four bars of a piece in a register below middle C when the rest of the piece clearly unfolds one to two octaves above this starting point. But every plausible version with the right hand in the treble clef also requires a certain suspension of disbelief with respect to the composer's notational habits. The solution I have opted for takes note of the absence of a brace at the beginning of the first system (compare the following three systems), and interprets it as a sign that Chopin may have intended that the music he initially notated in the bass clef be read two octaves higher, or in the register of the music found on the immediately following systems with braces.

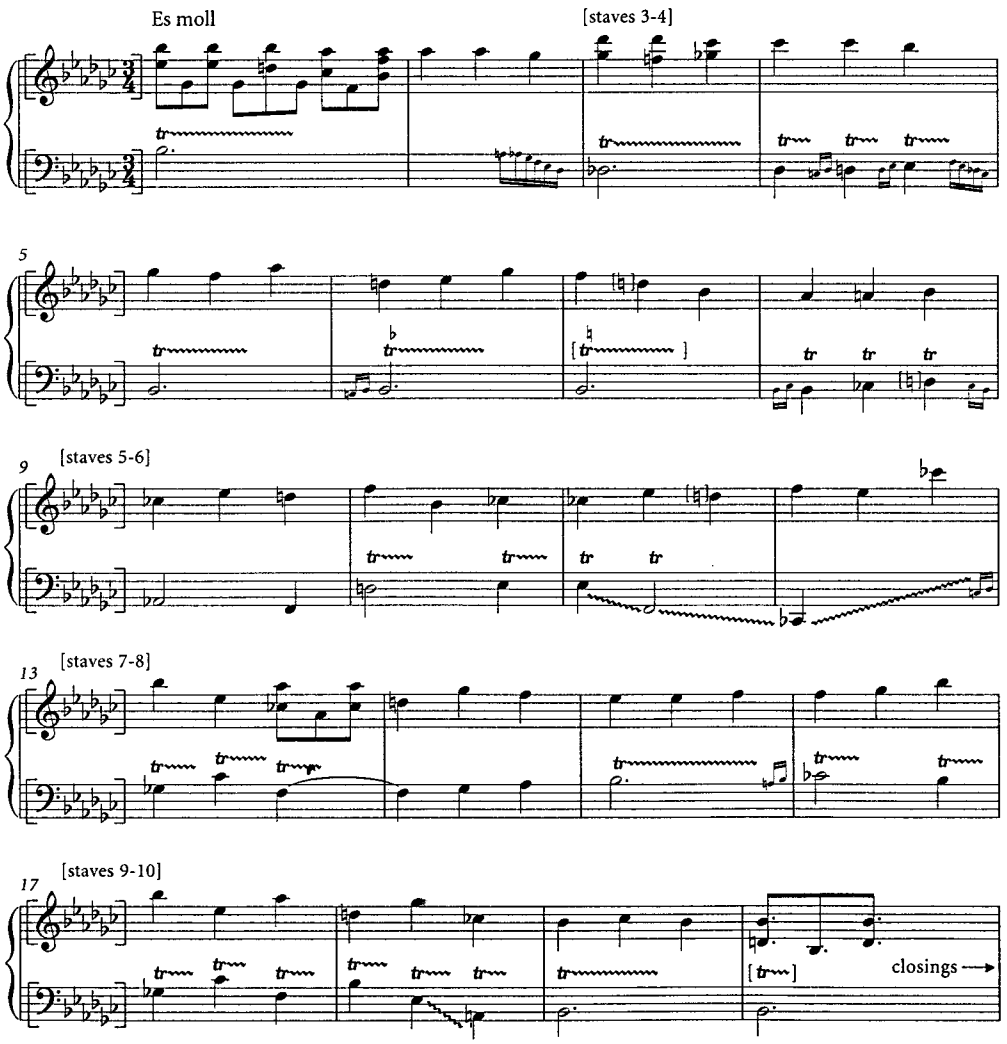
Ex.2 Register and Chopin's conception of the key of E♭ minor: (a) Etude, op.10 no.6; (b) Polonaise, op.26 no.2; (c) Prelude, op.28 no.14



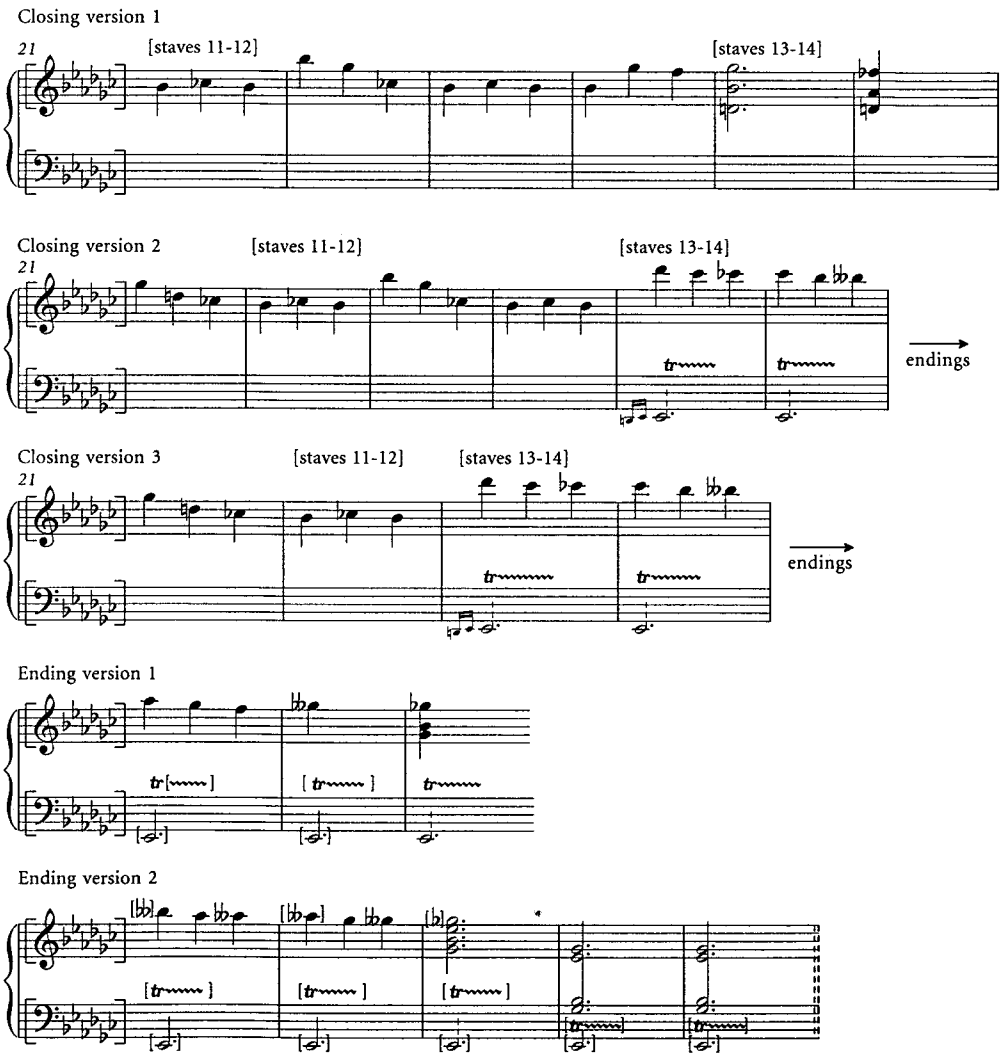
Exx.3 and 4 use this solution in order to offer, respectively, a relatively literal transcription of the sketch and a 'realization' of what Chopin's runic scrawl may have implied musically. I have no illusions that this realization offers *the* right solution for the opening (or indeed for other interpretative details), or that there can even be such a thing as *the* right solution. For a composer who so customarily allowed multiple versions of his published works to appear in print at the same time, it would be surprising if one of his sketches displayed a more determinate nature than his finished works.[14] Indeed, I intend the sense of 'realization' precisely to mirror the process by which a keyboard player renders a continuo part into sound: different renditions of the E♭ minor sketch will reveal at once the adherence to a common source and the individuality of the various interpreters. In this light we might recall Delacroix's words: 'Perhaps the sketch of a work only pleases as much as it does because everyone finishes it to his liking.'

Despite the blurred edges of the beginning and

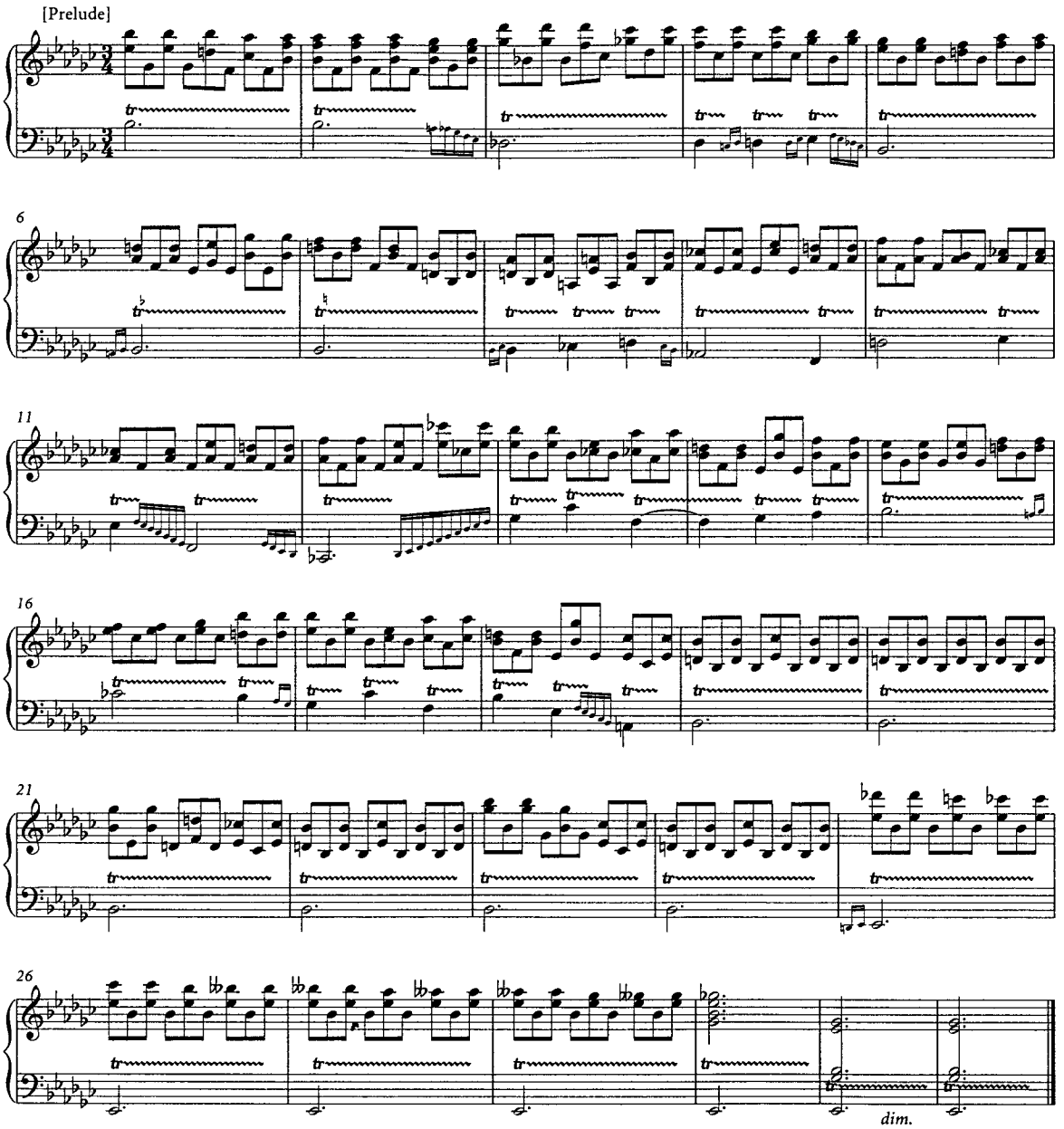
Ex.3 Relatively literal transcription of the E♭ minor sketch



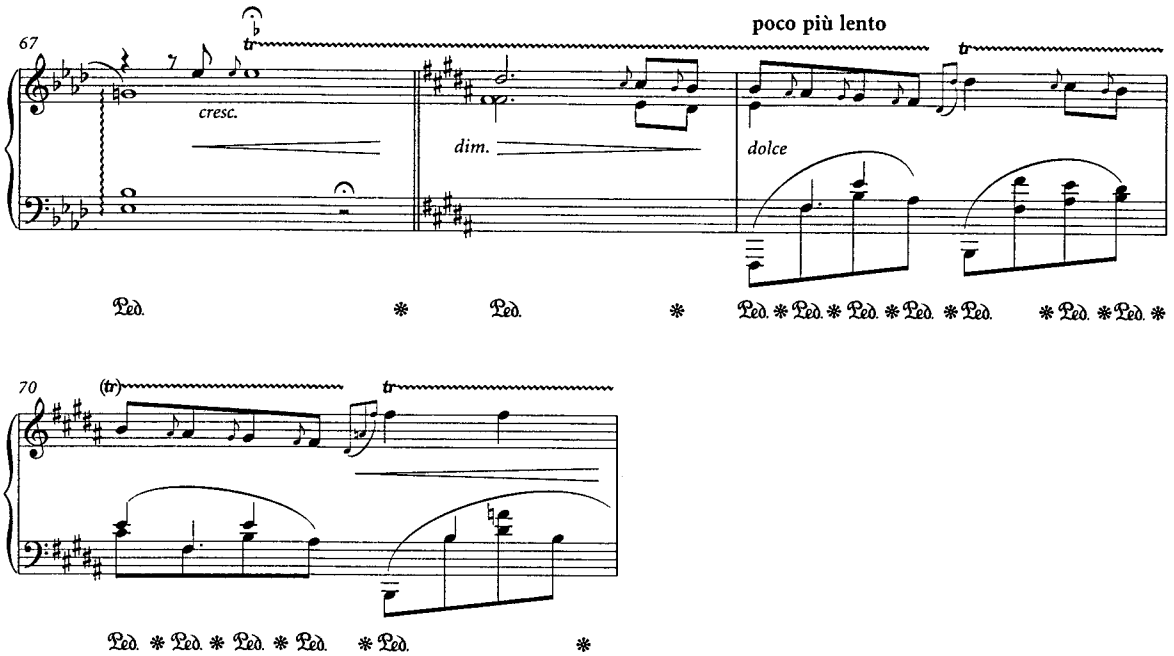
end of the sketch and the haziness of many of its internal details, we can nevertheless garner a sense of what sort of E♭ minor Prelude this sketch represents. Or, put another way, we can understand what led Chopin to undertake the sort of compositional labours on paper that George Sand so evocatively described in her memoirs. For undoubtedly it was the innovative timbral and textural surface, the intriguing possibility of building a prelude around unremitting torrents of trills densely enchained beneath melodic triplets, that impelled Chopin to take up paper and quill. This timbral gesture can be understood in one sense as experimental: Chopin's impulses here led him down a path (with respect to the unprecedented tethered trills) that he would not allow himself to tread in a published work until the reprise of the Nocturne in B major, op.62 no.1—and even there the appearance of the trills in the melodic line produces a less radical effect (ex.5). In another sense the timbre sounds disturbing, even grotesque: there is something disquieting in the prolonged turbulence of the trill, an effect perhaps



Ex.4 Realization of the E♭ minor sketch



Ex.5 Reprise of Nocturne in B major, op.62 no.1

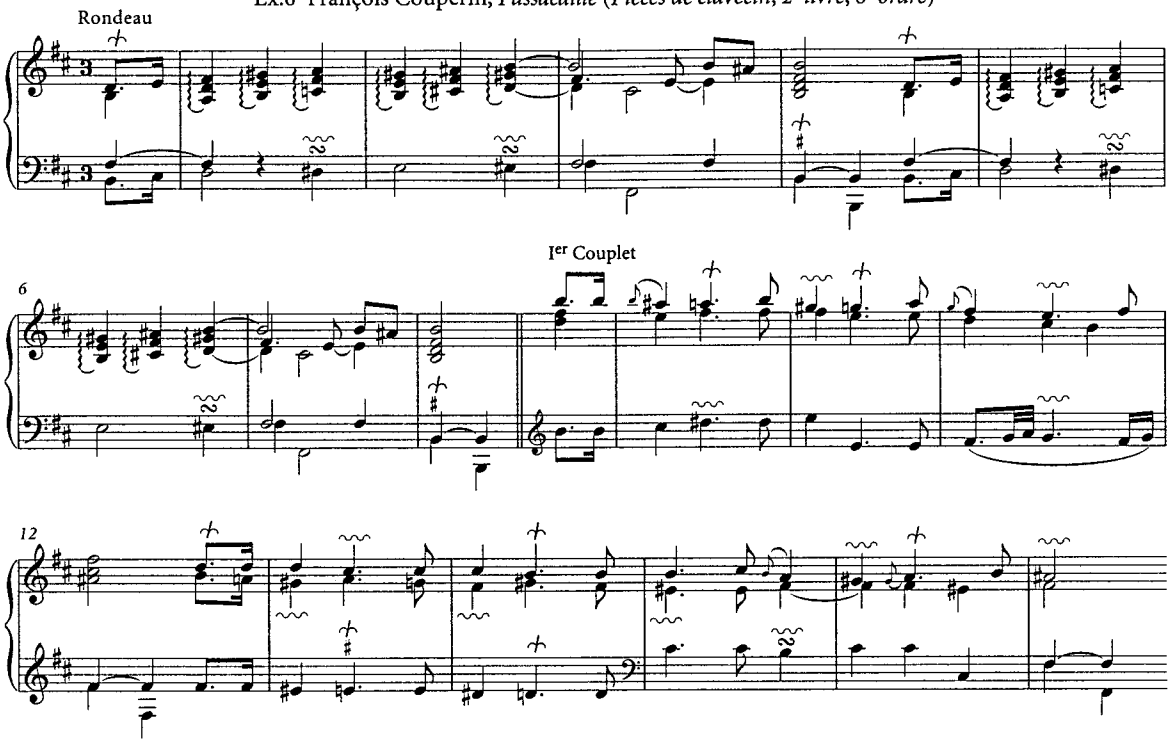


not too surprising when we recall the rhetoric of distress that Sand used in her memoirs to describe Chopin's compositional activities on Majorca:

> The cloister was for him full of terrors and phantoms, even when he felt well. He did not say anything, and I had to guess. When I would return from my nocturnal explorations in the ruins with my children, I would find him, at ten in the evening, pale at his piano, his eyes haggard, his hair standing almost on end. It would take him some moments to recognize us.
>
> He would then make an effort to laugh, and he would play us the sublime things he had just composed, or, better, the terrible and harrowing ideas that had seized him, unwittingly, in that hour of solitude, sadness and terror.
>
> It is there that he composed the most beautiful of those brief pages that he modestly entitled preludes.[15]

Perhaps, too, the sound of the prelude shows Chopin imaginatively evoking music of the past, for the massed trills bring to mind more the sound of such *clavecinistes* as François Couperin and Rameau than any model chronologically proximate to Chopin's time. To my ear, Couperin's style seems most apposite to that of Chopin's sketch. Readers of this journal are better placed than most to conjure up their own associations with specific pieces. For myself, the conjoined trills of the sketch call to mind the repetitive intensity of a work such as the B minor *Passacaille* (*Pièces de clavecin, 2e livre, 8e ordre*)—see ex.6. Yet it is difficult to ascertain precisely when and how Chopin might have come into contact with music from this earlier epoch. Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger has argued that Chopin would likely have been familiar with some of the music of François Couperin. But Eigeldinger's evidence points to this knowledge as developing after the drafting of the E♭ minor sketch: the fundamental source by which a musician in Paris could have come to know the music of François Couperin, Jean-Joseph-Bonaventure Laurens's anonymously edited anthology of 38 *Pièces de clavecin par F. Couperin*, was published in 1841, more than two years after the putative date of the sketch.[16] The *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* did print, at various times during 1839, an *Archives curieuses de la musique* that included compositions by Louis Couperin and Rameau, but it is not clear whether Chopin would have had access to even the earliest issues of this newspaper while away on Majorca. But to worry over a specific source for Chopin's knowledge may well miss the point, for various of Chopin's musical acquaintances with strong antiquarian tendencies

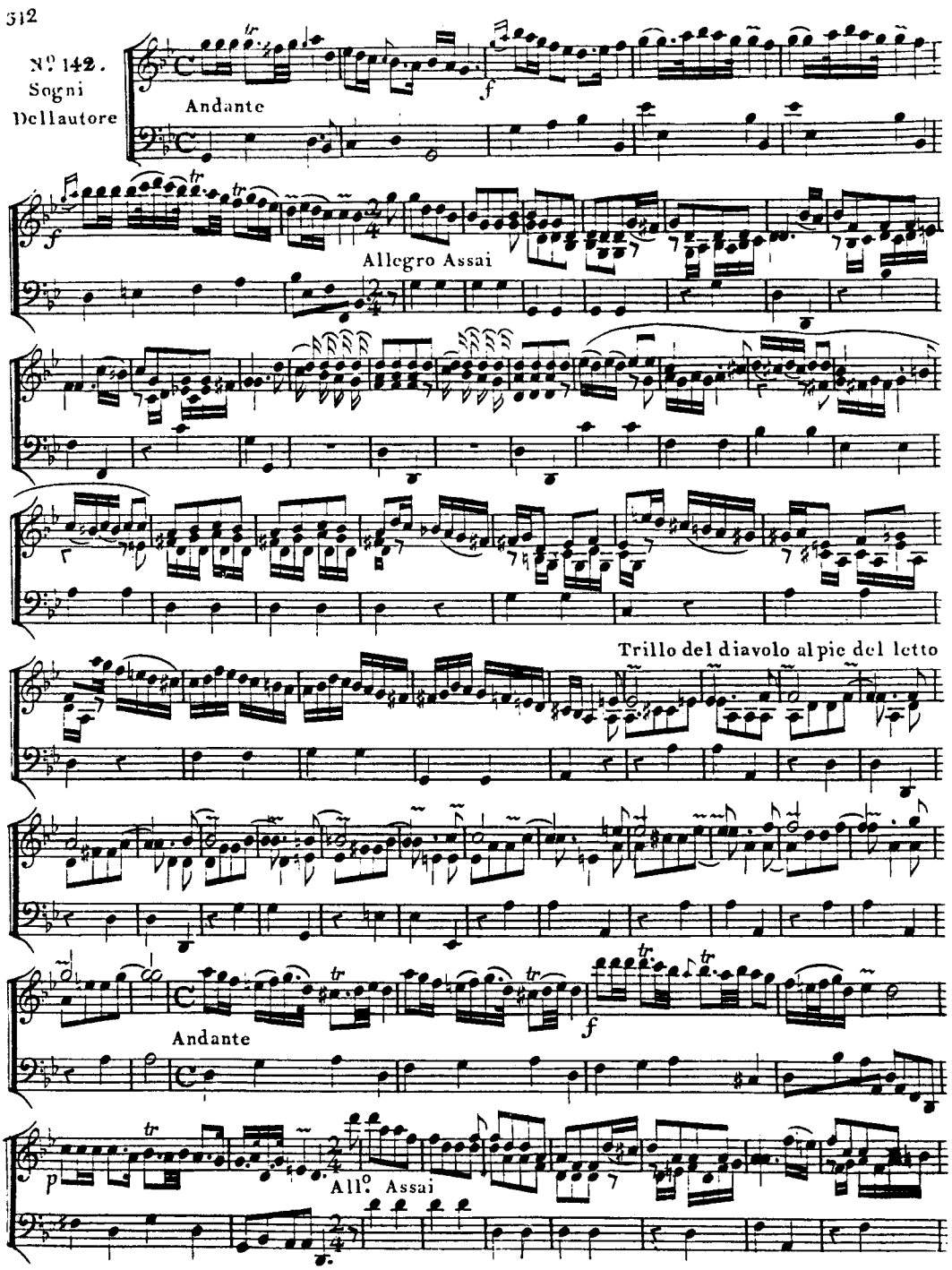
Ex.6 François Couperin, *Passacaille* (*Pièces de clavecin, 2e livre, 8e ordre*)



(Charles-Valentin Alkan, for example) could have served as informal conduits for the sound of the *clavecinistes*.[17]

And it is possible, too, that an entirely different sort of 'ancient music' might have inspired Chopin, who with this sketch may have pondered crossing mediums and conceiving a sort of 'Devil's trill' prelude for the piano. Tartini's 'Le trille du diable' first saw print in Jean-Baptiste Cartier's famous violin treatise of 1798 (illus.2). Although the Cartier treatise remained well known in Chopin's time, we need not suppose that Chopin spent time thumbing through violin methods in order to explain how he might have come to know the Tartini piece. For in a footnote attached to the first page of the Tartini sonata, Cartier thanked 'Baillot'—Pierre Baillot—for having loved Tartini's music enough to convince him to include the 'Devil's trill' in his treatise.[18] This same Baillot, three decades later, was one of Chopin's first musical contacts upon his arrival in Paris (he participated in Chopin's first concert on 26 February 1832). Baillot continued to nourish a fondness for Tartini's music (he cited some of it—though not the 'Devil's trill'—in his own *Art du violon* of 1834). If Chopin had not encountered the Tartini piece before he moved to Paris, he perhaps would have had good opportunities to hear it while in Baillot's presence. And what is most important, the affect of the sketch—the dark timbre produced by the E♭ minor tonality and the piercing, unsettling trills—certainly fits well with the 'diabolical' topic explored in Tartini's piece.[19]

But in this sketch, at once experimental, disturbing and evocative of a distant ornamental past, Chopin yoked innovative timbral gestures to generally conservative phrase and tonal structures. With respect to the phrase structure, there is a correspondence between the predominance of four-bar systems in the sketch and the actual phrase structure of the music. In other words, the material shape of the sketch reveals something notable about its rigid phrase structure. (The left-hand scalar runs that end the first three phrases do little to mitigate the rigidity of this scaffolding.) In this instance, Chopin turned exterior constraints into positive compositional virtues. That is, the stable phrase structure and the



2 Tartini, 'Devil's trill' Sonata, as first printed in Jean-Baptiste Cartier, *L'art du violon* (Paris, 1798), after the facsimile of the Paris [1803?] edition (New York: Broude Brothers, 1973)

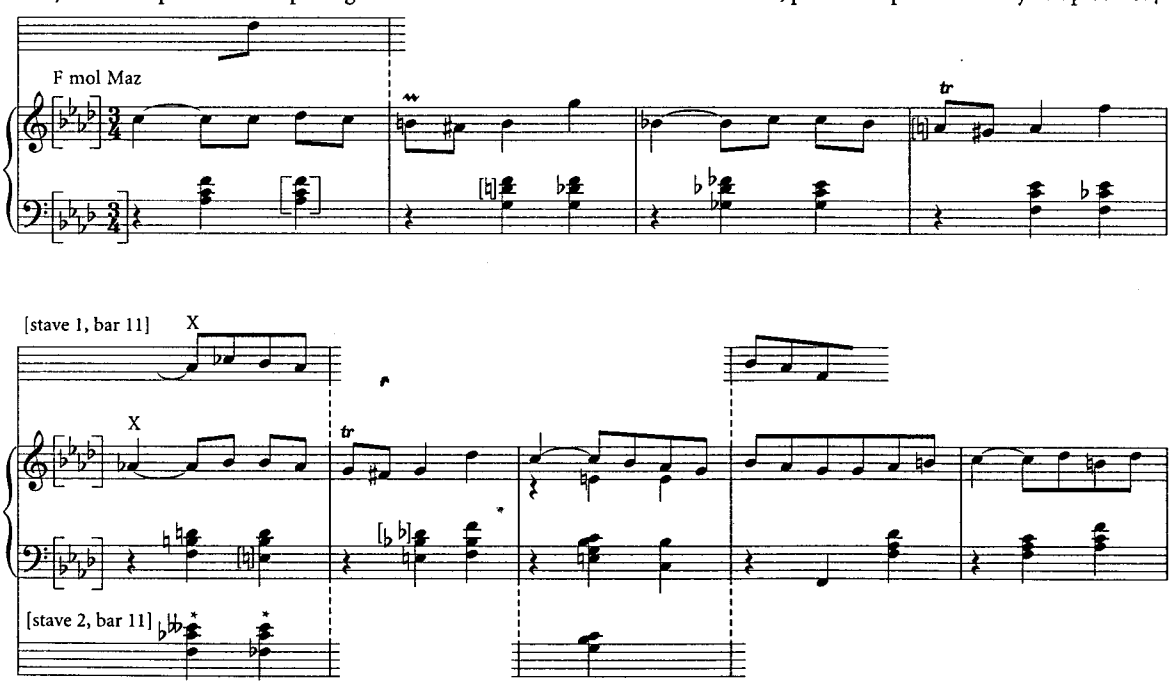
largely unremarkable harmonic stratum cast the timbral and textural experiments into greater relief. They provide the ground against which may be judged the imaginative flutterings in the left hand.

Now, while the sound-world of the E♭ minor sketch differs sharply from that of the work published as the E♭ minor Prelude, op.28 no.14, this does not mean that the latter work does not contain any trace of the sketch. In moving from the sketch to the published work, Chopin remained wedded to two ideas (see ex.2c). First, he wanted this E♭ minor Prelude to feature an atypical texture: the conjoined trills in the sketch, the 'crabbed' octaves in op.28 no.14.[20] And second, he wanted it to highlight repeating triplets.

That conceptual echoes of the E♭ minor sketch should continue to resonate in the published Prelude, op.28 no.14, figures importantly in our attempt to determine the ontological status of the sketch. For in this function, as in others just as significant, the 'Es moll' sketch resembles only one other sketch by Chopin: indeed, the most famous of all Chopin sketches, that for the F minor Mazurka published posthumously by Fontana as op.68 no.4 (ex.7). These are the only two surviving sketches for 'complete' pieces—'complete' in the sense that they display some semblance of a beginning, middle and end—that do not relate in basic thematic substance to works that Chopin himself finished. Both sketches display a significant degree of uncertainty with respect to the details of voice-leading and form, and both represent early attempts at pieces that he did publish: respectively, a Prelude for op.28, and (I have contended) a Mazurka for op.63.[21] And although he abandoned both sketches, their stylistic fingerprints remain in both of the replacement works. (In the published Mazurka a passage in the first contrasting section mimics an idiosyncratic harmonic progression in the sketch.)

Hence whatever ontological status one grants to the music in the sketch for the F minor Mazurka should also attach to the music of the E♭ minor sketch. If Fontana's implied logic is correct, then the sketch for the F minor Mazurka, apparently one step removed from improvisation, reveals evidence of an unconstrained master on the job. It would

Ex.7 Transcription of the opening bars of the sketch for a Mazurka in F minor, published posthumously as op.68 no.4



*MS: g♯

therefore transmit to us a genuine work—the cup dipped into the torrent of creativity drew forth a pearl. (The Mazurka's near canonical status, especially among critics, suggests a widespread acceptance of this logic.) And if the F minor Mazurka enjoys the status of a work, then the early E♭ minor Prelude too ought to be welcomed as a proper work by Chopin, a 'previously unknown prelude', perhaps, or, to adapt a marketing philosophy current in the mid-19th century, Chopin's *première pensée musicale.*

But this logic is false. First, if Sand's testimony is to be believed, it ignores the distinction in Chopin's own psyche between improvisation and sketch, between a relatively spontaneous outpouring and a decidedly constrictive creative endeavour. Second, it obscures another important distinction that follows from the divide between improvisation and sketch, namely the difference in Chopin's mind between music for public consumption and music for his own private domain. To be sure, Chopin must have improvised privately (though we do not know if he considered such private improvisations genuine compositional activity; it is quite possible that he considered the activity at the keyboard that led to the birth of a piece to be a very different pursuit from 'improvisation'). But Chopin, like nearly every keyboard artist of his time, plainly considered improvisation primarily a public activity (if he believed otherwise, we would not have testimony from the likes of Grzymała and Fontana about his improvisational skills).[22] Sketches, on the other hand, were for Chopin intensely private documents (witness his concern that any sketches in his portfolio be destroyed after his death, and precisely because what he termed his 'respect' for the public made the idea that any 'imperfect' composition would appear before them utterly repellent to him).[23] Third, and once again drawing on the importance to the composer of the difference between the public and private domains, Chopin explicitly put the two sketches aside in favour of other, replacement works. Neither sketch ever engaged with—indeed they were explicitly denied—any of the ordinary social contexts that might have elevated their contents to the full status of a work. In this way they would seem to be very different from the sort of sketch valorized in the visual arts. These musical drafts did not represent the *élan* of the composer's creative passion, but rather the detritus of his most agonizing labours.

Yet to argue thus is not to claim that the sketches lack aesthetic value, and that they must be somehow suppressed (as if that would be possible). Placed in the proper context, the sketches would permit performers and scholars both to understand better the compositional contexts from which the respective works emerged and to choose to perform the 'private' readings if they felt that Chopin (like other figures of his generation) denied a more radical initial creative impulse. And, more importantly perhaps, the sketches would also demonstrate that textual instability was as fundamental to the early stages of Chopin's compositional process as to the final stages.

But in addition to these more broadly conceived aesthetic values, the sketch for an E♭ minor Prelude possesses aesthetic value on its own terms. It allows us, for only the second time, to understand how a complete piece that Chopin did not publish might have sounded at one stage in its conception, and thus in turn better to grasp how he went about making his creative decisions. Even more particularly, the sketch provides a glimpse into Chopin's workshop during one of the most noteworthy—and fraught—periods in his life, the fabled sojourn to Majorca. It brings vividly to life the images of a strained and stressed composer toiling to complete a set of pieces—the Twenty-four Preludes—of signal importance to the history of music. Transcribing and realizing the E♭ minor sketch may not yield a hitherto unknown *work* by Chopin, but what it does yield is thoroughly interesting in its own right.

I wish to thank Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, Murray Perahia, John Rink and Carl Schachter for comments and suggestions that proved most helpful in the completion of this article. Jonathan Bellman deserves special accolades, not only for his wise counsel on the content of this article, but also for his fine performance of the Prelude, which enlivened an oral presentation of this paper at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in Toronto (November 2000).

1 The formulation 'finish and publish' thereby separates into a distinct category the sketch for the Nocturne in C minor, a work that Chopin did 'finish' (to the extent that he prepared a fair copy of the piece), but did not

publish. (The work was first published in 1938.)

2 C. Rosen and H. Zerner, *Romanticism and realism: the mythology of nineteenth-century art* (New York, 1984), pp.226–7.

3 Sand's account appears in her *Impressions et souvenirs* (Paris, 1873), pp.72–90. For an important discussion of the relationship between this improvisation and Chopin's Prelude, op.45, see J.-J. Eigeldinger, 'Chopin and "la note bleue": an interpretation of the Prelude op.45', *Music and letters*, lxxviii (1997), pp.233–53.

4 Eugène Delacroix, *Journal, 1822–1863*, ed. A. Joubin (Paris, 1931–2; rev. edn 1980), p.330; translation adapted from M. Hannoosh, *Painting and the 'Journal' of Eugène Delacroix* (Princeton, 1995), p.72.

5 Baudelaire most notably defended the aesthetic worth of the 'unfinished' art work in his *Salon de 1845*, as part of his valorization of Corot's landscapes; see Charles Baudelaire, *Curiosités esthétiques, l'art romantique, et autres œuvres critiques*, ed. H. Lemaitre (Paris, 1962), p.61.

6 George Sand, *Histoire de ma vie*, in *Œuvres autobiographiques*, ed. G. Lubin, 2 vols. (Paris, 1971), ii, p.446. I have slightly modified the English translation printed in *Story of my life: the autobiography of George Sand, a group translation*, ed. T. Jurgrau (Albany, 1991), p.1108.

7 See Rosen and Zerner, *Romanticism and realism*, p.228.

8 *Œuvres posthumes de Fréd. Chopin*, ed. J. Fontana (Berlin, 1855), p.2. I have modified the translation printed in J.-J. Eigeldinger, *Chopin: pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils*, trans. N. Shohet with K. Osostowicz and R. Howat, ed. R. Howat (Cambridge, 1986), p.282.

9 On the F minor Mazurka as Chopin's *dernière pensée*, see J. Kallberg, *Chopin at the boundaries: sex, history, and musical genre* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), ch.4: 'Chopin's last style', pp.89–134.

10 See J.-J. Eigeldinger, 'L'achèvement des *Préludes* de Chopin: documents autographes', *Revue de musicologie*, lxxv (1989), pp.229–42.

11 The descending stem of the first note on the tenth staff was written over the jagged edge of the torn paper, which suggests that the writing of the sketch followed the tearing of the paper.

12 Eigeldinger, 'L'achèvement des *Préludes*', pp.230–42.

13 The four-bar units perhaps also served Chopin as a kind of visual architectonic scaffolding. He very occasionally used this procedure in sketches where he was not (as in the E♭ minor sketch) constrained for space. See in particular his sketch for the Berceuse, op.57 (Warsaw, Towarzystwo imienia Fryderyka Chopina, M/2165), and also the first eight bars of the sketch for the Nocturne in C minor, op. post. (Warsaw, Towarzystwo imienia Fryderyka Chopina, M/300).

14 On the meaning of the musical variants in Chopin's 'simultaneous' first editions, see Kallberg, *Chopin at the boundaries*, ch.7: 'The Chopin "problem": simultaneous variants and alternate versions', pp.215–28.

15 Sand, *Histoire de ma vie*, ii, pp.419–20; Sand, *Story of my life*, p.1091 (translation modified).

16 'Chopin et Couperin: affinités sélectives', *Échos de France et d'Italie: liber amicorum Yves Gérard*, ed. M.-C. Mussat, J. Mongrédien and J.-M. Nectoux (Paris, 1997), pp.175–93.

17 On the general pathways Chopin might have followed in Paris to learn about music before Mozart, see J.-J. Eigeldinger, 'Placing Chopin: reflections on a compositional aesthetic', *Chopin studies 2*, ed. J. Rink and J. Samson (Cambridge, 1994), pp.119–22.

18 *L'art du violon* (Paris, 1798); Cartier's footnote (the text of which reads 'Cette Piece est Très rare; Je la dois à BAILLOT, Son amour Pour les belles productions de TARTINI, L'a décidé à m'en faire le sacrifice') appears on p.262, 'Le trille du diable' on pp.268–9. In the facsimile version of 1973—derived from a printing of 1803—the footnote appears on p.307, and the 'Devil's trill' on pp.312–13; see J.-B. Cartier, *L'art du violon* (Paris, 1803; R/New York, 1973).

19 Chopin's teacher Józef Elsner tells us that Chopin had already once before, in a flirtatious moment in Polish society, musically brought to mind devils: 'you nonchalantly (but because beautiful eyes asked you to) amplified an idea of a few notes for a diabolical Chorus into an angelic Song'; letter of Elsner to Chopin, 13 Nov 1832, Fryderyk Chopin, *Korespondencja Fryderyka Chopina*, ed. B. E. Sydow, 2 vols. (Warsaw, 1955), i, p.221 (my translation).

20 The reference to 'crabbed' octaves borrows from Chopin's own evocative description of the unison octave texture of the finale of the Sonata in B♭ minor, op.35: 'a short little finale, perhaps about 3 of my pages; the left hand crabs [*ogadują*] unisono with the right after the march' (letter to Julian Fontana, 8 Aug 1839, in Chopin, *Korespondencja*, i, p.353; emphasis in original; my translation). The standard English translations of the letter generally render the verb in the last clause as 'gossip', which ignores the more biting resonances of the Polish word, which carries two meanings: (1) 'to crab, to pull to pieces, to cry down', and (2) 'to talk over, to speak (ill) of': see J. Stanisławski, *The great Polish–English dictionary*, 2 vols. (Warsaw, 1978), i, p.634.

21 Kallberg, *Chopin at the boundaries*, pp.126–32.

22 Chopin doubtless distinguished between at least two types of 'public' improvisation: that which took place in front of a larger, anonymous, paying audience, and that which took place in the more comfortable and intimate setting of a salon peopled by acquaintances. Certainly the latter venue nourished the most famous and ethereal of Chopin's improvisations, but we should not forget the importance of the first category in particular to Chopin's early career as virtuoso pianist.

23 See the letter from Wojciech Grzymała to Auguste Léo written shortly after Chopin's death (before his funeral); Chopin, *Korespondencja*, ii, p.324 (my translation).