

Interpreting Chopin's Music Today: Mythologization of Art: Kitsch

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Abstract : The subject of this abstract is related to the notion of 'popular music', a notion that should be treated with extreme care, particularly when applied to Frederic Chopin, one of the greatest composers of Romanticism. By 'popular music', we mean a category of everyday music, set against the more intellectual kind, referred to as 'classical'. We only need to look back to the culture of the nineteenth century to realize that this 'popular music' refers to the 'music of the low'. It can be studied from a sociological viewpoint, or as sociological aesthetics. However, we cannot ignore the fact that, very quickly, this music spread to the wealthiest strata of the European society of the nineteenth century, while likewise the lowest classes often listen to the intellectual classical music, so pleasant to listen to. Further, we can observe that a sort of 'sacralisation of kitsch' occurs at the intersection between the classical and popular music. This process is the topic of this contribution. We will start by investigating the notion of kitsch through the study of Chopin's popular compositions. However, before considering the popularisation of this music in today's culture, we will have to focus on the use of the word kitsch in Chopin's times, through his own musical aesthetics. Finally, the objective here will be to negate the theory that art is simply the intellectual definition of aesthetics. A kitsch can, obviously, only work on the emotivity of the masses, as it represents one of the features of culture-language (the words which the masses identify with). All art is transformed, becoming something outdated or even outmoded. Here, we are truly within a process of mythologization of art, through the study of the aesthetic reception of the musical work.

Keywords : F. Chopin, kitsch, musical work, mythologization of art, popular music, romantic music

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