

Title – Chopin’s Fantasy in F minor: the Tragedy and Triumph of Poland

Program of Study – Music

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Category – Performing Arts (Music)

Abstract:

Frederic Chopin was one of the greatest pianists of the nineteenth century, and among his enormous output of piano compositions, the Fantasy in F minor is one of his greatest masterpieces. The piece is powerful and mysterious, and includes a variety of expression from abundant melodicism, to intense laments, to three marches of drastically different character. This study seeks to determine how Chopin’s Fantasy conveys a Polish Nationalist message. The methods include research of biographies and commentaries to examine the historical, philosophical, and musical influences behind the piece. Any performer or listener of Chopin’s music must understand his connection with Polish Romanticism. Chopin grew up in Warsaw during a time of social and political unrest; he moved away in 1830 just before the tragic November Uprising. As an exile in Paris for the rest of his life, he composed music rooted in the traditions of his homeland. The Fantasy is a musical narrative containing allusions to Polish melodies and a unified character of tragedy and triumph. Its form, melodicism, and harmonic structure reflect Chopin’s Romantic influences, and its character strongly implies Polish nationalism. This study forms interdisciplinary connections between music, history, and philosophy, with personal connections between the work and modern-day artists and listeners. Further research is needed on disputing editions of the score, the extent of Chopin’s allusions to

Polish melodies, and Chopin's specific reasoning behind the expansive contrasting material in the piece. The aim of this research is to promote informed and meaningful connections between the work, the performer, and the listener.