

## Reviews on Chopin's Piano Variations in 1830s France: Their Significance in Cultural History as a Venue to Disseminate the Idea of 'Art Music'

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In the *Gazette musicale de Paris* (henceforth, the *Gazette*), founded by the music publisher Maurice Schlesinger in 1834, Chopin's piano variations (Opp. 2, 12, 13 & 14), which were published by the same firm, were highly praised as music that could not be understood by 'the masses'. This study aims to consider the significance of these piano variations and their reviews in the cultural history of music.

Comprehensive research on the music magazines of 1830s France revealed that *Le Pianiste* had published negative opinions about Chopin's works, and then in a rebuttal of this, the *Gazette* praised his works explaining that Chopin's piano variations could be appreciated only by 'connoisseurs'. While in previous studies, the *Gazette* is generally considered to be the music magazine for artists, I noted that this popular genre was deliberately highlighted to obtain a large readership among piano amateurs.

In the *Gazette*, reviews on Chopin's piano variations functioned as a venue to convey to piano amateurs the idea of 'art music', which is different from the music in vogue and is associated with the classics. In the reviews, the critic emphasized the difference between Chopin's works and the patterned virtuosic variations, and praised his works for their coherence. Behind this appreciation, the reviewer's view about instrumental music was that musical compositions are manifestations of the composer's spirit. These reviews influenced on piano reviews in 1830s France, as is clear from the fact that the evaluation of Chopin's works in *Le Pianiste* was changed. Chopin's piano variations and their reviews played a significant role in disseminating the idea of 'art music' in France.