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# HARMONIA

The Journal of the Graduate Association of  
Musicologists *und* Theorists (GAMuT)



# HARMONIA

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Volume 21 • 2023–2024

The Journal of the Graduate Association of  
Musicologists *und* Theorists at the  
University of North Texas

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Congratulations to Tomás Jonsson, whose paper “Misunderstood: The Legacy of Art Tatum” was the winner of the 2023–2024 Graham H. Phipps Paper Award.

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# Misunderstood: The Legacy of Art Tatum

TOMÁS JONSSON

## Introduction

Every jazz pianist has an Art Tatum encounter story. Some pianists burn through his discography and fruitlessly attempted to imitate his technical tricks, yet others reject his stylings altogether as nothing more than tasteless virtuosity. But most contemporary jazz pianists have settled on a middle way, expressing admiration for Tatum's bravura without treating his music as worthy of serious study or imitation.<sup>1</sup> Although Tatum was unanimously celebrated among the great musicians of his day, the critical establishment was, and has been, divided since the beginning. For years, "a sizeable body of jazz critical opinion ... dismissed Tatum as a jazz pianist altogether."<sup>2</sup> According to David Horn, the current attitude towards him is one of "bemused ambivalence ... consigning him to the special kind of marginality reserved for talented non sequiturs."<sup>3</sup>

In his day, Tatum was the most popular jazz pianist among jazz musicians, but this is no longer the case for several reasons. First, pre-bebop pianists are generally relatively neglected in jazz piano pedagogy. As the accomplished musician Fred Hersch once observed, jazz pianists today do not delve very deeply into the past: "they might go back to Bud Powell, but they won't go back any further ... they would rather listen to Brad Mehldau."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps this is because contemporary jazz improvisation bears little resemblance to pre-bop jazz. Since jazz has been a largely linear language for most of its history now, pre-bop musicians (including Tatum) do not receive the same rigorous study. Second, as Horn argues, Tatum's approach doesn't neatly fit into "established narratives and agreed values."<sup>5</sup> Because he was a transitional figure between swing, stride, and bebop (with strong classical influences and popular song quotations interspersed throughout), his *sui generis* style is difficult to teach or learn methodically. Tatum suggested the melody "chorus after chorus, erecting a massive structure of countermelodies, fluid voicings,

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<sup>1</sup> Mait Edey, "Tatum, The Last Years," *Jazz Review* 3, no. 7 (August 1960): 4–5, <https://www.jazzstudiesonline.org/files/jso/resources/pdf/JREV3.7Full.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Benny Green, "Art Tatum," in *The Reluctant Art: Five Studies in the Growth of Jazz*, expanded ed. (1961; repr., New York: Da Capo Press, 1991), 195.

<sup>3</sup> David Horn, "The Sound World of Art Tatum," *Black Music Research Journal* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 237–57, <https://doi.org/10.2307/779469>.

<sup>4</sup> Fred Hersch, "Interview Fred Hersch," interview by Lies Steppe [Klara], March 22, 2019, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XCGuRn3cxg>.

<sup>5</sup> Horn, "The Sound World of Art Tatum," 238.

substitute chords, and sometimes whole substitute progressions beneath it.”<sup>6</sup> Tatum’s style defies convenient categorization, in contrast with bebop vocabulary, which can be systematically taught. To younger jazz musicians, Tatum is “at best a puzzling anachronism, an anomaly ... standing apart from the mainstream.”<sup>7</sup> And finally, Tatum’s technical brilliance, which even his fiercest critics universally concede, is such that few pianists could imitate him even if they wanted to, further contributing to his neglect in jazz pedagogy.

Tatum’s brilliant technique has long served as the basis of what I call “the limitation narrative.” The well-established critical consensus about Tatum is that he was not much of an improviser, but instead, a gifted but mechanical technician who covered for the shallowness of his ideas with glistening arpeggios and cheap pyrotechnics. In other words, his creative deficiencies were “directly related to his extraordinary technical facility.”<sup>8</sup> This paper presents evidence that undermines the limitation narrative in three ways. First, historical context gleaned from interviews of Tatum and his contemporaries reveals that Tatum was not limited because of his own abilities; instead, Tatum chose to limit himself due to commercial tastes. Second, in spite of these compromises, he had the nearly unanimous admiration of his musical peers, including “the greats” revered by the critical establishment. Finally, this paper uses original transcriptions to assess Tatum’s ability to improvise linearly in a small group. The recorded evidence will clearly show that his creative decisions reflected a desire to play to his audience, presenting his most innovative material to largely Black audiences. The persistence of the limitation narrative is arguably one of the reasons Tatum does not receive serious study commensurate with his immense talents and contributions to jazz history. Dispelling it will perhaps lead to a reevaluation of his impact, and hopefully more detailed study.

### **Tatum and the Jazz Critical Establishment**

Tatum’s standing among the jazz critical establishment was sharply divided between those who lauded him as a genius and those who were unimpressed with all but his virtuosity. In his seminal biography *Too Marvelous for Words: The Life and Genius of Art Tatum*, James Lester artfully describes this split in critical opinion:

His dazzling command of the keyboard has been a wedge that has divided opinion about him. There has been a minority of critics who find in him an unnecessary ornateness or even floridity, a shallowness, “an excess of hyperbole.” One of the most

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<sup>6</sup> Edey, “Tatum, The Last Years,” 4.

<sup>7</sup> Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz 1930-1945*, vol. 2 in *The History of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 502.

<sup>8</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 477.

polite expressions of this point of view was that “his tendency to display his accomplishments sometimes gets in the way of a performance.” The cultivation of virtuoso skill has always exposed players to the same criticism: No SOUL[,] ... decoration, not substance; effect, not content ... The complaint is that showy displays of musical athleticism take the place of musical thought and usurp the place of more significant improvisation. ... [In Jazz criticism,] one important criterion has always been originality; whenever skill seems to have replaced imagination, or prepared devices take the place of creativity, a reputation suffers. Because of his virtuosity, it has never been easy to judge Tatum by this particular criterion.<sup>9</sup>

Although Lester describes the critical view as a minority position, in my research I found appraisals of Tatum’s artistry to be fiercely split down the middle. I found at least as many dedicated skeptics as devoted admirers. Tatum’s creativity was and still is a topic of fierce debate among elite critics, and in 1940s America, these critics tended to be White, formally educated, and wealthy, whereas jazz musicians themselves were generally Black, informally educated, and socially disadvantaged.

### **Racial Dynamics in Jazz Criticism**

Scholars have observed the tendency of White critics to assail the work of Black artists that appeal to popular tastes. Christi Jay Wells points out that historian Gunther Schuller derided the Chick Webb band for achieving national prominence by featuring Ella Fitzgerald on “popular vocal numbers.”<sup>10</sup> Schuller’s frustration was that he saw jazz as a high art form and was disappointed that Webb and Fitzgerald were singing music that was beneath their station. In Schuller’s words, Fitzgerald’s early material with the band was “inane ephemera,” “idiotic,” and “often trashy.”<sup>11</sup> Webb’s shift was yet more evidence that “outstanding music rarely coincides with great public success.”<sup>12</sup> Wells characterizes Schuller’s criticism as part of a raced and gendered reaction common among critics of the time.<sup>13</sup> We will

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<sup>9</sup> James Lester, *Too Marvelous for Words: The Life and Genius of Art Tatum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 10.

<sup>10</sup> Christopher J. [Christi Jay] Wells, “‘A Dreadful Bit of Silliness’: Feminine Frivolity and Ella Fitzgerald’s Early Critical Reception,” *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 21 (January 2017): 43–44, <https://doi.org/10.1353/wam.2017.0003>.

<sup>11</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 293.

<sup>12</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 293.

<sup>13</sup> Ironically, Schuller was astute enough to detect racial issues in classical musician’s attitudes towards jazz but appeared to be blind to his own shortcomings. His remarks are worth quoting in full: “I suspect, moreover,



see Schuller's contempt for popular tastes return in his dim view of Tatum's "light classics" offerings.<sup>14</sup>

Even in their compliments, the critics' remarks could be steeped in racism. One *Down Beat* article called Tatum "a serious colored man" for having "a black man's genius for improvising ... and a white man's practised technique."<sup>15</sup> The problematic implications in the article are numerous, including that improvisation skills are inherently Black abilities (a twist on the noble savage trope), that only white men had practiced technique (Black technique is represented as either inferior or wild and untamed), and that Tatum was "a serious colored man" because of his abilities (in contrast to the unserious majority of "colored men").

#### *André Hodeir's Review*

Perhaps the most forceful exponent of the jaundiced view of Art Tatum is the French critic André Hodeir, marketed by *Down Beat's* editor as "one of Europe's best-known and most respected jazz critics."<sup>16</sup> In his 1955 review of Norman Granz's *The Genius of Art Tatum* series, Hodeir emphatically rejects the claim that Art Tatum could be considered a genius. Although he concedes that Tatum is a very talented pianist who is capable of executing some clever lines, his immense technique does not compensate for huge deficiencies in repertoire choice, style, and creativity.<sup>17</sup> Hodeir accuses Tatum of having "no evident desire to depart from the main theme," and of being a player who "renovates nothing."<sup>18</sup> He concludes his assessment of Tatum by remarking that "since there is virtually no music here, unless it is of the worst, and hardly any jazz, there is nothing left but the virtuoso to judge. ... It seems obvious that his very

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that those classical artists who admired Tatum did so in the generally patronizing way that classical musicians have traditionally viewed black and/or jazz artists, not to mention blind ones. Black musicians earned renowned White classical musicians' admiration only when they were perceived as emulating classical standards and properties. It is interesting that Tatum's technique was admired by classical musicians in the 1930s and 1940s clearly for its classical leanings and technical perfection, qualities they could relate to. But where were the classical admirers of Thelonious Monk's or Pete Johnson's more 'unorthodox' and intrinsically jazz-rooted techniques?" (Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 479).

<sup>14</sup> For more criticism of Tatum's so-called light classics, see Erik Wiedemann, "The Art Tatum Myth: An Attempt at a Revaluation," *Jazz Monthly* 1, no. 7 (August 1955): 27–30.

<sup>15</sup> George Duning, "Impressions of Art Tatum at the Grand Piano: Changes of Key Reminiscent of Bix Beiderbecke's Brain Children — Pianissimo Passages That Remind You of a Debussy Nocturne," *Down Beat* 2, no. 10 (October 1935): 5, 9.

<sup>16</sup> André Hodeir, "The Genius of Art Tatum: A French Jazz Critic Evaluates the Music of a Great Pianist," *Down Beat* 22, no. 16 (August 10, 1955): 9.

<sup>17</sup> Hodeir, "The Genius of Art Tatum," 9–10, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Hodeir, 10.

conception of jazz bars his entrance into the world of real artistic creations.”<sup>19</sup> Noticeably, Hodeir centers himself as the gatekeeper of legitimate jazz, even though jazz is not a European-born art form. Hodeir has been identified by other writers as a standard-bearer of White European jazz criticism, removed from the American jazz scene and full of “Eurocentric assumptions [that] led him to misunderstand the music’s fundamental properties.”<sup>20</sup> With this review, Hodeir places himself decidedly in the camp of those who find Tatum to be more style than substance.

### *Billy Taylor’s Response*

Hodeir’s article sparked a firestorm of controversy, prompting the eminent pianist Billy Taylor to write a vigorous defense of Tatum, his friend and mentor, in the pages of *Down Beat* that same year. Taylor saw Hodeir as quite presumptuous to form such strong conclusions about Tatum’s artistry from just one group of recordings. In Taylor’s words, it was especially important to hear Tatum perform outside of the recording studio:

Anyone who has ever heard Tatum play after hours in a setting of his own choosing will bear out the fact that this is a completely different Art Tatum from the one who plays either in clubs, jazz concerts, or on records. When he plays for a select audience of his own choosing, even his “arrangements” take on a new dimension. The fabulous technical facility is then used as it should be used, to present and exploit the creative power which sets Tatum apart from other jazz pianists ... The fact that “every jazz pianist, even a fourth-rate saloon pianist, ornaments a theme as he plays it” does not negate that kind of approach nor does it necessarily indicate a lack of ambition. Tatum has certainly developed jazz solo piano playing to its highest point of virtuosity to date, but again I must insist, records, even the extensive Granz set, have not presented the complete Art Tatum.<sup>21</sup>

Taylor’s argument that Tatum played best after hours is a common refrain among musicians of that era. Unfortunately, most of the critical establishment formed its opinions of Tatum’s music solely through his

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<sup>19</sup> Hodeir, 10.

<sup>20</sup> John Gennari, *Blowin’ Hot and Cool: Jazz and Its Critics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 188–89. Ironically enough, Hodeir believed that “improvisation and the blues are not essential to jazz,” so it is interesting that he spends so much time on Tatum’s perceived improvisational deficiencies.

<sup>21</sup> Billy Taylor, “Billy Taylor Replies to Art Tatum Critic,” *Down Beat* 22, no. 19 (September 21, 1955): 17.

commercial records, which displayed brilliance but did not represent the full scope of Tatum's creative potential. Hodeir's review assumes that the listening experience of "the European critic" (limited to those records available overseas) did not differ substantially from that of an American listening to a performance in person,<sup>22</sup> but this is simply not the case with Art Tatum. Where Hodeir saw technical prowess as the main (and only) attraction, Taylor understood Tatum's abilities to be mere vehicles for his nonpareil creative instincts. Far from boxing him in, his technique gave him complete freedom to play anything he set his mind to. Taylor's comments go a long way to explain why the critics did not align with Tatum's peers on their assessments of his musicianship. Simply put, his peers had access to a much more expansive dataset than the critics did. But it was the critics whose opinions and narratives endured, leading to an overwhelming printed consensus that Tatum is a limited artist.

### *The Two Tatums Theory*

In fairness to Hodeir, even friendlier critics had harsh things to say about some of Tatum's commercial recordings. In his review of a similar multivolume project, influential jazz journalist Whitney Balliet pans Tatum's inability to avoid clichés, his supposed lack of taste, and his rambling improvisation that tended "to conceal rather than enhance."<sup>23</sup> But in contrast to Hodeir, Balliet instead blames Norman Granz "for putting this flawed Tatum before the public and then magnifying him. He [Granz] got to Tatum just three years before his death, when the great engines were beginning to run down. He also recorded him in the wrong way, for Tatum was a born showoff who was not particularly happy by himself in a recording studio."<sup>24</sup> Balliet was aware that Tatum was at his best playing for live audiences. In other writings, he could not be more ecstatic about Tatum's playing (as experienced through after-hours tapes):

It has long seemed [that] Art Tatum ... appeared equally brilliant and assured whether he recorded in a studio or on the concert stage. Now a new and extraordinary recording—"Art Tatum: God Is in the House"—proves that this wasn't so; that, indeed, as legend has had it, there were two Tatums. One was the virtuoso who moved with consummate ease through a world owned and run by whites, and the other was the secret genius who went uptown after his regular hours and played unbelievable music for his own pleasure in small black clubs for black audiences. (Not enough has been made of the fact that there is a great

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<sup>22</sup> Hodeir, "The Genius of Art Tatum," 9.

<sup>23</sup> Whitney Balliett, *Collected Works: A Journal of Jazz, 1954-2001* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), 443-444.

<sup>24</sup> Balliett, *Collected Works: A Journal of Jazz, 1954-2001*, 444.

difference in the way many black musicians perform before white audiences and before black ones.) Musicians who hear Tatum in such circumstances have repeatedly touted this aspect of his playing, but it was difficult to believe them. How could there have been another and even better Tatum? Well, there was, and he is on every track of the record.<sup>25</sup>

Like Hodeir, Balliett's assessments of Tatum's musicianship were limited to recordings. But instead of confining himself to official releases, Balliett sought out a collection of bootleg recordings featuring the unfiltered Tatum playing after-hours for Black audiences. His review was appropriately glowing, confirming the "legend" about the two Tatums.

Contemporaneous accounts of Tatum's live performances confirm that his after-hours performances tended to be for Black audiences, who were not inclined to let in White visitors. Timme Rosenkrantz, a Danish aristocrat who styled himself as a jazz baron, was one of the few exceptions because he was present by Art Tatum's personal invitation. He joked that Tatum's after-hours performances were "harder to crash than the royal court."<sup>26</sup> According to one report, Tatum was reluctant to explain his techniques to curious White musicians unless they were close friends.<sup>27</sup> One reason is that during the 1950s, Black musicians were barred from performing or patronizing many venues due to segregation. And on occasions when they were allowed to perform, they were paid less than their White counterparts.<sup>28</sup>

Another possible reason for Tatum's restricted audience could lie in his strained relationship with elite White critics. Some scholars have observed how critics developed popular narratives about after-hours jazz being the purest form of jazz, in contrast to jazz made for commerce.<sup>29</sup> While this was an oversimplification for bebop

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<sup>25</sup> Balliett, 393.

<sup>26</sup> Timme Rosenkrantz, *Harlem Jazz Adventures: A European Baron's Memoir, 1934-1969*, Studies in Jazz (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press and the Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University, 2012), 199–200.

<sup>27</sup> Orrin Keepnews, "Art Tatum," in *The Jazz Makers*, ed. Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1957), 162. Tatum's specific remark was: "Why should I show him my stuff so he can go use it at a place I can't get to play at?" Notably, Keepnews also reports that "from another source comes vehement denial that color, rather than talent, was ever a consideration with him." The record seems to be mixed on Tatum's racial guardedness.

<sup>28</sup> Scott DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 285–86.

<sup>29</sup> Scott DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop*, 202–35. In DeVeaux's telling, the narrative of the jam session being "uncorrupted" by commerce is part of the primitivist myth of "real" jazz being in opposition to the market (202–207).

musicians, Tatum would sometimes stay up until 7:00 or 8:00 a.m., waiting for the outsiders to leave so that he could play undisturbed.<sup>30</sup> Only the most dedicated listeners got to hear Tatum in his natural habitat. In other writings, Balliet draws a similar dichotomy, implying but not explicitly mentioning race:

Tatum had two main modes—the flashy, kaleidoscopic style he used on the job, and the straight-ahead jazz style, which emerges in fragments from his few after-hours recordings and from the recordings made with his various trios (piano, guitar, and bass), which seemed to galvanize him ... He offered the first style to the public, which accepted it with awe, and he used the second to delight himself and his peers.<sup>31</sup>

Here, of course, Tatum's "peers" were mostly Black fellow jazz musicians who had little in common with European critics such as Hodeir. Hodeir simply did not have access to Tatum's second mode. In her liner notes to *Pieces of Eight*, Tatum scholar Felicity Howlett also notes how Tatum played differently in a live setting:

From all reports, Tatum was acutely aware of how much he was extending the perceptive abilities and imaginations of a given audience. Amidst the party setting, surrounded by people who were seriously enjoying themselves and sympathetic to his music, Tatum did not feel the need to provide such firm reassurances as he might have elsewhere. Rather, he provoked a challenge for himself or his audience with each tune he performed.<sup>32</sup>

One can guess that "firm reassurances" here refer to making the melody, harmony, and rhythm clear for commercial White audiences that bought his records, but also for at least one critic.

In his Tatum analysis, Hodeir presents himself as one of those listeners who wants more reassurance, at least rhythmically. He paints Tatum as a pianist who doesn't give enough musical security to his sidemen in his group playing and as a choppy player with a questionable sense of time in his solo work.<sup>33</sup> Billy Taylor disagrees,

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This criticism is largely directed towards recounters of the bop era though, which Tatum deeply influenced but was nonetheless not exactly a part of.

<sup>30</sup> Keepnews, "Art Tatum," 154.

<sup>31</sup> Whitney Balliett, "Art Tatum," in *American Musicians: 56 Portraits in Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 205.

<sup>32</sup> Arnold Laubich and Felicity A. Howlett, liner notes for Art Tatum, *Pieces of Eight*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution R029, 1981, 33 1/3 rpm.

<sup>33</sup> Hodeir, "The Genius of Art Tatum," 10.

noting that Tatum “had an impeccable sense of rhythm ... [even when] playing all over the bar line ... [he] always knows where *one* is.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, it wasn’t that Tatum lost the time, but rather that the listener lost Tatum. In my extensive listening of Tatum’s discography, I have found this to be almost universally the case, and I cite one such instance in the transcription section of this article. More times than I can count, I have rewound a Tatum recording, confident that I heard him slip up rhythmically. But after several focused listens, often at reduced speed, I can’t help but agree that Tatum’s time never moved even an inch.

If it were true that Tatum lost track of time during the breaks, it might give some credence to the idea that his virtuosity covers a multitude of artistic sins, and that he is not truly a jazz artist. But his tempo is generally firm and unwavering unless he deliberately enters a tempo rubato section for dramatic contrast. It is actually a testament to Tatum’s musicianship that he can play virtuosic breaks perfectly in time, but phrased in such a way that all but the sharpest musicians are thrown off course. This kind of ability is not ideal for a sideman but makes him an entertaining group leader to listen to.

#### *Gunther Schuller’s Appraisal*

Not all critics were as harsh on Tatum as was Hodeir. One critic that took a less extreme view was celebrated composer and writer Gunther Schuller. Schuller came from a strictly classical background but got to serve as sideman to some of the biggest names in jazz, including Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis.<sup>35</sup> Schuller later became an accomplished writer and used his influence to bolster the reputation of jazz in classical music society writ large; one such example was a genre term he coined and composed in, Third Stream music, which fused classical music and jazz.<sup>36</sup> In his monumental work *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930-1945*, Schuller takes a more balanced view of Tatum’s style relative to Hodeir. He takes great issue with Hodeir’s article, calling it “petulant, cavilling, unreasonable, and often incoherent.”<sup>37</sup> Schuller is significantly more thorough in his analysis of Tatum because he begins with the earliest available recordings, conducting a survey spanning through recordings made just before Tatum’s death. Schuller also deals with Tatum’s ensemble

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<sup>34</sup> Billy Taylor, “An Art Tatum Recollection and Analysis,” *Keyboard* 7, no. 10 (October 1981): 36.

<sup>35</sup> Bret Johnson, “Gunther Schuller Obituary: American Conductor, Author, Horn Player and Composer of More Than 200 Solo and Orchestral Works, Whose Interests Stretched From Chamber Music to Opera and Jazz,” *The Guardian*, June 30, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/global/2015/jun/30/gunther-schuller>.

<sup>36</sup> The Associated Press, “Gunther Schuller — Composer, Educator, Musician — Dies at 89,” *WBUR*, June 22, 2015, <https://www.wbur.org/news/2015/06/22/gunther-schuller-obit>.

<sup>37</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 498.

playing, as well as the occasional foray into some of the after-hours bootleg and private recordings where Tatum's star shone brightest. He has glowing praise for Tatum's technique, especially his touch, and credited him for bringing so-called "spicy harmonies" (drawn from the harmonic language of 20th-century classical composers like Debussy and Ravel) into the jazz vocabulary.<sup>38</sup>

But Schuller ultimately concludes that Tatum was more of a craftsman than a real artist because he did not "channel his superior gifts into a more deeply expressive and creatively more original language."<sup>39</sup> He says that Tatum's craft is impressive, yet "eclectic, largely predictable, and surface."<sup>40</sup> Though his tone is more measured, like Hodeir, Schuller takes a dim view of Tatum as an improviser (though he later concedes that Coleman Hawkins and Louis Armstrong have the same tendencies):

Tatum's "originality" was undercut by the redundancy with which he used certain harmonic and ornamental devices, and by the fact that he was not truly speaking an improviser. Tatum, far more often than not, worked out his "improvisations" and, except for occasional minor variants, played them virtually the same way over long periods of time. Generally, he did make them sound as if they were improvised, and the average listener would probably not have been able to detect whether they actually were or not.<sup>41</sup>

For Schuller, Tatum's technique got in the way of original improvisations. He could dazzle the audience with any one of his dozens of technical tricks at such a speed that nobody could tell that they were canned devices. Schuller thought most of Tatum's solos were essentially set solos where the core was arranged but the decorations could be changed out. However, my transcriptions will show Tatum barely repeated himself at all when he was playing for an after-hours audience.

Schuller is even more critical of Tatum's interpretations of classical melodies and popular themes, which he considers to be "pre-set ... re-arrangements, involving a diffusion of their original charm and sentimental values ... these particular Tatum creations were hardly jazz at all, but a gullible public, once again, fell for the irresistible notion of 'jazzing the classics.'"<sup>42</sup> Jazzing the classics referred to the popular 1930s practice of taking themes from European classical music and giving them a swing beat and some

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<sup>38</sup> Schuller, 479-482.

<sup>39</sup> Schuller, 477-478.

<sup>40</sup> Schuller, 481.

<sup>41</sup> Schuller, 481.

<sup>42</sup> Schuller, 485.

updated harmonies in a light hearted twist on the familiar.<sup>43</sup> Schuller also characterizes Tatum's trio repertory as being especially limited and mostly "pre-arranged, leaving very little room for real improvisation[.] ... Most of [these] recordings have a calculated feeling. They remind us of a kind of musical façade with not very much depth behind it."<sup>44</sup> But as my transcriptions will demonstrate, even on jazzed-up classics in a trio setting, Tatum's creative impulses were unbridled.

While Schuller praises Tatum's adventurous harmonies and single-note horn-style approach (also known as the linear approach) on some live recordings, he tends to treat them as aberrations in his style.<sup>45</sup> One gets the feeling that Schuller expects Tatum to get with the times and pursue modern linear improvisation further.<sup>46</sup> In his appraisal of Tatum's oeuvre, he demonstrates an awareness of Tatum's concerns that audiences wouldn't like it if he went far out harmonically, but he doesn't see this as a valid excuse.<sup>47</sup> In his eyes, the beboppers took the risks of losing the public, whereas Tatum catered to them and thus missed out on the opportunity to become truly great. For Schuller, Tatum's moments of modernity were promising but still revealed his limitations because he was unwilling and perhaps unable to develop them as far as his peers. Furthermore, despite this awareness of Tatum's choices, Schuller still bases nearly all of his opinions on Tatum's studio recordings rather than his bootleg live ones. Schuller's version of the limitation narrative is more nuanced than that of other critics because he factors in Tatum's conscious self-limitation in some artistic choices. Even so, Schuller still concludes that Tatum was not a truly original artist and thus judges him harshly for it.

Schuller's assessment of Tatum's playing is an immense improvement over Hodeir's in its thoroughness, rhetorical modesty, and more methodical approach. But ultimately, it also contributes to what I've called "the limitation narrative," the trope that for all of his technical mastery, Art Tatum was not truly a creative powerhouse because he wasn't much of an improviser. While he had "an unrivaled, exciting technique, [he] lacked the creative imagination to put that technique to maximum use."<sup>48</sup> This narrative varies slightly from critic to critic but usually contains the following elements. Tatum (a) depended too much on the original melody, (b) his flashy technique

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<sup>43</sup> Marc Chénard, "Third Stream Jazz: Musical Crossroads or Parallel Worlds? (Part I)." *La Scena Musicale* 6, no. 6 (March 2001). Accessed February 12, 2024. <http://www.scena.org/lsm/sm6-6/third.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 489.

<sup>45</sup> Schuller, 489-490.

<sup>46</sup> Schuller was not the only critic to expect more linear improvisation from Tatum; see Michael Gibson, "The Paradox of Art Tatum," *Jazz Journal* 12, no. 10 (October 1960): 3-4.

<sup>47</sup> Schuller, 486, 490.

<sup>48</sup> Horn, "The Sound World of Art Tatum," 237.



concealed a lack of melodic inventiveness, (c) his solos were more like worked-out arrangements than true improvisation. This limitation narrative is held by a significant faction of jazz critics and its persistence has likely contributed to Tatum's neglect in jazz piano education, so it is important to examine it critically.

### Historical Context

Historical context reveals that all three elements of the limitation narrative are false to the extent that they are made as categorical statements about Tatum's *ability* rather than his choices. To the first claim (a), it is worth noting that though Tatum crossed paths with the beboppers, he is very much a stylistic product of the swing era. Most pianists of Tatum's generation "did not usually play flowing, saxophone-like improvisations in the right hand."<sup>49</sup> Instead, they tended to improvise with chordal figurations, arpeggiated flourishes, and most critically, embellishment of the melody. But with the advent of bebop, jazz shifted towards linear improvisation.<sup>50</sup> The linear improvisers, led by Bud Powell and inspired by Charlie Parker, mostly improvised by generating single-note lines anew over the chord changes, much the way a horn player would.<sup>51</sup> As much as we are now accustomed to linear improvisation that discards the melody, that was not the norm for decades of jazz history. As my transcriptions will demonstrate though, Tatum was perfectly capable of linear improvisation when he wanted.

#### *Tatum's Technical Self-Appraisal*

To the second claim (b), it is undeniably true that Tatum's virtuosity is sometimes the most dominating feature of his recordings. In a radio interview cited in the liner notes to *Pieces of Eight*, Tatum expounds on his philosophy of technique:

I don't see anything too complicated about my style. I mean, I've been told by quite a few musicians that I have quite a bit of technique and I appreciate that in a sense, but that's not my idea, to have all of the technique in the world and not be able to play the nice basic harmonies and the nicer things about the piano. However, people are funny, because if you have been billed as a pianist, as a technician, it's one of those things you can't hardly live down and every place you

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<sup>49</sup> Lewis Porter, "Tatum's Dissonant, 'Avant-Garde' Side, Part 1, + Bonuses! (Updated): With Bonuses for Paying Subscribers!," *Playback With Lewis Porter!*, January 2, 2023, accessed April 21, 2023, <https://lewisporter.substack.com/p/tatums-dissonant-avant-garde-side>.

<sup>50</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 490.

<sup>51</sup> Steve Provizer, "How Important Was Art Tatum's Influence?," *The Syncopated Times* 5, no. 1 (January 2020): 36.

play if you don't seem to play a lot of technical things right away, people say "He's slipping, he doesn't play as well as he used to" or one of those things.<sup>52</sup>

From this interview, we can glean that Tatum felt pressured to display technical tricks to maintain his reputation. The constant refrain from Tatum's critics that he has poor taste is complicated by Tatum's self-reflection about his status.

A critic might respond that Tatum is not an unbiased authority on his own playing, so he could be responding defensively to criticism here. Even so, other sources corroborate Tatum's remarks that virtuosity was not always his primary aim. To take one example, the swing pianist Jay McShann insisted that

Art could really play the blues ... he was the world's greatest blues player, and I think few people realized that. ... He never did want anyone to ask him to play. It took something out of him. You had to prime him a little and wait until he got ready. As a rule, he'd play all that old technique stuff first, but when he settled down he played [and felt the] blues.<sup>53</sup>

Tatum's affinity for playing (and singing!) the blues was further evidenced in his private life. When viewed in context with McShann's remarks, it is clear that Tatum played "the nicer things about the piano" more than the critics thought. He had a reputation to uphold as a showman. Night after night audiences came to be blown away by his technical tricks. The paying public came to expect that of him, but when he was by himself or with friends, Tatum was drawn towards the blues, rather than technical virtuosity, and as my transcriptions will demonstrate, Tatum could improvise melodic lines with minimal virtuosic flourishes when he wanted to.

#### *Tatum's Trio Preparation*

There is also some truth to the third claim (c), that Tatum had some elements of his performances things worked out, but not because he was lacking in imagination. Rather, there were commercial factors at play. His public remarks are instructive in understanding his self-imposed limitations. In an unidentified radio interview, he explained his strategy for the trio, remarking that "if we make arrangements difficult, people won't understand what we're playing.

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<sup>52</sup> Laubich and Howlett, liner notes for Tatum, *Pieces of Eight*.

<sup>53</sup> Stanley Dance, *The World of Count Basie* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980), 255. It is interesting that in his writings, Schuller attributes Tatum's blues recordings to a desire to meet the tastes of the White public during the boogie-woogie craze, rather than a genuine love for the genre (Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 486).

We keep it melodic. That's not my idea to have all the technique in the world and not be able to play the nice basic harmonies and nicer things about the piano."<sup>54</sup> Tatum's biographer James Lester argues that Tatum is being a salesman here by "presenting a necessity as a virtue. He needed work and the public needed understandable music."<sup>55</sup> It is also possible that a virtuoso such as Tatum might underestimate the technical feats in his performances. I don't think this is the most likely explanation though, given Tatum's private proclivities for simple blues playing. In his commercial trio recordings, Tatum did admit to "keep[ing] it melodic," featuring slick quotes of popular tunes and entertaining time changes. The critics are not wrong in perceiving the music to be more accessible to the public. But as described earlier, Tatum was a different musician in his live performances—even in his oft-derided trio work.

If the critics found Tatum's trio recordings to be predictable and preplanned, the professional musicians attending live certainly did not think so. Rex Stewart, a jazz cornetist and contemporary of Tatum's, recalled that when the Tatum Trio played on 52nd Street in 1945, "most musicians could never guess what Art was going to play from one moment to the next ... [the trio] never played it safe, never put in hours of rehearsal with each sequence pinpointed. On the contrary, every tune was an adventure, since nobody could predict where Art's mind would take them."<sup>56</sup> Exact accounts of how much the Tatum Trio rehearsed vary widely. The trio's bass player Slam Stewart recalls extensive rehearsals, whereas the guitar player Tiny Gimes says the group never rehearsed, causing him considerable stress.<sup>57</sup> Regardless of the truth of the matter, the trio took enough risks in live performances that skilled musicians like Rex Stewart were fully convinced that the ensemble was figuring things out in the moment. If even trained musicians were thrilled by Tatum's unexpected twists and turns, it is safe to say that the less trained critics would be too if they were there (perhaps hidden in the audience to avoid detection!).

### *Tatum's Solo Preparation*

Although Tatum is often described as a set solo player (meaning one who works something out beforehand and plays the same solo with some variations in every performance), Tatum himself disavowed working things out. In a 1955 radio interview with Willis

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<sup>54</sup> Bob Doerschuk, "An Art Tatum Biography," *Keyboard* 7, no. 10 (October 1981): 26. As far as I can tell, neither the interview cited in the *Pieces of Eight* liner notes nor the one cited by Doerschuk below are extant, so without the full interview it is unclear whether they are parts of the same interview. In any event, they share similar themes.

<sup>55</sup> Lester, *Too Marvelous for Words*, 151–52.

<sup>56</sup> Rex Stewart, "Genius in Retrospect Art Tatum," *Down Beat* 33, no. 21 (October 20, 1966): 42.

<sup>57</sup> Lester, *Too Marvelous for Words*, 152–53.

Conover on *Music USA*, when asked how much of his performances are planned as opposed to improvised, Tatum responded, "I'm a pretty fortunate guy about planning because I don't do too much planning. Most fellas do have to plan, and they set up arranged things. With me, I don't. The only time that we plan anything is when I use a trio ... and we have very few rehearsals, so I don't do too much planning."<sup>58</sup> Note that he was asked about his *performances*, not studio recordings, which show signs of planning, especially with his trio.<sup>59</sup> The same interview also explicitly addresses Tatum's ability to recreate his solos:

**Conover:** You do have a marvelous, a marvelous memory, don't you, Mr. Tatum, when you have played a performance, you can recall the position of each note and if necessary, repeat the performance almost note for note.

**Tatum:** Yes, I can, at any time, just about I can play anything note for note. I have that happen to me quite often, people come in and they say, "Gee, I'd like to hear you play that just like the record," or either they'll say, "God, you're playing it just like the record. I didn't expect it." Or either they'll say—I used to get tired of playing things like the—I'd make a record and then people come in and I wouldn't play it that way, and they'd say "God, would you play it like the record that the—you didn't play it that way on the record." So, I mean, I can do it either way. It doesn't make any difference.<sup>60</sup>

In another interview with Conover a few months later, Tatum is less ambivalent about requests to recreate solos:

**Tatum:** Solo playing, most of the time[,] certain numbers I have certain set patterns for, and I'll tell you the reason for that, Willis: Because I've had so many complaints. People used to come in and say, "Gee, I heard your record of such-and-such a thing fifteen years ago and you don't play it that way anymore." ... Invariably they want to hear it the same when they see you in person. ... [But with me,] with any artist I ever saw, I've always wanted to see them do something

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<sup>58</sup> Art Tatum, "Music USA #172-B, Interview with Art Tatum," interview by Willis Conover, UNT Music Library Conover Collection, May 18, 1955, <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc701825/>.

<sup>59</sup> By 1955, Everett Barksdale had replaced Tiny Grimes in the guitar chair of the Tatum trio. Perhaps the new incarnation of the trio had different rehearsal practices.

<sup>60</sup> Tatum, "Music USA #172-B, Interview with Art Tatum."

different than what they've done on their record or whatever they've done...

**Conover:** To be jazz, must the variation be brand new each time—spontaneous, on the spot? Can you play things the same way twice and still satisfy a definition of jazz?

**Tatum:** I think you can. In fact, I know you can. Because I don't know of anybody in the world who could change an idea every time they got ready to play. You're bound to revert back to the same thing some time or another.<sup>61</sup>

From these comments, we learn that Tatum deeply valued improvisation in his own artistic preferences but felt pressured due to audience capture and other commercial factors to give his fans what they wanted to hear. Although he was able to reproduce set solos note-for-note to meet audience demands, that was not his preference or his crutch.

Again, it is true that Tatum is not an impartial juror of his own artistry, so he might have an agenda in framing his music in a certain light. Nevertheless, he is certainly a better authority on his intentions than a critic like Hodeir who formed his judgments from an incomplete picture of Tatum's craft. Tatum's remarks also make sense of why some of his recordings and performances of certain tunes remain consistent over the years, while others are different each time. But even when he plays worked-out material, he makes it sound convincingly improvised.<sup>62</sup> Lest there be any doubt about Tatum's innovative prowess, Laubich makes clear in his liner notes that "notwithstanding his proclivity for set patterns on certain pieces, Tatum was capable of, and often demonstrated, an ability for almost limitless improvisation on any tune; sometimes he was known to play a single title for hours at a time."<sup>63</sup> Solo recreation was one of Tatum's impressive abilities, not a creative limitation. When he wanted to, he could duplicate himself note for note, but this was by no means his default or even his preferred way of playing.

### Respected by His Peers

Art Tatum's playing was lauded by the greatest jazz giants of his day. Hodeir himself admits that "perhaps no other jazz artist has been so highly and so unanimously praised by his fellow artists. Even among the avant-garde modernists it would be hard to find a jazz pianist for whom Tatum is not the greatest of them all."<sup>64</sup> In 1956, jazz journalist and pianist Leonard Feather conducted a comprehensive

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<sup>61</sup> Willis Conover, "An Art Tatum Interview," *Keyboard* 7, no. 10 (October 1981): 45.

<sup>62</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 481.

<sup>63</sup> Laubich and Howlett, liner notes for Tatum, *Pieces of Eight*.

<sup>64</sup> Hodeir, "The Genius of Art Tatum," 9.

poll of 101 leading jazz musicians, seeking to understand their views of the contemporary jazz scene in part because of his belief that “with some exceptions, professional musicians’ views tend to be more valid and valuable than those of professional critics, especially critics who are not musically literate.”<sup>65</sup> Art Tatum’s dominating musical popularity among his peers (polled just months before his death) was nearly hegemonic, and Feather himself was a glowing admirer. When musicians were asked to answer who was the “greatest ever” on each instrument, Tatum received the second-largest number of votes (68), second only to Charlie Parker (76).<sup>66</sup> No other pianist came in close, with the great Bud Powell earning a distant second place at 21 votes.<sup>67</sup> By 1956, Tatum was more out of step than ever with the direction that jazz was headed in. But that did not stop him from taking the crown as the greatest ever pianist in the eyes of his peers.

Some of the stars included in the long list of Tatum admirers were Louis Armstrong (voted for the Tatum Trio), Count Basie, Clifford Brown, Harry Carney, Nat King Cole, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Erroll Garner, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, Gerry Mulligan, Johnny Hodges, J.J. Johnson, Quincy Jones, Milt Jackson, Oscar Peterson, Oscar Pettiford, Bud Powell, Horace Silver, Sonny Stitt, Billy Taylor, Cootie Williams, and Teddy Wilson.<sup>68</sup> All of these undisputed jazz legends saw something in Tatum’s playing that many of the critics did not.<sup>69</sup> Tatum’s peers were much better situated to assess his playing than the critics of his day not only because of their deeper musical knowledge, but also because many of them had access to Tatum in the mostly Black nightclubs and private performances where he flexed his musical muscles.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Leonard Feather, *The Encyclopedia Yearbooks of Jazz*, 1st Da Capo Press ed. (1956, 1958; repr., New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), vi.

<sup>66</sup> Feather, *The Encyclopedia Yearbooks of Jazz*, 77.

<sup>67</sup> Feather, 56.

<sup>68</sup> Feather, 56-75.

<sup>69</sup> The only caveat to this impressive lineup is that some of these artists voted for multiple pianists, so it is not always clear who is the favorite. But regardless of the exact rankings, it is clear that Art Tatum achieved a level of unanimous praise uncommon among artists of his day.

<sup>70</sup> Some of his peers, including saxophonist Benny Green, were incensed by the critical opinion of Tatum’s music, observing that “[Historically,] jazz criticism has been conducted by those whose passionate love of the music was never quite passionate enough for them to learn the rudiments of jazzmaking, which means that when a player like Tatum puts his genius and his vast experience into a thirty-two chorus, it would be foolhardy to expect the average commentator to have the remotest idea what is going on. This explains why for many years there was a sizeable body of jazz critical opinion which dismissed Tatum as a jazz pianist altogether and refused to admit his qualifications to be counted among [his] rivals” (Green, *The Reluctant Art*, 195).

## *Tatum's Legacy*

Jazz legend Hank Jones was glowing in his praise of Tatum, remarking that Tatum “totally mastered the jazz idiom. His harmonic conception was far advanced. In fact, he was using harmonic concepts that bebop players adapted years later.”<sup>71</sup> Billy Taylor, one of Tatum’s students, remembers that Coleman Hawkins and Art Tatum “recognized that they were the source” of many of the developments in bebop.<sup>72</sup> Charlie Parker was reportedly envious of Tatum’s right hand and even “took a job at Jimmy’s Chicken Shack [in 1939] ... simply because it allowed him to listen to Tatum.”<sup>73</sup> Martin Williams also detects Tatum’s influence in Parker’s harmony, accent patterns, and speed.<sup>74</sup> No less an authority than Miles Davis himself recalled that “all the bebop piano players were crazy about Art,” especially Bud Powell, who modeled his playing after Tatum.<sup>75</sup> That alone should be enough to dispense with Schuller’s false claim that the beboppers “pretty much ignored Tatum.”<sup>76</sup>

But Tatum’s influence spread beyond bebop. John Coltrane learned how to use dominant polychords from listening to Tatum, and musicians as diverse as Lennie Tristano, Charles Mingus, and Oscar Peterson have all cited Tatum’s significant influence on their playing.<sup>77</sup> It is abundantly clear that far from being an isolated sideshow, Tatum was easily the most widely respected pianist of his era, and, contra the critics, also one of the most influential.

## **Transcriptions and the Recorded Evidence**

### *Why Melody in F?*

Art Tatum’s extant discography includes an immense repertoire of hundreds of songs, but for a variety of reasons, I eventually settled on transcribing his renditions of Anton Rubinstein’s

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<sup>71</sup> Bret Primack, “No Greater Art: Talkin’ Tatum with Hank Jones, Billy Taylor, Dick Hyman, Adam Makowicz,” *JazzTimes* 28, no. 1 (January/February 1998): 40.

<sup>72</sup> Primack, “No Greater Art,” 42.

<sup>73</sup> Lewis Porter, “Tatum’s Dissonant, ‘Avant-Garde’ Side, Part 3, With Conclusions, + Bill Evans BONUS: His Impact on Jazz History,” *Playback With Lewis Porter!* January 22, 2023, accessed April 21, 2023, <https://lewisporter.substack.com/p/tatums-dissonant-avant-garde-side-695>.

<sup>74</sup> Martin Williams, “Art Tatum: Not for the Left Hand Alone,” *American Music* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 40, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3051572>.

<sup>75</sup> Miles Davis and Quincy Troupe, *Miles: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1989), 79.

<sup>76</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 490.

<sup>77</sup> Porter, “Tatum’s Dissonant, ‘Avant-Garde’ Side, Part 3.”

1852 composition *Melody in F: Opus 3, No. 1*.<sup>78</sup> First, Tatum only made two recordings of this tune, one in 1943 for a live radio broadcast,<sup>79</sup> and the other in-studio in 1952.<sup>80</sup> This provides a valuable source of comparison for the hypothesis that Tatum played differently in front of others than he did without an audience. Second, most of the current scholarship and transcription of Tatum's music focuses almost exclusively on his solo piano recordings.<sup>81</sup> Some work has been done analyzing his after-hours recordings or some of his solos at the big All-Star concerts, but his trio recordings are underappreciated.<sup>82</sup> In part, this is because his trio work is viewed as more commercially oriented and less original. Having listened to lots of Tatum trio recordings, I reject this categorization and find several surprises, such as the tight call and response figures on "Exactly Like You" and intricate chromatic voice-leading on "I Know That You Know." To the best of my knowledge, none of Tatum's solos on *Melody in F* have ever been transcribed. Third, *Melody in F* represents a genre of Tatum tunes for which the critical establishment had particular disdain: the jazzed-up classical melody.

Schuller was unsparing in his contempt for these recordings, which he viewed as "hardly jazz at all" and just bait for the "gullible public."<sup>83</sup> While Schuller's remarks here were specifically directed towards Tatum's solo renditions of classical tunes, it is unlikely that Schuller thought favorably of Tatum's trio renditions of classical tunes given his dim view of Tatum's trio material as a whole. Selecting a recording that would have been subjected to the fiercest criticism from critics such as Schuller ensures that the limitation narrative has a fair chance to have its claims tested. My analysis reveals that Tatum is highly original even on these recordings, particularly when playing live.

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<sup>78</sup> Anton Rubinstein, "Melody in F: Opus 3, No. 1," in *Masterpieces of Piano Music*, ed. Albert Ernest Wier (New York: Carl Fischer, 1918), 232–34, <https://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/0/0b/IMSLP02633-Rubinstein - Melody in F, Op.3 No.2.pdf>.

<sup>79</sup> The Art Tatum Trio, "Melody in F (Live)," recorded 1943, track 9 on *Live 1934-44*, vol. 1, Storyville 101 8331, 2002, compact disk, <https://storyvillerecords.bandcamp.com/album/live-1934-44-vol-1>.

<sup>80</sup> The Art Tatum Trio, "Melody in F, Opus 3, No. 1," recorded December 20, 1952, track 8 on *The Art Tatum Trio*, Capitol H-408, 1953, 45 rpm, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mScomSb81hE>.

<sup>81</sup> Felicity A. Howlett, "An Introduction to Art Tatum's Performance Approaches: Composition, Improvisation, and Melodic Variation" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1983).

<sup>82</sup> Riccardo Scivales, *The Right Hand According to Tatum: A Guide to Tatum's Improvisational Techniques Plus 10 Transcribed Piano Solos* (Bedford Hills, NY: Ekay Music, 1998).

<sup>83</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 485.



### *Transcription Process*

In this comparative transcription, I evaluate Tatum's strength as a linear improviser to see how he measures up on the critics' own terms. For this reason, I elected to transcribe only Tatum's right hand across all of his choruses, except for those left-hand moments that take a melodic role during right-hand resting points. Although Tatum's left hand is one of his strongest assets because of its rhythmic drive, harmonic tricks, and contrapuntal lines, removing it from the picture puts the Tatum transcriptions on equal footing with other linear players of the era.<sup>84</sup> Analyzing one hand only also makes a comparative assessment of Tatum's playing easier to understand, as each of his solos is notated on a single staff.<sup>85</sup>

For ease of reference, I have followed the model of Anthony Tambourlas's Tatum scholarship by adding the melody above all of Tatum's solos.<sup>86</sup> This will allow the reading listener to see how little Tatum depends on the melody for his improvisation. I transcribed Rubinstein's melody exactly from Carl Fischer's 1918 edition of the piece, stripped of the flowing accompaniment pattern. To turn Rubinstein's *Melody in F* into a vehicle for jazz improvisation, Tatum excerpted the melody significantly and cut some transitional passages. Because of this, I have only added the sections of the melody that Tatum includes in the head of the recording. The chord symbols above Rubinstein's melody are my own additions which I derived by looking at the accompaniment figures. They follow the original melody, not Tatum's improvisations, so that the reading listener can observe what kind of language Tatum plays over the changes.

### *Different Recordings for Different Audiences*

Some background on the two recordings is useful to understand their differences. The first recording of *Melody in F* was made in Los Angeles on March 22, 1943 for the Armed Forces Radio

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<sup>84</sup> For a detailed exploration of Tatum's left hand innovations, see Paul William Shinn, "The Left-Hand Stride Piano Technique of Art Tatum," DMA diss., University of Colorado, 2016.

<sup>85</sup> Transcribing Tatum comes with a multitude of challenges. The most obvious one is his breathtaking speed; even with the advanced tempo-slowing software *Transcribe!* by Seventh String, it is a time-consuming and tedious task. This is made no easier by the often grainy recording quality of the era. Additionally, the presence and volume of the guitar make it extraordinarily difficult to distinguish Tatum's middle register playing from Tiny Grimes' or Everett Barksdale's guitar work.

<sup>86</sup> Anthony Tambourlas, "Art Tatum (1910-1956) and the Jazz Piano: A Stylistic Appraisal," *Ars Nova* 26, no. 1 (1994): 65-66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03796489408566518>.

Service (AFRS) *Jubilee*.<sup>87</sup> According to John Dunning, *Jubilee* “filled an important gap in the musical history of radio, though it was transcribed for distribution to service personnel and was not heard at home. [It was] conceived (at least in part) as a morale-building service for Negro troops overseas ... Most of the shows were recorded before live audiences.”<sup>88</sup> In contrast, the second recording of *Melody in F* was a commercial recording by Capitol Records on December 20, 1952.<sup>89</sup> Not much information is publicly available about this session, but it was released for sale within the next year on a vinyl album simply titled *The Art Tatum Trio*.<sup>90</sup>

The contrast between the two recordings could not be sharper. The 1943 recording was live, made by Black Americans for Black Americans. Recall Balliett’s aforementioned observation that Tatum’s most inspired work tended to be in live performances for Black audiences.<sup>91</sup> While it is not known who made up the live audience in the studio on recording day, Tatum must have known he was playing for Black service members overseas. Given what we know about Tatum’s adaptability, it is not unreasonable to speculate that the Black overseas audience played a role in his especially inspired playing. The 1952 recording, while technically brilliant, is more standard fare for Tatum, with a heavier reliance on the melody. Perhaps this is because a commercial recording had to cater to the largely wealthy, White, record-buying public.

### *Form*

The 1943 recording of *Melody in F* (featuring Lloyd “Tiny” Grimes on guitar and Leroy Eliot “Slam” Stewart on double bass) opens with a short 4-measure intro, then a simple but crisp statement of Rubinstein’s theme, followed by two swinging choruses by Tatum, a guitar solo, a bass solo, and then an unexpectedly exuberant *third* chorus that leads into the head out.<sup>92</sup> To my ears, it sounds like Grimes and Stewart were about to play the head out after the bass solo, but Tatum couldn’t resist getting in one more chorus.

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<sup>87</sup> Arnold Laubich and Ray Spencer, *Art Tatum, A Guide to His Recorded Music*, Studies in Jazz (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press and the Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University, 1982), 26.

<sup>88</sup> John Dunning, “Jubilee: Black-Oriented Swing, Jazz, Bop, and Variety,” in *On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 376–77.

<sup>89</sup> Laubich and Spencer, *Art Tatum*, 73.

<sup>90</sup> The Art Tatum Trio, *Melody in F, Opus 3, No. 1*, recorded December 20, 1952, track 8 on *The Art Tatum Trio*, Capitol H-408, 1953, 45 rpm.

<sup>91</sup> Balliett, *Collected Works*, 393.

<sup>92</sup> The Art Tatum Trio, *Melody in F (Live)*, recorded 1943, track 9 on *Live 1934-44*, vol. 1, Storyville 101 8331, 2002, compact disk. In mainstream jazz, after playing the melody once or twice through, a member of the ensemble will improvise over the harmonies of the original tune while keeping the original form. This is called “taking a chorus.”

The 1952 recording of *Melody in F* features Everett Barksdale on guitar and Slam Stewart on double bass.<sup>93</sup> Tatum takes a significantly faster tempo and relies much more heavily on his unmatched pyrotechnics. This recording is significantly shorter, and not just because of the faster tempo. Tatum opens with the familiar four-measure intro, breezes through the head in, giving the guitar the first solo (although one can be forgiven for thinking it was a blistering duet). His comping for Slam’s bass solo is more restrained, but there is no such restraint shown on his own solo, which shows off Tatum’s glistening technique in all its splendor. A brisk but playful head out caps off the tour de force.<sup>94</sup>

### Tatum’s Recordings and the Limitation Narrative

#### *Dependence on the Melody*

Tatum’s *Melody in F* recordings (see Appendix A for comparative score) represent everything the critics dislike about his body of work: a commercially popular trio playing semi-classical fluff. And yet, as my transcriptions demonstrate, his solos on the tune defy all three elements of the “limitation narrative” that I identified. It is often claimed that Tatum depended too much on the original melody for his improvisations. In the words of Hodeir, he had “no evident desire to depart from the main theme ... [instead playing everything] according to the rules”<sup>95</sup> But in all three of Tatum’s choruses in 1943, the theme is almost completely absent from his lines.<sup>96</sup> He hints at it in m. 2 of 1943A, m. 20 of 1943B, and mm. 21-22 and 24-25 of 1943C, and quotes it in mm. 14-15 of 1943C. Even those small moments are substantially transformed so as not to be heard as derivative. Example 1 depicts one such transformation. In m. 2 of 1943A, Tatum ornaments the melody with approach tones above and below, decorated with different rhythms, and offset from the downbeat.

#### Example 1. Rubinstein Melody vs. Tatum Improvisations, *Melody in F*, m. 2.

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is labeled 'Rubinstein Original (Excerpted)' and shows a melody in F major with a 2-measure rest at the beginning. The bottom staff is labeled 'Tatum 1943 Chorus A' and shows a highly ornamented and rhythmically complex version of the same melody, featuring many sixteenth notes and triplets. The original melody is: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Tatum's version is: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), with various ornaments and rhythms.

<sup>93</sup> Laubich and Spencer, *Art Tatum*, 73.

<sup>94</sup> The Art Tatum Trio, *Melody in F*, *Opus 3, No. 1*.

<sup>95</sup> Hodeir, “The Genius of Art Tatum,” 10.

<sup>96</sup> From here on, I refer to Tatum’s three choruses of improvisation as 1943A, 1943B, and 1943C. Since Tatum took only one chorus in 1952, I refer to that chorus simply with the year 1952. Additionally, at Tatum’s speed solos are usually written in 8<sup>th</sup> notes, but I’ve chosen to notate in 16<sup>th</sup> notes because that is how they rhythmically relate to Anton Rubinstein’s original melody.

In contrast, his 1952 recording is somewhat more tied to the melody. The theme is hinted at in measures 1 and 5, while measures 10-15 are direct quotes of the melody with some embellishment. The melodic contour is preserved, but Tatum varies the harmony with block chords and adapts the rhythm for a jazz context. Nowhere in any of his 1943 choruses does Tatum quote the melody so directly. Example 2 below displays all of Tatum's choruses on mm. 10-15 for ease of comparison. It seems that the energy of a live audience empowered Tatum to depart from the melody in ways that he did not when faced with the strictures of the studio.

**Example 2. Rubinstein Melody vs. Tatum Improvisations, *Melody in F*, mm. 10-15.**

This system of the musical score covers measures 10-15. It begins with the 'Rubinstein Original (Excerpted)' in measure 10. Above the staff, the following chords are indicated: C, Co7, G/B, G7/G, and C. The original melody is shown in a single staff. Below it are three staves for 'Tatum 1943 Chorus A', 'Tatum 1943 Chorus B', and 'Tatum 1943 Chorus C'. Each of these choruses shows a different melodic and harmonic interpretation of the original. The final staff in this system is 'Tatum 1952', which shows a more direct approach to the original melody with block chords. Measure numbers 10, 11, and 12 are marked at the beginning of their respective staves.

This system continues the musical score for measures 10-15. It starts with the 'Orig.' (original melody) in measure 10. Above the staff, the following chords are indicated: C, Co7, G/B, G7/G, and C. Below the original are three staves for 'T-1943A', 'T-1943B', and 'T-1943C'. Each of these choruses shows a different melodic and harmonic interpretation of the original. The final staff in this system is 'T-1952', which shows a more direct approach to the original melody with block chords. Measure numbers 10, 11, and 12 are marked at the beginning of their respective staves.

This system continues the musical score for measures 10-15. It starts with the 'Orig.' (original melody) in measure 10. Above the staff, the following chords are indicated: Fmin, C, Fmin, and C. Below the original are three staves for 'T-1943A', 'T-1943B', and 'T-1943C'. Each of these choruses shows a different melodic and harmonic interpretation of the original. The final staff in this system is 'T-1952', which shows a more direct approach to the original melody with block chords. Measure numbers 10, 11, and 12 are marked at the beginning of their respective staves.

### *Virtuosity as a Fig Leaf*

It is also claimed that Tatum's flashy technique concealed a lack of melodic inventiveness. In the words of Schuller, Tatum's right hand "seemed always in need of exploding into cascading runs and arpeggios, into careening arabesques. What little original truly melodic material might rise to the surface of his performances was more often than not merely the upper lines of the harmonies, rather than intrinsically melodic material."<sup>97</sup> Upon examination of the transcriptions, this claim does not hold up either. Tatum's 1943 choruses are, by and large, mostly linear. Although there are a few of his infamous sextuplet runs blended into the texture, most of his lines make the changes in a direct, single-note fashion, not unlike a bop pianist. Of course, Tatum's rhythmic sensibility was not that of a bebopper because he came from an older school of playing. Nonetheless, his right hand was very much capable of bop-like improvised lines. Ex. 2 shows exactly this kind of playing, especially in mm. 10-13 of 1943C. Tatum uses chromatic approach tones from above and below much the way a bop pianist might.

Also worthy of note are his striking polychordal implications in mm. 16-17 of 1943A and 1943B (See Ex. 3). The originally written harmony of the tune alternates between F minor and C major, but Tatum's solo instead centers around C7, used as a stable reference point from which to go harmonically far out. Over this C7 in mm. 16 of 1943A, Tatum's right hand outlines BMajor2, EMaj9#4, and C7#9b13. In mm. 16-17 of 1943B, Tatum's right hand suggests Dbmin6, Dbmin9, Gb9#11, and Ebmin6 over C7 in the left-hand comping, although Tatum first plays Db13 in the left hand before slipping down to the C7 chord.

### **Example 3. Rubinstein Melody vs. Tatum Improvisations, *Melody in F*, mm. 16-17.**

The image displays a musical score for Example 3, comparing the original melody by Rubinstein with four different improvisations by Tatum. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The original melody (Rubinstein Original, Excerpted) is shown in the first staff, starting at measure 16. Above the staff, the chords Fmin, C, Fmin, C, Fmin, and C are indicated. The four Tatum improvisations are shown in the subsequent staves: Chorus A (1943), Chorus B (1943), Chorus C (1943), and 1952. The improvisations are highly chromatic and feature complex rhythmic patterns, including sextuplets and triplets. The 1952 version is particularly dense, with many sixteenth notes and triplets.

<sup>97</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 485.

Tatum's 1952 chorus features some of the same linear style, but does depend more on brilliant technical tricks, especially in the bridge. Measures 16-21 of 1952 are impossibly fast, phrased over the barline in a way that makes the listener think Tatum has lost the beat. When the band comes back in at measure 18 after the break, the listener feels as though the beat has been flipped and suspects that Tatum stretched or compressed a measure. In the words of critic Benny Green, "the beat has gone, and that means that somebody has made a mistake."<sup>98</sup> Either the listener flipped the beat, or Tatum did.

Although critics such as Hodeir spoke negatively about Tatum's sense of time, a close inspection usually reveals Tatum's time to be infallible. After transcribing Tatum's break at a painfully slow tempo, I realized that the mistake was in my own perception. Looking at Ex. 3, Tatum starts his serpentine run exactly on the second eighth note of measure 16, but he accents it in such a way that the listener perceives the run to begin on the downbeat. When the guitar and bass come back in on the downbeat of measure 18 exactly on time, the listener is left wondering where the downbeat went. Tatum, however, continues his flurry of notes, almost without any rest at all, all the way through until the downbeat of the final chord at m. 25.

#### *Repetitive/Preplanned Solos*

The final element of the "limitation narrative" is that Tatum's solos were more like worked-out arrangements than true improvisation. As a proponent of this perspective, Schuller wrote, "Tatum, far more often than not, worked out his "improvisations" and, except for occasional minor variants, played them virtually the same way over long periods of time ... [his classical rearrangements] were hardly jazz at all, [and his trio recordings left] very little room for real improvisation."<sup>99</sup> But these claims quickly fall apart upon examination of my transcriptions. Apart from some shared quotations of the theme in mm. 15-16 of 1943C and 1952, the reading listener will be hard-pressed to find lines in common between any of the four choruses. Take mm. 20-21 (Ex. 4) as representative examples, where Tatum demonstrates a huge range of textures across all of his choruses.

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<sup>98</sup> Green, *The Reluctant Art*, 196-97.

<sup>99</sup> Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 481, 485, 489.

**Example 4. Rubinstein Melody vs. Tatum Improvisations, *Melody in F*, mm. 20-21.**

In 1943A, Tatum makes a short ascent followed by a flurry of small harmonically crunchy cluster chords on the way down. In 1943B he displaces his chordal melody to occur offbeat from his left hand and transfers some notes to the left hand. In 1943C he creates a mini call and response with his left hand interjecting between short right hand exclamations. And in 1952 he displays his crystal-clear technique on a dizzying chromatic run that changes directions and rhythms several times. Overall, Tatum has some techniques in common across his solos, but the precise lines are unique in every take. Tatum has stylistic trademarks, but so does every pianist, and certainly every pianist of his era. How many jazz pianists could take four choruses on such a harmonically simple tune without repeating themselves far more than Tatum ever did? Not many.<sup>100</sup>

To be fair, there are certainly plenty of Tatum's commercial recordings where the limitation narrative claims hold water. For example, there are some tunes in his regular repertoire, such as his famous *Tiger Rag*, whose virtue is purely pyrotechnical. He recorded it many times during his career and each version is roughly the same with only minor variation in the technical tricks employed. These showpieces are musically shallow and seem to be largely preplanned, but they serve their purpose: to entertain. Where the critics go too far is in claiming some of his unorthodox stylistic choices precluded his status as an artist or even as an improviser. These transcriptions of *Melody in F* decisively dismantle the notion that Tatum's studio-recorded deficiencies are evidence of creative limitations. Whatever one thinks of Tatum's output, and there are fair criticisms to be made, one cannot in good faith argue that Tatum was incapable of departing from the melody without relying on bravura, or that he could not

<sup>100</sup> Further research could corroborate this by finding a tune recorded by several great pianists, including Art Tatum, Bud Powell, Teddy Wilson, Bill Evans, Oscar Peterson, and McCoy Tyner. Their solo lines on the same tune could be compared internally to each other to determine which artist repeats himself most, melodically, harmonically, and rhythmically.

improvise substantial, swinging, and linear lines at a high level of proficiency. There are countless other recordings where Tatum demonstrates his relentless innovation, but they are often not his most famous ones, which are admittedly often geared towards impressing commercial audiences.<sup>101</sup>

Even though Art Tatum lived and died decades ago, his artistic journey and historic legacy provide so many instructive lessons to today's artists. Sometimes artists sacrifice their purest artistic desires in order to make a living and achieve commercial success. But these very compromises can also lead to hostility from the critical establishment, which has the luxury of scrutinizing music from above instead of creating it on the bandstand. Unfortunately, the critical opinion established during an artist's lifetime can have a longer lifespan than the artist.

Problematic narratives such as the limitation narrative, once constructed, can prove to be quite stubborn even after decades have passed, living on through the apathy of contemporary musicians. This is especially true for artists such as Tatum whose unrecorded work differs so greatly from his recorded projects. But through understanding the historical context, opinions of the musicians on the ground, and thorough transcription and analysis, we can cut through entrenched narratives and arrive closer to the truth about an artist's music. Every new jazz pianist will continue to have an Art Tatum first encounter for the foreseeable future, but in a fairer musical world this meeting would mark the beginning of intense study and admiration instead of the end of it. While Tatum was misunderstood by the critical establishment for decades, there is little doubt that he deserves his place in the pantheon of innovative improvisers.

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<sup>101</sup> In *20th Century Piano Genius*, a set of Tatum tapes recorded at private Hollywood parties, the harmonic flights of fancy are unceasing. One hears Tatum at his most playful and imaginative state on nearly every track, particularly "Mine, Too Marvelous for Words" and "Mr. Freddie Blues." See Art Tatum, *20th Century Piano Genius*, recorded 1950 and 1955 on Verve Records 314-531763-2, 1996, compact disc. Lewis Porter has assembled an impressive (but by no means comprehensive) collection of Tatum recordings that show him to be an avant-garde radical who explored bitonality decades before it became widespread in jazz. The polychordal lines in *Melody in F* are not aberrations in his style. Though I agree with his assessment, it goes somewhat beyond the scope of this paper, so I have included his characteristically excellent 3-part series on the Works Cited page of this article.



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# Appendix A

## Comparative Transcription of Art Tatum Improvisations on *Melody in F* Transcription by Tomás Jonsson

The score is organized into three systems, each corresponding to a different chord progression from the original piece. Each system contains five staves: the original melody and four different improvisations by Art Tatum.

**System 1 (Measures 1-4):** Chords: F, C7/G, F/A, F#o7.

- Rubinstein Original (Excerpted):** Shows the original melody.
- Tatum 1943 Chorus A:** Features a triplet in the first measure and a complex melodic line.
- Tatum 1943 Chorus B:** Includes a triplet and a melodic line with a dotted line and '8' above it.
- Tatum 1943 Chorus C:** Features a triplet and a melodic line with a dotted line and '8' above it.
- Tatum 1952:** Includes a triplet and a melodic line with a dotted line and '8' above it.

**System 2 (Measures 4-5):** Chords: Gmin, Bbmin6, C7, F, Bo7, C7.

- Orig.:** Shows the original melody.
- T-1943A:** Includes a triplet and a melodic line.
- T-1943B:** Includes a triplet and a melodic line.
- T-1943C:** Includes a triplet and a melodic line with a dotted line and '8' above it.
- T-1952:** Includes a triplet and a melodic line with a dotted line and '8' above it.

**System 3 (Measures 6-8):** Chords: F, C7/G, F/A, D7.

- Orig.:** Shows the original melody.
- T-1943A:** Includes a triplet and a melodic line.
- T-1943B:** Includes a triplet and a melodic line.
- T-1943C:** Includes a triplet and a melodic line with a dotted line and '8' above it.
- T-1952:** Includes a triplet and a melodic line with a dotted line and '8' above it.

8 Gmin C7 F

Orig.

T-1943A

T-1943B

T-1943C

T-1952

10 C C67 G/B G7/G C

Orig.

T-1943A

T-1943B

T-1943C

T-1952

12 C C67 G/B G7/G C

Orig.

T-1943A

T-1943B

T-1943C

T-1952

14 Fmin C Fmin C

Orig.

T-1943A

T-1943B

T-1943C

T-1952

16 Fmin C Fmin C Fmin C

Orig.

T-1943A

T-1943B

T-1943C

T-1952

18 F C7/G F/A F#o7

Orig.

T-1943A

T-1943B

T-1943C

T-1952

20 Gmin Bbmin6 C7 F Bo7 C7

Orig.

T-1943A

T-1943B

T-1943C

T-1952

22 F C7/G F/A D7

Orig.

T-1943A

T-1943B

T-1943C

T-1952

24 Gmin C7 F

Orig.

T-1943A

T-1943B

T-1943C

T-1952





# Tracing Chopin in Slovenian Music: Mazurka Op. 42, No. 2 by Fran Gerbič

TANJA KNEŽEVIĆ

## Introduction

While recent scholars have written about the reception of Fryderyk Chopin in Central and Western Europe, the Americas, and Japan, there is a notable absence of accessible and comprehensive studies examining Chopin reception in the Balkans.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, such research is crucial because it reveals the resonance of Romanticism, and Chopin in particular, in countries with music traditions that do not find their origins in the European West.

This article provides a case study for Chopin reception in Slovenia in the nineteenth century by focusing on the extent to which his compositional traits manifest themselves in the pianistic creativity of the Slovenian composer Fran Gerbič (1840–1917), particularly in his Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2. Identifying influence on composers inherently implies a prior reception, but the reception itself does not necessarily indicate the presence of influence. The distinction is particularly relevant in the context of this research, in which Chopin's influence on Fran Gerbič is perceived as an integral aspect within the broader framework of Chopin reception research.

Slovenian musicologist Dragotin Cvetko (1911–1993) was the first to suggest Chopin's influence on Fran Gerbič, albeit without providing any comparative analysis. To evaluate Cvetko's claims, I first researched the field from a historical perspective, which allowed me to draw conclusions on the reception of Chopin in Slovenia and Gerbič's potential connection to Chopin. Following this, I thoroughly analyzed Gerbič's mazurka. Through my research, I found that although the reception of Chopin in the region was delayed due to the regional economic and political crisis, Gerbič made a significant connection with Chopin's music. This connection was facilitated during

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Samson, "Chopin Reception: Theory, History, Analysis," in *Chopin Studies 2*, ed. John Rink and Jim Samson (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1–17; Barbara Pabjan, "The Reception of Chopin and His Music in Polish Society," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 41, no. 2 (December 2010): 343–378; Tomasz Baranowski, "Chopin in the Music Culture of Russia in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century. From Glinka to Scriabin," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Musicology* 9 (2011): 139–149. Scholars have also written about Chopin reception in Prague, America (including Mexico), and Japan. See William Smialek and Maja Trochimczyk, "Reception and Performance Studies," in *Frédéric Chopin: A Research and Information Guide* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 272–315.

the time Gerbič worked at the Lviv Conservatory from 1882 to 1886, where he interacted with Karol Mikuli, a prominent figure in Chopin's circle and an editor of his works.

My research shows that melodic features commonly associated with Chopin also manifest in Gerbič's mazurka. While the presence of these shared compositional traits provides a basis for understanding Cvetko's claim of influence, they do not independently confirm a direct line of influence from Chopin to Gerbič. Rather, this analysis underscores the feasibility of Cvetko's assertion within the broader context of shared compositional practices of the time. Having identified distinguishing Chopinesque features through the frameworks of Mieczysław Tomaszewski and Francis Frederick McGinnis, I present stylistic similarities in Gerbič's mazurka, including the "type I" cadential formula and the "falling fourth" motif.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, I draw attention to identical intervallic patterns in several measures of Gerbič's mazurka and various pieces by Chopin. Furthermore, I highlight a striking resemblance in the melodic contour and propose a shared function of figures used in the second thematic idea of Gerbič's mazurka and Chopin's Waltz in A minor, Op. Posthumous. Also, I demonstrate the shared phrase endings between Gerbič's mazurka and various mazurkas by Chopin, characterized by the figure I term "do-ti-do."

Although Cvetko claimed that Chopin's influence is visible also in the harmonic diversity of the music that Gerbič composed in Lviv, my research shows that only one phrase of Gerbič's mazurka bears the imprint of Chopin's influence.<sup>3</sup> Remarkable similarities between the first phrase of Gerbič's mazurka and the first phrase of Chopin's Mazurka in F-sharp minor, Op. 6, No. 1 are evident in the incorporation of a descending chromatic bass line, harmonized with altered chords. According to Richard S. Parks, this chromatic prolongation technique is consistent in Chopin's works.<sup>4</sup> However, as we shall see, the rest of Gerbič's mazurka manifests harmonic language typical of tonal music in general, making it challenging to attribute it to Chopin's influence.

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<sup>2</sup> Mieczysław Tomaszewski, "Tonality, Melody and Harmony," in *Chopin: The Man, His Work, and Its Resonance*, trans. John Comber (Warsaw: The Fryderyk Chopin Institute, 2015), 276; Francis Frederick McGinnis, "Chopin: Aspects of Melodic Style," (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1963), 103.

<sup>3</sup> Dragotin Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes au XIXe siècle," in *Book of the First International Musicological Congress Devoted to the Works of Frederick Chopin: Warszawa, 16th-22nd February 1960* (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1963), 287.

<sup>4</sup> Richard S. Parks, "Voice Leading and Chromatic Harmony in the Music of Chopin," *Journal of Music Theory* 20, no. 2 (Autumn 1976): 189–214.

## The Reception of Chopin in Nineteenth-Century Slovenia

Chopin reception in Slovenia was notably delayed compared to that in other parts of Europe. The particular historical conditions of Slovenia resulted in a limited exposure to European musical developments for its residents. According to Cvetko, music by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven dominated the repertoire of the Ljubljana Philharmonic Society concerts throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, with little room for newer composers.<sup>5</sup> While it is challenging to reconstruct the early reception of Chopin's music in Slovenia due to a lack of preserved concert programs, the emergence of *čitalnice* as cultural centers facilitated the integration of Chopin's music into Slovenian musical culture.<sup>6</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century, with the increasing number of Slovenian musical institutions, Chopin's music received a more widespread acceptance and was more often performed.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, around 1870, his music became a staple repertoire in many performance venues.<sup>8</sup> The *Glasbena Matica* Society, created in 1872,

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<sup>5</sup> Dragotin Cvetko, "Razvoj Muzičke Umjetnosti u Sloveniji," in *Historijski Razvoj Muzičke Kulture u Jugoslaviji*, Josip Andreis, Dragotin Cvetko, and Stana Đurić-Klajn (Zagreb: Školska Knjiga, 1962), 398. On December the 6th, 1844, Chopin's piano version of *La ci darem la mano* in B-flat major, Op. 2 was performed by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Ljubljana, marking the first documented evidence of the performance of Chopin's music in Slovenia. Because the pianist's name was not mentioned in the program, it is unknown whether it was a Slovenian or a foreign pianist because foreigners, mostly from neighboring Austria, often performed at concerts in Ljubljana. (Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes au XIX siècle," 282).

<sup>6</sup> Slovenian *čitalnice*, like the European salons, served as social gathering places where people engaged in intellectual and cultural activities. However, Slovenian *čitalnice* differed from salons in other parts of Europe in that they were influenced by the specific socio-political context, including nationalistic sentiments and efforts to preserve Slovenian identity. (For more information, see Leon Stefanija, "Unconscious Syncretism and Wilful Pragmatism: A Note on the Slovenian Salon Music's Aesthetics at the End of the Nineteenth Century," *Mousikous Logos* no. 1 (January 2014), <http://m-logos.gr/issues/i0001/a0015-stefanija>. While the incomplete sources do not provide exact details regarding the activities of the reading room in Ljubljana, there are records that the following Chopin's pieces were performed later in the nineteenth century: Great Waltz in A flat major, Op. 18 (1881), Fantasia in F minor, Op. 49 (1887), and Polonaise in E flat major (1889) (Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 284). Fran Gerbič, at one point, served as a reading room chair, leading me to assume that it was within this environment that he was exposed to Chopin's music (Cvetko, *Historijski Razvoj Muzičke Kulture u Jugoslaviji*, 431). He was closely connected to the reading room until he left to study in Prague in 1865. See Janja Podgrajšek, "Danski in Slovenski Zborovski Skladitelji v Obdobju Romantike in Pozne Romantike" (master's thesis, University of Maribor, 2006), 29.

<sup>7</sup> Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes au XIXe siècle," 283.

<sup>8</sup> Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes au XIXe siècle," 283. On the same page, Cvetko mentions that Gustav Mahler performed Chopin's Polonaise in A-flat major, Op. 53, No. 8 in 1882 at the Ljubljana Philharmonic. While he was

quickly became the heart of Slovenian musical initiatives. Following the foundation of its music school in 1882, Chopin's compositions found a place in the school curriculum, which is evidenced by the school concert programs.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, as Cvetko explains, Chopin became considered "a teacher who transcended national boundaries and who, like Mozart, had already become the property of all mankind."<sup>10</sup> In tracing the evolution of Chopin's reception in Slovenia, it becomes evident that his music underwent a remarkable transformation from relative obscurity to widespread recognition. This development not only reflects the growing sophistication of Slovenia's musical scene but also underscores the enduring resonance of Chopin's music across diverse cultural contexts.

While Cvetko asserts that the influence of Chopin's music is evident in the works of many Slovenian composers including Jurij Mihevec (George Micheuz, 1805–1882), Alojzij Ipavec (Ipavič, Ippavitz, 1815–1849), Ivan Hinek (1796–1886), François Prescheren (Prešeren, 1800–1849), Henry Ippaviz (Ipavec, dates unknown), and Benjamin Ipavec (1829–1920), the primary focus of this paper lies on the analysis of Fran Gerbič's mazurka.<sup>11</sup> The absence of a thorough analysis of the aforementioned composers' works is due to limitations in accessing their scores and recordings. However, these composers, according to Cvetko, employed techniques characteristic of the first phase of Romanticism, wrote in genres (polonaises, waltzes, etudes, impromptu, scherzo) typically used by Chopin, and even composed works that directly named Chopin's influence.<sup>12</sup> Despite these similar-

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also a conductor of the newly opened National Theater in Ljubljana in the 1881–82 season, he never performed at the Philharmonic's concerts as a conductor but exclusively as a pianist, playing Liszt and Chopin with much success.

<sup>9</sup> Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 284.

<sup>10</sup> Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 283.

<sup>11</sup> Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 285. Names in the parenthesis are an alternate spelling.

<sup>12</sup> Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 285-286. Mihevec wrote, among other pieces, a composition called *Chopin's Memories Op. 117, No. 1: Fantasy, No. 2: Dreaming*. This composition was written in honor of Chopin shortly after his death and published by the Mackar publishing house in Paris. Chopin's influence, according to Cvetko, is also visible in his Two Easy Polonaises Op. 18, Brilliant Mazurka Op. 28, Great Elegant Waltz Op. 84, Nocturne Op. 96, Mazurka Memories Op. 112, No. 6, Impromptu Op. 142, Fantasy-Mazurka Op. 145, and Brilliant Scherzo Op. 182. Alojzij Ipavec wrote, among other pieces, Fantasia in the form of a Polonaise and Trauermarsch. Cvetko argues that it is evident that the latter was modeled on Chopin's Funeral March—it starts in C minor, then transitions to A-flat major and finally returns to the initial C minor. In the same way, Chopin's and Liszt's composing techniques can be noticed in Hinek's compositions. One of them is *Gefühls-Fantasie mit Variationen über allbeliebte Volkshymne*, composed in 1853 and written with distinct technical skill. Chopin's influence, as Cvetko argues, is unmistakable, especially in the theme (Cvetko named this "introductory part")

ities, Cvetko explains that the musical expression of these later composers was fundamentally different from Chopin's style because of the influence of German Romantic sentimentality.<sup>13</sup> For a comprehensive exploration of Chopin's influence, further research into the works of these composers would be necessary. Consequently, this paper serves as the initial step towards more comprehensive research about Chopin's influence and the credibility of Cvetko's claims, laying the groundwork for future research in this field.

### **Fran Gerbič (1840–1917)**

The most profound impact of Chopin's music is evident in the compositions of Fran Gerbič; according to Cvetko, Gerbič's close association with people from the Slavic musical milieu, especially the Czechs and Poles, played a pivotal role in shaping his musical sensibilities.<sup>14</sup> Gerbič studied composition and vocal performance at the Prague Conservatory, and in 1868 was a tenor at the Prague National Theater.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, he lived and worked in Lviv from 1882 to 1886, which provided a unique opportunity for him to get acquainted with Polish music culture.<sup>16</sup> During his time in Lviv, Gerbič worked with Karol Mikuli (1821–1897) who was the leader of the Society for Dissemination of Music in Galicia (Towarzystwo dla Upowszechniania Muzyki w Galiciji).<sup>17</sup> Mikuli was also Chopin's student, friend, and an extraordinary performer and editor of his compositions, who played a crucial role in introducing Gerbič to Polish music.<sup>18</sup> In an article for

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and its variations 2, 4, 6, 11 and 12. *Memories from Trieste* – Nocturne for piano, Op. 1, *Poetry of the Night* - Piano Nocturne Op. 7 and Mazurka de Salon for Pianoforte Op. 13 are Prešern's pieces that Cvetko claims were influenced by Chopin. The piece by Henry Ippaviz was a "dynamic and extraordinary capriccio," *Forever Yours*. Finally, Benjamin Ipavec was a refined composer of Slavic expression and lyricism. Cvetko remarks that his inclination towards Chopin's style is especially reflected in the following compositions: Polka Mazurka (1868), Slavjanka Mazurka (1878), Mazurka (1900) and Poloneza (1906).

<sup>13</sup> Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 286.

<sup>14</sup> Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes" 286.

<sup>15</sup> Janja Podgrajšek, "Danski in Slovenski Zborovski Skladitelji," 69; Franc Križnar, "Edo Škulj, Fran Gerbič (1840–1917). Ob 100-letnici smrti .....", *Glasba v šoli in vrtcu* 20, no. 3 (Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo, 2017): 59; Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 287. After returning to Slovenia, he remained in contact with the Czechs, and especially with Dvořák.

<sup>16</sup> Križnar, "Edo Škulj, Fran Gerbič," 59–60. During that period, Lviv was a lively cultural city, predominantly inhabited by Poles and Ukrainians. For more information, see, Luba Kyyanovska, "Die national-kulturellen Beziehungen in Lviv in der zweiten Hälfte des XIX. Jahrhunderts," in *Gerbičev zbornik*, ed. Edo Škulj (Ljubljana: Družina, 2000), 31–39.

<sup>17</sup> Luba Kyyanovska, "Die national-kulturellen Beziehungen," 31–39; Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 287.

<sup>18</sup> Luba Kyyanovska, "Die national-kulturellen Beziehungen," 32; Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 287.

the newspaper *Novi Akordi*, Gerbič expressed his gratitude to Mikuli, stating:

Since I worked at this [Lviv] conservatory as a professor for four years, I had many opportunities to communicate with this artist, and I have him to thank for a lot of information about Chopin. I have not yet encountered a student who hung with all his soul on his teacher with such love and gratitude as Mikuli. He loved and adored him above all else. Chopin was everything to him!<sup>19</sup>

This acknowledgment illuminates Mikuli's role as a bridge, connecting Gerbič to the rich musical language of Chopin.

Mikuli, one of the most prolific editors of Chopin's works, passionately advocated for Chopin's legacy. In his description of Chopin as a teacher with a "holy artistic zeal," Mikuli emphasized that "every word from his lips was stimulating and inspiring."<sup>20</sup> In this article, Mikuli's 1879 edition of Chopin's mazurkas forms the basis of many of the musical examples. The foreword to this edition shows the devotion and passion that Mikuli felt for his teacher, especially about the recurring errors in earlier editions, which he meticulously worked on correcting with his "immortal master."<sup>21</sup> This enthusiasm for Chopin's works must have had a profound influence on Gerbič, a striving young musician and a future composer coming from a community with different musical expectations.

Cvetko claims that the exceptional chromatic richness, melodic delicacy, and harmonic diversity of the music Gerbič composed in Lviv are the principal examples of Chopin's influence.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, he highlights Gerbič's four piano mazurkas (Op. 41, Nos. 1 and 2, and Op. 59, Nos. 1 and 2) as the pieces with the most Chopinesque elements, showing resemblances not only to Chopin's techniques but also to his expressivity.<sup>23</sup> Based on my analysis of Mazurka in D minor,

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<sup>19</sup> Edo Škulj, "Gerbič – Urednik in pisec," in *Gerbičev zbornik*, ed. Edo Škulj (Ljubljana: Družina, 2000), 69. This is the original Gerbič's quote in Slovenian: "Ker sem štiri leta deloval na tem konservatoriju kot profesor, sem imel mnogo prilike občevati s tem umetnikom, in njemu se imam zahvaliti za mnogo podatkov, tičočih se Chopina. Nisem še naletel na učenca, ki bi s tako ljubeznijo in hvaležnostjo visel z vso dušo na svojem učitelju, kakor Mikuli. Ljubil in obožaval ga je nad vse. Chopin mu je bil vse!"

<sup>20</sup> Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*, trans. Naomi Shohet with Krysia Osostowicz and Roy Howat, ed. Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 11.

<sup>21</sup> Frédéric Chopin, *Mazurkas*, ed. Carl Mikuli (New York: Dover Publications, 1987).

<sup>22</sup> Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 287.

<sup>23</sup> Cvetko, "Chopin chez les Slovènes," 287.

Op. 42, No. 2, it becomes evident that the influence of Chopin is predominantly visible in the melodic aspects.

### Turn Topos and Shared Intervallic Patterns

One prevalent melodic feature found in both Chopin's music and in Gerbič's mazurka is the "turn topos," an embellishment of a note by an upper and lower neighboring note. Tomaszewski recognizes the turn topos as a melodic feature so frequently used by Chopin that he listed it as one of the characteristic elements of Chopin's compositional style.<sup>24</sup> Examples 1a and 1b below illustrate two ways that Chopin incorporated it into his music. Example 1a illustrates Chopin's use of two integrated turns (notated with rhythmic values) in the first eight measures of his Mazurka in A minor, Op. 7, No. 2. The first turn embellishes note D (D-E-D-C-sharp-D), and the second embellishes note A (A-B-A-G-sharp-A). Meanwhile, the first measure of Chopin's Impromptu in A-flat major, Op. 29, shown in Example 1b below, demonstrates that the first half of the turn (E-flat-F-E-flat) was represented by a superimposed symbol for trill while the second part (E-flat-D-E-flat) was integrated into the melody.

Example 1a. Chopin, Mazurka in A minor, Op. 7, No. 2, mm. 1–6.

<sup>24</sup> Tomaszewski, 264–67, 275–76. Drawing upon another Chopin scholar, Bronisława Wójcik-Keuprulian, Tomaszewski remarks that ornamental melody is the most characteristic and most common form of melody in Chopin's oeuvre. Consequently, his book discusses two kinds of ornaments in Chopin, the *integrated* (notated with rhythmic values) and the *superimposed* (represented by the standard symbol for mordent, trill, turn, and small note values that lie outside the notated rhythmic framework).



**Example 1b. Chopin, Impromptu in A-flat major, Op. 29, m. 1.**

The turn figure repeatedly appears in Gerbič's mazurka.<sup>25</sup> For instance, Example 1c shows four integrated turns occurring in measures 10-14. While the first two turns, G-A-G-F-sharp-G and E-F-E-D-sharp-E (mm. 10-11), are complete, the other two, D-E-D-(A)-F and A-B-flat-A-A-flat-(G) (mm. 12 and 14), could be interpreted as incomplete turns or variants.

**Example 1c. Gerbič, turn figures in Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, mm. 6-14.<sup>26</sup>**

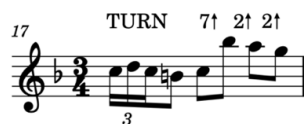
Besides the similarity between the two composers in their frequent use of turn figures, an additional striking resemblance emerges in the melody of m. 17 of Gerbič's mazurka and m. 2 of Chopin's Impromptu No. 3 in G-flat major, Op. 51. Gerbič's mazurka features a turn C-D-C-B-C followed by an ascending leap of a seventh (C-B-flat) and two descending steps (B-flat-A-G) (Example 2a). Remarkably, the

<sup>25</sup> We can see either the complete or the variant (incomplete) turn in the following measures of Gerbič's Mazurka, Op. 42, No. 2: 10-12, 14-15, 17-23, 33-35, 37-38, 44, 52, 54, 57, and 61. However, for Example 1c, I only include the first four.

<sup>26</sup> Engravings based on Fran Gerbič, "Mazurka, Op. 42, No. 2," *Novi akordi: zbornik za vokalno in instrumentalno glasbo* (Ljubljana: L. Schwentner, 1991).

second measure of Chopin's impromptu begins with the same intervals (Example 2b).<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, not only do the two passages have the same melodic patterns but also the same letter names. However, while Gerbič's example uses C–D–C–B–C–B-flat–A–G, in Chopin's example, all of them are flat: C-flat–D-flat–C-flat–B-flat–C-flat–B-flat–A-flat–G-flat.

**Example 2a. Gerbič, Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, m. 17.**



**Example 2b. Chopin, Impromptu No. 3 in G-flat major, Op. 51, m. 2.**



Similar melodic patterns are also evident in the opening measures of Chopin's Impromptu No. 1 in A-flat major, Op. 29 (Example 2c), mm. 93–94 of his Grande valse brillante in E-flat major, Op. 18 (Example 2d), and the first measure of his Impromptu No. 3 in G-flat major, Op. 51 (Example 2e). Following the turn, each example exhibits a leap of a sixth, followed by two descending steps. Similarly, the eighteenth measure of Gerbič's mazurka features a turn, followed by a leap of a sixth, a descending step, and a descending third, as illustrated in Example 2f.

**Example 2c. Chopin, Impromptu No. 1 in A-flat major, Op. 29, mm. 1–2.**



**Example 2d. Chopin, Grande valse brillante in E-flat major, Op. 18, mm. 93–94.**

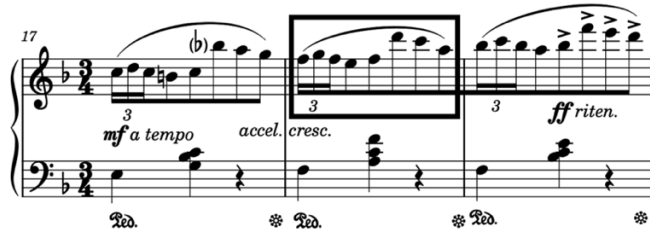


<sup>27</sup> The discrepancy here is that Chopin's seventh is major while the one of Gerbič is minor. Following the leap of a seventh, Chopin's two descending seconds are both major, whereas in Gerbič's mazurka, the first is minor, and the second is major.

**Example 2e. Chopin, Impromptu No. 3 in G-flat major, Op. 51, m. 1.**



**Example 2f. Gerbič. Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, mm. 17–19.**



Moreover, Examples 3a–3c below depict identical intervallic patterns observed in mm. 10 and 11 of Gerbič's mazurka, mm. 21 and 23 of Chopin's Waltz in D-flat major Op. 64, No. 1, and the first two measures of Chopin's Waltz in A-flat major, Op. 69, No. 1. All the examples begin with a turn, denoted by a rectangle in all three examples. Following the turn, a consistent pattern emerges across all of these examples: a leap of a third between two consonances subsequently filled with a passing tone, indicated by an oval in the examples. In Gerbič's mazurka, the concluding note of the turn ascends a third (G–B-flat), and this third is then filled in with a passing tone A. Similarly, in Chopin's D-flat major waltz, the final note of the turn, F, leaps up a third to A, which then steps down to G to fill in the space of the third. In Chopin's Waltz in A-flat major, the concluding note of the turn, D-flat, ascends a third to F, succeeded by a step down to E-flat, filling the third. This consistent recurrence of intervallic patterns across the examples underscores a significant parallel. Although there is no definite evidence, it is plausible that Chopin's waltzes may have influenced Gerbič during his time in Lviv when he worked with Mikuli.

**Example 3a. Gerbič, Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, mm. 10–11.**



**Example 3b. Chopin, Waltz in D-flat major, Op. 64, No. 1, mm. 21–24.**



**Example 3c. Chopin, Waltz in A-flat major, Op. 69, No. 1, mm. 1-2.**



Even though the turn is just one of many ornaments in Chopin's repertoire, its recognition by Chopin scholars as a Chopinesque stylistic device should not be overlooked. In Gerbič's mazurka, the prevalence of turn figures is remarkable, as are the identical intervallic patterns found in several compositions by Chopin. For example, mm. 10 and 11 of Gerbič's mazurka mirror the melodic patterns of mm. 21 and 23 of Chopin's Waltz in D-flat major, Op. 64, No. 1, as well as the opening measures of Chopin's Waltz in A-flat major, Op. 69, No. 1. Likewise, m. 17 of Gerbič's mazurka echoes the melodic patterns found in m. 2 of Chopin's Impromptu No. 3 in G-flat major, Op. 51. Furthermore, m. 18 of Gerbič's mazurka closely resembles the opening measures of Chopin's Impromptu No. 1 in A-flat major, Op. 29 and the first measure of his Impromptu No. 3 in G-flat major, Op. 51. These findings support Cvetko's claim that Chopin's influence may be discerned in the melodic style of Gerbič's mazurkas.

### **Cadential Formula**

A cadential formula often used by Chopin is also present in Gerbič's mazurkas. In his dissertation on Chopin's melodic style, Francis Frederick McGinnis identifies recurring cadential patterns as a prominent feature in Chopin's works. He argues that mazurka and waltz melodies display a remarkably high incidence of cadential stereotypes, exceeding 60 percent. McGinnis emphasizes that such a phenomenon must be counted as a significant recognizable factor in Chopin's melodic style.<sup>28</sup> His research presents the most prominent four cadential types in Chopin's works.<sup>29</sup> Among these, the "type I" cadential formula stands out, characterized by a fifth scale degree followed by an ascending leap to a third and a stepwise descent to a first scale degree.<sup>30</sup> Examples 4a-4c below show the cadential formula in three pieces by Chopin: mm. 93-94 of *Grande valse brillante* in E-flat major, Op. 18 (Example 4a),<sup>31</sup> mm. 43-44 of the *Waltz in A minor*, Op. 34, No. 2 (Example 4b),<sup>32</sup> and m. 12 of his *Polonaise in D minor*, Op. 71, No. 1 (Example 4c).<sup>33</sup> Example 4d illustrates the same cadential formula in Gerbič's mazurka: an embellished fifth scale

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<sup>28</sup> McGinnis, "Chopin," 108.

<sup>29</sup> McGinnis, "Chopin," 103-6.

<sup>30</sup> McGinnis, "Chopin," 103

<sup>31</sup> McGinnis, "Chopin," 93, Example 54. Although the original key of the piece is E-flat major, the section of the excerpt is in A-flat.

<sup>32</sup> McGinnis, "Chopin," 93, Example 55.

<sup>33</sup> McGinnis, "Chopin," 103, Example 62.

degree, A, followed by an ascending leap to a third scale degree, F, and a stepwise descent to the tonic, D.

**Example 4a. Grande valse brillante in E-flat major, Op. 18, mm. 93–94.**

**Example 4b. Waltz in A minor, Op. 34, No. 2, mm. 43–44.**

**Example 4c. Polonaise in D minor, Op. 71, No. 1, m. 12.**

**Example 4d. The same cadential formula in Gerbič, Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, mm. 15–16.**

Once again, it is crucial to examine the broader context and potential influences on Chopin’s style. While his use of cadential formulas stands out, it may not be entirely unique to him. In future research, it would be valuable to explore whether Chopin consistently employed these cadential patterns across all genres he composed, and whether their prevalence in his works exceeded that of other composers from his era. Therefore, although the “type I” cadential formula is evident in both Gerbič’s mazurka and Chopin’s dance styles, and while it is plausible that Gerbič heard it in numerous Chopin’s pieces, it is difficult to argue for a direct influence in this regard. Nevertheless, the shared similarities provide additional support for Cvetko’s claim.

**The Similarity in The Second Thematic Idea:  
Chopin’s Waltz in A Minor, Op. Posthumous and Gerbič’s Mazurka**

Remarkably, the second thematic idea in Gerbič’s mazurka (Example 5b, mm. 9–16) shares a contour with the second thematic idea in Chopin’s Waltz in A Minor, Op. Posthumous (Example 5a, mm. 17–24). First, both are structured as eight-measure periods. While the antecedent phrase in Chopin’s waltz begins with an ascending scale (Ex-

ample 5a, m. 17), the one in Gerbič's mazurka begins with a descending chromatic scale (Example 5b, m. 9). However, the melodic contour in the subsequent three antecedent measures of both works exhibits a remarkable similarity. As demonstrated in m. 18 of Example 5a and m. 10 of Example 5b, both composers embellish the first note of the second measure of their antecedent phrase—Chopin embellishes it with a trill and Gerbič with a turn. Subsequently, both composers repeat the second measure idea in the following two measures, each time descending, as evidenced in mm. 19–20 of Example 5a and mm. 11–12 of Example 5b.

**Example 5a. Chopin, Waltz in A minor, Op. Posthumous, mm. 17–24.**

**Example 5b. Gerbič, Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, mm. 9–16.**

Additionally, the scale in the first measure of the antecedent phrase in both composers' works serves a similar function. It builds tension, which is gradually released with each subsequent measure of the phrase. Chopin's scale introduces tension through its ascent, outlining a V chord with a tendency tone that seeks resolution (Example 5a, m. 17). The scale in Gerbič's mazurka generates dramatic tension with its chromaticism (Example 5b, m. 9). In the consequent phrase,

Chopin heightens the tension by arpeggiating the V chord through three octaves, each in a higher register (Example 5a, m. 21). Similarly, Gerbič intensifies the atmosphere after the chromaticism by introducing a register shift, avoiding an otherwise descending scalar pattern (Example 5b, m. 14).

I also examined this same section of Gerbič's mazurka (Example 5b) for identical melodic patterns in relation to Chopin's Waltz in A-flat major, Op. 69, No. 1 (mm. 1–2) and Chopin's Waltz in D-flat major, Op. 64, No. 1 (mm. 21 and 23) (see Examples 3a–3c). Considering the enduring recognition of Chopin's waltzes as his most celebrated works, these parallels between Gerbič's mazurka and Chopin's waltzes lend credence to Cvetko's claims regarding Chopin's influence on Gerbič's compositions.<sup>34</sup>

### The “Do-Ti-Do” Figure

The “do-ti-do” figure, shown in Example 6a, is a concise three-note motive comprised of a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note and a quarter note and characterized by a descent from scale degree 1 to the leading tone followed by an ascent back to the tonic. This figure emerges prominently in Gerbič's mazurka, mirroring its presence in several of Chopin's mazurkas.

#### Example 6a. “Do-Ti-Do” Figure



This lower neighboring figure, which I termed “do-ti-do” for simplicity,<sup>35</sup> drew my attention because it concludes three phrases within Gerbič's mazurka. Encountering this figure in the same genre of both composers prompted me to examine the figure's musical context. In Gerbič and Chopin's mazurkas, the figure appears on the first or second beat, emphasizing the second or third beat. This rhythmic emphasis aligns with the characteristic accentuation on the second and third beats observed in mazurkas.<sup>36</sup> However, although Stephen Downes acknowledges the figure as a standard *rhythmic* figure that arises on the first beats of mazurkas, no available literature on mazurkas examines it in the context of harmony or melody.<sup>37</sup> Also, while the figure is not explicitly mentioned as characteristic of Chopin, there are numerous instances of the figure across Chopin's mazurkas, which could give further credence to Cvetko's claim.

<sup>34</sup> Tomaszewski, “Tonality, Melody and Harmony,” 400–401.

<sup>35</sup> I named the figure “do-ti-do” in accordance with *Moveable Do* system.

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Downes, “Mazurka,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001. Accessed 8 Jan. 2023.

<sup>37</sup> Downes, “Mazurka.”

Example 6b illustrates the first occurrence of the “do-ti-do” figure in Gerbič’s mazurka.<sup>38</sup> The figure concludes an opening sentence of the mazurka supported by a tonic chord in D minor. The second instance unfolds in m. 16, as Gerbič employs the figure to conclude the consequent phrase of the period, once again harmonized with a tonic chord in D minor (Example 6c). Finally, in its final appearance in m. 24, illustrated in Example 6d, the figure also ends the consequent phrase of the period, harmonized with the tonic harmony in the relative F major.

**Example 6b. Do-Ti-Do figure in Gerbič, Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, mm. 7-8.**

**Example 6c. Do-Ti-Do figure in Gerbič, Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, mm. 15-16.**

**Example 6d. Do-Ti-Do figure in Gerbič, Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, mm. 20-24.**

Remarkably, Chopin employs the “do-ti-do” figure in a similar manner in m. 12 of his Mazurka in A minor, Op. 59, No. 1 at the end of the phrase, supported by the tonic harmony (Example 6e).<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> For Examples 6a-6c in context, see Example 8.

<sup>39</sup> The only difference is that the first *do* in Chopin’s mazurka was not a dotted eighth note but rather an eighth note followed by a sixteenth rest. Also, the same figure comes back at the end of the phrase in m. 36. In m. 79, there is an exact transposition of the opening twelve measures to G-sharp minor, where the figure can be heard again. Finally, in m. 114, in which we expect



Additionally, both composers used an acciaccatura to ornament the first *do* of the figure. We can also see the “do-ti-do” figure in measures 12 and 20 of Chopin’s Mazurka in A-flat major, Op. 50, No. 2 (Example 6f).<sup>40</sup> Again, as in his Mazurka in A minor, Op. 59, No. 1 (Example 6e) and Gerbič’s mazurka (Example 6b–6d), it is ornamented with an acciaccatura, and it comes at the end of the phrase accompanied by tonic harmony, creating a sense of closure.

Example 6e. Chopin, Mazurka in A minor, Op. 59, No. 1, mm. 1–14.

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-6) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system (measures 7-10) includes a *ten.* marking. The third system (measures 11-14) features a circled acciaccatura in measure 12. The bass line contains figured bass notation: "Red." and "\*" symbols.

the ending of the phrase on tonic (A minor), the figure is accompanied by  $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}/\text{V}$ , as a deceptive ending. Unlike the previous occurrences in which it brought closure to the phrase, the harmony this time heightens the tension and creates a sense of incompleteness.

<sup>40</sup> The figure appears again within the two returns of the A section: mm. 43 and 51, and 87 and 95.

**Example 6f. Chopin, Mazurka in A-flat major, Op. 50, No. 2, mm. 8-20.**

The image shows three systems of musical notation for Chopin's Mazurka in A-flat major, Op. 50, No. 2, measures 8-20. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (measures 8-12) has a 'do' symbol under measures 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The second system (measures 13-16) has 'do' symbols under measures 13, 14, 15, and 16. The third system (measures 17-20) has 'do' symbols under measures 17, 18, 19, and 20. A black box highlights a specific rhythmic figure in measures 9, 14, and 18, which consists of a quarter note followed by two eighth notes.

Furthermore, there is yet another instance of the figure in mm. 2 and 10 of Chopin's Mazurka in E minor, Op. 41, No. 2, illustrated in Example 6g. It emerges at the end of two-measure units, contributing to a sense of completion. Even though E minor is the tonic of the mazurka, the opening two measures, and measures 9 and 10, feature tonicization of the subdominant, A minor. Therefore, the figure can appropriately be classified as "do-ti-do" in this mazurka as well.

**Example 6g. Chopin, Mazurka in E minor, Op. 41, No. 2, mm. 1-10.**

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Chopin's Mazurka in E minor, Op. 41, No. 2, measures 1-10. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (measures 1-4) has a 'do' symbol under measure 1. The second system (measures 5-8) has a 'do' symbol under measure 5. A black box highlights a specific rhythmic figure in measures 2 and 6, which consists of a quarter note followed by two eighth notes.

Chopin extensively utilized the "do-ti-do" figure in the A section of his Mazurka in C major, Op. 33, No. 3, shown in Example 6h. While the figure in mm. 6 and 14 feature scale degrees 6 and 5, respectively, these measures can be regarded as the tonicization of A

minor (mm. 5–6) and G major (mm. 13–14). Consequently, the term “do-ti-do” appropriately characterizes these occurrences as well.

**Example 6h. “Do-Ti-Do” Figure in Chopin’s Mazurka in C major, Op. 33, No. 3 (mm 1–16)**

The image shows a musical score for Chopin's Mazurka in C major, Op. 33, No. 3, measures 1 through 16. The score is written for piano in 3/4 time. It consists of a treble and bass clef. The melody in the treble clef features a prominent 'do-ti-do' figure, which is highlighted with black boxes in measures 1, 5, 9, and 13. A percentage symbol (%) is placed above measure 1, and a '1' is above measure 2. A 'p' dynamic marking is present in measure 1. The bass line provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. At the end of measure 16, there is a 'Fine' marking. There are also some handwritten-style markings like '20.' and '\*' below the bass line.

We can see that the “do-ti-do” figure is prominent in both Gerbič’s and Chopin’s mazurkas, which suggests a potential link between the two composers. While the figure is not explicitly identified as characteristic of Chopin’s style in existing literature, its recurrence across his works adds weight to Cvetko’s assertion of Chopin’s influence on Gerbič. Further investigation into this motif and its significance in mazurkas could provide valuable insights into the connection between these composers’ musical styles and contribute to a deeper understanding of Romanticism in music.

## The Topos of the Falling Fourth (“Chmiel Motif”)

The topos of the falling fourth emerges as another similarity between Chopin’s melodic motifs and Gerbič’s mazurka, deserving careful consideration. Drawing upon Anna Czekanowska, Tomaszewski remarks that folk melody in Chopin manifests through tetrachordal structures, in which a “framework of fourths” is filled out with a second and a third (see Examples 7a and 7b).<sup>41</sup> Instances include the falling fourth motifs in Chopin’s Nocturne in B-flat Minor from Op. 9 and Prelude in A minor, recognized as distinctive Chopinesque melodic formulas, which are reminiscent of the folk song “Chmiel” (Hops).<sup>42</sup> Strikingly, Chopin employs the same pitches for the motif in m. 24 of his B-flat Minor nocturne and measures 5–6 of his A minor prelude: D–A–B.<sup>43</sup> These pitches and the two notes preceding them, D and E, appear in the original folk song in the exact order, though a half step lower in the folk version: D-flat–E-flat–D-flat–A-flat–B-flat.<sup>44</sup>

Example 7a. Chopin, Nocturne in B-flat minor, Op. 9, No. 1, mm. 24–25.

Example 7b. Chopin, Prelude in A minor, Op. 28, No 2, mm. 1–9.

<sup>41</sup> Tomaszewski, “Tonality, Melody and Harmony,” 276.

<sup>42</sup> Tomaszewski, “Tonality, Melody and Harmony,” 276; Kapela Brodow, “Chmiel (Hops wedding song),” video, 1:32, July 17, 2009, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5p1jN\\_K\\_lk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5p1jN_K_lk). This is the YouTube link to the original folk song with the falling fourths motif.

<sup>43</sup> Another example in which Chopin employed the “Chmiel Motif” is his Mazurka Op. 67, No. 2 (mm. 1–2). One measure later, he repeats the same motif up a third (mm. 3–4). Another example of Chopin’s use of the “falling fourth” motif is his Mazurka Op. 59, No. 1, which begins with the motif. (E–B–C).

<sup>44</sup> Tomaszewski, “Tonality, Melody and Harmony,” 276; Brodow, “Chmiel (Hops wedding song).”

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The top staff, labeled with a '5', shows a treble clef with a circled note (E) followed by a falling fourth motif (D-A) enclosed in a rectangular box. The bottom staff, labeled with an '8', shows a similar motif in a different pitch, also circled and boxed. The bass clef in both staves contains a complex accompaniment of chords and moving lines.

In Gerbič's mazurka, the falling fourth motif illustrated in mm. 41–42 and 45–46 of Example 7c features the same pitches (D–A) that Chopin used (Example 7a and Example 7b, m.5), though the leap in Gerbič's mazurka is filled by a third instead of a second. Both Chopin and Gerbič introduce E as the pitch preceding the motif, indicated by a circle in the examples. The motif reappears in mm. 49 and 53 of Gerbič's mazurka, albeit in a different pitch (Example 7c). The final instance of the motif in Example 7c shares all the pitches with the one in measure 25 of Chopin's B-flat Minor nocturne: D–A–B-flat (Example 7a). Nevertheless, without further research, the determination of whether the "falling fourth" motif in Gerbič's mazurka is a coincidence or potentially another manifestation of Chopin's influence remains elusive.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> As I explore similarities in the use of the "falling fourth" motif between Gerbič and Chopin, it is relevant to consider Alexander Scriabin's mazurkas, which also demonstrate elements of Chopin's influence, including the presence of the "falling fourth" motif. Examples of the "falling fourth" motif include his Mazurka Op. 3, No. 1 (mm. 1–3), Mazurka Op. 25, No. 4 (mm. 1–2, 5–6), Mazurka Op. 25, No. 5 (mm. 16, 47–48), Mazurka Op. 25, No. 6 (mm. 9–10, 11–12), Mazurka Op. 40, No. 1 (m. 51). Scriabin's mazurkas and early compositions are widely recognized to have been influenced by Chopin, and while there may not be explicit research linking this motif to Chopin's style in Scriabin's work, its presence suggests a continuation of Chopin's influence in later composers' mazurkas. See also, Nataliya Sukhina, "Alexander Scriabin (1871–1915): Piano Miniature as Chronicle of His Creative Evolution; Complexity of Interpretive Approach and Its Implications" (DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2008); Carol Kendall Oliver, "The Mazurka Triangle: The Influence of the Mazurkas of Frédéric Chopin on the Mazurkas of Alexander Scriabin and Reinhold Glière" (DMA diss., University of Memphis, May 2005).

Example 7c. Gerbič, Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, mm. 41–64.

Harmonies in Gerbič's Mazurka

Thus far, I have dedicated considerable attention to the melodic influences of Chopin in Gerbič's compositions, however, examining the harmonic structures in Gerbič's mazurkas provides further insight into the depth of Chopin's impact on Gerbič's musical style. Gerbič opens his mazurka with a straightforward  $i-V_5^6-i$  progression, effectively expanding the tonic area (Example 8a, mm. 1–3). He then introduces a chromatically descending bass line: C-sharp–C–B-flat (mm. 4–6), harmonized with diminished chords. This chromatic descent begins with a C-sharp fully-diminished seventh (a leading tone chord) in measure 4 and culminates in A dominant seventh (a

dominant of the piece) in measure 7. These altered diminished chords between the leading tone chord and the dominant seventh deviate from their traditional function as secondary leading tone chords. Instead, they function as a chromatic prolongation bridging the only two chords in this passage that hold the primary significance in the harmonic framework of D minor. Moreover, within this chromatic descent, a circle of fifths progression emerges in measures 4–5: C-sharp fully-diminished seventh goes to F-sharp diminished, which then progresses to B fully-diminished seventh. In measure 7, the progression unfolds with a *i* chord, followed by a cadential six-four that leads to a dominant seventh chord, which resolves to the tonic in measure 8.

**Example 8a. Gerbič, Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, mm. 1–24.**

Moderato (♩ = 104)

The musical score for Gerbič's Mazurka in D minor, Op. 42, No. 2, measures 1–24, is presented in a piano arrangement. The tempo is marked Moderato with a quarter note equal to 104 beats per minute. The key signature is D minor (two flats). The score is divided into five systems of four measures each. The first system (measures 1–4) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a chromatic descent in the bass line. The second system (measures 5–8) includes a piano ritardando (*p riten.*) in measure 7, followed by a fortissimo (*f a tempo*) section. The third system (measures 9–12) features a fortissimo ritardando (*ff riten.*) in measure 11, leading to a piano (*p*) section. The fourth system (measures 13–16) includes a mezzo-forte (*mf a tempo*) section with an acceleration and crescendo (*accel. cresc.*) in measure 15, followed by a fortissimo (*ff riten.*) section. The fifth system (measures 17–20) features a piano (*p*) section. The score concludes with a *Fine* marking in measure 24. The bass line is marked with *Red.* and *\** symbols, indicating specific harmonic or performance details.

In Chopin's Mazurka in F-sharp Minor, Op. 6, No. 1, demonstrated in Example 8b, a strikingly similar opening phrase unfolds. This eight-measure long phrase opens with a  $V^7-i$  progression (mm. 1–2), which Chopin transposes up a third, resulting in  $V^7/III-III$  (mm. 3–4). Additionally, Chopin introduces a descending

chromatic bass line starting in measure 5: A-G-sharp-G-F-sharp-F-E-E-flat-D-C-sharp, harmonized with fully and half-diminished seventh chords and dominant seventh chords. This sequence serves as a chromatic prolongation, bridging a III chord in measure 4 with a V<sup>7</sup> in measure 9. Similar to Gerbič's mazurka, Chopin deftly incorporates a circle of fifths progression within this descending line (see Table 1). For instance, in measure 5, a D-sharp half-diminished seventh goes to a G-sharp dominant seventh, which leads to a C-sharp dominant seventh. This chromatic prolongation continues, culminating in measure 8, where A half-diminished seventh goes to D dominant seventh, which goes to G-sharp half-diminished seventh. Finally, the G-sharp half-diminished seventh proceeds to a C-sharp dominant seventh, the dominant of the key, which initiates a new phrase. As we further explore Chopin's innovative use of chromatic harmony, it becomes evident that his techniques transcend mere harmonic conventions.

**Example 8b. Chopin, Mazurka in F-sharp minor, Op. 6, No. 1, mm. 1-10.**

The musical score for Chopin's Mazurka in F-sharp minor, Op. 6, No. 1, measures 1-10, is presented in three systems. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 132. The score includes various performance instructions and musical notations:

- Measure 1:** Starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G, A) followed by a quarter note (B). The left hand has a quarter note (F#).
- Measure 2:** The right hand continues with a triplet of eighth notes (B, C, D) followed by a quarter note (E). The left hand has a quarter note (G#).
- Measure 3:** The right hand has a quarter note (F#) followed by a triplet of eighth notes (G, A, B). The left hand has a quarter note (C#).
- Measure 4:** The right hand has a quarter note (C#) followed by a triplet of eighth notes (D, E, F#). The left hand has a quarter note (G#).
- Measure 5:** The right hand has a quarter note (A) followed by a triplet of eighth notes (B, C, D). The left hand has a quarter note (E).
- Measure 6:** The right hand has a quarter note (E) followed by a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G, A). The left hand has a quarter note (B).
- Measure 7:** The right hand has a quarter note (F#) followed by a triplet of eighth notes (G, A, B). The left hand has a quarter note (C#).
- Measure 8:** The right hand has a quarter note (G) followed by a triplet of eighth notes (A, B, C). The left hand has a quarter note (D).
- Measure 9:** The right hand has a quarter note (A) followed by a triplet of eighth notes (B, C, D). The left hand has a quarter note (E).
- Measure 10:** The right hand has a quarter note (B) followed by a triplet of eighth notes (C, D, E). The left hand has a quarter note (F#).

Performance instructions include *cresc.* (crescendo) in measure 4, *descrec.* (decrescendo) in measure 5, *legato* in measure 5, and *rubato* in measure 9. The score also features various ornaments and dynamic markings.



**Table 1: Chromatic Prolongation in Chopin, Mazurka in F-sharp minor, Op. 6, No. 1, mm. 4–9.**

	M.4	Measure 5			Measure 6		
Chords:	A	D# <sup>o7</sup>	G# <sup>7</sup>	C# <sup>7</sup>	C# <sup>o7</sup>	F# <sup>7</sup>	F# <sup>o7</sup>
Bass:	A	A	G#	G#	G	F#	F#
RN:	III						

	Measure 7			Measure 8			M.9
Chords:	B <sup>o7</sup>	E7	E <sup>o7</sup>	A <sup>o7</sup>	D7	G# <sup>o7</sup>	C# <sup>7</sup>
Bass:	F	E	E	Eb	D	D	C#
RN:						vii <sup>o</sup> <sub>3</sub> <sup>4</sup> /V	V <sup>7</sup>

Richard S. Parks, in his analysis of Chopin's works, offers insights regarding my reception thesis. In his article "Voice Leading and Chromatic Harmony in the Music of Chopin," Parks examines Chopin's chromatic harmony, specifically exploring Chopin's use of altered applied dominants and leading-tone chords in a context where they do not serve standard harmonic functions.<sup>46</sup> He draws upon Gerald Abraham, the first to use the term "harmonic parenthesis" to describe sections that feature a series of altered chords.<sup>47</sup> Abraham specifically focused on Chopin's early compositions with a succession of fully-diminished seventh chords, only the first and last of which can be related to the original key of the piece, describing this technique as a "temporary suspension of tonality."<sup>48</sup> He draws parallels to similar techniques in the works of Haydn, Jomelli, and Gluck, utilizing chords that are more relatable to their tonal context but which offer insights into the origin of Chopin's approach.<sup>49</sup>

Building on Abraham's insights, Parks contends, and I agree, that these progressions transcend strict harmonic considerations and that their function can be explained through voice leading.<sup>50</sup> Parks also gives an example of the opening phrase in Chopin's Mazurka in F-sharp minor, Op. 6, No. 1, which was previously discussed in this paper.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, he identifies a chromatic prolongation technique as typical for Chopin, offering examples from various compositions, such as Prelude in E minor, Op. 28, Nocturne in E-flat major, Op. 9, No. 2 (mm. 10–13), Fantasy in F Minor, Op. 49 (mm. 268–276), and Etude in E major, Op. 10, No. 3 (mm. 21–54).<sup>52</sup> He also mentions other pieces by Chopin in which the same technique occurs: Mazurka, Op. 30, No.

<sup>46</sup> Richard S. Parks, "Voice Leading and Chromatic Harmony in the Music of Chopin," *Journal of Music Theory* 20, no. 2 (Autumn, 1976): 189–214.

<sup>47</sup> Parks, "Voice Leading," 189.

<sup>48</sup> Parks, 190.

<sup>49</sup> Parks, 190.

<sup>50</sup> Parks, 191.

<sup>51</sup> Parks, 192.

<sup>52</sup> Parks, 192–212.

4 (mm. 128–31), Mazurka, Op. 67, No. 2 (mm. 21–24), Ballade, Op. 52 (mm. 72–75), and Mazurka, Op. 7, No. 2 (mm. 17–25).<sup>53</sup> Parks explains that this technique used by Chopin is characterized by the prolongation and emphasis of specific chords that frame the passages, which, whether different or the same, always hold primary significance in the tonal scheme.<sup>54</sup> He goes on to say that each passage aims to emphasize tonal relationships through melodic movement, with the chromatic chords chosen intentionally to create a sense of complexity and ambiguity.<sup>55</sup> Finally, as I examine the parallels between Gerbič's opening phrase and Chopin's Mazurka in F-sharp minor, while considering various other Chopin's pieces cited by Parks, who argues that the technique of chromatic prolongation is characteristic of Chopin, I find it plausible to partially support Cvetko's argument that Chopin's influence is evident in chromatic richness and harmonic diversity in Gerbič's works he composed in Lviv. Concerning the harmonies from the remainder of Gerbič's mazurka (Example 8a), it is difficult to attribute them to Chopin's influence because the harmonic simplicity prevalent in this section aligns with tonal music conventions, and thus does not support Cvetko's assertion.<sup>56</sup>

## Conclusion

The motive behind this research was to test the assertion of Dragotin Cvetko, a renowned Slovenian scholar who argued that there was evidence of a considerable influence of Chopin in Gerbič's works. These assumptions were supported by the fact that Gerbič worked with Chopin's student Karol Mikuli in Lviv, where Gerbič familiarized

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<sup>53</sup> Parks, 212.

<sup>54</sup> Parks, 212.

<sup>55</sup> Parks, 212–13.

<sup>56</sup> Measures 9–12 of Gerbič's mazurka (Example 8a) exhibit a simple chord progression:  $i-ii^{\flat}_5-V^7-i$ , repeated in measures 13–16. In measure 17, the piece modulates to the relative F major and measures 17–24 take the form of an eight-measure long period. The harmonies in measures 17–20 follow a straightforward pattern:  $V^{\flat}_5-I-V^{\flat}_3-I^{\flat}$ , concluding the antecedent phrase with an imperfect authentic cadence. The consequent phrase introduces more adventurous harmonies. Upon returning to  $V^{\flat}_5$  in measure 21 in the consequent phrase, measure 22 introduces a tonicization of G minor, functioning as a  $ii$  chord in the key of F. This measure features an F-sharp diminished seventh followed by a D dominant seventh chord, serving as  $vii^{\flat}_2/ii$  and  $V^7/ii$ , respectively. The final two measures present a  $ii-V^7-I$  progression, culminating in a perfect authentic cadence. In measure 25, Gerbič reintroduces the opening eight-measure long melody with a descending chromatic bass line, now in F major. Following this phrase, harmonies in the rest of mazurka include only tonic, supertonic, and dominant chords. This harmonic simplicity thus complicates any speculation about influences on Gerbič's harmonies.

himself more intimately with Chopin's works. Drawing upon distinctive Chopinesque features identified by Tomaszewski and McGinnis, I found stylistic similarities between the works of Chopin and Gerbič's mazurka, including the "Type I" cadential formula and the "falling fourths" motif. I also discovered the same intervallic patterns of several measures from Gerbič's mazurka to those from various pieces by Chopin. Moreover, I revealed a similar melodic contour and suggested the same function of figures used in the second thematic idea of Gerbič's mazurka and Chopin's *Waltz in A minor, Op. Posthumous*. My investigation also highlights that Gerbič's and various mazurkas by Chopin share the same phrase endings with a figure I termed "do-ti-do." Based on Cvetko's claim regarding Chopin's significant influence on Gerbič, my research shows that the impact is indeed visible in the melodic aspect of his music. Significantly, my findings extended to the realm of harmony. I unveiled striking similarities in the opening phrase of Gerbič's mazurka and Chopin's *Mazurka in F sharp minor, Op. 6, No. 1*. The similarity is particularly evident in the employment of a descending chromatic bass line, harmonized with altered chords. This technique aligns with Chopin's characteristic chromatic prolongation, as delineated by Parks. While direct influence of Chopin on Gerbič is difficult to prove, my findings provide substantial support for Cvetko's claim. In my future research, I will continue exploring Cvetko's assertions, analyzing other works by Gerbič and examining other composers whom Cvetko suggested were influenced by Chopin. This pursuit holds potential to significantly contribute to our understanding of musical influences and developments in the region.

It is essential to point out that there are limitations to my research. I understand the reception study as interdisciplinary research involving a compilation and examination of a wide range of data—concert programs, advertisements, newspaper articles, scientific articles (theoretical, musicological, or performance practice), different recordings, and works by later composers. Because many of these documents were not accessible in the United States, I plan on continuing my investigation by visiting regional archives that may keep less obvious yet crucial data. For example, private letters, performance tickets, or even travel arrangements and bills might help us determine who, where, and when Gerbič met during his travels and regional performances.

This research would be additionally valuable because we assume that Gerbič's practice might have influenced the musical production not only in Slovenia but in the Balkans as a whole. Such a hypothesis opens a new field of research that would shed light on the conditions and musical developments in the region. Therefore, the importance of this musical event in the development of Slovenian music Romanticism should not be disregarded.

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## About the Contributors

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During her Master's degree, Tanja was recognized with the prestigious E.C. Hall Outstanding Graduate Student Award, distinguishing her as the university's top graduate student. Tanja has also been a dedicated teacher, teaching fellow, and research assistant at various educational institutions, including the University of North Texas, Texas Woman's University, and the University of Central Oklahoma. Her commitment to sharing the joy of music has also led her to conduct guest lectures in European universities and public schools in Oklahoma.

**TOMÁS JONSSON**. Described as "extraordinarily talented" by Houston Public Media, Tomás Jonsson is a highly sought-after pianist and composer on the DFW music scene. He is known for his ability to perform with any lineup, in any genre, for any audience. His experience in historically-Black Baptist churches has infused his playing with a gospel sensibility that is uncommon for a classically trained musician. In February 2024, Tomás won 2nd Place (and Best Jazz Ballad) at the UNISA International Jazz Piano Competition in Pretoria, South Africa. In May of 2023, Tomás won 1st Place at the Jacksonville Jazz Piano Competition. Tomás has performed or recorded with celebrated artists including Benny Benack III, Ulysses Owens, Jr., Reuben Rogers, Caity Gyorgy, and Nick Finzer.

In May 2022 he graduated with a B.M. in Classical Piano Performance from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. In May 2024, he graduated with an M.M. in Jazz Studies at the University of North Texas where he worked as Teaching Fellow and played in the legendary One O'Clock Lab Band®. This Fall he is headed to Baltimore, Maryland to pursue a Graduate Performance Diploma in Jazz Studies at the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University. In his spare time, he loves to bake and keep up with developments in the law.