

ZBIGNIEW SKOWRON

WARSZAWA

UNIwersytet Warszawski

Instytut Muzykologii

FRYDERYK CHOPIN'S REDISCOVERED VISITING CARDS. A CONTRIBUTION TO HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH STEFAN WITWICKI

In Chopin's correspondence with his close friend Stefan Witwicki, we note both letters of deeper substance concerning Chopin's creative talent and also letters treating of everyday matters in a direct, friendly style. A special case in this correspondence is that of the short missives which Chopin wrote on his visiting cards and sent through a messenger.

The present article, which recapitulates the exchange of letters between Chopin and Witwicki from 1831 to 1845, deals with three of Chopin's visiting cards bearing information for his friend dating from 1841–1842, as indicated by the address: '16, rue Pigalle'. The texts written on these visiting cards have already been published by Bronisław Edward Sydow, but he did not indicate the source of the information he gave or the place where the autographs were kept.

Research has revealed the location of two of the visiting cards, which have been held since 1925 in the Jagiellonian Library in Kraków, following a donation from Dionizy Zaleski (MS BJ 9196 III fol. 40 and MS BJ 9196 III fol. 41; items 5 and 7 in the table appended to the text).

Of particular significance among the 'telegraphic' information sent to Witwicki by Chopin is the hitherto unpublished visiting card put up for auction in the spring of 1999 by Les Neuf Muses in Paris (item 8 in the table; current repository unknown). Chopin sent it to Witwicki on the day of the death of their mutual friend Jan Matuszyński, who was buried at Montmartre Cemetery on 21 April 1842.

The rediscovered Chopin visiting cards are of modest research value, but they do enrich the pool of authentic Chopin documents. They also reflect Chopin's activeness amid his everyday, personal affairs.