

Żywe wspomnienia: Examining Fryderyk Chopin's Op. 17 No. 4

Mazurka in A Minor as a Musical Memory

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International Conference "Music in the World of Values and Meanings"

Akademia Muzyczne im. Feliksa Nowowiejskiego

9-10 December 2025

Abstract

While some Chopin scholars, like Jeffrey Kallberg, have examined connections between numbers within a single mazurka opus, little to no scholarship has explored the possibility of significant connections between opuses. At the same time, the theme of memory permeates discussions of Chopin's work across the fields of musicology, analysis, and performance. This study examines Chopin's Op. 17 No. 4 Mazurka in A minor through the lens of memory, demonstrating the ways in which recontextualization of musical elements from the Op. 6 No. 3 Mazurka in E major transforms the former into a musical memory, providing evidence for interopus connections between the mazurkas and offering analytical support for the memory-based language and metaphors found in existing discussions of Chopin's music. Although one case study is not enough information to make sweeping claims about the way memory functions in Chopin's mazurkas, it reveals some trends. First, shifts between major and minor keys appear to play a significant role in communicating the processes of memory. Second, A sections tend to embody the processes of memory, while B sections represent a shift in temporality. Grounding my analytical process in the experience of learning to play these pieces, I offer a holistic method for understanding this music, which has significant implications for both scholars and performers, and provide a methodology for examining the rest of Chopin's mazurkas through such a memory-based framework.