

Abstract

Alan Rawsthorne: Revisiting Chopin's Ballade Genre

In this article I intend to bring a new understanding to the second Ballade of the English composer, Alan Rawsthorne (1905-1971). Using Rawsthorne's 1966 article on the ballades of Chopin as a point of reference, I will try to contextualize his own ballade. In Rawsthorne's case – being a composer and an admirer of Chopin – this deep analysis undoubtedly influenced the composition of his Ballade, the one composed in 1967 shortly after the publication of his analysis, and the one under consideration in this article.

Until now, this influence had received little attention. Scholars like Frank Dawes, Karl Kroeger and James Gibb had linked Rawsthorne's second Ballade to Chopin's second Ballade Op. 38, and it was Stephen Rees's doctoral thesis (1970) that provided more detail about this connection. However, Rees examined Rawsthorne's piano works in general and thus did not give particular attention to this Ballade.

Despite all this scholarly activity, Rawsthorne's Ballade has remained much less well examined. Therefore, I will investigate the possibility of a resemblance between Rawsthorne's and Chopin's ballades in terms of the compositional techniques identified by Rawsthorne in his article on Chopin's ballades. I will compare Rawsthorne's ballade structure with his own understanding of the genre that Chopin created, searching for points of intersection between the two. This article will reveal a surprising resemblance between Chopin's and Rawsthorne's ballades.