

Music History and Cosmopolitanism / abstract & bio
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Session 3a, Thursday June 2, 9–11 am

Comrade Frycek travels again: cosmopolitan Chopin in communist Poland

In 1945, members of the Fryderyk Chopin Institute hatched an ambitious plan: a yearlong celebration to mark the centenary of Chopin's death would not only fete their most canonic composer, but also broadcast Poland's wartime resilience to an international audience. By the opening of the 1949 Chopin Year, the festivities had grown in scale, with state patronage ensuring concerts in factories, a publication of Chopin's complete works, the commission of compositions in Chopin's honor, countless performances, and even a feature film. This paper considers how the 1949 Chopin Year operated as a vehicle for international musical exchange, as officials and musicians organized events across Europe, as well as in Mexico, Brazil, the United States, and Egypt.

By drawing on hitherto un-considered archival sources of the Polish Ministry of Culture's Office of Foreign Cooperation, I offer a new view of musical transnationalism in the immediate wake of WWII. Although scholars have long considered how contemporary political circumstances contributed to the musical opposition of Western and Soviet musical practices, I argue here that early cold war exchanges also re-interpreted longer transnational music histories. The Ministry organized "historical concerts" in the cities where Chopin had lived or performed, re-enacting nineteenth-century performances with appropriate repertoire and Polish pianists. In this way the worldwide organization of Chopin celebrations drew on the model of Chopin's own travels and exile. I consider the rich paper trail left by such efforts, showing how organizers found Chopin a convenient vehicle for international cooperation, all the while adapting his image to fit local conditions. By extending the geographical scope of the celebrations beyond Chopin's own European travels, Polish communists hoped to re-interpret an earlier history of exile and of the international circulation of musicians, while suggesting the historical roots of communist universalism.

Mackenzie Pierce is a doctoral candidate in musicology at Cornell University, where he is writing a dissertation entitled "Music and war in mid-century Poland, 1926-50." Pierce's research has been presented at the American Musicological Society Annual Meeting (2015), the University of California Berkeley, and the French Academy in Rome. He is a recipient of fellowships from the Beinecke Foundation, the Kosciuszko Foundation, and the DAAD. His article on Chopin's *Préludes* recently appeared in the volume *Piano Culture in 19th-Century Paris* (Brepols, 2015).