

## Lectorum Letricumque Epistulae

On page 134 of her interesting article “New Light on the Fate of Some Early Works of Stravinsky: The *Funeral Song* Rediscovery” (*Acta Musicologica* 87, no. 2 [2015]) Natalia Braginskaya comments on the Paul Sacher Foundation’s purchase, in 1997, of the manuscript of Igor Stravinsky’s orchestral arrangement of Frédéric Chopin’s Nocturne op. 32, no. 2. She does so in a way that suggests our institution was being secretive about this acquisition. This was not at all the case. In fact, in the spring of 1998, in addition to announcing the transfer in our annual bulletin *Mitteilungen der Paul Sacher Stiftung*, we published a facsimile of one page from this manuscript, accompanied by a commentary containing details of its acquisition, in our book *Settling New Scores: Music Manuscripts from the Paul Sacher Foundation*, ed. Felix Meyer (Mainz: Schott, 1998), 70. Braginskaya did not therefore need to wait for the first volume of Stephen Walsh’s Stravinsky biography to receive the news. She could have had it earlier—and straight from the horse’s mouth.

The Paul Sacher Foundation

Dear Dr. Meyer,

Thank you for your communication and for your attention to my article in *Acta Musicologica* 87, no. 2 (2015). Please accept my apologies for references to the Paul Sacher Foundation that may have seemed offensive to you and your colleagues. The two months of research I spent at the Paul Sacher Foundation in 2011 remain the most important period in my professional life, and I have fond memories of my exchanges and discussions with many wonderful people there.

I take this opportunity to assure you that, while writing my article, I had no intention to accuse or offend anybody at the Paul Sacher Foundation, but rather I intended to report two objective facts I had observed while in Basel:

1. In the official Inventory of the Stravinsky collection of the Paul Sacher Foundation (published in 1989) that I had at my disposal in 2011, there was no item equivalent to Stravinsky’s orchestral arrangement of Chopin’s Nocturne op. 32, no. 2;
2. during two days in September 2011, I was unable to gain access to this Stravinsky manuscript, because the librarian, who contacted me at that moment, confirmed that, at the time, there was no such manuscript in the Stravinsky collection of the Paul Sacher Foundation.

I have no doubt that this mistaken claim was accidental, and surely such things can happen in any archive or any library, and it can happen to any one of us. By no means did I wish to suggest that your institution was deliberately secretive about the Chopin–Stravinsky acquisition of 1997. Whereas you may surely reproach me for failing to note this in the two Paul Sacher Foundation publications of 1998, which I should have known “straight from the horse’s mouth,” as you write, I was not aware

of them, hence it was not entirely my fault. I hope we might understand that this incident underscores once more a serious problem of informational deficit in the musicological cooperation between West and East, Europe and Russia, a problem that unfortunately still exists.

I hope, perhaps, that my dear Basel colleagues might know that in the late 1990s most Russians—me, too—saw Switzerland itself like another planet, far out of reach for us. Accordingly, at the time, I had no opportunity to study either *Settling New Scores: Music Manuscripts from the Paul Sacher Foundation* or *Mitteilungen der Paul Sacher Stiftung* of 1998. Russian scholars still have only restricted access to the annual bulletin, *Mitteilungen der Paul Sacher Stiftung*. In Russia, only scholars associated with the Paul Sacher Foundation receive this publication, thanks in large part to personal delivery from the Foundation itself.

Given the situation in Russia, it is not surprising that even eminent Stravinsky researchers, my senior Russian colleagues, some already in direct contact with the Paul Sacher Foundation, were not aware of the Chopin–Stravinsky manuscript in the Stravinsky collection of the Paul Sacher Foundation. I refer here to scholars such as Victor Varunts. There is no mention of Stravinsky’s arrangements of Chopin’s Nocturne as an acquisition by the Paul Sacher Foundation in the three volumes of Varunts’s Stravinsky Russian correspondence (1998, 2001, 2003). Although both the Waltz op. 18 and the Nocturne op. 32, no. 2 had already published by Boosey & Hawkes by that time, Varunts passed away believing that Stravinsky’s instrumentations of Chopin’s pieces were probably the property of the Lifar estate.

Indeed, all these things may be qualified as a result of the long period of isolation of Russia. My fruitful cooperation with Western colleagues began in 2008 at the time of the establishment of the IMS Study Group, “Stravinsky: Between East and West,” at the initiative of Tilman Seebass, Liudmila Kovnatskaya, Henri Vanhulst, and Dorothea Baumann. At our meetings in Ukraine, Belarus, Italy, and Russia, it was a critical directive of my co-chair, Valérie Dufour, and myself to build bridges toward mutual understanding, exchanging new ideas and information. The importance of the Paul Sacher Foundation as a world center for Stravinsky studies in this process cannot be overestimated.

I am deeply grateful to Heidi Zimmermann, a curator of the Stravinsky collection, for sending me scanned copies of the relevant publications from 1998. I also wish to thank you, Dr. Meyer, for also providing me with Hermann Danuser’s publication on the Chopin–Stravinsky Nocturne. You have given me a chance in my future researches to correct the previous unintentional omission, to which you call attention in my article on the re-discovered Stravinsky’s *Funeral Song* op. 5. Thank you, too, for your attention to this misunderstanding in our personal correspondence.

With cordial greetings from St. Petersburg,  
Dr. Natalia Braginskaya

**With the two letters here the exchange in *Acta Musicologica* comes to its close.**