



« Chopin et Tellefsen
sur fond de la culture
musicale de Paris
du XIX^{ème} siècle »

'Chopin and Tellefsen
in the musical culture
of Paris during
the nineteenth century'

Bibliothèque Polonaise de Paris
Paris, le 18 septembre / 18 september 2013

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Thomas Tellefsen in juste milieu

Thomas Tellefsen was a Norwegian composer and pianist who spent most of his life in Paris. It was the Parisian milieu that he felt at home in, taking an active part in its music life. And those strong links with Paris are the starting point for studying Tellefsen's life and creative output in the context of *juste milieu*, the dominating cultural movement in France around 1850.

In the 1850s and 1860s Tellefsen composed several chamber music works, all of them built on the well-known formal principles, showing several classical traits as the proves of Tellefsen's predilection for the classical idiom which was also expressed through his activity as a chamber musician. He was a member of Princess Marcelina Czartoryska's *Club des Mozartistes* and performed in numerous chamber music concerts with the most celebrated musicians of the time, like the violonist Delphin Alard and the cellist Auguste Franchomme. The repertory of these concerts was based on classical and early romantic works. At the same time Tellefsen took an active part in the dissemination of historical music. He participated in François Delsartes' *Concert Historiques* and some other musical events playing 18th century works on original instruments. In the 1850s and 60s he was the editor of several collections of music from the 18th century, which included works by C.P.E. Bach and Rameau.

Juste milieu is closely connected with Victor Cousin's eclecticism and is described as the political formulation of his philosophy. *Juste milieu* can also be described as a French national architectural style. A central idea was to make a synthesis of the best elements of the old and contemporary French culture. Another idea, closely linked to the main one, was to avoid the extreme points of view, and instead to choose the golden mean (*juste milieu*).

The predominant and most influential French music critic in the period between 1830 and 1870 was the musicologist, composer and philosopher of music, François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871). In many respects his music philosophy and his criticism reflect some ideas in *juste milieu*.

Today researchers agree that music and music culture can't be regarded as isolated from other aspects of social life, because it is created, it changes and transforms in result of complicated cultural and political processes. In order to understand Tellefsen's music and his activity in the Parisian music life, he should be seen in the light of the French *juste milieu* of the mid 19th century both in architecture and in Fétis' ideology.