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Musical Heritage, Alterity, and Transnational Migration: Wanda Landowska's Musical Lives

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In August 1914, a week after the outbreak of World War I, German nationalists accused the harpsichordist Wanda Landowska of being an enemy alien. She responded with an open letter to the Berliner Tageblatt, one of the chief daily newspapers in Germany, explaining that she was *not Russian. "Quite the contrary—I am a Pole*. Whilst the German hatred of the Russian government is scarcely two weeks old—*ours has lasted for at least a century*."[1] Her proud, even violent, claim that as a Pole she harbored generational hate against such foreign oppression of her country is borne out in her diaries as she followed the fate of her homeland. In mid-December, for example, she noted:

> Isn't it wonderful how every nation in the world wants to give joy and good fortune to our poor country. The Germans want to liberate us from the Russian yoke; the Russians are unwilling to permit our falling under the German boot; while Austria wants to give us an Archduke. They growl over us, tear us apart; we are dismembered, worse, yes worse than ever before, and the kingdom itself is no more.[2]

1 Wanda Landowska, "Leserbrief," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 18 August 1914: *"Ganz im Gegenteil — ich bin Polin*. Während der Hass der Deutschen gegen die russische Regierung kaum zwei Wochen alt ist — *ist der unsrige mindestens hundertjährig*." Emphasis original.

2 Wanda Landowska, Diary, [19] December 1914, English trans. by Regis N. Barwig [?], typescript. Library of Congress, Music Division, Wanda Landowska and Denise Restout Papers (hereafter: WLDRP), Box 103.

Musical Heritage, Alterity, and Transnational Migration: Wanda Landowska's Musical Lives

Landowska was born in Warsaw in 1879. Despite the city's symbolic power as the erstwhile capital of the Polish crown, by that time it was the third-largest urban center in the Russian empire. Like many of her fellow Poles stranded in Germany during World War I, Landowska was therefore deemed a Russian subject and put under house arrest, even though she was allowed to continue teaching her harpsichord class at the Hochschule für Musik throughout the fours war years and—as the war went on—to concertize sporadically in Italy and Switzerland.

Figure 1: Concert goers in Saint-Leu-la-Forêt in front of the concert hall built by Wanda Landowska. Undated photograph by Elsa Schunicke. WLDRP, Box 199. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Such lived experience of wartime precariousness puts into relief how Landowska's career and identity intersected with geo-political frameworks that—as the current invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation makes us aware—can change radically from one day to another. It also offers a starting point to reflect on the role of music in a transnational life. Indeed, almost as a counterpoint to the unmooring of both self-chosen and enforced cross-border movement, the famous harpsichordist carried with her a constant sense of musical heritage to be preserved, cherished, and revived through performance and creation, through study, and through joyful conviviality, even in the most temporary of abodes. When, in 1925, Wanda Landowska bought property in the genteel town of Saint-Leu-la-Forêt, northwest of Paris, it seemed as though she had found a permanent home, where she would then build, between 1926 and 1927, a small concert hall in her garden (Figure 1). Her so-called "temple of music" was to become a place simultaneously aristocratic and egalitarian, in which Landowska saw herself, as she described it, "working in the intimacy of my beloved old masters surrounded by my friends and followers."[3] She assembled a distinguished library and instrument collection that included such prized items as Chopin's upright piano that he had used in Mallorca in 1838 as well as a stunningly beautiful seventeenth-century clavichord (Figure 2). Yet what Landowska had envisaged as her "forever home," was overrun by Nazi plunderers in 1940 who stole her belongings as Landowska moved, once more, in order to save her life—this time across the Atlantic, to New York where she arrived on the day after Pearl Harbor, on 8 December 1941. Here, too, her deep investment in a transnational musical heritage became a lodestone that guided her through exile until her death at her home in Lakeville, Connecticut, in 1959.

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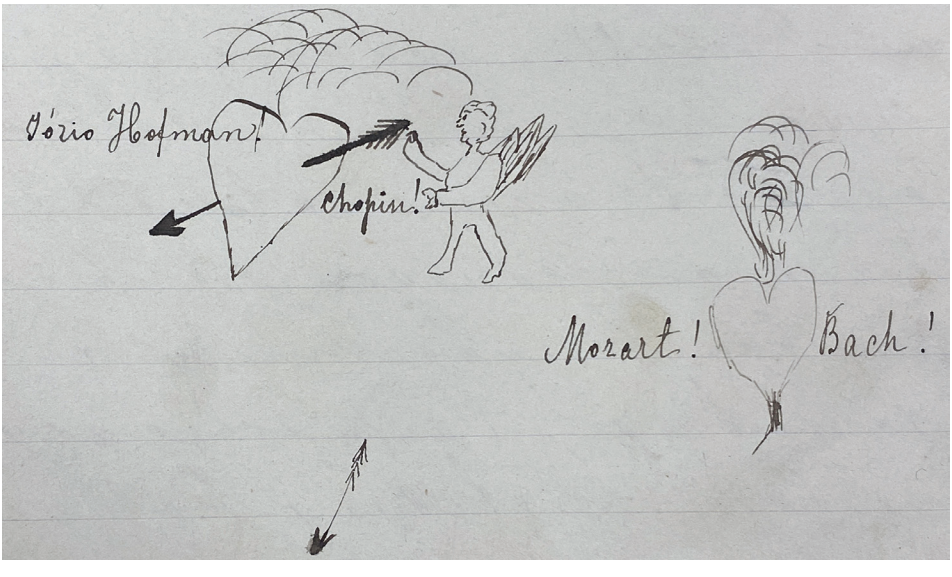
3 Wanda Landowska (1927), cited in Alice Hudnell Cash, "Wanda Landowska and the Revival of the Harpsichord: A Reassessment," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1990, 164.

Figure 2: Wanda Landowska in front of the upright piano that was owned originally by Frédéric Chopin. The photograph was taken in her Berlin apartment, ca. 1914. WLDRP, Box 188. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC

In this essay, I center my remarks on the complex issue of musical heritage in the musical lives of Wanda Landowska as it relates to matters of identity, gender, race, displacement, and creativity. Heritage is not a neutral word, however, especially not in a country such as the United States after the events of 6 January 2021, where ideas of an American heritage fueled a seditious riot intended to keep power in the hands of a Fascist junta that routinely evoked the old Confederate South (and its flag) as a bedrock of rightwing ideology. Moreover, fully justified efforts to decolonize university curricula in the United States, with its history of settler colonialism and White supremacy, have put into question any unreflective evocation of Western classical music. Yet this very music was and remains a native musical practice in the Europe of Wanda Landowska, and she claimed it as her inborn cultural heritage, one she could declare as her own. By engaging caringly with the core values of a displaced woman-identified, queer musician of Jewish Polish descent, I suggest rethinking how musical heritage might be thought from Landowska's unique and vulnerable positionality.

Figure 3: Wanda Landowska, Diary, 11 March 1896. WLDRP Box 100. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.



First, I will address Landowska's artistic worlds and their associated music more broadly; then I will center the second part of my discussion on her engagement with Polish music, including that of Frédéric Chopin. To conclude, I will reflect on how these musical practices connect to Landowska's construction of cultural heritage, and explore whether and how this lens might help engage with the complexities of her lived identities and even prompt thinking in different ways about heritage in general.

Landowska's Artistic Worlds and Their Music

Landowska's artistic worlds were infused with music that ranged from the English Renaissance composer William Byrd to contemporaries such as Francis Poulenc or Samuel Barber, and they also included popular and folk musics from a variety of environments. Given that Landowska is known nowadays mainly for her pioneering work in the early-music revival, the breadth of her musical experience is often overshadowed by discussions of such feats as her famous interpretations of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Goldberg Variations* which she was the first to perform in its entirety on the harpsichord. Her teenage diaries reflect that Bach was indeed one of her heroes, together with Mozart, Chopin, and the Polish pianist, Josef Hofmann, and she proudly owned the sobriquet of "Bacchante" that the Hungarian conductor, Arthur Nikisch, had bestowed on her after hearing her perform Bach as a fifteen-year-old pianist (Figure 3).[4] But for all her early interest in the music of the eighteenth century, Landowska's musical journey first took her on the path of becoming a composer. Between the ages of sixteen and twenty, she studied in Berlin with Heinrich Urban who had been the teacher of Paderewski, among others. Concerts in which she played her works were quite successful though critics noted that her

4 Wanda Landowska, Diary, 11 March 1896, English trans. by Regis N. Barwig [?], typescript. WLDRP Box 100. Bernard Gavoty, *Wanda Landowska*, trans. by F.E. Richardson (Geneva: René Kister, 1957), 8.

piano compositions carried some influence of Chopin.[5] A Waltz in E minor which was published in 1909 but most likely composed during her studies with Urban give some sense of her musical voice as a composer (Example 1).

Her compositions encompassed numerous genres, including orchestral works, songs, and chamber music. Yet after she moved to Paris, she increasingly found composing a chore. She considered the songs and piano pieces she sold to the publisher Enoch simply a means supporting the household financially, and she hoped to be able to avoid this form of drudgery in the future. Teaching, too, helped support Landowska and her new husband, Henri Lew, as did performing and recording. In 1905 alone, Landowska recorded thirteen piano rolls which included works by Bach, Berlioz, Chopin, and Schumann, among others.[6]

Like many aspiring musicians of the early twentieth century, Landowska started out with a broad repertoire that stretched from early music performed on the piano to the Viennese classics—including Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven—to music of her day. If I emphasize the breadth of her musicking, it is to highlight its variety, unusual only in the significant portion given over to music before 1800. Nonetheless, one aspect that would distinguish her appearances throughout her career was already obvious: Landowska was a soloist aiming for, and strategizing to achieve, worldwide fame. She carefully curated her public image and she modeled herself on the glittering opera divas who were the musical stars of the period. She was not emulating Paderewski; she wanted to be Lina Cavalieri.[7]

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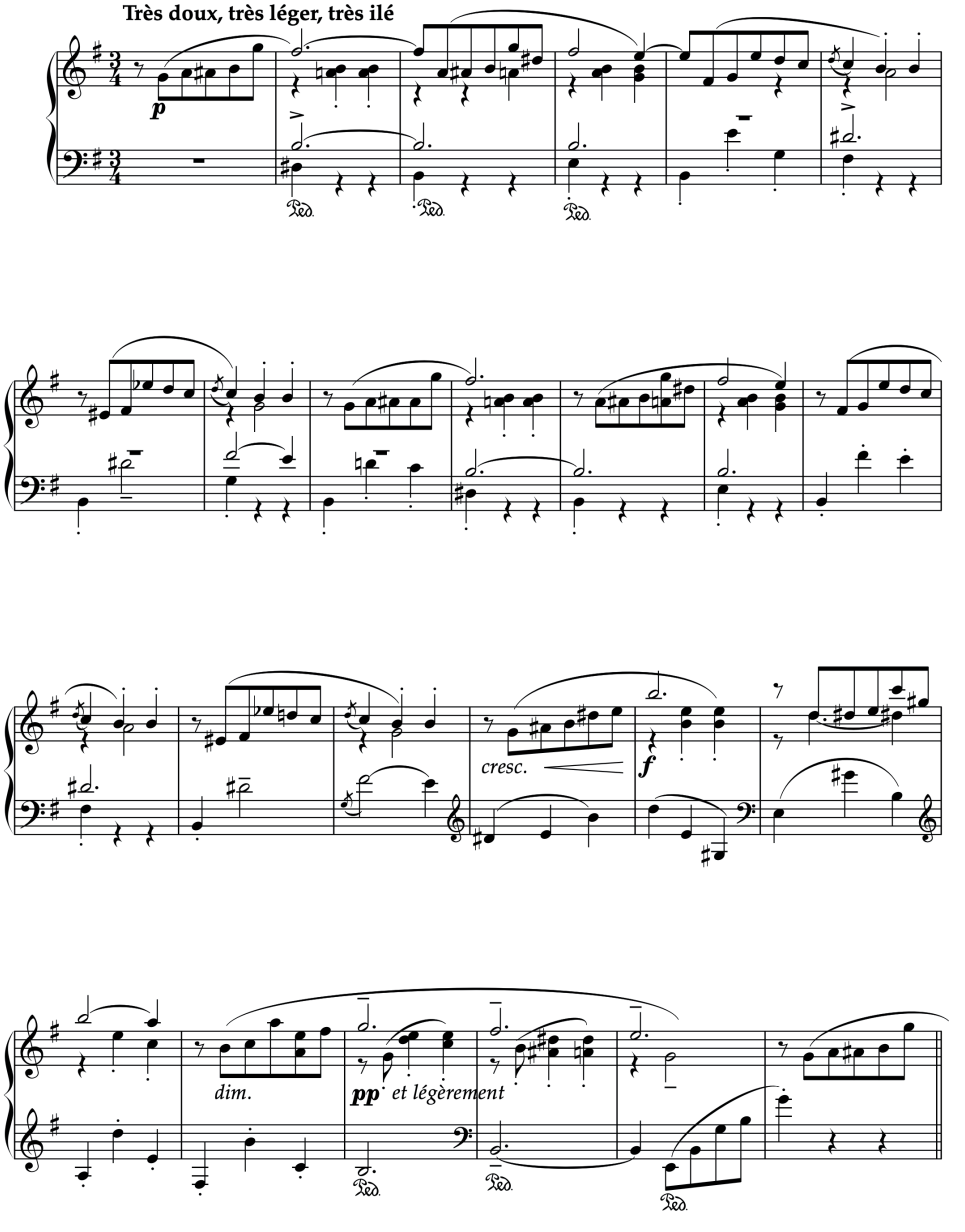
5 Landowska noted in her diary of 16 April 1896, English trans. by Regis N. Barwig [?], typescript. WLDRP Box 100: "I read one of the criticisms about me that arrived yesterday. It seems good to me. There is a subtle hint that my works are somewhat plagiarized, so to speak, from Chopin, and that my playing is somewhat lacking in strength. At least it is open about it. In Warsaw, the critics never write the truth[.]"

6 For a list of Landowska's recordings, including her piano rolls, see *Die Dame mit dem Cembalo: Wanda Landowska und die Alte Musik*, ed. by Martin Elste (Mainz: Schott, 2010), 212–30.

7 On Landowska's early career, see Annegret Fauser, "Creating Madame Landowska," *Women & Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 10 (2006): 1–23.

Example 1: Wanda Landowska, *Waltz in E minor* (Paris: Album Musica, 1909).



This relentless emphasis on solo performance ran counter to the general practice in the world of early-music performance Landowska entered around 1900, where keyboard performers were as much active as continuo players and accompanists as performing in solo recitals. If and when Landowska appeared as a continuo player, it was in high-profile events, such as the performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in Basel in 1919, touted as the first since the time of Bach in which the continuo past was performed on a harpsichord (Figure 4). Whether this was true or not, Landowska and her entourage would highlight this performance as a milestone for the remainder of her career.

Figure 4: Wanda Landowska and Hermann Ruthers (seated) with other performers who participated in 1919 in the *St Matthew Passion* rendering.

Landowska's musical life increasingly centered on becoming the "empress of the harpsichord," as one admirer identified her.[8] She was closely involved in the creation and promotion of the Pleyel concert harpsichord.

8 During her concert tour to Egypt, in 1938, Landowska interacted with a customs official who recognized her and exclaimed: "Ah, you are the empress of the harpsichord." Dianita Mathot, St. Leu Journal, 11 March 1938, 13. WLDRP, Box 170.

The piano manufacturer Pleyel & Co. had already started producing harpsichords in the late nineteenth century, drawing on models found in museums. But it was the new concert instrument developed in 1912 in consultation with Landowska—including a sixteen-foot register—that turned the firm into the premier harpsichord maker of the interwar years. Landowska would travel with these harpsichords and used them in concerts and recordings throughout her life. When she had to leave her instruments behind fleeing the invading German troops, one of her priorities was to reacquire a Pleyel instrument that would allow her to practice and perform in the South of France and that she would take with her when she crossed the Atlantic on the SS Exeter.[9]

Landowska's view of the harpsichord as an instrument that was simultaneously historic and timeless also made it an excellent candidate for modernist composers to write solo concertos for her, whether Manuel de Falla in 1926 or Francis Poulenc three years later with his *Concert champêtre*. Both works were commissioned and championed by Landowska, and her correspondence shows that she often tried to have them scheduled in concerts in which she was hired as the soloist. Poulenc's *Concert champêtre* in particular became a piece that embodied her musical worlds in crucial ways, signifying not only a shared aesthetic vision with the composer but also her idea of a friendship rooted both in personal and artistic kinship (Figure 5). As Poulenc pointed out in an interview with Claude Rostand: "With Landowska living in 1928 in Saint-Leu-la-Forêt … it was in a very eighteenth-century country atmosphere, that I situated my work. This concerto reflects a countryside in the manner of Diderot and Rousseau."[10]

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9 On the confiscation of Landowska's possessions, especially with respect to the repatriation of her harpsichord, see Carla J. Shapreau, "The Nazi Confiscation of Wanda Landowska's Musical Collection and its Aftermath." *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies* 32 (2020): 429–49. For the shipping and ticket details for the trip from Lisbon to New York, see WLDRP, Box 202.

10 Francis Poulenc, *J'écris ce que je chante: Textes et entretiens réunis, présentés et annotés par Nicolas Southon* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), 777: "Landowska habitant en 1928 à Saint-Leu-la-Forêt … c'est dans une atmosphère de campagne très xviiie que j'ai situé mon œuvre. Ce concerto est champêtre selon Diderot et Rousseau."

Figure 5: Wanda Landowska and Francis Poulenc at Saint-Leu-la-Forêt, 1928, during the composition of the *Concert champêtre*. Photograph by Elsa Schunicke. WLDRP, Box 199. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC

The idea that early music and harpsichord performance had their place not only within public concerts but also—and perhaps even more prominently—in the more intimate, interstitial setting of salon culture formed an important part of Landowska's musical world, and in particular that of gynocentric artistic communities. In the early 1900s, she was part of the circle of the American expatriate Natalie Clifford Barney whose garden pavilion became the center of a Sapphic salon. Indeed, the estate of Saint-Leu-la-Forêt itself could be seen as a musical mirror to the literary salon that Natalie Clifford Barney hosted in the rue Jacob in central Paris and that was—in Sylvia Kahan's words—"perhaps the most open bastion of lesbianism of the epoch."[11] Between 1911 and 1913, Landowska had lived at 24, rue Jacob, two houses down from Barney, and been a visitor to, and performer at, her salon.[12] In June 1911, for example, she participated in an eighteenth-century-themed event where she played Couperin in the course of an indoor–outdoor fête.[13] On the grounds of Barney's property, a small building dating from the early nineteenth century with a Greek façade and the inscription "A l'Amitié" served—after extensive renovation—as the location where musical entertainments and lavish hospitality merged into convivial experiences.[14] Landowska's calendars note visits with Barney, such as for tea in May 1922.[15] Landowska herself features

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11 Sylvia Kahan, *Music's Modern Muse: A Life of Winnaretta Singer, Princesse de Polignac* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 226 and 236.

12 Elste, ed. *Die Dame mit dem Cembalo*, 199, and David Kjar, "The Plague, a Metal Monster, and the Wonder of Wanda: In Pursuit of the Performance Style." *Per Musi* 24 (2011):79–100, 84. Online version: http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S1517-75992011000200010&script=sci_arttext (accessed 29 March 2022).

13 Suzanne Rodriguez, *Wild Heart, a Life: Natalie Clifford Barney's Journey from Victorian America to Belle Époque Paris* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 194.

14 A website dedicated to the adjacent rue Visconti offers detailed information on the building and its history. See https://www.ruevisconti.com/LaRueMysterieuse/TempleAmitie.html#E. The building still existed in 2007 when Samuel Dorf visited the property. See Samuel Dorf, *Performing Antiquity: Ancient Greek Music and Dance from Paris to Delphi, 1980–1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 48.

15 Wanda Landowska, Calendar for 1922, Library of Congress, Music Division, Wanda Landowska and Denise Restout Papers. Entry for May 22, 1922: "Duchesse et Nathalie Thé." WLDRP Box 104.

in Barney's famous drawing, "Le Salon de l'Amazone," where she takes place of pride in a group of musicians gathered in the top right corner.[16] Barney's blending of artistic enterprise and gynocentric lifestyle can be seen echoed in the way Landowska organized life and musicking in Saint-Leu-la-Forêt where close female friends and students constituted an inner circle around which various sets of musicians, patrons, musical entrepreneurs, Polish compatriots, and musicologists were grouped. The interconnection between the Barney's and Landowska's circles was embodied not least in the person of Barney's life partner, the Duchess Elisabeth de Gramont, who would become a regular visitor to Landowska's own temple to art in Saint-Leu-la-Forêt, attending not only the public concerts but also dropping by for tea and private harpsichord recitals.

If Saint-Leu-la-Forêt was Landowska's sanctuary, her public-facing activities as a touring and recording artist formed an integral part of establishing her as the foremost harpsichordist of the interwar years. Landowska deployed modern technologies to promote her musical vision, and actively curated her media presence. She was highly conscious about the strengths and weaknesses of evolving recording technologies. Documents in the archives reveal the care with which Landowska engaged with her recordings, including adaptations of her registrations: as she commented in 1938, for example, the four-foot register was the one that sounded best given the microphone used by Gramophone Records in Paris.[17] She would retake a piece until satisfied with its interpretation, and then listen to playbacks and proofs of records—sometimes for weeks if not months—until she deemed the sonic balance acceptable. Recording, Landowska maintained, needed such care because "it captures one instant in our life

16 The map was published in Barney's *Aventures de l'esprit* (1929). See Sheila Crane, "Mapping the Amazon's Salon: Symbolic Landscapes and Topographies of Identity in Natalie Clifford Barney's Literary Salon," in *Gender and Landscape: Renegotiating the Moral Landscape*, ed. by Lorraine Dowler, Josephine Carubia, and Bonj Szczygiel (London: Routledge, 2005), 145–61.

17 Dianita Mathot, Saint-Leu-la-Forêt Journal, 31 March 1938, 58. WLDRP, Box 170.

when there are a thousand and one."[18] To select the right take for the final record became an important element of shaping both her art and her artistic persona, just as she carefully selected the appropriate photograph for her publicity materials.

Landowska's Musical Poland

In Landowska's musical world, art and artistic persona were deeply intertwined with her identity as a Polish musician of Jewish descent. Yet despite Landowska's soul-deep connection with Poland, her bond with her ancestral nation was not without its own complications. Two aspects, in particular, created pressures on any cohesively positive vision of Polish culture: anti-Semitism, on the one hand, and cultural provincialism, on the other. For a cosmopolitan musician who considered herself as part of the elite of Western music, Polish music could not simply be evoked in the same universalist manner that had become a familiar trope when speaking about Bach, Handel, or Mozart. Therefore, Landowska needed to do some heavy lifting connecting Polishness to musical universalism.

More painful for Landowska personally were the deep-seated Polish concepts of Jewishness as a racial rather than religious marker. Because of the way in which documents were destroyed during World War II, it is not clear who converted when to Catholicism in Landowska's family. What is known, however, is that Landowska herself was baptized Catholic as an infant and never converted to Judaism, neither after her marriage to Henry Lew who was a prominent Jewish folklorist, nor when she began openly to identify as Jewish in the 1930s. The many personal remarks recorded in the diaries written by her students and companions in Saint-Leu-la-Forêt during the 1920s and 1930s show how strongly Landowska had internalized this racial concept of Jewishness. In 1938, for example, in a private remark to her companion of the time, Dianita Mathot, she tried to sort through what

18 Dianita Mathot, Saint-Leu-la-Forêt Journal, 29 March 1938, 53. WLDRP, Box 170: "Ça prend un instant de notre vie alors que nous en avons mille et un."

it meant to be Polish and Jewish: "Polish, I don't know… but I am first and foremost Jewish, meaning that I have a terrible, ferocious ability to assimilate, one that seizes everything."[19] That same year, she responded to the persecution of Jews in Austria and Germany by exclaiming: "I believe that all those of Jewish origin should become Jews again."[20]

Such racialized constructions of Jewishness were a filter that was never absent in her life. For example, in 1895 at age sixteen, a piano teacher in Wrocław not only harassed her sexually during a lesson but also inquired pointedly whether she was "a little Jewess."[21] And in 1951, the seventy-two-year old musician still grappled with the fact that it had been up to her to win over her great hero, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who was well known for his close association with anti-Semitic Polish nationalists.[22] As she wrote in a first draft of her recollections of Paderewski: "At first, Paderewski was refractory, with a tinge of hostility. Nonetheless, I approached him and spoke to him. I readily felt that, underneath, this man was made to sympathize with me. Little by little he became cordial. There was in him the curious attraction of a bluetrue-blooded Pole for a Jewess. And, in 1910, I was rather young and flamboyant!"[23] "Blue-blooded" was originally "true-blooded," which reveals how the question of true Polishness by blood was a deeply problematic concept for an artist who

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19 Wanda Landowska quoted in Dianita Mathot, St. Leu Journal, 21 December 1938, 100. WLDRP, Box 170: "Polonaise, je ne sais pas… mais je suis juive surtout, c'est-à-dire que j'ai une faculté d'assimiler terrible, féroce, qui s'empare de tout."

20 Dianita Mathot, Saint-Leu-la-Forêt Journal, 31 March 1938, 58. WLDRP, Box 170: "Je trouve que tous ceux qui sont d'origine juive devraient redevenir juifs."

21 Wanda Landowska, Diary, 13 October 1895, English trans. by Regis N. Barwig [?], typescript. WLDRP, Box 100.

22 Debate is still ongoing whether or not Paderewski himself was anti-Semitic. He was closely linked to Roman Dmowski, an outspokenly anti-Semitic politician, and also co-owned—for seven years—the anti-Semitic newspaper, *Rzeczpospolita*. See, for example, Maja Trochimczyk, "Rediscovering Paderewski," *Polish Music Journal* 4/2 (2001), fn 13, https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/publications/polish-music-journal/vol4no2/ (accessed 29 March 2022).

23 Wanda Landowska, "Recollections of Paderewski," dated 28 January 1951, typescript. WLDRP, Box 155.

was aware how anti-Semitic her homeland could be.[24] Unsurprisingly, this passage did not make it into the final version of her published recollections which simply speak about the many hours she spent with the Polish legend and note his appreciation for her vision of Polish music and heritage.

This vision evolved over the decades. It was inevitable, however, that Chopin would be Landowska's guiding star for defining musical Polishness, just as he was for her compatriots. She never once questioned Chopin's inalienably Polish character, and it is easy to find comments in her writings that emphasize not only his national quality but also criticize the inadequacy of non-Polish performers of his music. Where Landowska charted her unique course was in framing the composer as simultaneously national and cosmopolitan by proclaiming him the true heir of Bach and Couperin. By anchoring Poland's national composer in the universalist heritage of Western music, she not only integrated his music into a lineage of great men but also turned what was perceived as picturesquely Polish into an integral part of Western music history. In her notes about Chopin interpretation, she connects the Polish composer's musical texture with that of Bach's counterpoint, and his rhythmic character with that of French music.[25] Writing about Chopin's Impromptu No. 2 in F sharp major, op. 36, she considered the dotted rhythms as calling for the use of the *notes inégales* typical of earlier French keyboard music.

In a text published in 1931, Landowska instead linked French harpsichord music with Chopin on a more subliminal level: Chopin's music was not "influenced" or shaped by any knowledge of the *clavecinistes*. Rather, it expressed the same musical and aesthetic concerns in their balance of harmony and melody, in their rhythmic gestures, and in their use of ornamentation.[26] Landowska posited the reason for such entangled sonic

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24 Landowska repeatedly referred to Polish anti-Semitism, as for example in 1938, when she commented about Jews fleeing Berlin and Vienna: "Mon Dieu, ces gens qui fuient de Berlin, de Vienne, qui vont en Pologne ou l'antisémitisme est terrible[.]" Comment recorded in Dianita Mathot, Saint-Leu-la-Forêt Journal, 10 April 1938, 66. WLDRP, Box 170.

25 Wanda Landowska, undated manuscript notes. WLDRP, Box 154.

26 Wanda Landowska, "Chopin et l'ancienne musique française," *Journal de Genève*, 15 December 1931; also published in the special issues on "Chopin," *La Revue musicale*, December 1931, 468–75.

worlds across space and time as lying within role of musical migration: "the perpetual and slow movement of reciprocal influences of nations."[27] This concept of mobility is the crucial point in Landowska's notion of cultural heritage because—as many of her comments and writings show—it enables her to reconcile her musical loves with her often marginalized identities as a Polish musician of Jewish ancestry. Her epistemologies of sonic mobility are complex, and she uses a number of methods to make her case: from participant observation and musical fieldwork to archival research.

Two pieces offer sonic evidence for Landowska's concept of a Polish musical heritage that was simultaneously nationally specific and transnationally anchored: one of Landowska's own compositions, her second *Bourrée d'Auvergne* which she wrote around 1912, and her recording—on the harpsichord—of Chopin's Mazurka in C major, op. 56, no. 2, in 1951 in an album dedicated to the memory of Paderewski. The *Bourrée d'Auvergne* was written for an event celebrating the region where the organizers had given Landowska a set of folk melodies on which to base her contribution (Example 2). After finishing the adaptations, she began to worry that they were too similar to the *oberek*, a lively Polish folkdance.[28] Had she superimposed her own musical nationality on a French folk dance? Her method of ascertaining the dance's authenticity was to play it for an unsuspecting coal deliverer from Auvergne who recognized the piece and spontaneously started dancing—an anecdote she would tell for decades after. Yet—as she continued expanding her story in subsequent iterations—it was one of sonic slippage: her French friends from the provinces heard the piece as authentically coming from the Auvergne in style, but Polish listeners did indeed interpret it as an *oberek*.[29] As she mentioned in one program note: "Paderewski adored it."[30]

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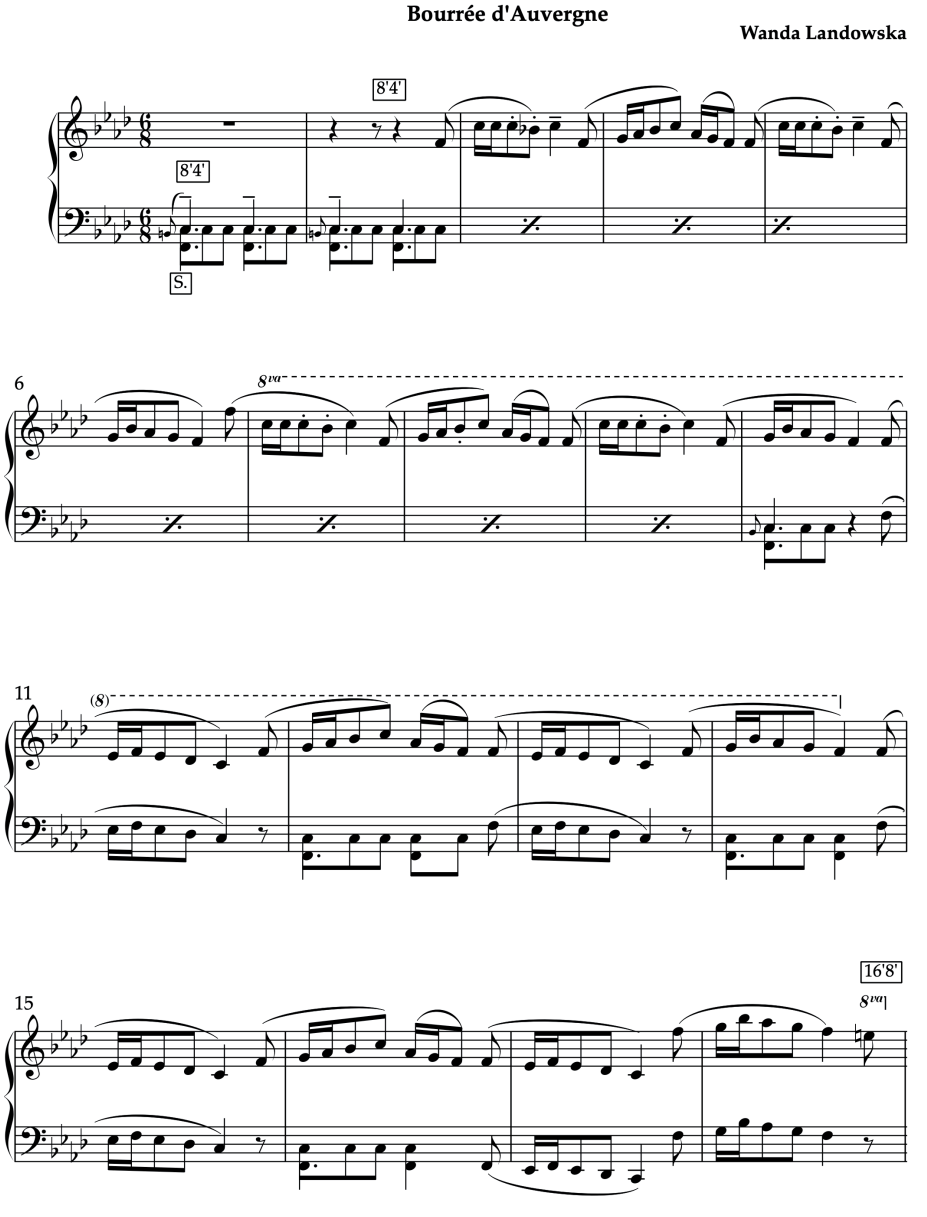
27 Landowska, "Chopin," 475: "le perpétuel et lent mouvement des influences réciproques des nations."

28 Dianita Mathot, St. Leu Journal, 16 June 1938, 184. WLDRP, Box 170: "Mais je la trouvais tellement semblable à une *oberek*. Je me méfiais, je me disais : je lui donne une allure trop polonaise."

29 Wanda Landowska, Program notes in English and French for the record titled *Dances of Poland*, WLDRP, Box 155.

30 Ibidem.

Example 2: Wanda Landowska, *Bourrée d'Auvergne* (for harpsichord), transcription from manuscript copy. WLDRP, Box 35.



Landowska's performance of Chopin's Mazurka is on a 1951 recording titled *Dances of Ancient Poland* and dedicated to Paderewski on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of his death in 1941. She considered the work to be "as a prototype of this dance. We find in it the most striking features of the *masur*: the stamping, the solo of the male dancer (the melody in A minor in the left hand), etc." [31] Landowska made a point about accentuating the performances folkloric authenticity through the use of the harpsichord: "Let me tell you why I do this: The harpsichord, reservoir of sharp colors, flute, strings, nasal oboes, bagpipes, contrabass, is the ideal instrument to render folk music." [32] Knowing and hearing the folk roots of Chopin, Landowska tells us, helps pianists avoid the mistakes that many non-Polish musicians make by turning his mazurkas into elegant salon pieces accented like a Viennese waltz. [33] Here the Polish musician claims ultimate authority grounded both in her lived experience of the Polish countryside and her archival research into Polish dances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Musical Heritage

These two examples offer but a brief glimpse into a rich and complex musical world that Landowska created over a long, distinguished, and transnational career. Given her position as a harpsichord soloist, her repertoire and its legitimacy played an important role in the construction of her public persona. Indeed, for Landowska, the concept of musical heritage was not abstract. It encompassed the music she loved, performed, taught, and recorded. It was also music over which she proudly declared ownership through a number of strategies developed from a positionality of vulnerability, including a blending of her own mobilities with that of Western music.

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31 Ibidem.
32 Ibidem.
33 Ibidem.

This prompts a more nuanced contextualizing and framing of the issue of musical and cultural heritage. Like so many other ideological constructs that continue to shape contemporary values and mindsets in the Western world, the modern concept of cultural heritage emerged in the nineteenth century. In music, edited series such as the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst* that started in 1871 with an edition of Palestrina's motets soon spawned national monument series, from Henry Expert's *Les Maîtres musiciens de la renaissance française* to Guido Adler's *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*. As Expert noted in his tri-lingual preface—in French, German, and English—it was a labor of rescue and restoration of "the valuable intellectual patrimony" from the menace of oblivion and ignorance.[34] Early-music performers, composers such as Johannes Brahms, Claude Debussy, and Camille Saint-Saëns, and musicologists all came together to define a heritage that was simultaneously national and universal.[35] This idea of musical and cultural heritage crystallized into its still paradigmatic form, however, after the end of World War I, when intellectuals, politicians, and artists confronted the destruction of the first global war and the influenza pandemic that followed. Whether the medieval cathedral of Reims, the University of Leuven Library (1636), or the fort of Sedd el Bahr at Gallipoli (1659), the war's bombing and shellfire had laid waste to countless treasures from the past. With international collaboration slowly picking up during the 1920s, a League of Nations spirit began to shape the enterprise of identifying, preserving, and restoring cultural heritage, both nationally and transnationally.

Landowska was an active, nay driven, agent in this effort of safeguarding the musical heritage of Western art music, wherein nostalgia for a lost past—together with the celebration of a restored, modern present—led to the recalibration of musical heritage from the 1920s onward, only to be

34 Henry Expert, "The Master Musicians of the French Renaissance" (English-language Preface), in *Les Maîtres musiciens de la renaissance française*, vol 12: Claude Lejeune, *Le Printemps* (1603) (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1900), n.p.

35 For an extensive exploration of one such edition project, see Deborah Mawer, Barbara L. Kelly, Graham Sadler, and Rachel Moore, *Accenting the Classics: Editing European Music in France, 1915–1925* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2023).

rethought again after the end of World War II. Like many of her contemporaries, Landowska simultaneously anchored cultural heritage in both nationalist historiography and cultural cosmopolitanism, although she offers a unique twist on this construct by emphasizing music's historical mobility.[36] Heritage thus conceived also carried a forward-moving component in that she found herself drawing on modern technologies—especially recording—and the creation of new music as means to propel her ideas on musical heritage into the future. Indeed, musical and cultural heritage were no empty constructs for Landowska—they were intimately connected to her experience as a musician whose music was erased, threatened, or appropriated by hegemonic powers, whether the Russian empire occupying Poland, or Nazi Germany confiscating her extensive library and instrument collection.[37] If music was indeed, as she claimed repeatedly, an art form wherein border-crossing circulation carried its homeland and its host simultaneously in its sounds, then she herself was not only empowered to represent and interpret music from across a wide span of cultural contexts, but also uniquely suited to be its champion.

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36 On this ideological double-bind, see, for example, Derek Gillman, *The Idea of Cultural Heritage*, revised edition (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), and Astrid Swenson, *The Rise of Heritage: Preserving the Past in France, Germany, and England, 1789–1914* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

37 The first publication to draw attention to the extent of the Nazi confiscation of Landowska's property was Willem de Vries, *Sonderstab Musik: Music Confiscations by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg under the Nazi Occupation of Western Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 217–29. Landowska's archives contain folders upon folders of documents relating to the attempts to recover the stole property, with Denise Restout leading the often demanding and difficult campaign. See especially WLDRP, Box 175.

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w Chapel Hill. W swoich badaniach koncentruje się na muzyce XIX i XX stulecia, szczególnie muzyce tworzonej we Francji i w Stanach Zjednoczonych. Autorka książek, artykułów oraz esejów, m.in. *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair* (2005), *Sounds of War: Music in the United States during World War II* (2013), The Politics of Musical Identity (2015) i *Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring"* (2017). W 2011 roku otrzymała Medal Edwarda J. Denta Królewskiego Stowarzyszenia Muzycznego, a jej publikacje były wielokrotnie nagradzane przez Amerykańskie Towarzystwo Muzykologiczne i ASCAP. W latach 2011–2013 była redaktor naczelną *Journal of the American Musicological Society*. Otrzymała stypendia rezydenckie w Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin i National Humanities Center, jak również stypendia National Endowment for the Humanities i Marie Curie Fellowship. Obecnie pracuje nad książką, której tytuł roboczy brzmi: *In Quest of Beauty: Wanda Landowska's Musical Life* [W poszukiwaniu piękna: życie muzyczne Wandy Landowskiej].

ABSTRACT

Musical Heritage, Alterity, and Transnational Migration: Wanda Landowska's Musical Lives

In 1925 Wanda Landowska bought property in the genteel town of Saint-Leu-la-Forêt, northwest of Paris, and built, between 1926 and 1927, "a temple to music" in her garden. Famous across the musical world as a performer, composer, teacher, consultant and scholar, Landowska was ready to find a home for her gynocentric

STRESZCZENIE

Dziedzictwo muzyczne, odmienność i migracje transnarodowe: muzyczne żywoty Wandy Landowskiej

W 1925 r. Wanda Landowska kupiła posiadłość w szacownym miasteczku Saint-Leu-la-Forêt na północny wschód od Paryża, i w latach 1926–1927 wybudowała w ogrodzie „świątynię muzyki". Landowska, sławna w całym świecie muzycznym jako wykonawczyni, kompozytorka, pedagog, konsultantka i badaczka, była gotowa

household after decades of cross-border movement. She had lived in Warsaw, Paris and Berlin, and was traveling extensively through Europe, the Middle East, Argentine and the United States. Throughout all her years of mobility, however, Landowska carried with her a constant sense of musical heritage to be preserved, cherished, and revived through performance and creation, through study and through joyful conviviality. She assembled a distinguished library and instrument collection that included such prized items as Chopin's upright piano that he had used in Mallorca in 1838. Yet what Landowska had envisaged as her "forever home" was overrun by Nazi plunderers in 1940 who stole her belongings as Landowska moved, once more, to save her life—this time across the Atlantic, to New York where she arrived on the day after Pearl Harbor. Here, too, her deep investment in a transnational musical heritage became a lodestone that guided her through exile. I address the complex issue of musical heritage in the musical lives of Wanda Landowska as it relates to matters of identity, gender, race, displacement, and creativity. By engaging caringly with the core values of a displaced woman-identified, queer musician of Jewish Polish descent, I propose to rethink how musical heritage might be thought from Landowska's unique and vulnerable positionality.

KEYWORDS Wanda Landowska, musical heritage, Polish music, early music, musical identity

znaleźć dom dla swojego ginocentrycznego gospodarstwa domowego po dekadach przemieszczania się po świecie. Mieszkała w Warszawie, Paryżu i Berlinie oraz podróżowała często po Europie, Bliskim Wschodzie, Argentynie i Stanach Zjednoczonych. Przez lata podróży Landowska nosiła w sobie stałe poczucie muzycznego dziedzictwa, które należy zachować, pielęgnować i ożywiać poprzez wykonywanie i tworzenie, studiowanie i radość obcowania. Zgromadziła znakomitą bibliotekę oraz kolekcję instrumentów obejmującą tak cenne przedmioty, jak np. pianino Chopina, na którym grał na Majorce w 1838 roku. Jednak to, co Landowska wyobrażała sobie jako swój „dom na zawsze", zostało w 1940 roku opanowane przez nazistowskich grabieżców, którzy ukradli jej rzeczy. Landowska po raz kolejny musiała przenieść się, by ratować życie — tym razem za Atlantyk, do Nowego Jorku, gdzie przybyła dzień po ataku na Pearl Harbor. Również w tym przypadku jej głębokie zaangażowanie w transnarodowe dziedzictwo muzyczne stało się jej gwiazdą przewodnią, misją, którą wypełniała podczas wygnania. W artykule zajmuję się złożonym zagadnieniem dziedzictwa muzycznego w życiu muzycznym Wandy Landowskiej, zagadnieniem wiążącym się z aspektami tożsamości, płci, rasy, wysiedlenia i twórczości. Analizując z troską podstawowe wartości wysiedlonej kobiety, muzyka queer o żydowskich korzeniach, proponuję inne, głęboko analityczne przemyślenie tego, w jaki sposób można myśleć o dziedzictwie muzycznym z wyjątkowej i wrażliwej pozycji osoby takiej jak Wanda Landowska.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE Wanda Landowska, dziedzictwo muzyczne, muzyka polska, muzyka dawna, tożsamość muzyczna