



Frederic François Chopin

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"Chopin" redirects here. For other uses, see Chopin (disambiguation).

Frédéric François Chopin (/ˈfʃoʊpæn/; French pronunciation: [fʁɛ.de.ʁik ʃɔ.pɛ̃]; 22 February or 1 March 1810 – 17 October 1849), born **Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin**,^[1] was a Polish composer and virtuoso pianist of the Romantic era, who wrote primarily for the solo piano. He gained and has maintained renown worldwide as one of the leading musicians of his era, whose "poetic genius was based on a professional technique that was without equal in his generation."^[2] Chopin was born in what was then the Duchy of Warsaw, and grew up in Warsaw, which after 1815 became part of Congress Poland. A child prodigy, he completed his musical education and composed many of his works in Warsaw before leaving Poland, aged 20, less than a month before the outbreak of the November 1830 Uprising.

At the age of 21 he settled in Paris. Thereafter, during the last 18 years of his life, he gave only some 30 public performances, preferring the more intimate atmosphere of the salon. He supported himself by selling his compositions and teaching piano, for which he was in high demand. Chopin formed a friendship with Franz Liszt and was admired by many of his musical contemporaries, including Robert Schumann. In 1835 he obtained French citizenship. After a failed engagement to a Polish girl, from 1837 to 1847 he maintained an often troubled relationship with the French writer George Sand. A brief and unhappy visit to Majorca with Sand in 1838–39 was one of his most productive periods of composition. In his last years, he was financially supported by his admirer Jane Stirling, who also arranged for him to visit Scotland in 1848. Through most of his life, Chopin suffered from poor health. He died in Paris in 1849, probably of tuberculosis.

All of Chopin's compositions include the piano. Most are for solo piano, although he also wrote two piano concertos, a few chamber pieces, and some songs to Polish lyrics. His keyboard style is highly individual and often technically demanding; his own performances were noted for their nuance and sensitivity. Chopin invented the concept of instrumental ballade. His major piano works also include sonatas, mazurkas, waltzes, nocturnes, polonaises, études, impromptus, scherzos, and preludes, some published only after his death. Many contain elements of both Polish folk music and of the classical tradition of J.S. Bach, Mozart and Schubert, all of whom he particularly admired. His innovations in style, musical form, and harmony, and his association of music with nationalism, were influential throughout and after the late Romantic period.

Both in his native Poland and beyond, Chopin's music, his status as one of music's earliest "superstars", his association (if only indirect) with political insurrection, his love life and his early death have made him, in the public consciousness, a leading symbol of the Romantic era. His works remain popular, and he has been the subject of numerous films and biographies of varying degrees of historical accuracy.



Photograph of Chopin by Louis-Auguste BissonBisson, c. 1849

Life

Childhood

Fryderyk Chopin was born in Żelazowa Wola,^[3] 46 kilometres (29 miles) west of Warsaw, in what was then the Duchy of Warsaw, a Polish state established by Napoleon. The parish baptismal record gives his birthday as 22 February 1810, and cites his given names in the Latin form *Fridericus Franciscus*; (in Polish, he was *Fryderyk Franciszek*).^[4] However, the composer and his family used the birthdate 1 March,^[5] which is now generally more accepted as the correct date.^[6]

Fryderyk's father, Nicolas Chopin, was a Frenchman from Lorraine who had emigrated to Poland in 1787 at the age of sixteen.^[7] Nicolas tutored children of the Polish aristocracy, and in 1806 married Justyna Krzyżanowska, a poor relation of the Skarbeks, one of the families for whom he worked.^[8] Fryderyk was baptized on Easter Sunday, 23 April 1810, in the same church where his parents had married, in Brochów. His eighteen-year-old godfather, for whom he was named, was Fryderyk Skarbek, a pupil of Nicolas Chopin. Fryderyk was the couple's second child and only son; he had an elder sister, Ludwika (1807–55), and two younger sisters, Izabela (1811–81) and Emilia (1812–27).^[9] Nicolas was devoted to his adopted homeland, and insisted on the use of Polish language in the household.

In October 1810, six months after Fryderyk's birth, the family moved to Warsaw, where his father acquired a post teaching French at the Warsaw Lyceum, then housed in the Saxon Palace. Fryderyk lived with his family in the Palace grounds. The father played the flute and violin;^[10] the mother played the piano and gave lessons to boys in the boarding house that the Chopins kept. Chopin was of slight build, and even in early childhood was prone to illnesses.^[11]



Chopin's Żelazowa Wola birthplace

Fryderyk may have had some piano instruction from his mother, but his first professional music tutor, from 1816 to 1821, was the Czech pianist Wojciech Żywny.^[12] His elder sister Ludwika also took lessons from Żywny, and occasionally played duets with her brother.^[13] It quickly became apparent that he was a child prodigy. By the age of seven Fryderyk had begun giving public concerts, and in 1817 he composed two polonaises, in G minor and B-flat major.^[14] His next work, a polonaise in A-flat major of 1821, dedicated to Żywny, is his earliest surviving musical manuscript.

In 1817 the Saxon Palace was requisitioned by Warsaw's Russian governor for military use, and the Warsaw Lyceum was reestablished in the Kazimierz Palace (today the rectorate of Warsaw University). Fryderyk and his family moved to a building, which still survives, adjacent to the Kazimierz Palace. During this period, Fryderyk was sometimes invited to the Belweder Palace as playmate to the son of the ruler of Russian Poland, Grand Duke Constantine; he played the piano for the Duke and composed a march for him. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, in his dramatic eclogue, "*Nasze Przebiegi*" ("Our Discourses", 1818), attested to "little Chopin's" popularity.^[15]



Chopin's father, Nicolas Chopin, by Mieroszewski, 1829

Education

From September 1823 to 1826 Chopin attended the Warsaw Lyceum.^[16] In the autumn of 1826 he began a three-year course under the Silesian composer Józef Elsner at the Warsaw Conservatory, studying music theory, figured bass and composition.^{[17][18]} Throughout this period he continued to compose and to give recitals in concerts and salons in Warsaw. He was engaged by the inventors of a mechanical organ, the "eolomelodicon", and on this instrument in May 1825 he performed his own improvisation and part of a concerto by Moscheles. The success of this concert resulted in his being asked to give a similar recital on the instrument before Tsar Alexander I, who was visiting Warsaw; the Tsar presented him with a diamond ring. At a subsequent eolomelodicon concert on 10 June 1825, Chopin performed his Rondo Op. 1. This was the first of his works to be commercially published and earned him his first mention in the foreign press, when the Leipzig *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* praised his "wealth of musical ideas".^[19]



Józef Elsner after 1853

During 1824–28 Chopin spent his vacations away from Warsaw, at a number of locales.^[20] In 1824 and 1825, at Szafarnia, he was a guest of Dominik Dziewanowski, the father of a schoolmate. Here for the first time he encountered Polish rural folk music.^[21] His letters home from Szafarnia (to which he gave the title "The Szafarnia Courier"), written in a very modern and lively Polish, amused his family with their spoofing of the Warsaw newspapers and demonstrated the youngster's literary gift.^[22]

In 1827, soon after the death of Chopin's youngest sister Emilia, the family moved from the Warsaw University building, adjacent to the Kazimierz Palace, to lodgings just across the street from the university, in the south annex of the Krasiński Palace on Krakowskie Przedmieście,^[23] where Chopin lived until he left Warsaw in 1830.^[24] Here his parents continued running their boarding house for male students; the Chopin Family Parlour (*Salonik Chopinów*) became a museum in the 20th century. In 1829 the artist Ambroży Mioszowski executed a set of portraits of Chopin family members, including the first known portrait of the composer.^[25]

Four boarders at his parents' apartments became Chopin's intimates: Tytus Woyciechowski, Jan Białobłocki, Jan Matuszyński and Julian Fontana; the latter two would later be part of his Paris milieu. He was friendly with members of Warsaw's young artistic and intellectual world, including Fontana, Józef Bohdan Zaleski and Stefan Witwicki.^[26] He was also attracted to the singing student Konstancja Gładkowska. In letters to Woyciechowski, he indicated which of his works, and even which of their passages, were influenced by his fascination with her; his letter of 15 May 1830 revealed that the slow movement (*adagio*) of his Piano Concerto No. 1 (in E minor) was secretly dedicated to her – "It should be like dreaming in beautiful springtime – by moonlight."^[27] His final Conservatory report (July 1829) described Chopin as "an exceptional talent, a musical genius."

Travel and domestic success



Chopin plays for the Radziwiłłs, 1829 (painting by Henryk Siemiradzki, 1887)

In September 1828 Chopin, while still a student, visited Berlin with a family friend, zoologist Feliks Jarocki, enjoying operas directed by Gaspare Spontini and attending concerts by Carl Friedrich Zelter, Felix Mendelssohn and other celebrities. On an 1829 return trip to Berlin, he was a guest of Prince Antoni Radziwiłł, governor of the Grand Duchy of Posen—himself an accomplished composer and aspiring cellist. For the prince and his pianist daughter Wanda, he composed his Introduction and Polonaise brillante in C major for cello and piano, Op. 3.^[28]

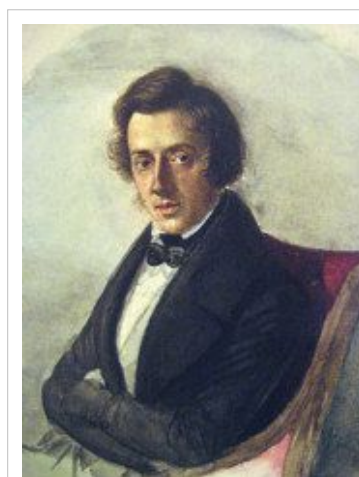
Back in Warsaw that year, Chopin heard Niccolò Paganini play and met the pianist and composer Johann Nepomuk Hummel. On 11 August, three weeks after completing his studies at the Warsaw Conservatory, he made his debut in Vienna. He gave two piano concerts and received many favourable reviews—in addition to some criticizing the "small tone" that he drew from the piano. In one of these 11 August concerts, he premiered his Variations on *Là ci darem la mano*, Op. 2 (variations on an aria from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*) for piano and orchestra. On his return to Poland, in December 1829 he premiered his Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21, at the Warsaw Merchants' Club. During this period he also began writing his first Études (1829–32).

Chopin's successes as a composer and performer opened the door to western Europe for him, and on 2 November 1830, he set out, in the words of Zdzisław Jachimecki, "into the wide world, with no very clearly defined aim, forever."^[29] With Woyciechowski, he headed for Austria, intending to go on to Italy. Later that month, in Warsaw, the November 1830 Uprising broke out, and Woyciechowski returned to Poland to enlist. Chopin, now alone in Vienna, was nostalgic for his homeland, and wrote to a friend, "I curse the moment of my departure."^[30] When in September 1831 he learned, while travelling from Vienna to Paris, that the uprising had been crushed, he expressed his anguish in the pages of his private journal: "O God! ... You are there, and yet you do not take vengeance!"^[31] Jachimecki ascribes to these events the composer's maturing "into an inspired national bard who intuited the past, present and future of his native Poland."

Paris

Chopin arrived in Paris in late September 1831; he would never return to Poland,^[32] thus becoming one of many expatriates of the Polish Great Emigration. In France he used the French versions of his given names, and after receiving French citizenship in 1835, he traveled on a French passport. However, Chopin remained close to his fellow Poles in exile as friends and confidants and he never felt fully comfortable speaking French. Chopin's biographer Adam Zamoyski writes that he never considered himself to be French, despite his father's French origins, and always saw himself as a Pole.^[33]

In Paris, Chopin encountered artists and other distinguished figures, and found many opportunities to exercise his talents and achieve celebrity. During his years in Paris he was to become acquainted with, among many others, Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, Ferdinand Hiller, Heinrich Heine, Eugène Delacroix, and Alfred de Vigny.^[34] Two Polish friends in Paris were also to play important



Chopin at 25, by his fiancée Maria Wodzińska, 1835

roles in Chopin's life there. His fellow student at the Warsaw Conservatory, Julian Fontana, had originally tried unsuccessfully to establish himself in England; Albert Grzymała, who in Paris became a wealthy financier and society figure, often acted as his adviser and "gradually began to fill the role of elder brother in [his] life."^[35] Fontana was to become, in the words of Michałowski and Samson, Chopin's "general factotum and copyist".^[36] Chopin was also acquainted with the poet Adam Mickiewicz, principal of the Polish Literary Society, some of whose verses he set as songs.^[37]

At the end of 1831, Chopin received the first major endorsement from an outstanding contemporary when Robert Schumann, reviewing the Op. 2 Variations in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (his first published article on music), declared: "Hats off, gentlemen! A genius."^[38] On 26 February 1832 Chopin gave a debut Paris concert at the Salle Pleyel which drew universal admiration. The critic François-Joseph Fétis wrote in the *Revue et gazette musicale*: "Here is a young man who ... taking no model, has found, if not a complete renewal of piano music, ... an abundance of original ideas of a kind to be found nowhere else ..."^[39] After this concert, Chopin realized that his essentially intimate keyboard technique was not optimal for large concert spaces. Later that year he was introduced to the wealthy Rothschild banking family, whose patronage also opened doors for him to other private salons (social gatherings of the aristocracy and artistic and literary elite). By the end of 1832 Chopin had established himself among the Parisian musical elite, and had earned the respect of his peers such as Hiller, Liszt, and Berlioz. He no longer depended financially upon his father, and in the winter of 1832 he began earning a handsome income from publishing his works and teaching piano to affluent students from all over Europe.^[40] This freed him from the strains of public concert-giving, which he disliked.



Maria Wodzińska, self-portrait

Chopin seldom performed publicly in Paris. In later years he generally gave a single annual concert at the Salle Pleyel, a venue that seated three hundred. He played more frequently at salons, but preferred playing at his own Paris apartment for small groups of friends. The musicologist Arthur Hedley has observed that "As a pianist Chopin was unique in acquiring a reputation of the highest order on the basis of a minimum of public appearances—few more than thirty in the course of his lifetime." The list of musicians who took part in some of his concerts provides an indication of the richness of Parisian artistic life during this period. Examples include a concert on 23 March 1833, in which Chopin, Liszt and Hiller performed (on pianos) a concerto by J.S. Bach for three keyboards; and, on 3 March 1838, a concert in which Chopin, his pupil Adolphe Gutmann, Charles-Valentin Alkan, and Alkan's teacher Zimmermann performed Alkan's arrangement, for eight hands, of two movements from Beethoven's 7th symphony.^[41] Chopin was also involved in the composition of Liszt's *Hexameron*; he wrote the sixth (and final) variation on Bellini's theme. Chopin's music soon found success with publishers, and in 1833 he contracted with Maurice Schlesinger, who arranged for it to be published also in Germany and England.^[42]

In the spring of 1834, Chopin attended the Lower Rhenish Music Festival in Aix-la-Chapelle with Hiller, and it was there that Chopin met Felix Mendelssohn. After the festival, the three visited Düsseldorf, where Mendelssohn had been appointed musical director. They spent what Mendelssohn described as "a very agreeable day", playing and discussing music at his piano, and met Friedrich Wilhelm Schadow, director of the Academy of Art, and some of his eminent pupils such as Lessing, Bendemann, Hildebrandt and Sohn.^[43] In 1835 Chopin went to Carlsbad, where he spent time with his parents; it was the last occasion he would see them. On his way back to Paris, he met old friends from Warsaw, the Wodzińskis. He had made the acquaintance of their daughter Maria in Poland five years earlier, when she was eleven. This meeting prompted him to stay for two weeks in Dresden, when he had previously intended to return to Paris via Leipzig.^[44] The sixteen-year-old girl's portrait of the composer is considered, along with Delacroix's, as among Chopin's best likenesses. In October he finally reached Leipzig, where he met Schumann, Clara Wieck and Felix Mendelssohn, who organised for him a performance of his own oratorio *St. Paul*, and who

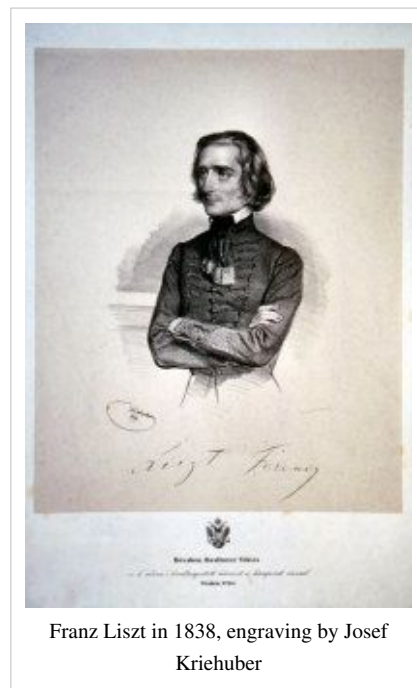
considered him "a perfect musician".^[45] In July 1836 Chopin travelled to Marienbad and Dresden to be with the Wodziński family, and in September he proposed to Maria, whose mother Countess Wodzińska approved in principle. Chopin went on to Leipzig, where he presented Schumann with his G minor Ballade.^[46] At the end of 1836 he sent Maria an album in which his sister Ludwika had inscribed seven of his songs, and his 1835 Nocturne in C-sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 1.^[47] The anodyne thanks he received from Maria proved to be the last letter he was to have from her.^[48]

Franz Liszt

Although it is not known exactly when Chopin first met Liszt after arriving in Paris, on 12 December 1831 he mentioned in a letter to his friend Woyciechowski that "I have met Rossini, Cherubini, Baillot, etc.—also Kalkbrenner. You would not believe how curious I was about Herz, Liszt, Hiller, etc.."^[49] Liszt was in attendance at Chopin's Parisian debut on 26 February 1832 at the Salle Pleyel, which led him to remark: "The most vigorous applause seemed not to suffice to our enthusiasm in the presence of this talented musician, who revealed a new phase of poetic sentiment combined with such happy innovation in the form of his art."

The two became friends, and for many years lived in close proximity in Paris, Chopin at 38 Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin, and Liszt at the Hôtel de France on the Rue Lafitte, a few blocks away. They performed together on seven occasions between 1833 and 1841. The first, on 2 April 1833, was at a benefit concert organized by Hector Berlioz for his bankrupt Shakespearean actress wife Harriet Smithson, during which they played Georges Onslow's *Sonata in F minor* for piano duet.[□] Later joint appearances included a benefit concert for the Benevolent Association of Polish Ladies in Paris. Their last appearance together in public was for a charity concert conducted for the Beethoven Memorial in Bonn, held at the Salle Pleyel and the Paris Conservatory on 25 and 26 April 1841.

Although the two displayed great respect and admiration for each other, their friendship was uneasy and had some qualities of a love-hate relationship. Harold Schonberg believes that Chopin displayed a "tinge of jealousy and spite" towards Liszt's virtuosity on the piano,[□] and others have also argued that he had become enchanted with Liszt's theatricality, showmanship and success.^[50] Liszt was the dedicatee of Chopin's Op. 10 Études, and his performance of them prompted the composer to write to Hiller, "I should like to rob him of the way he plays my studies."^[51] However, Chopin expressed annoyance in 1843 when Liszt performed one of his nocturnes with the addition of numerous intricate embellishments, at which Chopin remarked that he should play the music as written or not play it at all, forcing an apology. Most biographers of Chopin state that after this the two had little to do with each other, although in his letters dated as late as 1848 he still referred to him as "my friend Liszt". Some commentators point to events in the two men's romantic lives which led to a rift between them; there are claims that Liszt had displayed jealousy of his mistress Marie d'Agoult's obsession with Chopin, while others believe that Chopin had become concerned with Liszt's growing relationship with George Sand.



Franz Liszt in 1838, engraving by Josef Kriehuber

George Sand



Chopin at 28, from Delacroix's joint portrait of Chopin and Sand

In 1836, at a party hosted by Marie d'Agoult, Chopin met the French author George Sand (born [Amantine] Aurore [Lucile] Dupin). Short (under five feet, or 152 cm), dark, big-eyed and a cigar smoker,^[52] she initially repelled Chopin, who remarked, "What an unattractive person *la Sand* is. Is she really a woman?"^[53] However, by early 1837 Maria Wodzińska's mother had made it clear to Chopin in correspondence that a marriage with her daughter was unlikely to proceed.^[54] It is thought that she was influenced by his poor health and possibly also by rumours about his associations with women such as d'Agoult and Sand.^[55] Chopin finally placed the letters from Maria and her mother in a package on which he wrote, in Polish, "My tragedy".^[56] Sand, in a letter to Grzymała of June 1838, admitted strong feelings for the composer and debated whether to abandon a current affair in order to begin a relationship with Chopin; she asked Grzymała to assess Chopin's relationship with Maria Wodzińska, without realising that the affair, at least from Maria's side, was over.^[57]

In June 1837 Chopin visited London incognito in the company of the piano manufacturer Camille Pleyel where he played at a musical soirée at the house of English piano maker James Broadwood.^[58] On his return to Paris, his association with Sand began in earnest, and by the end of June 1838 they had become lovers.^[59] Sand, who was six years older than the composer, and who had had a series of lovers, wrote at this time: "I must say I was confused and amazed at the effect this little creature had on me ... I have still not recovered from my astonishment, and if I were a proud person I should be feeling humiliated at having been carried away ..."^[60] The two spent a miserable winter on Majorca (8 November 1838 to 13 February 1839), where, together with Sand's two children, they had journeyed in the hope of improving the health of Chopin and that of Sand's 15-year-old son Maurice, and also to escape the threats of Sand's former lover Félicien Mallefille.^[61] However, after discovering that the couple were not married, the deeply religious people of Majorca became inhospitable,^[62] making accommodation difficult to find. This compelled the group to take lodgings in a former Carthusian monastery in Valldemossa, which gave little shelter from the cold winter weather.

On 3 December, Chopin complained about his bad health and the incompetence of the doctors in Majorca: "Three doctors have visited me ... The first said I was dead; the second said I was dying; and the third said I was about to die."^[63] He also had problems having his Pleyel piano sent to him. It finally arrived from Paris in December. Chopin wrote to Pleyel in January 1839: "I am sending you my Preludes [(Op. 28)]. I finished them on your little piano, which arrived in the best possible condition in spite of the sea, the bad weather and the Palma customs." Chopin was also able to undertake work on his Ballade No. 2, Op. 38; two Polonaises, Op. 40; and the Scherzo No. 3, Op. 39.^[64]

Although this period had been productive, the bad weather had such a detrimental effect on Chopin's health that Sand determined to leave the island. To avoid further customs duties, Sand sold the piano to a local French couple, the Canuts.^{[65][66]} The group traveled first to Barcelona, then to Marseilles, where they stayed for a few months while Chopin convalesced.^[67] In May 1839 they headed for the summer to Sand's estate at Nohant, where they spent most summers until 1846. In autumn they returned to Paris, where Chopin's apartment at 5 rue Tronchet was close to Sand's rented accommodation at the rue Pigalle. He frequently visited Sand in the evenings, but both retained some independence.^[68] In 1842 he and Sand moved to the Square d'Orléans, living in adjacent buildings.^[69]

At the funeral of the tenor Adolphe Nourrit in Paris in 1839, Chopin made a rare appearance at the organ, playing a transcription of Franz Schubert's *lied Die Gestirne*. On 26 July 1840 Chopin and Sand were present at the dress rehearsal of Berlioz's *Grande symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, composed to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the July Revolution. Chopin was reportedly unimpressed with the composition and disliked it.^[70]

During the summers at Nohant, particularly in the years 1839–43, Chopin found quiet, productive days during which he composed many works, including his *Polonaise in A-flat major*, Op. 53. Among the visitors to Nohant were Delacroix and the mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot, whom Chopin had advised on piano technique and composition.^[71] Delacroix gives an account of staying at Nohant in a letter of 7 June 1842:

The hosts could not be more pleasant in entertaining me. When we are not all together at dinner, lunch, playing billiards, or walking, each of us stays in his room, reading or lounging around on a couch. Sometimes, through the window which opens on the garden, a gust of music wafts up from Chopin at work. All this mingles with the songs of nightingales and the fragrance of roses.^[72]

Decline



George Sand sewing, from Delacroix's joint portrait of Chopin and Sand

From 1842 onwards, Chopin showed signs of serious illness. After a solo recital in Paris on 21 February 1842, he wrote to Grzymała "I have to lie in bed all day long, my mouth and tonsils are aching so much."^[73] He was forced by illness to decline a written invitation from Alkan to participate in a repeat performance of the Beethoven Seventh Symphony arrangement at Erard's on 1 March 1843.^[74] In the winter of 1844/5, Charles Hallé visited Chopin and found him "hardly able to move, bent like a half-opened penknife and evidently in great pain", although his spirits returned when he started to play the piano for his visitor.^[75] Chopin's health continued to deteriorate, particularly from 1845 onwards. Modern research suggests that apart from any other illnesses, he may also have suffered from temporal lobe epilepsy.^[76]

Chopin's relations with Sand soured, worsened in 1846 by problems involving her daughter Solange and Solange's fiancé, the young fortune-hunting sculptor Auguste Clésinger.^[77] The composer frequently took Solange's side in quarrels with her mother; he also faced jealousy from Sand's son Maurice.^[78] Chopin was utterly indifferent to Sand's radical political pursuits, while Sand looked on his society friends with disdain.^[79] As the composer's illness progressed, Sand had become less of a lover and more of a nurse to Chopin, whom she called her "third child." In letters to third parties, she vented her impatience, referring to him as a "child," a "little angel," a "sufferer" and a "beloved little corpse." In 1847 Sand published her novel *Lucrezia Floriani*, whose main characters—a rich actress and a prince in weak health—could be interpreted as Sand and Chopin; the story was uncomplimentary to Chopin, who could not have missed the allusions as he helped Sand correct the printer's galleys. In 1847 he did not visit Nohant, and he quietly ended their ten-year relationship following an angry correspondence which, in Sand's words, made "a strange conclusion to nine years of exclusive friendship." The two would never meet again.^[80]

Chopin's output as a composer throughout this period declined in quantity year by year. Whereas in 1841 he had written a dozen works, only six were written in 1842 and six shorter pieces in 1843. In 1844 he wrote only the Op. 58 sonata. 1845 saw the completion of three mazurkas (Op. 59). Although these works were more refined than many of his earlier compositions, Zamoyski opines that "his powers of concentration were failing and his inspiration was beset by anguish, both emotional and intellectual."^[81]

Tour of England and Scotland

With this decline, Chopin's public popularity as a virtuoso began to wane, as did the number of his pupils, and this, together with the political strife and instability of the time, caused him to struggle financially. In February 1848, with the cellist Auguste Franchomme, he gave his last Paris concert, which included three movements of the Cello Sonata Op. 65.



Jane Stirling, by Devéria, c.
1830

In April, during the Revolution of 1848 in Paris, he left for London, where he performed at several concerts and at numerous receptions in great houses. This tour was suggested to him by his Scottish pupil Jane Stirling and her elder sister. Stirling also made all the logistical arrangements and provided much of the necessary funding.^[82]

In London Chopin took lodgings at Dover Street, where the firm of Broadwood provided him with a grand piano. At his first engagement, on 15 May at Stafford House, the audience included Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The Prince, who was himself a talented musician, moved close to the keyboard to view Chopin's technique. Broadwood also arranged concerts for him; among those attending were Thackeray and the singer Jenny Lind. Chopin was also sought after for piano lessons, for which he charged the high fee of one guinea (£1.05 in present British currency) per hour, and for private recitals for which the fee was 20 guineas. At a concert on 7 July he shared the platform with Viardot, who sang arrangements of some of his mazurkas to Spanish texts.^[83]

In late summer he was invited by Jane Stirling to visit Scotland, where he stayed at Calder House near Edinburgh and at Johnstone Castle in Renfrewshire, both owned by members of Stirling's family. Stirling clearly had a notion of going beyond mere friendship, and Chopin was obliged to make it clear to her that this could not be so. He wrote at this time to Grzymała "My Scottish ladies are kind, but such bores", and responding to a rumour about his involvement, answered that he was "closer to the grave than the nuptial bed."^[84] He gave a public concert in Glasgow on 27 September,^[85] and another in Edinburgh, at the Hopetoun Rooms on Queen Street (now Erskine House) on 4 October. In late October 1848, while staying in Edinburgh, at 10 Warriston Crescent, with the Polish physician Adam Łyszczynski, he wrote out his last will and testament—"a kind of disposition to be made of my stuff in the future, if I should drop dead somewhere", he wrote to Grzymała.

Chopin made his last public appearance on a concert platform at London's Guildhall on 16 November 1848, when, in a final patriotic gesture, he played for the benefit of Polish refugees. He was at this time clearly seriously ill, weighing less than 99 pounds (45 kg), and his doctors were aware that his sickness was at a terminal stage.^[86]

At the end of November, Chopin returned to Paris. He passed the winter in unremitting illness, but gave occasional lessons and was visited by friends, including Delacroix and Franchomme. Occasionally he played, or accompanied the singing of Delfina Potocka, for his friends. During the summer of 1849, his friends found him an apartment in Chaillot, out of the centre of the city, for which the rent was secretly subsidised by an admirer, Princess Obreskoff. Here in June 1849 he was visited by Jenny Lind.^[87]

Death and funeral

With his health further deteriorating, Chopin desired to have a family member with him. In June 1849 his sister Ludwika came to Paris with her husband and daughter, and in September, supported by a loan from Jane Stirling, he took an apartment at Place Vendôme 12.^[88] After 15 October, when his condition took a marked turn for the worse, only a handful of his closest friends remained with him, although Viardot remarked sardonically that "all the grand Parisian ladies considered it *de rigueur* to faint in his room."

Some of his friends provided music at his request; among them, Potocka sang and Franchomme played the cello. Chopin requested that his body be opened after death (for fear of being buried alive) and his heart returned to Warsaw. He also bequeathed his unfinished notes on a piano tuition method, *Projet de méthode*, to Alkan for completion.^[89]

On 17 October, after midnight, the physician leaned over him and asked whether he was suffering greatly. "No longer", he replied. He died a few minutes before two o'clock in the morning. Those present at the deathbed appear to have included his sister Ludwika, Princess Marcelina Czartoryska, Sand's daughter Solange, and Thomas Albrecht. Later that morning, Solange's husband Clésinger made Chopin's death mask and a cast of his left hand.^[90]

Chopin's disease and the cause of his death have since been a matter of debate. His death certificate gave the cause as tuberculosis, and his physician, Jean Cruveilhier, was then the leading French authority on this disease.^[91] The terminal symptoms of pulmonary tuberculosis resemble those of cystic fibrosis, which would be described and named only a century later; but in the 19th century, in the absence of modern respiratory therapy and medical support, survival with cystic fibrosis to age 39 was virtually impossible. Given Chopin's history and symptoms, it seems likely that he suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis.



Chopin's death mask, by Clésinger (photos: Jack Gibbons)

The funeral, held at the Church of the Madeleine in Paris, was delayed almost two weeks, until 30 October.^[92] Entrance was restricted to ticket holders^[93] as many people were expected to attend. Over 3,000 people arrived from as far as London, Berlin and Vienna without invitations and were excluded.

Mozart's Requiem was sung at the funeral; the soloists were the soprano Jeanne-Anais Castellan, the mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot, the tenor Alexis Dupont, and the bass Luigi Lablache; Chopin's Preludes No. 4 in E minor and No. 6 in B minor were also played. The organist at the funeral was Lefébure-Wély.^[94] The funeral procession to Père Lachaise Cemetery, which included Chopin's sister Ludwika, was led by the aged Prince Adam Czartoryski. The pallbearers included Delacroix, Franchomme, and Camille Pleyel. At the graveside, the Funeral March from Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 2 was played, in Reber's instrumentation.^[95]



Chopin on His Deathbed, by Teofil Kwiatkowski, 1849, commissioned by Jane Stirling. Chopin is in the presence of (from left) Aleksander Jełowicki, Chopin's sister Ludwika, Princess Marcelina Czartoryska, Wojciech Grzymała, Kwiatkowski.

Chopin's tombstone, featuring the muse of music, Euterpe, weeping over a broken lyre, was designed and sculpted by Clésinger. The expenses of the funeral and monument, amounting to 5,000 francs, were covered by Jane Stirling, who also paid for the return of the composer's sister Ludwika to Warsaw. Ludwika took Chopin's heart, preserved in alcohol, back to Poland in an urn.^{[96][97]} She also took a collection of two hundred letters from Sand to Chopin; after 1851 these were returned to Sand, who seems to have destroyed them.

Music

See also: List of compositions by Frédéric Chopin by genre, List of compositions by Frédéric Chopin by opus number, Ballades (Chopin), Études (Chopin), Mazurkas (Chopin), Nocturnes (Chopin), Polonaises (Chopin), Preludes (Chopin), Waltzes (Chopin) and Miscellaneous compositions (Chopin)

Overview



Autographed musical quotation from the Polonaise Op. 53, signed by Chopin on 25 May 1845

Over 230 works of Chopin survive; some compositions from early childhood have been lost. All his known works involve the piano, and only a few range beyond solo piano music, as either piano concertos, songs or chamber music.^[98]

Chopin was educated in the tradition of Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart and Clementi; he used Clementi's piano method with his own students. He was also influenced by Hummel's development of virtuoso, yet Mozartian, piano technique. He cited Bach and Mozart as the two most important composers in shaping his musical outlook.^[99] Chopin's early works are in the style of the "brilliant" keyboard pieces of his era as exemplified by the works of Ignaz Moscheles, Friedrich

Kalkbrenner, and others. Less direct in the earlier period are the influences of Polish folk music and of Italian opera. Much of what became his typical style of ornamentation (for example, his *fioriture*) is taken from singing. His melodic lines were increasingly reminiscent of the modes and features of the music of his native country, such as drones.^[100]

Chopin took the new salon genre of the nocturne, invented by the Irish composer John Field, to a deeper level of sophistication. He was the first to write ballades and scherzi as individual concert pieces. He essentially established a new genre with his own set of free-standing preludes (Op. 28, published 1839). He exploited the poetic potential of the concept of the concert étude, already being developed in the 1820s and 1830s by Liszt, Clementi and Moscheles, in his two sets of studies (Op. 10 published in 1833, Op. 25 in 1837).^[101]

Chopin also endowed popular dance forms with a greater range of melody and expression. Chopin's mazurkas, while originating in the traditional Polish dance (the *mazurek*), differed from the traditional variety in that they were written for the concert hall rather than the dance hall; "it was Chopin who put the mazurka on the European musical map."^[102] The series of seven polonaises published in his lifetime (another nine were published posthumously), beginning with the Op. 26 pair (published 1836), set a new standard for music in the form. His waltzes were also written specifically for the salon recital rather than the ballroom and are frequently at rather faster tempos than their dance-floor equivalents.^[103]

Titles, opus numbers and editions

Some of Chopin's well-known pieces have acquired descriptive titles, such as the *Revolutionary Étude* (Op. 10, No. 12), and the *Minute Waltz* (Op. 64, No. 1). However, with the exception of his *Funeral March*, the composer never named an instrumental work beyond genre and number, leaving all potential extramusical associations to the listener; the names by which many of his pieces are known were invented by others.^[104] There is no evidence to suggest that the *Revolutionary Étude* was written with the failed Polish uprising against Russia in mind; it merely appeared at that time.^[105] The *Funeral March*, the third movement of his Sonata No. 2 (Op. 35), the one case where he did give a title, was written before the rest of the sonata, but no specific event or death is known to have inspired it.^[106]

The last opus number that Chopin himself used was 65, allocated to the Cello Sonata in G minor. He expressed a deathbed wish that all his unpublished manuscripts be destroyed. At the request of the composer's mother and sisters, however, his musical executor Julian Fontana selected 23 unpublished piano pieces and grouped them into eight further opus numbers (Opp. 66–73), published in 1855. In 1857, 17 Polish songs that Chopin wrote at various stages of his life were collected and published as Op. 74, though their order within the opus did not reflect the order of composition.

Works published since 1857 have received alternative catalogue designations instead of opus numbers. The present standard musicological reference for Chopin's works is the Kobylańska Catalogue (usually represented by the initials 'KK'), named for its compiler the Polish musicologist Krystyna Kobylańska.^[107]

Chopin's original publishers included Maurice Schlesinger and Camille Pleyel.^[108] His works soon began to appear in popular 19th-century piano anthologies.^[109] The first collected edition was by Breitkopf & Härtel (1878–1902).^[110] Among modern scholarly editions of Chopin's works are the version under the name of Paderewski published between 1937 and 1966 and the more recent Polish "National Edition", edited by Jan Ekier, both of which contain detailed explanations and discussions regarding choices and sources.^{[111][112]}


Form and harmony

Improvisation stands at the centre of Chopin's creative processes. However, this does not imply impulsive rambling: Nicholas Temperley writes that "improvisation is designed for an audience, and its starting-point is that audience's expectations, which include the current conventions of musical form."^[113] The works for piano and orchestra, including the two concertos, are held by Temperley to be "merely vehicles for brilliant piano playing ... formally longwinded and extremely conservative".^[114] After the piano concertos (which are both early, dating from 1830), Chopin made no attempts at large-scale multi-movement forms, save for his late sonatas for piano and for cello; "instead he achieved near-perfection in pieces of simple general design but subtle and complex cell-structure."^[115] Rosen suggests that an important aspect of Chopin's individuality is his flexible handling of the four-bar phrase as a structural unit.^[116]



Chopin's last (Pleyel) piano, on which he composed in 1848–49. Fryderyk Chopin Museum, Warsaw

J. Barrie Jones suggests that "amongst the works that Chopin intended for concert use, the four ballades and four scherzos stand supreme", and adds that "the Barcarolle Op. 60 stands apart as an example of Chopin's rich harmonic palette coupled with an Italianate warmth of melody."^[117] Temperley opines that these works, which contain "immense variety of mood, thematic material and structural detail", are based on an extended "departure and return" form; "the more the middle section is extended, and the further it departs in key, mood and theme, from the opening idea, the more important and dramatic is the reprise when it at last comes."^[118]

	Mazurka in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4 Giorgi Latso, piano
	Waltz in D-flat major, Op. 64, No. 1 (so-called <i>Minute Waltz</i>) Peter Gerwinski, piano
	Étude Op. 10, No. 12 (so-called <i>Revolutionary</i>) Martha Goldstein playing an 1851 Érard piano
	Prelude Op. 28, No. 15 in D-flat major Giorgi Latso, piano
<i>Problems playing these files? See media help.</i>	

Chopin's mazurkas and waltzes are all in straightforward ternary or episodic form, sometimes with a coda.^[119] The mazurkas often show more folk features than many of his other works, sometimes including modal scales and harmonies and the use of drone basses. However, some also show unusual sophistication, for example Op. 63 No. 3, which includes a canon at one beat's distance, a great rarity in music.^[120]

Chopin's polonaises show a marked advance on those of his Polish predecessors in the form (who included his teachers Zywny and Elsner). As with the traditional polonaise, Chopin's works are in triple time and typically display a martial rhythm in their melodies, accompaniments and cadences. Unlike most of their precursors, they also require a formidable playing technique.^[121]

The 21 nocturnes are more structured, and of greater emotional depth, than those of Field, (whom Chopin met in 1833). Many of the Chopin nocturnes have middle sections marked by agitated expression (and often making very difficult demands on the performer) which heightens their dramatic character.^[122]

Chopin's études are largely in straightforward ternary form.^[123] He used them to teach his own technique of piano playing—for instance playing double thirds (Op. 25, No. 6), playing in octaves (Op. 25, No. 10), and playing repeated notes (Op. 10, No. 7).^[124]

The preludes, many of which are very brief, (some consisting of simple statements and developments of a single theme or figure), were described by Schumann as "the beginnings of studies".^[125] Inspired by J.S. Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Chopin's preludes move up the circle of fifths (rather than Bach's chromatic scale sequence) to create a prelude in each major and minor tonality.^[126] The preludes were perhaps not intended to be played as a group, and may even have been used by him and later pianists as generic preludes to others of his pieces, or even to music by other composers, as Kenneth Hamilton suggests: he has noted a recording by Ferruccio Busoni of 1922, in which the Prelude Op. 28 No. 7 is followed by the Étude Op. 10 No. 5.^[127]

The two mature piano sonatas (No. 2, Op. 35, written in 1839 and No. 3, Op. 58, written in 1844) are both in four movements. In Op. 35, Chopin was able to combine within a formal large musical structure many elements of his virtuosic piano technique—"a kind of dialogue between the public pianism of the brilliant style and the German sonata principle".^[128] The last movement, a brief (75-bar) perpetuum mobile in which the hands play in unmodified octave unison throughout, was found shocking and unmusical by contemporaries, including Schumann.^[129] The Op. 58 sonata is closer to the German tradition, including many passages of complex counterpoint, "worthy of Brahms" according to the music historians Kornel Michałowski and Jim Samson.

Chopin's harmonic innovations may have arisen partly from his keyboard improvisation technique. Temperley considers that in his works "novel harmonic effects frequently result from the combination of ordinary appoggiaturas or passing notes with melodic figures of accompaniment", and cadences are delayed by the use of chords outside the home key (neapolitan sixths and diminished sevenths), or by sudden shifts to remote keys. Chord progressions sometimes anticipate the shifting tonality of later composers such as Claude Debussy, as does Chopin's use of modal harmony.^[130]

Technique and performance style

In 1841, Léon Escudier wrote of a recital given by Chopin that year, "One may say that Chopin is the creator of a school of piano and a school of composition. In truth, nothing equals the lightness, the sweetness with which the composer preludes on the piano; moreover nothing may be compared to his works full of originality, distinction and grace."^[131]

Chopin refused to conform to a standard method of playing and believed that there was no set technique for playing well. His style was based extensively on his use of very independent finger technique. In his *Projet de méthode* he wrote: "Everything is a matter of knowing good fingering ... we need no less to use the rest of the hand, the wrist, the forearm and the upper arm."^[132] He further stated: "One needs only to study a certain position of the hand in relation to the keys to obtain with ease the most beautiful quality of sound, to

know how to play short notes and long notes, and [to attain] unlimited dexterity."^[133] The consequences of this approach to technique in Chopin's music include the frequent use of the entire range of the keyboard, passages in double octaves and other chord groupings, swiftly repeated notes, the use of grace notes, and the use of contrasting rhythms (four against three, for example) between the hands.^[134]

Jonathan Bellman writes that modern concert performance style—set in the "conservatory" tradition of late 19th- and 20th-century music schools, and suitable for large auditoria and/or recordings—militates against what is known of Chopin's more intimate performance technique.^[135] The composer himself said to a pupil that "concerts are never real music, you have to give up the idea of hearing in them all the most beautiful things of art."^[136] Contemporary accounts indicate that in performance, Chopin avoided rigid procedures sometimes incorrectly attributed to him, such as "always crescendo to a high note", but that he was concerned with expressive phrasing, rhythmic consistency and sensitive colouring.^[137] Berlioz wrote in 1853 that Chopin "has created a kind of chromatic embroidery ... whose effect is so strange and piquant as to be impossible to describe ... virtually nobody but Chopin himself can play this music and give it this unusual turn".^[138] Hiller wrote that "What in the hands of others was elegant embellishment, in his hands became a colourful wreath of flowers."^[139]

Chopin's music is frequently played with *rubato*, "the practice in performance of disregarding strict time, 'robbing' some note-values for expressive effect".^[140] There are differing opinions as to how much, and what type, of *rubato* is appropriate for his works. Charles Rosen comments that "most of the written-out indications of *rubato* in Chopin are to be found in his mazurkas ... It is probable that Chopin used the older form of *rubato* so important to Mozart ... [where] the melody note in the right hand is delayed until after the note in the bass ... An allied form of this *rubato* is the arpeggiation of the chords thereby delaying the melody note; according to Chopin's pupil, Karol Mikuli, Chopin was firmly opposed to this practice."^[141]

Friederike Müller, a pupil of Chopin, wrote: "[His] playing was always noble and beautiful; his tones sang, whether in full *forte* or softest *piano*. He took infinite pains to teach his pupils this *legato*, *cantabile* style of playing. His most severe criticism was "He—or she—does not know how to join two notes together." He also demanded the strictest adherence to rhythm. He hated all lingering and dragging, misplaced *rubatos*, as well as exaggerated *ritardandos* ... and it is precisely in this respect that people make such terrible errors in playing his works."



Extract from Chopin Nocturne Op. 62 no. 1 (1846, composer's manuscript)



The same passage (1881 Schirmer edition). The examples show typical use by Chopin of trills, grace notes and detailed pedalling and tempo instructions.

Polish heritage

The "Polish character" of Chopin's work is unquestionable; not because he also wrote polonaises and mazurkas ... which forms ... were often stuffed with alien ideological and literary contents from the outside. ... As an artist he looked for forms that stood apart from the literary-dramatic character of music which was a feature of Romanticism, as a Pole he reflected in his work the very essence of the tragic break in the history of the people and instinctively aspired to give the deepest expression of his nation ... For he understood that he could invest his music with the most enduring and truly Polish qualities only by liberating art from the confines of dramatic and historical contents. This attitude toward the question of "national music" – an inspired solution to his art – was the reason why Chopin's works have come to be understood everywhere outside of Poland ... Therein lies the strange riddle of his eternal vigour.

Karol Szymanowski, 1923^[142]

With his mazurkas and polonaises, Chopin has been credited with introducing to music a new sense of nationalism. Schumann, in his 1836 review of the piano concertos, highlighted the composer's strong feelings for his native Poland, writing that "Now that the Poles are in deep mourning [after the failure of the November 1830 rising], their appeal to us artists is even stronger ... [I]f the mighty autocrat in the north [i.e. Alexander I of Russia] could know that in Chopin's works, in the simple strains of his mazurkas, there lurks a dangerous enemy, he would place a ban on his music. Chopin's works are cannon buried in flowers!"^[143] The biography of Chopin published in 1863 under the name of Franz Liszt (but probably written by Carolyne zu Sayn-Wittgenstein)^[144] claims that Chopin "must be ranked first among the first musicians ... individualizing in themselves the poetic sense of an entire nation."^[145]

Some modern commentators have argued against exaggerating Chopin's primacy as a "nationalist" or "patriotic" composer. George Golos refers to earlier "nationalist" composers in Central Europe, including Poland's Michał Kleofas Ogiński and Franciszek Lessel, who utilised polonaise and mazurka forms.^[146] Barbara Milewski suggests that Chopin's experience of Polish music came more from "urbanised" Warsaw versions than from folk music, and that attempts (by Jachimecki and others) to demonstrate genuine folk music in his works are without basis.^[147] Richard Taruskin impugns Schumann's attitude toward Chopin's works as patronizing^[148] and comments that Chopin "felt his Polish patriotism deeply and sincerely" but consciously modelled his works on the tradition of Bach, Beethoven, Schubert and Field.^[149]

A reconciliation of these views is suggested by William Atwood: "Undoubtedly [Chopin's] use of traditional musical forms like the polonaise and mazurka roused nationalistic sentiments and a sense of cohesiveness amongst those Poles scattered across Europe and the New World ... While some sought solace in [them], others found them a source of strength in their continuing struggle for freedom. Although Chopin's music undoubtedly came to him intuitively rather than through any conscious patriotic design, it served all the same to symbolize the will of the Polish people ..."^[150]

Reception and influence

See also: List of memorials to Frédéric Chopin



Funerary monument on a pillar in Holy Cross Church, Warsaw, enclosing Chopin's heart

Jones comments that "Chopin's unique position as a composer, despite the fact that virtually everything he wrote was for the piano, has rarely been questioned." He also notes that Chopin was fortunate to arrive in Paris in 1831—"the artistic environment, the publishers who were willing to print his music, the wealthy and aristocratic who paid what Chopin asked for their lessons"—and these factors, as well as his musical genius, also fuelled his contemporary and later reputation. While his illness and his love-affairs conform to some of the stereotypes of romanticism, the rarity of his public recitals (as opposed to performances at fashionable Paris soirées), led Arthur Hutchings to suggest that "his lack of Byronic flamboyance [and] his aristocratic reclusiveness make him exceptional" among his romantic contemporaries, such as Liszt and Henri Herz.

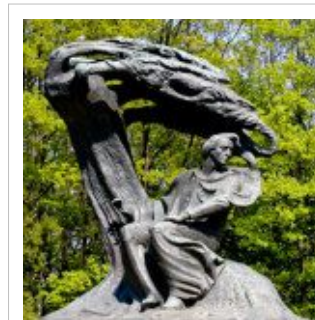
Chopin's qualities as a pianist and composer were recognized by many of his fellow musicians. Schumann named a piece for him in his suite *Carnaval*, and Chopin later dedicated his Ballade No. 2 in F major to Schumann. Elements of Chopin's music can be traced in many of Liszt's later works. Liszt later transcribed for piano six of Chopin's Polish songs. A less fraught friendship was with Alkan, with whom he discussed elements of folk music, and who was deeply affected by Chopin's death.^[151]

Two of Chopin's long-standing pupils, Karol Mikuli (1821–1897) and Georges Mathias, were themselves piano teachers and passed on details of his playing to their own students, some of whom (such as Raoul Koczalski) were to make recordings of his music. Other pianists and composers influenced by Chopin's style include Louis Gottschalk, Édouard Wolff (1816–1880) and Pierre Zimmermann.^[152] Debussy dedicated his own 1915 piano *Études* to the memory of Chopin; he frequently played Chopin's music during his studies at the Paris Conservatoire, and undertook the editing of Chopin's piano music for the publisher Jacques Durand.^[153]

Polish composers of the following generation included virtuosi such as Moritz Moszkowski, but, in the opinion of J. Barrie Jones, his "one worthy successor" among his compatriots was Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937).^[154] Edvard Grieg, Antonín Dvořák, Isaac Albéniz, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff, among others, are regarded by critics as having been influenced by Chopin's use of national modes and idioms.^[155] In the 20th century, composers who paid homage to (or in some cases parodied) the music of Chopin included George Crumb, Bohuslav Martinů, Darius Milhaud and Igor Stravinsky.^[156]

Chopin's music was used in the 1909 ballet *Chopiniana*, choreographed by Michel Fokine and orchestrated by Alexander Glazunov. Sergei Diaghilev commissioned additional orchestrations—from Stravinsky, Anatoly Lyadov, Sergei Taneyev and Nikolai Tcherepnin—for later productions, which used the title *Les Sylphides*.^[157]

Chopin's music remains very popular and is regularly performed, recorded and broadcast worldwide. The world's oldest monographic music competition, the International Chopin Piano Competition, founded in 1927, is held every five years in Warsaw.^[158] The Fryderyk Chopin Institute of Poland lists on its website over eighty societies world-wide devoted to the composer and his music.^[159] The Institute site also lists nearly 1,500 performances of Chopin works on YouTube as of January 2014.^[160]



Chopin statue, Łazienki Park, Warsaw

Recordings

The British Library notes that "Chopin's works have been recorded by all the great pianists of the recording era." The earliest recording was an 1895 performance by Paul Pabst of the Nocturne in E major Op. 62 No. 2. The British Library site makes available a number of historic recordings, including some by Alfred Cortot, Ignaz Friedman, Vladimir Horowitz, Benno Moiseiwitsch, Paderewski, Arthur Rubinstein, Xaver Scharwenka and many others.^[161]

Numerous recordings of Chopin's works are available. On the occasion of the composer's bicentenary, the critics of *The New York Times* recommended performances by the following contemporary pianists (among many others).^[162] Martha Argerich, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Emanuel Ax, Evgeny Kissin, Murray Perahia, Maurizio Pollini and Krystian Zimerman. The Warsaw Chopin Society organizes the *Grand prix du disque de F. Chopin* for notable Chopin recordings, held every five years.^[163]

In literature, stage, film and television



Chopin's grave at
Père-Lachaise cemetery,
Paris

Chopin has figured extensively in Polish literature, both in serious critical studies of his life and music and in fictional treatments. The earliest manifestation was probably an 1830 sonnet on Chopin by Leon Ulrich. French writers on Chopin (apart from Sand) have included Marcel Proust and André Gide; and he has also featured in works of Gottfried Benn and Boris Pasternak.^[164] There are numerous biographies of Chopin in English. (See "Bibliography" below for some of these.)

Possibly the first venture into fictional treatments of Chopin's life was a fanciful operatic version of some of its events. *Chopin* was written by Giacomo Orefice and produced in Milan in 1901. All the music is derived from that of Chopin.^[165]

Chopin's life and his relations with George Sand have been fictionalized in numerous films. The 1945 biographical film *A Song to Remember* earned Cornel Wilde an Academy Award nomination as Best Actor for his portrayal of the composer. Other film treatments have included: *La valse de l'adieu* (France, 1928) by Henry Roussel, with Pierre Blanchar as Chopin; *Impromptu* (1991), starring Hugh Grant as Chopin; *La note bleue* (1991); and *Chopin: Desire for Love* (2002).^[166]

Chopin's life was covered in a BBC TV documentary *Chopin – The Women Behind The Music* (2010), and in a 2010 documentary realised by Angelo Bozzolini and Roberto Prosseda for Italian television.^[167]

References

Notes

- [1] In Polish, pronounced [ˈʂɔpɛn], with alternative, phonetic spelling *Szopen*.
- [2] Rosen (1995), p. 284.
- [3] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 4–5 (locs. 115–130).
- [4] Hedley (1980), p. 292
- [5] According to his letter of 16 January 1833 to the chairman of the Société historique et littéraire polonaise (Polish Literary Society) in Paris, he was "born 1 March 1810 at the village of Żelazowa Wola in the Province of Mazowsze." <ref>Chopin (1962), p. 116.
- [6] Rose Cholmondeley, "The Mystery of Chopin's Birthday" (<http://www.chopin-society.org.uk/articles/chopin-birthday.htm>), Chopin Society UK website, accessed 21 December 2013
- [7] Zamoyski (2010), p. 3 (loc. 100).
- [8] Michałowski and Samson (n.d), §1, para. 1
- [9] Zamoyski (2010) p. 7 (loc. 158).
- [10] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 5–6 (locs. 130–144).
- [11] Zamoyski (2010), 6 (loc. 144).
- [12] Michałowski and Samson (n.d), §1, para. 3
- [13] Samson (1996), p. 8.
- [14] "The Complete Keyboard Works" (<http://chopin.wordpress.com/the-complete-solo-works/chopin-the-complete-keyboard-works/>), Chopin Project website, accessed 21.12.2013

- [15] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 11–12 (locs. 231–248).
- [16] Samson (1996), p. 15.
- [17] Michałowski and Samson (n.d.), §1, para. 5.
- [18] The Conservatory was affiliated with the University of Warsaw; hence Chopin is counted among the university's alumni.
- [19] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 21–2 (locs. 365–387).
- [20] At Szafarnia (in 1824 – perhaps his first solo travel away from home – and in 1825), Duszniki (1826), Pomerania (1827) and Sanniki (1828).<ref>Szkleener (2010), p. 8.
- [21] Michałowski and Samson (n.d.), §1 para. 2.
- [22] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 19–20 (locs. 334–352).
- [23] The Krasiński Palace is now the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts.
- [24] An 1837–39 resident here, the artist-poet Cyprian Norwid, would later write a poem, "Chopin's Piano", about the instrument's defenestration by Russian troops during the January 1863 Uprising. UNIQ-ref-0-5fdf06067fe224cd-QINU
- [25] The originals perished in World War II. Only photographs survive.<ref>See Kuhnke (2010)
- [26] Zamoyski (2010), p. 43 (loc. 696).
- [27] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 50–52 (locs. 801–838).
- [28] Zamoyski (2010), p. 45 (loc. 731).
- [29] Jachimecki (1937), p. 422.
- [30] Michałowski and Samson (n.d), §2, para. 1
- [31] Michałowski and Samson (n.d), §2, para. 3. The journal is now in the National Library of Poland.
- [32] Michałowski and Samson (n.d), §1, para. 6
- [33] Zamoyski (2010), p. 128 (loc. 2027).
- [34] Zamoyski (2010), p. 106 (loc. 1678).
- [35] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 106–107 (locs. 1678–1696).
- [36] Michałowski and Samson (n.d), §3, para. 2
- [37] Zamoyski (2010), p. 137 (loc. 2164)
- [38] Schumann (1988), pp. 15–17.
- [39] cited in Zamoyski (2010), p. 88 (loc. 1384).
- [40] Michałowski and Samson (n.d), §2, paras. 4–5
- [41] Conway (2012), p. 226 and n. 9.
- [42] Michałowski and Samson (n.d), §2, para. 5.
- [43] Niecks (1980), p. 313.
- [44] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 118–9 (locs. 1861–1878).
- [45] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 119–20 (locs. 1878–1896).
- [46] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 126–7 (locs.1983–2001).
- [47] Jachimecki (1937), p. 423.
- [48] Chopin (1962), p. 144.
- [49] Hall-Swadley (2011), p. 31.
- [50] Hall-Swadley (2011), p. 33.
- [51] Walker (1988), p. 184.
- [52] Schonberg (1987), p. 152.
- [53] Michałowski and Samson (n.d.) §3, para. 3.
- [54] Chopin (1962), p. 141.
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- [62] Zamoyski (2010), pp. 161–162 (locs. 2544–2560).
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- [64] Zamoyski (2010), p. 168 (loc. 2646).
- [65] Zamoyski (2010), p. 168 (loc. 2654)
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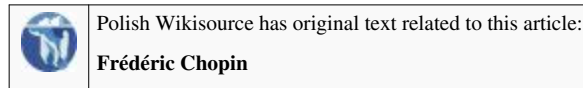
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- *Chopin Early Editions* (<http://chopin.lib.uchicago.edu/>), a collection of over 400 first and early printed editions of musical compositions by Frédéric Chopin published before 1881

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