

CLASSICAL



CLASSICAL MUSIC: BE AN
INSTANT EXPERT

About the Instant Expert Series

Many people think that learning about classical music and the people that create it would require so much time and energy that the prospect of diving in overwhelms them. Naxos, the world's leading classical label, has mined its vast catalog of recordings (and the brains of its global staff of classical music connoisseurs) to design a new series called "Instant Expert" which is available by download only. Each "Instant Expert" volume focuses on the music of one composer, featuring a curated collection of that composer's greatest hits as well as some unique or historically significant compositions. In addition, each download is accompanied by a podcast hosted by Raymond Bisha, Naxos of America Director of Media Relations, and a booklet containing track information and an abridged biography of the composer.

– Kelly M. Rach, National Publicist, Naxos of America



Chopin
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Fryderyk Chopin **(3/01/1810-10/17/1849)**

Born near Warsaw in 1810, the son of a French émigré and a Polish mother, Chopin won early fame in the relatively limited circles of his native country before seeking his fortune abroad in Paris. His departure from Warsaw coincided with the unsuccessful national rising against Russian domination and Chopin found himself in Paris in the company of a number of other Polish exiles. He was able to establish himself as a pianist and as a teacher of the piano, primarily in fashionable society. For some ten years, Chopin enjoyed a liaison with the writer George Sand but broke with her during the last years of his life, brought to a close by the tuberculosis from which he had long suffered. His compositions, principally for the piano, make a remarkable use of the newly developed instrument, exploring its poetic possibilities while generally avoiding the more obvious ostentation of the Paris school of performers.



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Orchestral Music

As a young musician embarking on a career as a pianist, Chopin provided himself with half a dozen works for piano and orchestra, a form for which he later found no necessity. These include two piano concertos, three works based on Polish themes, a Fantasia, a Krakowiak and a Grand polonaise, and a set of variations on a theme by Mozart.

Chamber Music

Chopin wrote an Introduction and Polonaise for cello and piano for an early patron and towards the end of his life a Cello Sonata. His G minor Piano Trio is a valuable addition to recital repertoire.

Piano Music

Chopin created or developed a number of new forms of piano music, vehicles for his own poetic use of the instrument, with its exploration of nuance, its original harmonies, and its discreet but often considerable technical demands. He used the popular form of the Waltz in a score of such compositions, of which the so-called Minute Waltz is probably the best known of many of almost equal familiarity. The Polish dance, the Polonaise, elevated from village to ballroom and provided the basis of another characteristic form in sixteen such works written between 1817, when Chopin was seven, and 1846. The best known among his familiar works are the Polonaise in A major, Opus 40 No. 1, the Polonaise in A flat, Opus 53, and the Polonaise-Fantaisie, Opus 61. Other Polish dances used by Chopin include the 62 Mazurkas. The four Ballades are supposedly based on patriotic poems by Chopin's friend Mickiewicz, evocative narrative works with no precise extra-musical association. The 21 Nocturnes continue an evocative form initiated by the Irish pianist John Field. Chopin wrote 26 Preludes, 24 of them completed during an ill-fated winter with George Sand, in Mallorca and 27 Studies, of which the Revolutionary Study is perhaps the best known. Other compositions include four Scherzos, expansions of the earlier form into a more extended virtuoso piece, three Sonatas, a Berceuse, a Barcarolle, four Impromptus, and a number of other works. The whole body of Chopin's music is of the greatest musical and technical importance, melodies often of operatic inspiration and harmonies and forms of considerable originality.



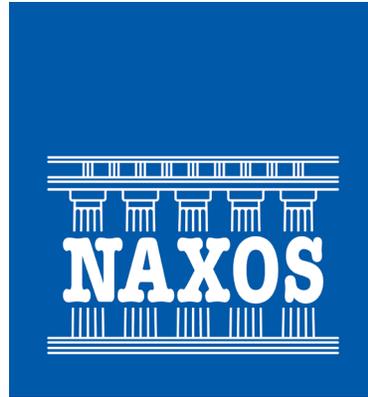
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Explore these and other key works by Chopin in their entirety:

12 Etudes, Op. 10: No. 12 in C minor, "Revolutionary"
24 Preludes, Op. 28
Andante spianato in G major, Op. 22
Ballade No. 3 in A flat major, Op. 47
Barcarolle in F sharp major, Op. 60
Berceuse in D flat major, Op. 57
Cello Sonata in G minor, Op. 65
Etude No. 3 in E major, Op. 10
Fantasy-Impromptu in C sharp minor, Op. 66
Mazurka No. 13 in A minor, Op. 17
Mazurka No. 23 in D major, Op. 33
Nocturne No. 19 in E minor, Op. 72
Nocturne No. 2 in E flat major, Op. 9
Nocturne No. 20 in C sharp minor, Op. posth.
Nocturne No. 5 in F sharp major, Op. 15
Nocturne No. 8 in D flat major, Op. 27
Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11
Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21
Piano Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 35, "Funeral March"
Polonaise No. 6 in A flat major, Op. 53, "Heroic"
Prelude No. 15 in D flat major, Op. 28
Scherzo No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 31
Waltz No. 1 in E flat major, Op. 18, "Grande valse brillante"
Waltz No. 6 in D flat major, Op. 64
Waltz No. 7 in C sharp minor, Op. 64
Waltz No. 9 in A flat major, Op. posth. 69



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