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CHOPIN – THE LAST CONCERT

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THE POLISH ROMANTICS

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TOBIAS KOCH



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# ABOUT THE VANCOUVER CHOPIN SOCIETY



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The Vancouver Chopin Society  
# 400 - 601 West Broadway Avenue,  
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Telephone: 604.871.4450  
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Since presenting its first concert on April 19th, 1998, the Vancouver Chopin Society has been using great music to bring people together. We feature pianists not by their famous names, but for their affinity for the music of Chopin, as well as for their great artistry. With our unique international connections, particular within the European community, our Society has been able to bring to Vancouver audiences artists such as Nelson Freire, Nelson Goerner, Rafal Blechacz, Ingrid Fliter, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Dina Yoffe, Wojciech Switala, Ingolf Wunder and Danill Trifonov, to name just a few. In many cases, the Vancouver Chopin Society had been responsible for these artists making their Vancouver debut.

Celebrating our 21st season, our Society strives to bring to Vancouver audiences artists of the highest calibre. With the large number of young people studying music, especially the piano, in this city, we aim to cultivate in these young people the joy of listening, and to make great music part of their lives. To that end, the Vancouver Chopin Society makes our tickets extremely affordable to music teachers as well as their students.

We thank our supporters for their encouragement these many years, and we hope to continue to bring you great music and musicians in the seasons to come.

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Iko Bylicki In Memory of Lloyd Dykk

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# 21<sup>st</sup> SEASON OF THE VANCOUVER CHOPIN SOCIETY

We hope you have enjoyed these performances by **Tobias Koch**. There are still two more incredible recitals in our current season. **Nelson Goerner**, whose performances and recordings have been garnering glowing acclaim, and **Kate Liu**, the remarkable artist who won the bronze medal and the prestigious prize for best mazurka performance at the 2015 Warsaw International Chopin Competition. At the competition, Kate Liu stole the hearts of the Polish audience with her authentic Chopin performances. We are excited to present her in this long-awaited and much anticipated Vancouver debut.



## **Nelson Goerner, April 7, 2019 3:00 pm, Vancouver Playhouse**

Those who attended Nelson Goerner's last Vancouver appearance with us will remember his staggering performance of Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata. No wonder Gramophone magazine awarded the pianist's recording of the work its sought-after "Editor's Choice."

In an eloquent review, Le Monde writes, "Majestic in Chopin, unquestionable in Debussy, the Argentinian pianist Nelson Goerner is one of those discreet artists whose career is immense."

## **Kate Liu, May 19, 2019 3:00 pm, Vancouver Playhouse**

Bronze medal winner of the 2015 International Chopin Competition in Warsaw as well as winner of the highly coveted Polish Radio prize for best performance of a mazurka, Kate Liu was seen by many jurors and musicians as the Competition's most original artistic personality. During the Chopin Competition, Liu received the highest score of 10 an unprecedented three times. Don't miss her Vancouver debut!

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## **EXCITING NEWS**

The Vancouver Chopin Society is happy to announce that renowned music historian Alan Walker, a world authority on 19<sup>th</sup> century music, and author of the monumental new biography of Chopin - Fryderyk Chopin - A Life and Times - has accepted our invitation to give a lecture in association with Kate Liu's recital on May 19<sup>th</sup>. This book, which took ten years to research and write, has been receiving rave reviews all over the world. After the lecture, Professor Walker will be available for book signing, and a limited number of copies of the book will be available for sale. Stay tuned for more details!



# TOBIAS KOCH

## 19TH-CENTURY PIANOFORTE

To probe the mysteries of sound with open-mindedness, versatility and with a sense of joy for discovery is the musical credo of Tobias Koch. Right from the beginnings of his musical career, Koch has been fascinated by the expressive potential of period keyboard instruments; he plays the harpsichord, clavichord, tangent piano, fortepiano, orphica, piano-pédalier, organ, and romantic grand piano in unorthodox and spirited performances — “with disarming spontaneity”, as a large German weekly put it. Koch chooses the most suitable instrument after extensive musicological research and performance practice studies, always leading to new results.

For years, he has been considered one of the leading interpreters in the field of romantic performance practice, and particularly of the work of Robert Schumann. The German Radio MDR Figaro wrote: “Inspired and inspiring right from the beginning. Tobias Koch plays Robert Schumann’s



music the way it should be played: revolutionary, romantic, with technical brilliance, emotional but without any hint of sappiness or pretence. Koch’s playing conjures up images that appear just as quickly as they fade away. Koch’s playing is infectious, every moment is an adventure.”

Koch’s comprehensive musical career as a soloist, chamber musician and Lied accompanist has taken him to music festivals throughout Europe including the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele, Verbier Festival, the Warsaw Chopin Festival, Rheingau Music Festival, Beethovenfest Bonn, the Schumann Festivals in Düsseldorf, Bonn, Leipzig, and Zwickau, and the Mendelssohn Days at the Gewandhaus Leipzig.

Koch gained valuable artistic impulses in master classes with David Levine, Roberto Szidon, Walter Kamper, Jos van Immerseel and Claire Chevallier. He is a recipient of the music sponsorship award of the city of Düsseldorf and teaches at the Robert Schumann Hochschule as well as at the Academies in Verbier and Montepulciano. Koch has worked with musicians such as Andreas Staier, Gottfried von der Goltz, Joshua Bell, Steven Isserlis, Markus Schäfer, the Pleyel and Hoffmeister Quartets, Concerto Köln and the Stuttgarter Hofkapelle under Frieder Bernius. He also collaborates closely with instrument makers, restoration specialists, and major instrument museums.

Koch has published on the topics of performance practice, rhetoric and musical aesthetics. He has featured in numerous productions for radio and television and recorded over 25 CDs with works by Mozart, Beethoven, Burgmüller, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Wagner, and Brahms. Drawn to the irresistible sound of period keyboard instruments, Koch has performed exclusively on historic instruments for many years.

[www.tobiaskoch.eu](http://www.tobiaskoch.eu)

EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER

Artistic Director Matthew White

201819 SEASON



Pick up our colourful calendar/brochure in the lobby today – it includes full details about the current season.

**[earlymusic.bc.ca](http://earlymusic.bc.ca)**

# 1852 LONDON BOUDOIR GRAND PIANOFORTE BY JOHN BROADWOOD & SONS

BY JOHN GLOFCHESKIE



Photo credit Jan Gates

- No. 989 in a series of Broadwood Boudoir Grands manufactured between 1835 and 1890.
- Oak case: 7'1" in length, and 4'2" in width.
- Veneer: Bookmatch Brazilian Rosewood.
- Open-bottom case covered with loose-woven burlap.
- Lid with short stick only.
- Iron composite frame has two tension bars to stabilize the case.
- Soundboard grain runs across the strings (parallel to keyboard).
- Soundboard is flat, not crowned as on modern piano.
- Keyboard range: 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  octaves, from CC to a4.  
82 keys covered in ebony and ivory.
- Straight stringing: single in the bass from CC to FF, double in the octave up to F, and triple for the remainder of the instrument up to a4.
- Tuning: A 430 Hz, slightly under modern pitch.
- Tuning pins are oblong (not square as on the modern piano).
- Two wooden pedals: damper and *una corda*.
- Hammer action is simple (without Erard's double escapement), but still allows good key repetition.

## Restoration by Marinus van Prattenburg, Abbotsford, Spring 2017

This 1852 Broadwood originated with an English family who brought it with them to British Columbia in the 1950s. The fact that the wood on the sustaining pedal is hardly worn is a good indication that the 1852 instrument was not much played. The original hammers, felts, and dampers were restored to playing condition and did not need to be replaced. All other parts are original except for the strings which were replaced by Rösler steel wire, using the original gauges. The result of the restoration is an instrument with a true Broadwood harmonic sound spectrum. This piano was bought for use by the Vancouver Chopin Society in 2018 and first used in two concerts of Chopin's music performed by the renowned Janusz Olejniczak.

## Marinus van Prattenburg

In a career spanning more than fifty years, Marinus has restored many Broadwoods, both squares and grands, the earliest being a 1784 square piano. Square pianos, both British and American, have been a special passion of his. He has restored French pianos including several Erard grands, and occasionally Pleyel and Gaveau instruments. His Viennese restorations include some fine 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century fortepianos. Steinway, Bechstein, and other modern pianos have also been through his workshop. The 1852 Broadwood was his final restoration. Now that he has retired, his final project is for himself—a new Viennese fortepiano, ca. 1800, of his own design. Marinus is also a published author whose books include *Mr. Sebastian: the life story of a mid-nineteenth century grand piano*.

## Sound characteristics of a London Broadwood

from Richard Burnett's book, *Company of Pianos* (2004), about instruments in the Finchcocks Collection

"Considerable power, coupled, due to sympathetic vibrations, with an obfuscating sea of sound, are the salient characteristics of this piano [1846 Broadwood Grand similar to those used by Chopin in England and Scotland in 1848 and to the 1852 instrument being used this evening]. The dampers are light for such an instrument and quite fail to extinguish totally any notes in the bass for up to ten seconds, according to how forcefully one depresses the keys. Old traditions die hard, and the tonal wash, so relished by the first performers on English pianos, here reaches its pinnacle, before receding into the greater clarity of later nineteenth century instruments. The 1846 Broadwood thus represents in this respect the link between the classical and the modern grand." (p. 54)

## Sound ideal of the Paris Pleyel

(Chopin's preferred piano) from the same source

"Like so many contemporary French grand pianos, the Pleyel [1842] is essentially an English instrument, with four iron bars reinforcing the case to allow high tension wire to be safely used. The dampers, however, are longer than those found in pianos of similar date by Broadwood and so there is less aftersound, [a characteristic] which is more typical of pianos of Germanic origin. The instrument is of particular interest for pianists since it is the same model as the Pleyel of 1839 owned by Chopin. Chopin had enjoyed a very close relationship with the Pleyel firm, the instruments of which possessed a specially beautiful and intimate tone colour, which clearly appealed to the composer: ... *The expression of my inner thoughts, of my feelings, is more direct, more personal* [than on an Erard, which produces its bright limpid tone colour effortlessly]. *My fingers feel in more immediate contact with the hammers, which then translate exactly and faithfully the feeling I want to produce, the effect I want to obtain.*" (p. 139)

# PROGRAMME 1

A RECITAL IN COLLABORATION WITH THE VANCOUVER CHOPIN SOCIETY



## Tobias Koch

1852 London Boudoir Grand Pianoforte by John Broadwood & Sons

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22 | 7:30 PM

## Chopin - The Last Concert

A reconstruction of Chopin's last solo recital concert programme, Edinburgh, 4 October 1848

### Fryderyk Chopin

(1810-1849)

**Mazurka in A-flat major**, Op. 7 No. 4 (1824/1831)

**Impromptu No. 1 in A flat major**, Op. 29 (1837)

**3 Etudes** from Op. 25 (1836)

in A-flat major No. 1

in F minor No. 2

in C-sharp minor No. 7

**2 Nocturnes**, Op. 27 (1835)

in C-sharp minor No. 1

in D-flat major No. 2

**Berceuse in D-flat major**, Op. 57 (1844)

**Grande Valse Brillante in E-flat major** Op. 18 (1831)

**Prelude in E major**, Op. 28 No. 9 (1839)

**Nocturne in B major**, Op. 62 No. 1 (1846)

**Prelude in C-sharp minor**, Op. 45 (1841)

**Ballade No. 3 in A-flat major**, Op. 47 (1841)

**3 Mazurkas** from Op. 7 (1831)

in B-flat major No. 1

in A minor No. 2

in F minor No. 3

**2 Mazurkas** from Op. 59 (1845)

in A minor No. 1

in F-sharp minor No. 3

**3 Waltzes**, Op. 64 (1847)

in D-flat major No. 1

in C-sharp minor No. 2

in A-flat major No. 3

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BY JOHN GLOFCHESKIE

## Chopin - The Last Concert

### Chopin's Public Concerts

Chopin's 1848 *Soirée Musicale* in Edinburgh is unique in his concert career in that he performed only his own solo piano music. His other public concerts had involved other artists—most often singers, but sometimes other instrumentalists as well—in a variety of repertoire. The Romantic concept of the solo “recital” had been established by Liszt a decade earlier but the term (and the practice) only gradually gained usage.

Chopin gave only about thirty public or semi-public concerts during his life, most of these to an audience that rarely exceeded three hundred persons. His last public concerts were the six of 1848: his final concert in Paris on 16 February (where he had not performed publicly for six years); two semi-public concerts in London on 23 June and 7 July (both with singers); a huge public concert in Manchester on 27 August (in which he made two reduced solo appearances because of a coach accident); and the two Scottish concerts in Glasgow on 27 September (incorporating singers), and in Edinburgh on 4 October (solo).

The Edinburgh concert was technically not Chopin's last public appearance since he performed again in London on 16 November in the Concert preceding the Annual Ball in Aid of the Literary Association of the Friends of Poland. As in the Manchester concert, the programme featured a large number of singers and instrumentalists, with Chopin playing a few solo pieces including the first two etudes of Op. 25.

It is important to acknowledge that the roster of public and semi-public concerts is not indicative of the extent of his performance career inasmuch as he performed frequently in the private rooms of friends and nobility. In a highly-informative talk given in London in 2010, Rose Cholmondeley points out that with access to Broadwood ledgers tracking the transport of pianos, we know that Chopin performed at “countless” private morning concerts, afternoon concerts, evening concerts, as well as informally in salons. Cholmondeley also mentions that whereas Chopin may have performed more “daring” larger works in his private concerts, he restricted himself to a limited set of pieces for public concerts, many of which are represented in this evening's programme.

### Chopin's Pianos

For all of his public concerts in England and in Scotland, Chopin used pianos provided by John Broadwood's grandson, Henry Fowler Broadwood (1811-1893), who spoke French (Chopin's English remained rudimentary) and whom Chopin referred to as “a real Pleyel” for the attention he gave to Chopin's needs. In his student years Chopin was most familiar with Viennese-action pianos (including the Warsaw Buchholtz), but after his arrival in Paris in 1831 his allegiance turned to the instruments of Camille Pleyel who acted as both friend and supporter. Chopin brought the Pleyel Grand from his 1848 Paris concert to London where it remained his “own” piano—his favoured practice instrument—despite the generosity of Broadwood. (Broadwood had provided a Grand for Chopin's London drawing room, as had Erard who owned factories in both London and Paris.) Chopin's piano aesthetic was decidedly French.

The 1847 Broadwood Grand Pianoforte (No. 17,047) used in Chopin's public concerts in London and Manchester survived and was later donated by the Broadwood Trust to the Royal Academy of Music. The Broadwood Grand Pianoforte (No. 17,001) which Broadwood shipped to Scotland for the 1848 Glasgow and Edinburgh concerts seems to have been bought shortly afterwards by John Muir Wood, its present whereabouts unknown. At Broadwood's request, Muir Wood, a pianist who had studied on the continent and was now director of the new Glasgow branch of his father's Edinburgh music shop, had accompanied Chopin and his Irish manservant Daniel on the train journey from London to Edinburgh on August 7, and was involved in the promotion of the Scottish concerts along with Jane Stirling. At Calder House, near Edinburgh, Jane made her Pleyel Grand available to Chopin in her drawing room, while Broadwood provided a piano for the composer's own rooms. In Edinburgh Chopin stayed on several occasions with the homeopathic Polish-born Dr. Łyszczynski (anglicized Lishinski), whose Scottish wife recalled Chopin playing on an old Broadwood square piano of her childhood “with evident pleasure”. Before Chopin left London for Paris on 23 November 1848, he requested that a Pleyel piano be placed in his apartment in advance. Ultimately it was only on a Pleyel that Chopin could realize his unique musical gift.



## The Programme of Chopin's "Last Concert"

MONSIEUR CHOPIN.

MONSIEUR CHOPIN has the honour to  
announce that he will give a  
SOIREE MUSICALE  
IN THE HOPETOUN ROOMS,  
THIS EVENING,  
WEDNESDAY the 4th of October,  
When he will Perform the following Compositions :—

1. Andante et impromptu, - - -	Chopin.
2. Etudes, - - -	Chopin.
3. Nocturnes et Berceuse, - - -	Chopin.
4. Grand Valse Brillante, - - -	Chopin.
5. Andante précédé d'un Largo, - -	Chopin.
6. Prelude, Ballade, Mazourkas et Valses,	Chopin.

To commence at Half-past Eight.

Tickets, limited in number, 10s. 6d. each, may be  
had of Wood & Co, No. 12 Waterloo Place.

The advertisement for Chopin's *Soirée musicale* which appeared in *The Scotsman* on the day of the concert in Edinburgh, 4 October 1848, is the only printed documentation we have of the six components of the programme (no printed programme has otherwise been found). Only two works are identified for certain: the Berceuse (Opus 57) in no. 3 and the Grande Valse Brillante (Opus 18) in no. 4. The impromptu in no. 1 and the prelude and ballade in no. 6 are not specified. Familiar genres are listed: etudes in no. 2, nocturnes in no. 3, mazurkas and waltzes in no. 6, without specific works being listed. In fact genre lists are quite typical of Chopin programmes where he seems to leave his choices for the concert itself. Most puzzling are the pieces identified only by tempo marking: Andante in no. 1, and Andante preceded by a Largo in no. 5. What might not be immediately obvious is evidence for a performance practice. Chopin was known to "prelude" (or improvise) or use a short introductory piece before beginning a larger work. This means that in no. 1 the Andante acts as a prelude to the impromptu, and in no. 5, the Largo acts as a prelude to the Andante. In no. 3, there is also the suggestion that the nocturnes act as a prelude to the Berceuse.

Tobias Koch has maintained the above order for his programme. For no. 1, he plays a Mazurka in A-flat major as a prelude to the Impromptu in the same key which follows. For no. 2, he supplies three etudes from Op. 25, the first two of which Chopin played frequently as a pair. For no. 3, he chooses two nocturnes which have the same tonic note (the first is just the enharmonic minor of D-flat major) as the Berceuse which follows. No. 4 is exactly as Chopin indicates.

To begin the second half of the programme (no. 5), Tobias Koch plays an independent prelude marked Largo followed by a Nocturne marked Andante. The keys are closely related. For

no. 6, he selects a prelude, a ballade, five mazurkas, and three waltzes, following Chopin's plan exactly.

The choice of specific works to play benefits from a comparison with the contents of the other four concerts given in England and Scotland in 1848. Especially useful are the handwritten opus numbers on a programme for Chopin's *Matinée Musicale* in the Merchants' Hall, Glasgow, on 27 September 1848, just eight days before the Edinburgh concert. (The Glasgow programme featured a soprano in three arias, but the programme is otherwise similar to Edinburgh.) The Glasgow programme likewise begins with "Andante et Impromptu" but handwritten below we find "No. 8 and 36". In his essay, "Small 'Forms': In Defense of the Prelude", Jeffrey Kallberg proposes the Prelude in F-sharp minor, Op. 28, no. 8, followed by the Impromptu in F-sharp major, Op. 36. In his new magisterial biography of Chopin, Alan Walker identifies the Andante as the *Andante Spianato*, Op. 22 (a number that conflicts with the annotated Glasgow programme) while keeping Op. 36 as the Impromptu as some earlier writers have done. Such discrepancies in identifying his concert works are often found in the Chopin literature. The fifth item in the published Edinburgh programme finds an interesting precedent in the printed programme for Chopin's first *Matinée Musicale* at the London residence of Mrs. Sartoris (the singer Adelaide Kemble) on 23 June, which begins "Andante (Op. 22) précédé d'un Largo", a choice not adopted by Tobias Koch in this evening's programme.

An additional possibility for choice of nocturnes emerges in the annotated Glasgow programme, where the two Nocturne Op. 55 are inserted between Op. 27 (which Tobias Koch selected) and Op. 57, the Berceuse. Op. 55 was dedicated to Jane Stirling in 1844, the year after she began her piano studies with Chopin. (She had begun studying with his English pupil Lindsay Sloper in Paris in 1840.) Op. 55 is Chopin's only dedication to her in all of his published works. She had sponsored Chopin's Scottish tour even to the extent of buying up one hundred seats for the Edinburgh concert, in case it did not sell because of the ticket price or its clash with other events in the Caledonian Rout. It would seem a least a courtesy for Chopin to have included the Op. 55 Nocturnes in his Edinburgh concert as did in Glasgow.

The annotated Glasgow programme indicates that the etudes played were from Op. 25, but does not give numbers. However, the programme of his first London *Matinée Musicale* on 23 June specifies: "Andante Sostenuto, 13me et 14 Étude". Etude no. 13 is Op. 25, no. 1, marked *Andante sostenuto* in the score. Etude no. 14 is Op. 25, no. 2, *Presto*, in F minor. Tobias Koch has indeed chosen these two etudes as the first of three that he performs this evening. A review in *The Musical World* confirms his playing of the F-minor Etude. >

The annotated Glasgow programme identifies Op. 28 for the Prelude, Op. 38 for the Ballade, Op. 7 for the Mazurkas, and Op. 64 for the Waltzes. While Tobias Koch adopts the Mazurkas and Waltzes from the Glasgow programme, his choices for the Prelude and Ballade are different, with the A-flat major Ballade replacing the F-major Ballade.

It is important to note that in a letter to his close friend Grzymala on October 3, the day before the concert, Chopin wrote: "Tomorrow evening I have to play, but have not seen the hall or arranged the programme." There is some speculation that John Muir Wood, who was promoting the Edinburgh concert, decided simply to list in the newspaper advertisement some numbers from the Glasgow concert without having received final confirmation from the composer.

Another way to ascertain or confirm the works Chopin played is to look for reviews published after the concert. The review that gives most clues appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* on 7 October. It makes interesting reading after the above considerations. Aside from allowing us to experience the concert through the ears of a contemporary listener, the review contains intriguing descriptions of the pieces which might be matched (or not) with the hypothetical programme solutions given above. [For a facsimile of this review, see p. 3 of the following link: [chopinsociety.org/files2018/chopin\\_koch\\_lastconcert.pdf](http://chopinsociety.org/files2018/chopin_koch_lastconcert.pdf)]

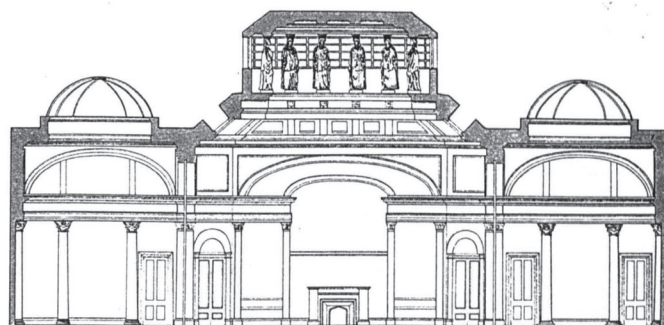
Tobias Koch is not the first pianist to attempt a reconstruction of the only public solo concert that Chopin ever played. The centenary of Chopin's 1848 Edinburgh concert was marked by a concert by the French pianist Alfred Cortot on 4 September 1948 during the second Edinburgh Festival. Cortot remarked in a preparatory letter that identification of the Andante and Largo was impossible and that the "*Sonata funèbre* and Polonaise in A flat should be included". (Chopin had performed neither a sonata nor a polonaise in any of his 1848 concerts.) In their 1993 book, *The Scottish Autumn of Frederick Chopin*, Iwo and Pamela Załuski, state that the 1848 concert was recreated in 1959 at the French Institute in Edinburgh in commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chopin's birth, the pianist being Janet Walcer, but do not give the programme. Speculation on the music played in the 1848 concert appears in many of the books on Chopin. What we can enjoy this evening is a well-researched attempt by Tobias Koch to recapture that unique event

————— **ADDENDUM:** —————

Although I have not acknowledged it otherwise, I would like to recommend the 2009 Durham University doctoral thesis, *Chopin in Britain*, by Peter Willis (downloadable from Durham E-Theses) for its thorough coverage of Chopin's visits to England and Scotland in 1837 and 1848. It is also the title of his book published by Routledge in 2017.

— John Głofcheskie

## The Hopetoun Rooms, Edinburgh



The space in which Chopin performed his *Soirée Musicale* was remarkable by Edinburgh standards. Opened in 1826 (and sadly demolished in 1967), the Hopetoun Rooms reflected the classical taste of its architect, Thomas Hamilton. Three interconnected spaces—two square rooms on either side of a large rectangular one—were designed so that they could be used as one spacious hall seating three hundred persons, or divided into three very elegant rooms. Each of the three spaces had a vaulted ceiling. The octagonal lantern in the central hall had a separate roof supported by twelve classical female statues (caryatids), with windows on the sides. The lighting was also new for Edinburgh. Five large glass globes ('moons') lighted by gas jets spread a soft, uniform light.



The effect of the room's decoration was often compared to that of a Greek temple. Paganini performed here in 1833, and Liszt in 1841. The rooms later became used for the Mary Eskine School which explains the circular insert in the picture of the interior.

## How Chopin Played

The reviews of Chopin's Edinburgh concert leave us with an appreciation of his unique achievement. On 7 October 1848, *The Scotsman* wrote: "Any pianist who undertakes to play alone to an audience for two hours, must nowadays be a very remarkable one to succeed in sustaining attention and satisfying expectation. M. Chopin succeeded perfectly in both. He played his own music, which is that of genius. ... We suspect that many of the salient points of melody in his compositions are reminiscences of the popular airs of Poland—of his own ill-fated land, and that the touching expression he gives to these arises from 'feelings too deep for tears.' The infinite delicacy and finish of his play, combined with great occasional energy never overdone, is very striking when we contemplate the man—a slender and delicate-looking person, with a marked profile, indicating much intellectual energy." ■

## PROGRAMME 2

A RECITAL IN COLLABORATION WITH THE VANCOUVER CHOPIN SOCIETY



### Tobias Koch

1852 London Boudoir Grand Pianoforte by John Broadwood & Sons

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23 | 7:30 PM

## The Polish Romantics

Michał Kleofas Oginski (1765-1833)

**Polonaise in A Minor, Farewell to the Homeland** (1794)

Karol Kurpinski (1785-1857)

**Polonaise in D minor** (1812)

**Polonaise in C major** (1818)

Maria Szymanowska (1789-1831)

**Polonaise in F minor** (1820)

Józef Elsner (1769-1854)

**Rondo à la Mazurka in C major** (1803)

Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)

**Polonaise in B-flat major, KK IVa-1** (1817)

Józef Krogulski (1815-1842)

**Mazurka in E minor "à la Chopin"** (1836)

Karol Lipinski (1790-1861)

**Mazurka in E-flat minor, Op. Posth** (1862)

Edward Wolff (1816-1880)

**Hommage à Chopin: Rêverie-Nocturne, Op. 169** (1852)

Ignacy Feliks Dobrzynski (1807-1867)

**Mazurka in A minor, Op. 37 No. 2** (1840)

Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)

**Mazurka in C-sharp minor, Op. 50 No. 3** (1842)

Karol Mikuli (1819-1897)

**Mazurka in F minor, Op. 4** (1860)

Ignacy Friedman (1882-1948)

**Mazurka in C minor, Op. 49 No. 2** (1912)

Raoul Koczalski (1885-1948)

**Mazurka in C minor, Op. 60** (1898)

Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941)

**Mazurka in A minor, Op. 9 No. 2** (1882)

**Krakowiak Fantazja in B major, Op. 14 No. 6** (1886)

Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)

**Polonaise in F-sharp minor, Op. 44** (1841)

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BY JOHN GLOFCHESKIE

## The Polish Romantics

This programme of keyboard music by Polish Romantics might also be called Music of Stateless Poland. Between 1795 and 1918, Poland as a nation disappeared from the map of Europe, divided among the Kingdom of Prussia in the west, the Russian Empire in the east, and Hapsburg Austria in the south. During this period, the desire for freedom became a powerful force, encouraged by the rise of Napoleon, the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw (1807) and the Congress Kingdom (1815), then ignited in the uprisings of 1831, 1848 and 1863, all with disastrous consequences. Writers, artists and musicians became the bearers of national identity, many of them part of the Great Emigration to receptive nations in the west.

By mid-century, the Polish-ness of Chopin's music, most of it written in Paris between 1831 and 1849, came to define the age. The Polish-American scholar Maja Trochimczyk writes that Chopin "held an elevated position in the national pantheon as a poet-prophet [*wieszcz*] whose musical statements equalled in significance the poetic proclamations of Adam Mickiewicz, expressing the true spirit of the nation," a position still held by Paderewski in his famous Chopin anniversary speech of 1910.

With the rise of the modernist "Young Poland" [*Młoda Polska*] movement, however, the Polish image of Chopin became overshadowed by Chopin as a European of universal significance. In 1910, for example, the Kraków critic, Franciszek Bylicki, proposed that Chopin's music was "above time," the "summit of raising music to the great dignity and meaning in universal culture." Perhaps the assessment that best represents Chopin is found in the words of the poet Norwid (1821-1883): "a Varsovian by birth, a Pole by heart, and a citizen of the world by talent."

The works on this programme cover the period 1794 to 1912, more-or-less chronologically, and represent precursors, contemporaries, and followers of Chopin. It is significant that three of the four genres represented on this programme are based in Polish folk music, the only exception being the nocturne (a genre established by the Irish pianist John Field and perfected by Chopin). There are eight mazurkas, six polonaises (including boyhood and mature works by Chopin), and one *krakowiak* (in fast duple metre). Given the need to express Polish cultural identity in a political vacuum, it is not surprising that Polish dance is paramount among Polish Romantic composers.

In general terms, the two triple-metre dances have different associations. The **polonaise** is a courtly, processional dance, requiring continuous motion through its three beats. The second-beat emphasis results from a dance gesture whose graceful lowering of the body on the first beat requires recovery on the second beat. In contrast, the **mazurka**, with potential accents on any or all of its three beats, has diverse peasant origins. The accents represent points of arrival in the dance gesture which require time and can disturb the regularity of the metrical pulse (as shown for example in Meyerbeer's famous observation of Chopin playing a mazurka in four beats rather than three, despite the composer's insistence otherwise).

The diversity of beats and gesture in the **mazurka** derives from its origins in three different regional peasant dances with different characteristic tempi, rhythmic patterns, and gestures: *mazur* (or *mazurek* in the diminutive—hence *mazurka*); the slower *kujawiak*; and the faster *oberek*. The urban mazurka which Chopin improvised for dancers in Warsaw ballrooms was thus open to a greater flexibility of style. Even rhythms of the equally popular triple-metre waltz can be found in some Chopin mazurkas. However, what is Chopin's alone in his mazurkas written "not for dancing" (unlike those of Szymanowska, for example) is their extreme expressive range with its attendant harmonic, chromatic, and textural originality.

The nationalist significance of the polonaise and the mazurka finds clear representation in two works from the time of the dissolution of the Polish state. The first **polonaise** on the programme arises directly out of the Kościuszko Uprising of 1794 whose defeat led to the Third Partition of Poland and abdication of the Polish King in 1795. **Ogiński**, a diplomat as well as a musician, having participated in the Uprising, lost his property, and fled to Venice—hence his "Farewell to the Homeland". The eminent Polish musicologist Irena Poniatowska writes that the "melancholy tone of the principal section, adorned with simple, but charming ornamental figures, became iconic of the polonaise in the early Romantic period of sentimentalism in Polish music." Also characteristic is the military rhythm used in the contrasting section which establishes a heroic mode.

A piece not on this programme helped to set the nationalistic importance of the **mazurka** for the freedom-seeking Polish



Romantics. The *Dąbrowski Mazurka* (whose folk melody was long misattributed to Ogiński), originated in 1797 in the Polish Legion in Italy whose hope had been to join Napoleon's troops in liberating Poland. Although the song became the Polish national anthem only in 1926, its expression of Polish

patriotism made it popular from the beginning but also resulted in its being banned in 1815 and again in 1860. Chopin was known to improvise on this nationalist mazurka in social settings with his compatriots. Hence both polonaise and mazurka can embody political meaning.

*In the following vignettes, the remaining composers are cited in the order in which their music appears in the programme, rather than in strict chronological order.*

**Kurpiński** was one of the most important musical figures in Warsaw musical life during Chopin's time. He arrived in the city in 1810, the year of Chopin's birth, at age 25. With Elsner's help, he became conductor at the opera for which he composed numerous nationalistic stage works. He conducted Chopin's first public concerto concerts in 1830. Polonaises in major keys occur in his orchestral and operatic works. His polonaises for solo piano also include minor keys, perhaps influenced by the model established by Ogiński.

**Szymanowska** had an international career as a pianist and was much praised by Goethe. She published a set of twenty-four mazurkas for dancing in 1824 but wrote only three polonaises. In the Polonaise in F minor, she incorporates the *stile brillante*, resulting in a more virtuosic use of the keyboard than did Ogiński. She also avoids the military style. It is almost certain that Chopin attended Szymanowska's Warsaw concert on a specially imported Broadwood piano in 1827. (Viennese or German piano types were most common in Warsaw.) Szymanowska also wrote in other piano genres associated with Chopin, including preludes, etudes, and three nocturnes (one of which Chopin probably knew).

**Elsner** was head of the newly-formed High School for Music at the University of Warsaw when Chopin began his studies there in 1826. He was a well-rounded musician and a thoughtful pedagogue who allowed the young composer to go his own way, citing his "amazing capabilities" and "musical genius" in a third-year report. Elsner wrote in all the classical genres: symphonies, concertos, chamber works, solo pieces, operas and oratorios. His early piano miniature on this programme is classical in nature but incorporates mazurka rhythms. He was one of the first to integrate elements of Polish folk music into his works.

**Krogulski** studied composition with Elsner and Kurpiński. Five years younger than Chopin, he remained in Warsaw until his early death, writing church music as well as symphonic and piano works. The title of the piece on today's programme shows his familiarity with Chopin's music. His mazurka incorporates expressive markings indicative of the type of rubato found in Chopin.

**Lipinski** was a Polish virtuoso violinist of international reputation who in his early years performed with Paganini, including an 1829 Warsaw concert heard by Chopin. He also performed with Szymanowska and later with Liszt. Schumann

dedicated his piano cycle *Carnaval* to him. Lipinski met Chopin in Paris in 1835/36 where they played together in salon concerts. Lipinski composed mostly music for violin including concertos and trios. He also transcribed five of Chopin's piano pieces for violin. Lipinski's mazurka on today's programme was published in the year of his death.

**Wolff** was born in Warsaw and studied piano with his mother before going to Vienna at the age of twelve. He returned to Warsaw four years later to study composition with Elsner. In 1835 he went to Paris where Chopin introduced him to society. For a time he acted as Chopin's copyist but his relations with the composer broke down when Chopin discovered that "he will pinch something and print it" as his own. Most of Wolff's three hundred pieces are for piano. The title of his work on today's programme, written three years after Chopin's death, is self-explanatory.

**Dobrzyński** was three years older than Chopin but was Chopin's contemporary at the High School of Music in Warsaw from 1826 to 1828, where he studied with Elsner. A respected piano performer and pedagogue, he published a *School for Piano* in 1845. Dobrzyński spent most of his life in Warsaw, conducting, composing symphony and opera, and teaching. His mazurkas are highly influenced by Chopin especially in their use of chromaticism, modulation, and key combinations.

**Mikuli**, a Moldavian-Armenian from Austrian Poland, studied medicine in Vienna from 1839 to 1844, then moved to Paris where he studied with Chopin until 1847. Chopin had high regard for Mikuli and made him his teaching assistant. Mikuli toured widely as a pianist before settling in Lviv (now Ukraine) where he was active as composer, teacher, and conductor. For his edition of Chopin's music published in 1879 (and still available in Dover reprints), he relied on sources written or corrected by Chopin himself. Mikuli took detailed notes of Chopin's comments in lessons and interviewed people who had heard him perform. Mikuli also composed a large number of virtuosic piano works. The mazurka on today's programme was written two years after his move to Lviv. Irena Poniatowska writes that it is "dominated by sadness and pensiveness, and the return of the principal section is varied, with a coda invoking a drone effect in the bass"—characteristics also found in Chopin's mazurkas. >

*The remaining three composers on the programme—three great Polish pianists—were born long after Chopin’s death and had careers that encompass the first part of the twentieth century.*

**Friedman** was born in Kraków and studied with Leschetizky in Vienna. He became one of the leading piano virtuosos of the first half of the twentieth century, with a large repertoire and a huge concert career. His recordings, particularly of Chopin’s mazurkas, are regarded as iconic for their highly individual rhythmic character. As a composer, Friedman wrote piano works and transcriptions as well as chamber music and songs. As an editor, he was involved with critical editions of music by Schumann, Liszt and Chopin. His mazurka on today’s programme is a small, quiet work which, in the words of Irena Poniatowska, “refers to the chromaticism of Chopin’s ‘last mazurka’, attaining a tone of Chopinian wistfulness.”

**Koczalski** made his piano debut as a child prodigy in Warsaw in 1888 at the age of three. Between 1892 and 1896 he studied at the Music Conservatory in Lviv with Mikuli, Chopin’s student. Koczalski performed and recorded most of the Chopin repertoire, including one of the first programmes on a period instrument (Chopin’s 1847 Pleyel) in 1948—now available as a Chopin Institute CD. Koczalski composed more than two hundred works, including piano pieces, chamber music, orchestral works and operas. His mazurka on today’s

programme was written at the age of thirteen, after his studies with Mikuli.

**Paderewski** is a name that is perhaps second only to Chopin in the history of Polish Romantic music and one with direct political significance. After study in Warsaw and Vienna, he made his debut as a pianist in Vienna in 1885 at the age of twenty-five, followed by Paris in 1888, London in 1890, and the United States in 1891. He achieved extraordinary popular celebrity through his charismatic stage appearance. He became one of the leading Polish composers at the turn of the century, writing not only piano works but also symphony and opera. His Minuet in G became a parlour standard. He recorded a substantial amount of piano repertoire though not always with the best technique. His political activity became intensive during the First World War. He successfully advocated for an independent Poland, became its first Prime Minister in 1919, and represented Poland at the peace conference in Versailles. A noted philanthropist, he received many honours. In 1937 he became the first editor-in-chief of a complete edition of Chopin’s works which bears his name. The two works on today’s programme were written when Paderewski was in his twenties and represent two aspects of his patriotic and virtuosic style. ■

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