

Frédéric Chopin

“Nothing is more odious than music without hidden meaning.”

Frédéric Chopin was a Polish-French composer born in 1810 in Warsaw, Poland. He was a virtuoso of the Romantic era and a master pianist. Chopin started learning music at a very young age as both his parents were musicians.

As a child, Chopin was regularly exposed to all forms of art and was writing his own music and poetry by age 6. By the time he was 8 years old he had already published his first *polonaise* musical piece and performed his first public concerto. At 12 years old he was playing in the drawing rooms of Polish aristocrats.

In 1826, Chopin's parents enrolled him at the Warsaw Conservatory of Music where he studied under Polish composer Jozef Elsner who inspired and cultivated his talents. Chopin had his debut performance in Vienna where he gained almost immediate popularity. Soon after he toured Europe for a short period before settling in Paris where he performed and made a living teaching piano to Parisian aristocrats. This is also where he met the great love of his life, French writer George Sand.

Chopin was the first composer to devote himself exclusively to the piano with most of his works written specifically for the instrument to be performed solo, these include 61 mazurkas, 16 polonaises, 26 preludes, 27 études, 21 nocturnes, 20 waltzes, 3 sonatas, 4 ballades, 4 scherzos, 4 impromptus, and more. “*The Four Ballades*” and “*Nocturne No. 9*”, which was inspired by the landscape at night, are among his greatest works. Chopin also took much of his inspiration from Polish folklore and gave the polonaise a new sense of patriotism.

Although Chopin's life was cut short by tuberculosis, his musical contributions were significant and he explored the full potential of the piano as an instrument. The combination of heartfelt emotion and exquisite technique alongside his unrivaled creativity earned him the deserving nickname of “the poet of the piano”.



DID YOU KNOW?

Chopin's dying wish was to have his heart preserved and taken back to Poland where it is currently at the Holy Cross Church in Warsaw.

FUN FACT

Chopin preferred playing intimate performances for smaller groups in almost complete darkness over big concerts under the spotlight!

MUSICAL TERM

Polonaise: Music written for, or in the rhythm of, a stately dance of Polish origin traditionally performed at open court balls and royal functions.

