

ショパン：ピアノ協奏曲とピアノソロ作品集

CHOPIN

PIANO CONCERTOS
WORKS FOR PIANO SOLO

PIOTR PALECZNY PIANO

KWARTET PRIMA VISTA

KRZYSZTOF BZÓWKA 1ST VIOLIN

JÓZEF KOLINEK 2ND VIOLIN

DARIUSZ KISIELINSKI VIOLA

JERZY MURANTY CELLO

JANUSZ MARYNOWSKI DOUBLE BASS

24 - carat GOLD
2 CD



DUX 1270-1 / 2016

FRYDERYK CHOPIN

Piano concertos

Works for piano solo

Fryderyk CHOPIN (1810-1849)

CD 1

*Piano Concerto in E minor Op.11

*Piano Concerto in F minor Op.21

CD 2

*Polonaise in A flat major Op.53

*Fantasy-Impromptu in C sharp minor Op.66

*Nocturne in F sharp major Op.15 No.2

*Scherzo in B flat minor Op.31

*Rondo à la Krakowiak in F major Op.14

Piotr PALECZNY - piano

Kwartet Prima Vista :

Krzysztof BZÓWKA - 1st violin, **Józef KOLINEK** - 2nd violin

Dariusz KISIELINSKI – viola, **Jerzy MURANTY** - cello

Janusz MARYNOWSKI - double bass

DUX Małgorzata Polańska & Lech Tołwiński ul. Morskie Oko 2, 02-511 Warszawa

tel./fax (48 22) 849-11-31, (48 22) 849-18-59

e-mail: dux@dux.pl, www.dux.pl

Aleksandra Kitka-Coutellier – International Relations kitka@dux

“Hats off gentlemen - a genius” - wrote Robert Schumann in his famous review entitled *Ein Opus 2*, published in the Leipzig periodical ‘Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung’ (No.49, 7 December 1831), having listened to Chopin’s *Variations on a Theme from Mozart’s Don Giovanni*.

The genius was born on 1 March in Żelazowa Wola, west of Warsaw. The local parish register contains the following entry: “In the year one thousand eight hundred ten, on the twenty third day of the month of April, at three o’clock in the afternoon. Before me, parish priest of Brochów in the district of Sochaczew in the Department of Warsaw, appeared Mikołaj Chopin, the father, aged forty, domiciled in Żelazowa Wola, and showed me a male child which was born in his house on the twenty second day of February of this year at six o’clock in the evening, declaring that it was the child of himself and of Justyna born Krzyżanowska, aged twenty eight, his spouse, and that it was his wish to give him two names, Fryderyk Franciszek. After making this declaration, they showed me the child in the presence of Józef Wyrzykowski, bailiff, aged thirty eight, and also Fryderyk Geszt, aged forty, both domiciled in the village of Żelazowa Wola. The father and both witnesses after reading the present birth-certificate declared that they could write. We have signed this document. Jan Duchnowski, parish priest of Brochów, acting registrar, Mikołaj Chopin, the father.”

22 February as the date of the composer’s birth is also mentioned in the baptismal certificate. However, according to the statements by Chopin’s mother and the composer himself, the real date was 1 March. The discrepancy is attributed to the father, Mikołaj Chopin, who, due to a slip of memory, is said to have given the priest 22 February, which was a Thursday, instead of the following Thursday, 1 March. It was the dream of Justyna and Mikołaj Chopin that their son’s godfather would be Count Fryderyk Skarbek, the owner of the manor-house in Żelazowa Wola (in later years professor of the economy of the Royal University in Warsaw). However, he could not make it to Żelazowa Wola on time from Paris, where he was studying at the time. His place was taken, as a matter of form only, by Franciszek Grembecki. The future composer’s godmother was Anna Skarbek, the sister of the absent Fryderyk.

Chopin’s parents married on 2 June 1806. His father, Mikołaj Chopin, was born in the village of Marainville in Lorraine, France. In 1787, at the age of 16, he sought his fortune in Warsaw. He was taken to Poland by his employer, Adam Weydlich, an administrator of Count Michał Pac’s estate at Marainville. After a short time, Mikołaj Chopin identified himself fully with his new homeland and, as a result of various circumstances, he never returned to France again. His first employment was as a clerk. In 1792 he started to earn a living as a tutor, initially engaged by the Łęczyński family in Kiernożia near Łowicz, and subsequently at the estate of Count Skarbek in nearby Żelazowa Wola. Teaching proved to be his true vocation.

Łęczyński family in Kiernożia near Łowicz, and subsequently at the estate of Count Skarbek in nearby Żelazowa Wola. Teaching proved to be his true vocation.

It was in Żelazowa Wola that he met his future wife. Tekla Justyna Krzyżanowska, the daughter of Jakub and Antonina née Kołomińska from the village of Długie near Izbica Kujawska, was a poor relative of the Skarbeks. Chopin biographers are in agreement that it was a love match. This is how the prominent Polish writer Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz makes the point in his biography of the composer (*Chopin*, Warsaw 1995): “Their love was reflected by their harmonious relationship, their gentle manners and the uniquely warm atmosphere of their home. Their lasting devotion to the place where they first met, Żelazowa Wola, and to the parish church in Brochów, is also very telling. When their oldest daughter, Ludwika, was to get married they chose this church as the venue. People who are unhappy in their marriage do not wish their children to enter adult life through the same door [...] The home and family imbued Chopin’s childhood and youth with happiness and warmth which he would miss so keenly later in life.”

The birth of Ludwika was followed by those of Fryderyk and his two younger sisters, Izabela and Emilia. The latter, endowed by nature with exceptional artistic gifts, notably literary talent, died at the age of fourteen.

Six months after the birth of Fryderyk, his parents moved to Warsaw, where Mikołaj began teaching French language and literature in several prestigious schools: the Warsaw Lycée (alongside the Rector, Samuel Bogumił Linde, other professors included the mathematician Juliusz Kolberg, the historian Wacław Maciejowski and the zoologist Feliks Jarocki), as well as at the School of Engineering and a military school. Occupying a large house, the Chopins opened a boarding house for the boys of well-to-do families who attended schools in Warsaw.

Fryderyk’s mother exerted a strong influence on shaping the boy’s artistic sensitivity. She could play the piano and sing well. It was thanks to her that the future composer had his first contact with the piano. At the age of seven he started to take piano lessons from his father’s friend, the Bohemian-born Wojciech Żywny. As one of his other pupils, W. Skrodzki recalled: “in addition to a sizeable snuffbox, holding half a pound of powder, with a portrait of Mozart or Haydn on the lid, and a huge striped red scarf, Żywny always had in readiness a large quadrangular pencil, which he used to correct the errors encountered on the printed page and sometimes to hit the less intelligent or careless pupils on their fingers

or head" (quoted after A. Czartkowski, Z. Jeżewska, *Fryderyk Chopin*, Warsaw 1975). Despite his meagre pianistic skills, Żywny proved to be a very clever teacher. It was thanks to him that Chopin was introduced to the music of Bach, Haydn and Mozart.

In 1817 Chopin composed two polonaises: in G minor and B flat major. They testify to the unprecedented talent of the 7-year-old boy. The first of them was published thanks to assistance from Father Józef Cybulski, parish priest in the Church of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary in the Nowe Miasto district of Warsaw, with the printing costs probably covered by the composer's godfather Count Fryderyk Skarbek. On 24 February 1818 Chopin made his public debut. At the Radziwiłł Palace in Krakowskie Przedmieście Street he performed the Piano Concerto in E minor by the Bohemian composer Adalbert Gyrowetz. An anecdote has it that, having returned home from the concert, Chopin is said to have described to his mother with much agitation how everybody had admired his new collar. The 'child prodigy' soon became a major attraction at Warsaw salons. Chopin was introduced to prominent visiting personalities, including the Italian soprano Angelica Catalani, from whom he received an inscribed gold watch. In 1821 he composed another of his youthful polonaises, in A flat major, dedicated to Wojciech Żywny. It demonstrated the young composer's fascination with the possibilities of pianistic technique.

Roughly at that time Chopin stopped taking lessons from Żywny, yet they remained on very warm and friendly terms until the professor's death in 1842. The 12-year-old child prodigy continued his education under the guidance of Józef Elsner, a polonized German from Silesia, who held the post of Rector at the newly-founded Warsaw Conservatory. He was a highly respected teacher and a prolific composer, whose output included operas, masses, oratorios, as well as symphonies and chamber works. Chopin's lessons with Elsner (initially irregular) focused on the rudiments of harmony and counterpoint. Meanwhile, his fame as an extremely talented composer and piano virtuoso grew from week to week. The periodical 'Kurier dla Płci Pięknej' wrote after his concert at the beginning of 1823: "After the 6th musical soirée we will probably not feel jealous of Vienna's Mr. List, as our capital has an equal, or perhaps a superior to him in (and we do not see any reason why we should keep secret the name of the young man who has been attracting common admiration) Mr. Chopin."

After the summer holidays of 1823, spent at the estate of the Skarbeks in Żelazowa Wola, Chopin continued his education in the 4th grade of the Warsaw Lycée. This period marked the beginning of his close, lifelong friendships with several of his schoolfriends: Julian Fontana, Tytus Woyciechowski, Jan Matuszyński, as well as the slightly older Jan Białobłocki and Wilhelm Kolberg. Another of his school friends, Dominik Dziewanowski, invited him to spend the summer holidays in 1824 and 1825 at his parents' estate in the village of Szafarnia. The stay there and travels the width and breadth of the surrounding area gave Chopin ample opportunity to gain insights into Polish folk music (the Mazurkas in B major and G major are an outcome of this fascination). 1825 saw the publication of the Rondo in C minor, "Chopin's first serious composition of larger design, already comparable in terms of compositional craft and inventive skills with the most noteworthy achievements of the masters of *style brillant*" (T.A. Zieliński, *Chopin. Życie i droga twórcza / Chopin. His Life and Creative Path*, Kraków 1993).

In July 1826 Chopin finished the Warsaw Lycée. After a six-week stay in the spa of Bad Reinerz (present-day Duszniki-Zdrój in south-western Poland), where he went in the company of his mother and his recuperating sister Emilia, he returned to Warsaw to become a full-time student at the Conservatory. He studied theory, figured bass and composition with Józef Elsner. The best pianist of the time (in Warsaw and beyond), he did not consider it necessary to attend piano lessons. In addition to his musical studies, he attended university lectures in general history by Feliks Bentkowski and in Polish literature by Kazimierz Brodziński. Brodziński's concept of the arts imbued with specific, national features and free of foreign influence surely had a bearing on shaping Chopin's creative imagination. Several important compositions date from that period, including the *Rondo à la Mazur* Op.5, Mazurka in A minor (published posthumously as Op.68, No.2), Sonata in C minor Op.4, dedicated to Elsner (in which Chopin attempted first of all to prove his skills in the construction of musical form), and the Polonaises of Op.71: in B flat major and in D minor (considered one of the finest works of that period). *The Variations on a Theme of Mozart* Op.2 for piano and orchestra (dedicated to Tytus Woyciechowski) - full of radiant virtuosity - is proof of Chopin's inspiration within the *style brillant*. After the summer holidays in the village of Sanniki, at the estate of the parents of another of his school friends, Konstanty Pruszek, Chopin began the final year of his three-year course. His compositional output of the time included two works for piano and orchestra with a strongly national stamp: the ***Rondo à la Krakowiak*, Op.14** and the *Fantaisie on Polish Airs*, Op.13. They marked a preliminary stage of work on a piano concerto. In 1829 Chopin graduated from the Conservatory. The final report signed by Elsner referred to Chopin's "extraordinary talent and musical genius."

As a reward for his outstanding results, Mikołaj Chopin financed his son's journey to Vienna. The route led through Kraków, Ojców, Bielsko and Cieszyn. Encouraged by his friends, Wilhelm W. Würfl (a Bohemian composer, pianist and

conductor, who in 1821-24 was professor of the Warsaw Conservatory) and Tomasz N. Nidecki (composer and fellow student), the 19-year-old Fryderyk gave two concerts in Vienna's Kärntnertortheater on 11 and 18 August. He played his *Variations* Op.2, the *Rondo à la Krakowiak* and an improvisation on a Polish folksong. The concerts were an overwhelming success. Among the audience were such celebrities as Count Lichnowsky, the music publisher Haslinger, the conductors Franz Lachner and Ignaz Seyfried, the composer Adalbert Gyrowetz and the pianist Carl Czerny. Chopin won rave reviews in the Viennese press, which stressed the "originality of both the playing and composition skills" and described him as "a master of the first rank", "a genius" and "one of the brightest meteors on the musical horizon." Having returned to Poland (through Prague and Dresden), Chopin made a brief visit to Prince Radziwiłł in Antonin. Within the space of several days he wrote the Polonaise in C major for piano and cello Op.3. Back in Warsaw, he devoted all his energy to the **Concerto in F minor, Op.21**, inspired by his first, truly romantic love for Konstancja Gładkowska, a young singer of noble beauty, one of the most talented students of Warsaw Conservatory in the class of professor Soliva. In a letter to Tytus Woyciechowski, dated 3 October 1829, Chopin wrote: "It is perhaps my misfortune that I have already found my ideal, whom I have served faithfully, though without saying a word to her, for six months, whom I dream of, in whose memory the *Adagio* of my concerto has been written, and who this morning inspired me to write the little waltz I am sending to you."

It was Konstancja, the ideal, with whom Chopin did not dare for the time being to exchange a single word, who inspired one of the most moving and passionate excerpts in his entire oeuvre, the second movement (Larghetto) of the F minor Concerto. The idea of a concerto brilliant (with expanded ornamentation of the piano part, which strongly dominates the orchestra) is blended here with the highly lyrical shaping of the musical phrase.

The first performance of the Concerto on 17 March 1830 evoked an enthusiastic reception. In a review in 'Kurier Polski', Maurycy Mochnacki wrote: "No one will think us nationally biased and bragging if we place Chopin within the small number of top-calibre pianists; let us leave it to others to claim when their nation should take the lead. At the concert, he played works of his own composition. It is difficult to say what takes precedence - his compositional talent or his masterful performance. Alongside the originality, lovely melodiousness, excellent and bold passages fittingly appropriate to the nature of the instrument, lively colours of expression and fire, and, lastly, a very smooth blending of them all into one whole - this is the main feature of his composition."

The success of the F minor Concerto no doubt urged Chopin to lose no time and start work on his **Second Concerto, in E minor, Op.11**. It was finished by August 1830. The composer's biographers are unanimous in pointing to numerous stylistic similarities between the two concertos. Iwaszkiewicz claims that "they could well constitute a single opus, like some of Beethoven's sonatas or quartets". He adds that "both concertos seem to develop around the slow movements. The first movements are kind of expanded, grand preludes, bringing to mind the cycles of César Franck, in which a chorale or aria constitutes the nucleus whereas everything that precedes it is a grand introduction. Everything that follows is something like 'discussion' or 'talk'. The difference is that in Chopin's concertos this 'talk' is more like 'dancing around', as the last movements in both are based on dance rhythms."

In his interpretation of the two Concertos, Zieliński points to quite substantial differences: "On the face of it, the Concerto in F minor is almost identical to the one in F minor, sharing a similar style, overall concept, type of expression and even numerous details. [...] However, there is no lack of individual differences. [...] They are evident in the construction of each movement as well as in the overall character of the work. The E minor Concerto exhibits a greater maturity and perfection of the compositional craft. On the other hand, its themes are more conventional in their type and expression, more in line with the prevalent norm of concerto-writing of the time. The musical ideas in the F minor Concerto seem to be more original and striking. It is also more delicate and intimate in its sound world and utterance, whereas the second is longer and has a greater sweep, energy, brilliance and solidity of sound.

In the F minor Concerto Chopin surprises the listener with a number of new ideas, boldly violating the conventions of sonata form. In the first movement, *Allegro maestoso*, he blends the broadly-conceived cantilenas (sometimes naive in their simplicity) and virtuoso figurative patterns with expanded modulations and refined chromatic ideas, particularly in the development. While working on the second movement, Chopin confided to his friend Tytus Woyciechowski in a letter of 15 May 1830: "The Adagio of my new concerto is in E major. It is not meant to create a powerful effect; it is rather a Romance, calm and melancholy, giving the impression of someone looking gently towards a spot which calls to mind a thousand happy memories. It is a kind of reverie in the moonlight on a beautiful spring evening."

Chopin's feelings towards Konstancja influenced therefore the Second Concerto as well. The intricate polyphonic fabric, harmonic effects which do not shun dissonances and richly varied articulation are blended together to create "music of a purely aural character which no one has attempted to write before, music which appears to the contemporary listener as if coming from the another world" (Zieliński). The 'dancing around' of the central movement in the E minor Concerto

is the finale Rondo (*Vivace*), which is a stylized dance, the *krakowiak*. Its most characteristic features are an extraordinary simplicity and directness, alongside contrasting melodic motifs, temperament, wit and humour.

Like the First Concerto, the public performance of the Second was preceded by two private concerts for a select group of friends, on 15 September 1830, with the accompaniment of a quartet, and on 22 September, with an orchestra with a reduced wind section.

Concurrently with the E minor Concerto, Chopin worked on several Mazurkas (including the Op.6, No.1, in F sharp minor, considered one of the most beautiful and interesting in terms of stylization), the first Etudes from Op.10, the third of the *Three Ecossaises* Op.72, six songs to poems by Stefan Witwicki from the collection 'Piosnki sielskie' (Rural songs): 'Życzenie' (The wish), 'Gdzie lubi' (There where she loves), 'Czary' (Charms), 'Hulanka' (Merry-making), 'Poseł' (The envoy), 'Wojak' (The warrior), several Waltzes (including those in E minor Op.posth., in B minor Op.69, No.2, and in D flat major Op.70, No.3) and three Nocturnes Op.9. He also began work on the *Andante spianato and Grand Polonaise* Op.22.

The years 1829-1830 marked a period of intensive private contacts, new friendships and the consolidation of earlier acquaintances (of which particularly noteworthy was the one with Tytus Woyciechowski, a large body of correspondence with him containing the composer's highly intimate personal remarks relating to his feelings and his music). One gets an impression that the multitude of these contacts reflected Chopin's desire to gather the greatest possible richness of experience for the future, as if anticipating that after his next (and in the event final) departure from Poland he would be cut off from much of it.

Chopin participated in almost all the major artistic events in Warsaw, including a gala benefit concert for the prominent opera singer Barbara Majer, during which he gave the Polish premiere of the Variations Op.2. He also attended a recital by the outstanding German singer Henrietta Sonntag.

Frequent contacts with Maurycy Mochnacki, the noted music critic and, above all, fervent patriot and opposition activist, were of particular importance in Chopin's formative years. Long discussions with Mochnacki and his friends, mainly poets (Stefan Witwicki, Bohdan Zaleski, Seweryn Goszczyński, Edward Odyniec), all filled with ardent patriotism and revolutionary views on the arts and politics, left an indelible impression on Chopin on the eve of his emigration from Poland.

Before his departure, Chopin paid one more visit to Tytus Woyciechowski in Poturzyn, south-eastern Poland. He cut short his stay there to be present at a debut performance of Konstancja Gładkowska in the title role in Paër's opera *Agnese*. The performance of his beloved made a profound impression upon him. In a letter to Tytus he wrote: "Gładkowska leaves little to be desired. [...] You would be enchanted with her phrasing, and her *nuances* are splendid; and although her voice trembled at the beginning when she came on, she later sang with great confidence."

In the summer of 1830 Chopin spent several weeks with his family in Żelazowa Wola, conversing for many hours with his godfather, Fryderyk Skarbek.

On 11 October 1830 the composer gave his farewell concert in Warsaw's National Theatre. The programme featured the Concerto in E minor, the *Fantaisie on Polish Airs*, as well as a symphony by Karol Goerner, an aria by Soliva (sung by Anna Wołków), an overture to Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, and the aria *Oh quante lagrime per te versai* from Rossini's *La donna del lago* (sung by Konstancja Gładkowska). The full house gave Chopin a tumultuous ovation. Two weeks later, several days before his departure, Konstancja inscribed in Fryderyk's album a poem with the following ending:

*Foreigners can perhaps judge you better
And give you better awards,
But they cannot love you more than we all do.*

On 1 November Chopin met for a farewell dinner at his friends, Dominik Magnuszewski and Józef Reinschmidt. The next day Józef Elsner laid on an unexpected and therefore all the more moving farewell for the most illustrious of his students. The stage-coach taking Chopin abroad was stopped at the city tollgate where Elsner with a group his students sang, with guitar accompaniment, a cantata composed by the professor specially for the occasion.

Five weeks earlier, Stefan Witwicki wrote in 'Powszechny Dziennik Krajowy': "Let us hope that no capital will keep him for ever."

Kalisz was the first stop on what was the most important and longest journey in Chopin's life. There, according to earlier plans, he met with Tytus Woyciechowski, who accompanied him in the subsequent stages of the journey. During a four-day rest in Wrocław (then called Breslau), Chopin had an unexpected meeting with the conductor Joseph Schnabel, an old friend of Józef Elsner. He asked Chopin to sit at the piano. On hearing Chopin play, a local pianist, due to perform in the Traders' Hall that night, fled, all too aware of his shortcomings as a pianist. Chopin heeded Schnabel's request and deputized for the sorry pianist. He performed the Rondo from the Concerto in E minor and improvised on themes

from Auber's opera *La Muette di Portici*.

After a week-long stay in Dresden (where he paid visits to the homes of several well-known Polish families) and a few days in Prague, on 23 November Chopin and Woyciechowski arrived in Vienna. Almost immediately they called on T.N. Nidecki, W.W. Würfl and Czerny. Chopin struck up a very valuable friendship with a doctor, Johann Malfatti, a great connoisseur of music, Beethoven's friend and physician and a highly influential person. The first weeks also brought some disappointment. Chopin's successes in Vienna one year earlier had almost been forgotten and impresarios did not show the same enthusiasm in offering concert engagements as before.

Johann Strauss, father, and Joseph Lanner were the darlings of the Viennese public. In a letter to Elsner of 29 January 1831, Chopin complained: "They call the waltzes here works of art. And they refer to Strauss and Lanner as Kapellmeisters". To make matters worse, the publisher Haslinger was deliberately very slow in bringing out the two pieces which Chopin had sent him some time ago: the Sonata in C minor and the Variations in E major on a Swiss theme.

Several days after their arrival in Vienna, Chopin and Woyciechowski learnt about the outbreak of the uprising in Warsaw against the subservience of the Kingdom of Poland to Russia and the presence of the Russian Tsar on the Polish throne. Tytus Woyciechowski returned to Warsaw to join the insurgent army, while Chopin, succumbing to the will of his father, stayed in Vienna. In a letter to Jan Matuszyński of 21 December 1830, he wrote: "If it were not that I should perhaps be a burden to my father I would return at once. I curse the moment of my departure". His compositions from this period include the highly dramatic Polonaise in G flat major (Op.posth.) and the Grand Polonaise in E flat major for piano and orchestra Op.22 (the last concert work in the *style brillant*), to which he later added a kind of introduction, the *Andante spianato* for piano solo. He also continued work on a cycle of 12 Etudes Op.10 (begun in Warsaw) and the Mazurkas Opp. 6 and 7, introducing to all these pieces harmonic ideas which were bold in their simplicity and austerity. He also returned to the cycle of song settings to words by Witwicki, with two more songs: 'Narzeczony' (The bridegroom) and 'Smutna rzeka' (The sad stream). Furthermore, he turned to Lithuanian folk poetry, in a translation by Ludwik Osiński: 'Piosnka litewska', (Lithuanian song) is one of Chopin's most beautiful songs.

In a letter to Jan Matuszyński of 26 December 1830, Chopin described his typical day in Vienna: "In the morning my unbearably stupid servant wakes me, I get up, my coffee is served, I sit down to play and often have to drink my coffee cold. Then at about nine my German-teacher comes; after the lesson I usually play and then Hummel draws my portrait and Nidecki practises my concerto - at least that is what has happened lately. All the while I am in my dressing-gown until noon, at which time a worthy little German fellow, Leidenfrost, turns up (he works at the prison) and if it is fine we go for a walk on the ramparts around the town. Then it is time for me to go to lunch if I have an invitation, and if not we both go to the "Bohemian Cook", a restaurant where all the University students eat. After lunch one drinks black coffee at the finest cafe, such is the fashion here. Then I pay my calls, come home at nightfall, tidy my hair, put on my evening shoes and then go off to a party. About ten or eleven, sometimes twelve but never later, I come home, play the piano, have a good cry, read, look at things, have a laugh, get into bed, blow out my candle and always dream about you all."

Chopin's closest acquaintances at this time included Dr. Malfatti (who looked after him with great warmth and even organized the provision of Polish dishes for him), the Bayer family, Joseph Merck, a cellist in the court orchestra and professor of the Vienna Conservatory (to whom Chopin dedicated his Introduction and Polonaise in C major for piano and cello, written during an earlier stay with Prince Radziwiłł) and Josef Slavik, a talented young Bohemian-born violinist (a student of Pixis). Czerny saw Chopin as his rival and therefore treated him with cool indifference. Thalberg, Hummel's student and then Europe's top pianist, was somewhat more sympathetic to Chopin.

News from Poland spoke of an imminent collapse of the Uprising. In Vienna, the atmosphere of ill will or even outright enmity towards strivings of the Polish people for independence was all too evident. Chopin wished to give a concert for the Polish cause but his plans did not materialize. He found it increasingly difficult to contain his irritation and utmost sorrow. In a moment of helplessness, he asked his parents in a letter of 22 December 1830: "I don't know whether I ought to make straight for Italy or what? Please do write and tell me! He did not receive the expected advice. In view of the fact that at the beginning of 1831 northern Italy started to be troubled by bloody disturbances, Chopin's plans began to be focused on Paris.

The first Christmas away from home was a very poignant time for the composer. It was then that he conceived the idea for the Scherzo in B minor, containing melodic motifs of the well-known Polish Christmas carol 'Lulajże Jezuniu' (Sleep little Jesus). Chopin completed the work in 1831. In this thoroughly Romantic piece, he rejected the aesthetics of the style and Josef Slavik, a talented young Bohemian-born violinist (a student of Pixis). Czerny saw Chopin as his rival and therefore treated him with cool indifference. Thalberg, Hummel's student and then Europe's top pianist, was

somewhat more sympathetic to Chopin.

News from Poland spoke of an imminent collapse of the Uprising. In Vienna, the atmosphere of ill will or even outright enmity towards strivings of the Polish people for independence was all too evident. Chopin wished to give a concert for the Polish cause but his plans did not materialize. He found it increasingly difficult to contain his irritation and utmost sorrow. In a moment of helplessness, he asked his parents in a letter of 22 December 1830: "I don't know whether I ought to make straight for Italy or what? Please do write and tell me!" He did not receive the expected advice. In view of the fact that at the beginning of 1831 northern Italy started to be troubled by bloody disturbances, Chopin's plans began to be focused on Paris.

The first Christmas away from home was a very poignant time for the composer. It was then that he conceived the idea for the Scherzo in B minor, containing melodic motifs of the well-known Polish Christmas carol 'Lulajże Jezuniu' (Sleep little Jesus). Chopin completed the work in 1831. In this thoroughly Romantic piece, he rejected the aesthetics of the style *brillant* and displayed fascination with the music of Schubert and, even more so, Beethoven's piano output. The Nocturnes of Op.15 (particularly the first one, in F major) also demonstrate Chopin's departure from the style of Hummel and Field. This is evidenced by the use of very simple melodic and rhythmic motifs, as well as harmonic and textural effects.

The Nocturne in F sharp major, Op.15, No.2 is very serene in its overall atmosphere. It is of particular interest in its harmonic language. The use of harmonic devices which create characteristic timbres and sounds is the hallmark of Chopin's nocturnes. Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz compared Chopin's nocturnes with those of Field: "We can see that Chopin drew profusely from the works by Field, Hummel and Szymanowska. At the same time it is clear to us how greatly the genius of Chopin dwarfed the ideas of these mediocre talents. Field's sentimentality, Italian mawkishness or English stiffness, the banality of his melodies and shyness of harmonic solutions are transformed in Chopin's nocturnes into a Romantic sweep, the impressionistic 'sound painting' and 'romance' programme, contradictory to the ballade."

At long last, there came a proposal for a public performance. Chopin was to play during a recital by the Italian singer Garcia-Vestris. However, the plans again failed to materialize after three proposed dates proved unsuitable for various circumstances. Eventually Chopin's first performance in Vienna came seven months after his arrival there, on 11 June 1831. The highlight of the programme was the premiere of Gallenberg's ballet *Theodosia*. The introductory part featured Weber's overture *Euryanthe* and Chopin's Piano Concerto in E minor. All the three post-concert reviews referred to Chopin the pianist. This is likely to have filled the cup of bitterness.

On 20 July 1831 the composer left Vienna. He was accompanied by his recent acquaintance Alfons Kumelski, a young Lithuanian naturalist who planned to continue his studies in Western Europe. On their way to Paris, they stopped in Salzburg, and subsequently in Munich, where they spent a month. On 28 August Chopin performed at a matinée in the city's Philharmonic, playing his Concerto in E minor and the *Fantaisie on Polish Airs*. Having received financial help from his father (which arrived after a considerable delay), Chopin went to Stuttgart. Kumelski remained in Munich.

In Stuttgart, Chopin learned of the defeat of the November Uprising and the capture of Warsaw. The feelings of anxiety, irritation and helplessness were coupled with a profound longing for home (as well as for Konstancja) and concern for his family. The entries in his diary from that time tell much about the composer's frame of mind: "The enemy has entered the home [...] O God, do You exist? You do and yet You do not avenge. Have You not had enough of Moscow's crimes - or - or are You Yourself a Muscovite [...] I am here, useless! And I am here empty-handed."

In Stuttgart Chopin completed the cycle of 12 Etudes Op.10. They reflect the composer's emotions connected with the dramatic developments in his homeland. This is particularly true of the Etude in C minor, the so-called 'Revolutionary' Study. Each etude is an independent, finite whole, exploring different technical problems and diverse in their expressive features. It is a highly original cycle, a masterpiece of musical form and invention, testifying to the astonishing maturity of the 21-year-old composer

In the autumn of 1831 Chopin arrived in Paris, the city of Victor Hugo, Eugène Delacroix, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Daniel Auber, Hector Berlioz, and of world-famous virtuosos such as Friedrich Wilhelm Kalkbrenner and Henri Herz. He found himself, therefore, in the cultural heart of Europe.

His first address was at 27, Boulevard Poissonnière, on the fourth floor. He lost no time in establishing contacts with numerous Polish exiles, including the music critic Wojciech Sowiński, the Komar family and their beautiful daughter Delfina (the wife of Mieczysław Potocki) and the Plater family. Soon Antoni Wodziński and Julian Fontana, Chopin's school friends, arrived in Paris. Of the musical contacts, the encounter with Kalkbrenner proved especially interesting for Chopin. Having listened to his interpretation of the Concerto in E minor, "Europe's first pianist" proposed to give Chopin piano lessons, claiming that the Polish composer lacked proper schooling. The idea never materialized, but Józef Elsner, on hearing the news of Kalkbrenner's offer, could hardly conceal his indignation. He took the opportunity to try

to convince his former student once again to compose an opera. He argued that this was the only musical genre which could ensure a composer eternal glory and the respect of future generations.

Chopin remained unyielding. Even though he gave up plans to write a third piano concerto, it was only because he resolved to proceed with serious study on the possibilities of fully employing the technical potential of the piano. The debate on this subject was brought to a conclusion by the composer's remark contained in a letter to Julian Fontana of 8 August 1839: "Woyciechowski wrote to me asking me to compose an oratorio. In a letter to my parents I responded by asking why he founded a sugar factory instead of a Cameldolite monastery or a Dominican convent. Good chap, Tytus, with his childish ideas."

The most important source of Chopin's income in Paris was from giving piano lessons. He became a popular teacher among the Polish and French aristocracy. The second consecutive solitary Christmas away from home evoked feelings of despair and depression in the composer. Somewhat surprisingly, news of Konstancja's wedding made almost no impression on Chopin, who remarked in a letter to Tytus Woyciechowski, dated 12 December 1831: "that does not put an end to platonic attachments."

26 February 1832 saw Chopin's Paris debut in the Pleyel's rooms. The concert's unusually expanded programme included Beethoven's Quintet Op.29, Chopin Concerto in E minor, Kalkbrenner's Grand Polonaise for six pianos (with Chopin as *primus inter pares*), and in the final part, a selection of Chopin's works – several Nocturnes and Mazurkas and the *Variations on a Theme from Mozart's Don Giovanni*. The concert ended in a tumultuous ovation. J. Fetis wrote in 'La Revue Musicale' of 3 March: "And yet a young man, giving in to his inborn drive, and not taking anyone as an example, has found if not an entire renewal of music for the piano, then at least a fragment of what has been sought so in vain, and what is a richness of original thoughts, the source of which it is impossible to find anywhere."

Several other reviews were also very favourable, stressing Chopin's great artistic individuality both as a pianist and composer.

Artistic success was soon followed by financial success. Wealthy families competed with one another to enlist Chopin's services as piano teacher. Within a relatively short time, he became a famous artist, sought-after teacher, and frequent guest in the salons of the aristocracy (the Rothschilds, Czartoryskis, Platers, Delfina Potocka), and various VIPs, such as Lord Rothsay Stuart (the English ambassador), Thomas Albrecht (secretary of the Embassy of Saxony) and the well-known banker August Lio. He also spent much time in the company of artists and intellectuals, including Heinrich Heine, Ferdinand Hiller, Johann Peter Pixis, Pierre Baillot, Adolphe Nourrit, and above all Franz Liszt and the well-known cellist Auguste Franchomme. Somewhat later, this illustrious circle was joined by Hector Berlioz, one of the greatest musical revolutionaries, with whom Chopin held fierce debates on aesthetic matters. He often performed together with Liszt. He also had many acquaintances among prominent emigre Poles, notably Maurycy Mochnacki, Joachim Lelewel, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Bohdan Zaleski and Stefan Witwicki. Bonds of sincere friendship linked Chopin with the Romantic bard Adam Mickiewicz. The other famous Romantic poet Juliusz Słowacki (whom Chopin used to meet in the salon of the Czartoryski family) evoked less sympathy in the composer.

In January 1833 Chopin wrote to Dominik Dziewanowski: "I have found my way into the very best society. I have my place among ambassadors, princes, ministers - I don't know by what miracle that sort of thing is indispensable to me: those circles are supposed to be the fountain-head of good taste. You at once have more talent if you have been heard at the English or Austrian embassies; you at once play better if Princess Vaudemont has patronised you. [...] I enjoy the friendship and esteem of the other musicians: I wouldn't write this, seeing that I have been here only a year, if I did not have proof of it in the fact that men of the highest reputation dedicate their works to me before I dedicate mine to them. For example, Pixis has inscribed his latest Variations for Military Band with my name. Moreover they write variations on themes from my works, and Kalkbrenner has composed variations on one of my mazurkas. Pupils of the Conservatoire, pupils of Moscheles, Herz, Kalkbrenner, in fact complete artists, have lessons from me and set my name next to Field's; and indeed, if I were a bigger fool than I am, I might imagine I had reached the peak of my career."

Chopin's rise to fame aroused the interest of the most prestigious publishers and by the summer of 1832 the composer signed a contract with the leading Parisian publishing firm of Schlesinger for the publication of his entire present and future output. Publishers of lesser rank, such as Farrenc, were treated by Chopin with evident indifference. Yet, he won universal admiration, not only on account of his musical skills but also exquisite manners. In his book on Chopin, published in Paris in 1852, Liszt wrote that Chopin was treated like a prince. In his letters to the composer, his father appealed to him to put by some money. Chopin, however, had no predilection for economising. In June 1832 he rented a new, more comfortable apartment, at 4 Cité Bergeré.

In the summer of 1832 Chopin started to work intensively on new compositions (without even going on holiday), notably on the Ballade in G minor, Op.23, the Mazurkas Op.17 and the Polonaises Op.26, in C sharp minor and E flat minor.

From Op.26 onwards "the polonaise acquired not only a hitherto unknown sweep but generally speaking a new rank and character. It is no longer a stylized dance but a serious, heroic national epic, a means of expressing the composer's emotions concerning the nation's struggle, analogous to the works of Polish Romantic poets." (Zieliński).

The successes of the famous Pole were followed with utmost interest in Warsaw. Mikołaj Chopin informed his son with much satisfaction (letter of 13 April 1833), that the editions of the Nocturnes and Mazurkas, imported from Leipzig, were selling like hot cakes.

In the spring of 1833 Chopin moved into a far more luxurious apartment at 5 Chaussée d'Antin, sharing accommodation with the physician Aleksander Hoffman (a former insurgent and recent arrival from Warsaw) and, after the latter's departure, with his Warsaw friend, the former insurgent and physician, Jan Matuszyński. In the autumn Chopin started work on a second cycle of 12 Etudes.

The works from the 1833-1834 period include the **Impromptu in C sharp minor, Op.66**. Based on a tripartite design, it is a joyous piece, communicating an impression of lightness and devoid of any dramatic content. Its outer parts contain brilliant pianistic figurations while the central part (*Largo. Moderato cantabile*) is remarkable for its natural song-like character. The work's hallmark is the interesting polyrhythmic structure evoking an impression of pulsation, just one of Chopin's many innovations. Chopin himself ranked the C sharp minor Impromptu among his less significant compositions, unworthy of publication. In 1835 he presented the work to Baroness d'Este (having probably received some money in return). After Chopin's death, Julian Fontana published the manuscript of the piece as Opus 66, under a somewhat controversial title *Fantaisie-Impromptu*. Fontana's version differed in several places from the one which Chopin inscribed in the Baroness's album.

In May 1834 Chopin undertook a journey to Germany. At the Rhineland Music Festival in Aachen he was welcomed by Mendelssohn and listened to Händel's oratorio *Israel in Egypt*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony. He also visited Düsseldorf, Coblenz and Cologne. Back in Paris, Chopin faced an important decision bearing on his entire future. By the end of the year he had to choose between the status of an emigre or a loyal subject of the Russian tsar (by periodically prolonging his passport at the Russian embassy). Chopin opted for the former, despite evident suggestions by his father to the contrary. He thus deprived himself of the possibility of legally revisiting his homeland.

On 5 April 1835, thanks to Chopin's organizational efforts, a major concert was held in Paris for the benefit of Polish refugees. This highlighted Chopin's links with the emigre circles. Among the performers were his friends, outstanding musicians such as Liszt, Hiller, Nourrit, Falcon and Ernst. Chopin himself played his Concerto in E minor. The proceeds from the event surpassed all expectations.

Chopin's output from the years 1835-1836 included the Mazurkas Op.24 and the second cycle of Etudes Op.25 (dedicated to Liszt's friend, Countess Maria d'Agoult), published in 1837.

In August 1835 Chopin had a unique opportunity to meet his parents, who went to Karlsbad for a cure. They spent almost a month together. Afterwards, in the nearby Dresden, he renewed his acquaintance with the Wodziński family, who had settled there after the November Uprising. Years earlier, the three young Wodziński sons, Antoni, Feliks and Kazimierz, had stayed in the boarding school managed by Chopin's father. Their younger sister, Maria, now 17, was an extremely attractive 17-year-old showing considerable musical and artistic talent and Chopin fell in love with her. She had been courted for some time by the poet Słowacki and Count Montigny. Now she responded with evident satisfaction to Chopin's advances to her. She had admired his music for years and herself tried her hand at composition. A year earlier she had sent him one of her com-positional attempts. Deeply moved, he sent her in return the Waltz in E flat major Op.18 with a dedication. Responding to her request, he presented her with the manuscript of his Waltz in A flat major (published posthumously as Op.69, No.1).

In the autumn of 1835 Chopin contracted tuberculosis. Things looked so serious that the Warsaw papers carried announcements of his death. At the beginning of 1836 official denials were printed. In the meantime, Chopin's passion for Maria Wodzińska became stronger. During a summer holiday in Marienbad (modern day Máriánské Lázně in the Czech Republic), where Maria came with her mother, they spent much time together. Maria played the Etudes of Op.25 to him and painted a very beautiful watercolour portrait of Chopin. After a joint journey to Vienna, he proposed and was accepted on the condition, expressed by Maria's mother, that he would take better care of his health. This was a secret engagement and did not end in marriage for, after a year-long 'trial' period, Maria's parents, disturbed by Chopin's bad state of health and irregular lifestyle, viewed him as an unsuitable partner for their daughter. Maria had no voice in the decision. Chopin found this rejection an extremely painful experience, and labelled the letters from Maria, tied into a small bundle, 'My sorrow'.

His feelings for Maria most probably inspired the song 'Moja pieszczotka' (My darling), a setting of a poem by Adam

Mickiewicz. In 1835-1837 he composed the Nocturnes Op.32, as well as the **Scherzo in B flat minor, Op.31** (dedicated to Countess Adela de Fürstenstein) considered the most important work of that period. Cast in the ternary form and enriched with elements of the sonata allegro, it is a piece which strikes the listener with constantly changing themes, rhythms, atmosphere and timbres. Robert Schumann described it as 'passionate', evoking associations with Byron's epic poems. Over 130 years later the prominent Polish composer Witold Lutosławski said in an interview, reminiscing his childhood: "I listened to one of my teachers playing the B flat minor Scherzo, sitting under the table so that no one could see how deeply I was moved."

In the autumn of 1836 Chopin had first met George Sand in the house of the Countess Maria d'Agoult. She was a famous French author of highly popular feminine novels (*Indiana, Valentine, Lélia*). Initially nothing indicated their friendship would develop into a deep liaison. Chopin's first impression was not at all favourable. He is said to have remarked to Hiller: "What an unlikeable woman, this Sand. Is she really a woman? I am inclined to doubt it." George Sand was the pen name of Aurora Dudevant, née Dupin. At the time she first met Chopin, she was 34, six years his senior, and separated from her husband, with two children, 15 year-old Maurice and 10 year-old Solange.

The Polish writer Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz wrote in his diary on 17 July 1838: "One of the celebrities of today's literary scene is George Sand, or Dudevant. [...] She is petite, shapely, beautiful, with big dark eyes. She doesn't speak much, but she is clever. She has a rare literary talent, familiar to all, and leads a free life, unfortunately! Yet she deigns to believe in God, the immortal soul and a better future. She is very attractive to the young. She is original in everything, even in her dress."

An account by Liszt leaves no doubt that it was George Sand who made the first step. After one of their first meetings, she sent Chopin a card reading: "On vous adore. George." In her efforts to gain Chopin's affection she used the mediation of Maria d'Agoult and Wojciech Grzymała (one of the leading figures in Polish emigre circles, founder of the Literary Society in Paris and Chopin's close friend in the late 1830s). On 17 February she wrote to Liszt from her estate in Nohant: "Dear Franz. Come to us as soon as possible. [...] Maria told me there is some hope that Chopin will come. Tell him I beg him to accompany you, that Maria can't do without him and that I adore him. I'll write to Grzymała personally and try to persuade him to visit us as well."

Before Chopin went to Nohant, however, he scored several successes, both as composer and pianist. In December he performed before the French royal family in the Tuileries Gardens. Following a concert on 12 March in Rouen, for which he was invited by the local conductor, his former fellow student at the Warsaw Conservatory, Antoni Orłowski, the 'Gazette Musicale' published, on 28 March 1838, an enthusiastic review by Ernest Legouvé, a member of the French Academy, who revealed that "those delightful melodies, those indescribable subtleties of execution, those melancholy and passionate inspirations, this poetry of playing and composition which equally moves the imagination and the heart, did no less pierce, move, and intoxicate the whole numerous gathering ..."

Chopin's compositional plans in that period included the 24 Preludes, a new Ballade, a sonata and a scherzo. At the beginning of 1838, he completed the Mazurkas Op.33, in which, like in the previous mazurka cycles, he harked back to traditional harmonic language and simple stylization devices, without shunning direct quotations of folk melodies.

In the meantime, George Sand addressed a 32-page letter to Grzymała. This fact is given prominence by all the composer's biographers. For Iwaszkiewicz, the letter prompted conclusions about the peculiar character of the Sand-Chopin liaison. "What struck Chopin in the letter were the maternal and self-sacrificing accents, which dominated over the appetite of a lustful she-cat licking its lips at the very recollection of a mouse, that is 'our little one' as she described him in the letter to Grzymała. [...] There is no doubt that Chopin responded with passion but what attracted him most was the simplicity (sometimes concealing coarseness) of the maternal demonstrations of the unfulfilled lover and even more unfulfilled guardian."

By the summer of 1838 they became lovers. In October they began their first holiday together, on the Spanish island of Majorca in the Mediterranean. It was a time for passionate relationship and intensive work. George was busy writing her next novel *Spiridion*. Chopin set himself the task of completing the 24 Preludes, the C minor Polonaise, and the E minor Mazurka (later referred to as the 'Palma' mazurka). The idea for the Ballade in F major was also born in Majorca. The composer's Paris apartment, as well as his financial matters and publishing arrangements, were taken care of by Julian Fontana. These happy days were disrupted by a return of tuberculosis. His illness aroused suspicion and fear on the part of the owner of the villa in which Chopin and George Sand stayed. He demanded that they leave without delay and cover the costs of disinfection.

On 15 December they took refuge in the deserted, picturesquely located monastery of Valldemosa, 10 kilometers from Palma. Under doctors' protection and by George Sand's solicitous care, Chopin's condition quickly improved. At the beginning of 1839 the composer's Pleyel upright piano was delivered. Intensive work on new compositions was

interrupted by mounting attacks of coughing and pain in his lungs. The rainy weather added to Chopin's health problems. As a result, the couple decided to return to the Spanish mainland. In February they went to Barcelona and, after a few days there, they sailed to Marseilles, where they remained for almost three months, spending most of the time in the company and care of Dr. Couvieres.

The stay in Majorca, so damaging for Chopin's health, brought a final maturing of his genius. It was there that he finished his true masterpiece - the Preludes Op.28 – inspired by Bach's *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*. These 24 piano miniatures, one in each major and minor key, are highly diversified in their Romantic content, texture, form and sound, and constitute a compositional whole. The cycle was dedicated to Camille Pleyel, who was to be its publisher. However, Pleyel rejected Chopin's financial conditions, as did Schlesinger shortly afterwards. Under the circumstances Chopin decided to look for a new publisher. His choice fell on Troupenas. Two years later, however, he mended fences with Schlesinger.

On 1 June George Sand took Chopin to her residence in Nohant, some 30 kms from Châteauroux. There, at long last, Chopin had a sense of family atmosphere for which he had pined for so many years. He also found propitious conditions in which to work. In a letter to Fontana of 8 August 1839 he wrote: "I am writing here a Sonata in B flat minor which will contain my March which you already know. There is an *Allegro*, then a Scherzo in E flat minor, the March and a short Finale, about three pages of my manuscript-paper. The left hand and the right hand gossip in unison after the March. I have a new Nocturne in G major which will form a pair with the one in G minor, if you remember. Oh, and I have four new Mazurkas; one in E minor written at Palma and three from here; in B major, A flat and C sharp minor. They seem pretty to me, as the youngest children usually do to parents who are growing old."

While in Nohant, Chopin enjoyed frequent visits by his close friends, Stefan Witwicki and Wojciech Grzymała. His happiness would have been complete if it had not been for the difficulties in establishing harmonious relations with George's children, particularly Maurice.

In the autumn, after a lapse of one year, Chopin returned to Paris ("For his moral condition, Paris is good for him; nervous characters, like his, need a refined civilization" - wrote George Sand to Ch. Marliani on 18 September 1839). He took up residence in rue Tronchet, close to the Church of St. Madeleine. All home-moving arrangements, as was to be expected, were taken care of by Fontana. Almost overnight it became apparent that finding work was no problem. Chopin's chief source of income was still from giving lessons and there was no end of prospective pupils. It was indeed a matter of fashion in the Parisian high society, particularly for young ladies, to be included among Chopin's pupils.

One of the highlights of the 1839 season in Paris was the visit by the famous pianist Ignaz Moscheles. Some time earlier, he had been very critical of Chopin's pianistic art, describing it as too sweet and insufficiently masculine. He later changed his mind and started to regard Chopin as unique among all pianists. During Moscheles's visit to Paris, they performed several times together, including a special concert before the French royal family on 29 October.

In this period Chopin used to spend much time at George Sand's salon at 16 Rue Pigalle. Of the guests visiting the salon, Chopin felt a special affection for Paulina Viardot, the 20-year-old talented singer, and the famous painter, Eugène Delacroix. Chopin had met him six years earlier and they became close friends. They used to spend much time together, talking about the arts for hours on end. There is a well known oil portrait of George Sand and Chopin executed by Delacroix. Iwaszkiewicz described it as one of the most moving portraits in the history of painting.

The early 1840s brought a relatively small output from Chopin. It was indeed a quieter period, during which he focused primarily on searching for new inspirations and thinking over his past accomplishments. The most noteworthy piece of the period was the Waltz in A flat major (*Grande Valse*) Op.42. Chopin stopped going to noisy parties and concerts. Instead, together with George, he attended the lectures by Mickiewicz, the newly nominated professor of Slavonic Literature at the Collège de France. As a virtuoso pianist, he no longer strove to gain engagements but rather avoided public performances. He was far more eager to perform his own pieces for a select group of friends. This was a time of full harmony and happiness, derived from the liaison with his beloved George. Whenever his health condition deteriorated or bouts of the disease recurred, he moved to her apartment to benefit from her affection and care.

They spent the long holidays of 1841 in Nohant. There, Chopin completed the Polonaise in F sharp minor, Op.44, which he described in a letter to Fontana as "a kind of polonaise but more a fantasie". It was dedicated to Delfina Potocka's sister, Countess de Beauvau. The output of the period also included the *Tarantella* Op.43 (most probably inspired by Rossini's popular *La Danza*), the third Ballade in A flat major Op.47 (more epic in its character than the previous ballades), two Nocturnes Op.48, in C minor and F sharp minor, as well as the Fantasie in F minor Op.49. Shortly after finishing it, Chopin wrote in a letter to Fontana of 20 October: "Today I finished the Fantasie [Op.49] – the weather is lovely but I am sad at heart - not that it matters. If it were otherwise, my existence would perhaps be of no use to anyone. Let us save ourselves up for life after death."

At the beginning of November, together with George and Solange, Chopin returned to Paris. In the meantime, Fontana helped him find a new apartment, at 16 Rue Pigalle, right next to George's salon. On 21 February he gave a concert at the Pleyel's room, together with the singer Viardot and the cellist Franchomme. Chopin performed the *Andante spianato*, the Ballad in A flat major, three Etudes of Op.25 - in A flat major, in F minor, and C minor, the Impromptu in F sharp major, four Nocturnes, including the D flat major Op.27 and in F sharp minor Op.48 and three Mazurkas.

A review in 'Revue et Gazette Musicale' said: "As is known, Liszt and Thalberg evoke big emotions; Chopin evokes them also but in a less energetic and noisy manner, simply because he sets into motion the most intimate strings of the heart."

In February 1841 news came of the death of Chopin's first music teacher, Wojciech Żywny, and two months later of his close friend, Jan Matuszyński, who had been struggling with tuberculosis for a long time.

Following such bad news, only Nohant could provide a cure for the composer's health and general frame of mind. George was all too aware of this and lost no time in arranging for a journey there. They left Paris on 5 May, with Maurice and Solange.

Three weeks after their arrival, George wrote to Delacroix: "Chopin has composed two exquisitely beautiful mazurkas, which are worth more than forty romances and contain more expression than the entire literature of this century" (she probably meant the Mazurkas of Op.50, including the one in C sharp minor). In addition to the Mazurkas, Chopin started to compose the Ballade in F minor, the Scherzo in E major, as well the **Polonaise in A flat major, Op.53**, known as 'Grand' (dedicated to August Lio). This polonaise evoked the highest praise from all the composer's biographers. Zdzisław Jachimecki described it as the pinnacle of Chopin's polonaise writing and the most perfect work in the history of the genre (*Chopin. Rys życia i twórczości.* / Chopin. An Outline of his Life and Work, Kraków 1953). Mieczysław Tomaszewski (*Chopin. Człowiek. Dzieło. Rezonans.* / Chopin. The Man, his Work and Resonance. Poznań 1999) writes that the last three Polonaises: in F sharp minor, Op.44, in A flat major, Op.53 and A flat major, Op.61 "differ in their form and character from all the earlier polonaises. They are elevated into epic poems - pianistic, dance or choreic. While remaining faithful to the overall principle of reprise, each of these polonaises departs from the compact dance model, defined by the convention, arriving instead at a freely-shaped form, sometimes loose and unstable, broadly conceived, with a sweep determined by the power of expression."

Towards the end of 1842 Chopin moved house again. His new apartment, at 9 Square d'Orleans was a stone's throw from the previous one. It became a favourite area of many artists. Residents included A. Dumas, the father, and the sculptor J.P. Dantan. George Sand rented an apartment at No.5, opposite Chopin's. In their salon they entertained frequently. Their old-time friends, P. Viardot, E. Delacroix, M. de Rozières, Ch. Marliani, and A. Franchomme were joined by Chopin's exceptionally talented pupil, Karol Filtsch, then a 12-year-old boy.

The couple's vacations in Nohant lasted from the last week of May till the end of October. Chopin returned to Paris with a batch of new pieces, the Mazurkas, Op.56 and the Nocturnes, Op.55, of which the one in E flat major "belongs to the most characteristic examples of Chopin's late style, departing from sentimental spontaneity and expansiveness and moving towards 'deep lyricism', restrained on the surface but sensitive, rich and diverse inside" (Zieliński). This time Chopin returned all by himself. George stayed in Nohant for longer. Incidentally, this was the time when the first cracks appeared in their relationship, pointing to a certain cooling down of their passionate feelings. The winter of 1843 saw a deterioration in Chopin's health. On 25 May the following year he was shocked by the news of his father's death, another in a series of painful experiences which affected the state of his health.

Towards the end of May 1844 Chopin and George Sand found themselves again in Nohant. In August they were visited by Chopin's sister, Ludwika, in the company of her husband Kalasanty Jędrzejewicz. The encounter with someone remaining so close to his heart was a real tonic for Chopin. The year 1844, despite more frequent bouts of tuberculosis, proved very fruitful for Chopin the composer. He penned two undoubted masterpieces, the Berceuse, Op.57 and the Sonata in B minor, Op.58.

The beginning of 1845 saw a further deterioration in the composer's health. Despite this, he gathered enough energy to give a public concert. It was held on 26 May at Hôtel Lambert, the residence of the Czartoryskis. Chopin performed together with Antoni Kątski, the pianist and composer (Field's pupil), then at the brink of a promising career. Soon came yet another painful blow for Chopin, the sudden death of his favourite pupil, Karol Filtsch, at the age of 15. A group of his new pupils included Jane Wilhelmine Stirling (daughter of a Scottish banker from Edinburgh), Countess Marcelina Czartoryska, Zofia Rosengard (the wife of the poet Bohdan Zaleski) and Karol Mikuli (undoubtedly one of the most talented of all his pupils). Two years later the group was joined by Maria Kalergis.

The summer of 1845 in Nohant was not as happy as the previous ones. George Sand's feelings to 'the small one' cooled into ones of friendship. She displayed symptoms of weariness and impatience. A serious conflict between George and

her daughter surrounding the latter's marriage to the sculptor Auguste Clésinger (in which Chopin took Solange's side) brought about the final separation. Christmas 1845 was no less miserable than the first one spent alone, away from home.

As if anticipating that he had little time left, Chopin threw himself intensively into composition. His last works - the Sonata in B minor, Op.58, the Barcarolle in F sharp major, Op.60, the Polonaise-Fantaisie, Op.61, the Nocturnes Op.62, the Mazurkas Op.63, the Waltzes Op.64 and the Sonata in G minor for piano and cello Op.65 - demonstrated an evident need for reflection, reverie and a philosophical distance from the world (Tomaszewski). Chopin seemed to avoid extreme means of expression, signs of violence, sharp contrasts and tension, even though, as Zieliński observes, these works "exhibit more complex structural patterns and harmonic means than the earlier pieces." The fact is that Chopin, throughout his life, wrote compositions which can be described as extraordinary from the point of view of both form and expressive features.

The innovative character of Chopin's sound idiom inspired successive generations of composers, including Liszt and Wagner.

The summer of 1846 was Chopin's last in Nohant. He left for Paris in the middle of November and spent the winter in seclusion in Square de Orleans. He paid frequent visits to the Czartoryskis at Hôtel Lambert. His last meeting with George Sand, purely accidental (it took place in the hall of Ch. Marliani's apartment), brief and cold, was at the beginning of March 1848.

In 1847 Chopin composed 'Elegy', the most dramatic of his songs. It was a setting of a poem by Zygmunt Krasiński. It was surely not without reason that he turned to this poignant text at that particular moment of his life:

*Bowed 'neath their crosses' cruel weight they stand
To catch from the mountain top the far gleam of the Promised Land.
Their eyes are mazed with light that seems transcending
Where to they see their own people descending.
Regions themselves, themselves will never enter
nor taste one morsel from that horn of plenty!
And here their bones will lie maybe forever unremembered,
unremembered, unremembered maybe forever!*

In his biography of Chopin, Iwaszkiewicz wrote that "it often happens that towards the end of life of someone truly great a guardian angel suddenly appears at the bedside. Its role is usually confined to alleviating the last efforts of the bed-ridden person, to put on mourning dress after his death and take care of the mementos of the deceased. The guardian's duties also included arranging for requiem church services and the placing of flowers at the grave of the poet, musician or artist. Chopin's 'guardian angel' was his Scottish pupil, miss Jane Stirling".

The 44-year-old Jane loved him sincerely for eight years, even though she was aware that her feelings were not reciprocated by Chopin. Her care and assistance had all the hallmarks of unselfishness. Deeply convinced that a longer sojourn outside Paris and a total change of surroundings (possibly even moving to London for good) would bring a miraculous retreat of the disease, she persuaded him to leave France.

On 20 April 1848 he arrived in England and was at once the centre of interest, thanks to the efforts of Jane Stirling, assisted by her sister, Catherine Erskine. Chopin was taken up by fashionable society and had days full of concerts and social engagements (he renewed contacts with his former pupils and became a sought-after guest in aristocratic salons). His first public appearance took place on 23 June at the house of a former pupil, singer Adelaida Sartoris, the second on 7 July at Lord Falmouth's palace. On the latter occasion Pauline Viardot sang six Mazurkas by Chopin in her own transcription, to words by Louis Pomey.

At the end of the London season Chopin went for three weeks to Scotland, where he toured the family residences of Jane Stirling and Catherine Erskine. The Scottish climate, however, proved evidently unfavourable to his health. On 28 August he performed in Manchester before an audience of 1500. Subsequent journeys and concerts, mostly arranged by the indefatigable Jane Stirling, thoroughly exhausted him.

Towards the end of November, Chopin returned to Paris. He was getting weaker by the day and was no longer capable of giving lessons, on which his income depended. Fortunately, Jane Stirling came to his assistance with a sizeable gift of money. In the spring of 1849, on doctors' suggestions, he moved to a summer residence in Chaillot, close to the Bois de Boulogne.

His sister Ludwika arrived with her husband and daughter at the beginning of August. Solange and her husband also came to stay close to Chopin. On 1 August the doctors decided, in consultation, that the composer should move to a warm apartment, facing south. Such a place was found at 12 Place Vendôme, where Chopin moved at the end of

September. It was there that he died on the morning of 17 October. On 30 October, following mass at St Madeleine's Church, he was buried at the Père Lachaise cemetery.

Five days earlier, the poet Cyprian Kamil Norwid wrote an obituary in 'Dziennik Polski': "A Varsovian by birth, a Pole at heart and by his talent a citizen of the world has passed away. He knew how to divine the greatest mysteries of art with astonishing ease. He could gather the flowers of the field without disturbing the dew or the lightest pollen. And he knew how to fashion them into stars, meteors, as it were comets, lighting up the sky of Europe, through the ideal of art. In the crystal of his own harmony he gathered the tears of the Polish people strewn over the fields, and placed them as the diamonds of beauty in the diadem of humanity."

Alicja Matracka-Kościelny

Piotr PALECZNY – piano

He is a graduate of the Music Academy in Warsaw where he studied with J. Ekier. He is a prizewinner of five international piano competitions, in Sofia (1968), Munich (1969), Warsaw (1970), Pleven (1971) and Bordeaux (1972). His accolade at the Warsaw Chopin Competition marked the beginning of his fine career in all continents. He has appeared as a soloist with many renowned orchestras including the Warsaw Philharmonic, the National Polish Radio SO, the Chicago Symphony, the Royal Philharmonic, the Concertgebouw, the BBC SO, Yomiuri Nippon, Tonhalle Orchester Zurich, RAI Roma, Santa Cecilia and the Gewandhaus Orchestra. He has performed at such prestigious venues as the Carnegie Hall, the Avery Fisher Hall and the Alice Tully Hall in New York, the Orchestra Hall in Chicago, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Gewandhaus in Leipzig and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, as well as such major events as the Flanders Festival, Prague Spring, and those in Istanbul, San Antonio, Berlin and Bergamo. He has toured the U.K., Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, the United States and China. He has made numerous recordings for radio and television in Poland and abroad, as well as on many labels, his repertoire including Chopin, Paderewski, Lutosławski, Szymanowski, Brahms, Mussorgsky and Balakirev.

He has sat on the juries of international piano competitions in Warsaw, Paris, Santander, Tokyo, Hamamatsu, Prague and Cleveland. Since 1993 he has served as Artistic Director of the International Chopin Festival in Duszniki Zdrój, the oldest music festival in Poland.

PRIMA VISTA is made up of musicians of the Polish Chamber Orchestra – Sinfonia Varsovia. Its repertoire includes a wide selection of string quartets by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Dvořák, Borodin and Szymanowski. The group is also keen on performing salon music of the 19th and 20th centuries. It has given concerts at numerous venues in Warsaw, including the Royal Castle, the Łazienki Park, the Zachęta Gallery and the Belvedere Palace, as well as at the Festival of the Stars in Międzyzdroje. In the spring of 1999 it made a tour of Germany.

The repertoire of Prima Vista includes chamber versions of Chopin's Piano Concertos (performed with leading Polish pianists Ewa Pobłocka, Krzysztof Jabłoński, Janusz Olejniczak and Piotr Paleczny) and of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* with Konstanty Andrzej Kulka and Jan Stanienda. Members of the Prima Vista Quartet are also highly respected as studio musicians. They have taken part in the recording of film music by Zbigniew Preisner and Krzesimir Dębski, and of numerous CDs by outstanding jazzmen, such as Henryk Miśkiewicz, Zbigniew Namysłowski and Krzysztof Herdzin and popular stars including Grzegorz Turnau, Tytus Wojnowicz, Michał Bajor, Katarzyna Skrzynecka and Robert Chojnacki. Three CDs with music performed by Prima Vista, published by DUX, namely: *Dolce far niente...*, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (with Konstanty A. Kulka violin solo), and *The Best of Chopin* (with Piotr Paleczny piano solo) have won the nomination to Fryderyk '99 award.

Krzysztof BZÓWKA, violin, is a graduate of the Warsaw Music Academy, where he studied with Henryk Palulis. In 1987 he joined the Sinfonia Varsovia Orchestra, of which he has been soloist since 1997. He performed the solo part in Marta Ptaszyńska's *Concerto grosso* during the orchestra's tour of Germany and France, with Yehudi Menuhin conducting.

Józef KOLINEK began to study the violin with Marta Suchecka. He then studied with Zenon Płoszaj at the Music Academy in Łódź. He is a prizewinner of the Zdzisław Jahnke Competition in Poznań and of the Karol Lipiński Competition in Lublin. Since 1978 he has been a member of the Polish Chamber Orchestra and the Sinfonia Varsovia. He was a member of the Varsovia Quartet, the Sinfonia Helvetica Orchestra during Grzegorz Nowak's stint as music director and the Menuhin Festival Orchestra.

Dariusz KISIELIŃSKI, viola, graduated from the Warsaw Music Academy where he studied the violin with Michał Trojanowski and the viola with Błażej Sroczyński. He is a prizewinner of the National Viola Competition in Poznań in 1985. He polished his musical skills on a grant in Banff, Canada. Since 1988 he has been a member of the Sinfonia Varsovia Orchestra.

Jerzy MURANTY, cello, is a graduate of the Warsaw Music Academy where he studied with Andrzej Orkisz and Jerzy Andrzejczak. He worked as principal cello with the Warsaw Sinfonietta and the Polish Radio Orchestra. At present he is a member of the Sinfonia Varsovia and the Menuhin Festival Orchestra.