



The Great Composer-Pianists: Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Brahms

Dr. Rachel Franklin

Monday, March 24, 2025 - 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET

Popular speaker and concert pianist **Rachel Franklin** guides a unique look at the monumental keyboard talents of four great composer-pianists and how their performing virtuosity influenced the piano works we enjoy today.

With a legacy of printed compositions but no recordings, how can we get closer to the white-hot moments of creation and performance when these artists poured out their genius for fortunate and astonished listeners? How did the composers' musical imaginations and their signature performance styles influence the development of how pianos would be constructed and sound? And did their contemporary audiences even comprehend what they were hearing?

Franklin offers fascinating exploration into the creative minds—and hands—of a quartet of piano pioneers celebrated for their prowess as composers and performers. She concludes each lecture with a live performance of a work by the spotlighted composer.

British-born Franklin has been a featured speaker for organizations including the Library of Congress and NPR, exploring intersections among classical and jazz music, film scores, and the fine arts.

March 24th: Fryderyk Chopin, 1810-1849

"The tone he could draw from the instrument, especially in cantabiles, was always immense...He gave a noble manly energy to appropriate passages with overpowering effect – energy without roughness – just as, on the other hand, he could captivate the listener through the delicacy of his soulful rendering – delicacy without affectation. For all the warmth of Chopin's temperament, his playing was always measured, chaste, distinguished and at times even severely reserved."

Karol Mikuli

Because of both his fragile health and the exquisite patina of his style, our understanding of Chopin's playing is sometimes clouded by romantic myth. While he only enjoyed performing for private audiences, many reports show him to have been a mesmerizing player with a piano technique and harmony so revolutionary that it left his brilliant friend Franz Liszt scrambling to keep up.

Chopin's works explored, media used

Variations on "Là ci darem la mano" Op. 2, 1827

- Kun-Woo Paik, Warsaw Philharmonic
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYONTFkgXmo>

Polonaise Brillante in C Major, Op.3, 1829

- Lynn Harrell, Pauline Yang
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNGuhVTWE7g>

Piano trio in G minor, Op. 8, 1828/9

- David Oistrakh - violin, Sviatoslav Knushevitsky - cello, Lev Oborin- piano
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqVxHoU2dnY>

Concerto in F minor, No. 2, Op. 21, 1829

- Artur Rubinstein, André Previn, London Symphony Orchestra
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhZm-vr4QZo>

Selection of Etudes Op. 10 & Op. 25, 1832-1835

- Evgeny Kissin
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hwOveZlugk&t=950s>

Etudes, Op. 10: Etude No. 5 in G-Flat Major, "Black Keys", 1832

- Janina Fialkowska
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-jv8fXNUYI>

Mazurka in A minor, Op. 17, no. 4, 1832-33

- Aimi Kobayashi
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vv-Kz1PsgvM>

Cello sonata in G minor, Op. 65, 1847

- Sol Gabetta, Nelson Goerner
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3thZnim4jY>

Sonata in B flat minor, Op. 35, 1839

- Rachel Franklin

Chopin Preludes Op. 28 No's 1-14, 1839

- Raoul Koczalski, recorded 1938- 39
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhfmIUvSnDw>

Waltz in C# minor, Op. 64, No. 2, 1847

- Dinu Lipatti
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CK6lVqclnJs>

Nocturne No. 13 in C minor Op. 48 No. 1, 1842

- Maria João Pires
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fck-EoNcFyg>

17 Polish Songs, Op. 74, 1829-1847, published 1857

- Olga Pasichnyk – soprano, Natalya Pasichnyk - piano
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBo_jb4UfkU

Barcarolle in F# major, Op. 60, 1846

- Krzysztof Moskalewicz, Concerts at Hatchlands Park: Chopin's music on his own piano
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUgxELRgPLk>

Waltz in A flat op.34 no 1, 1838

- Rachel Franklin