

CHOPIN: FINAL YEARS AND DEATH 1847-49

OLLI livestream Oct. 22, 2020 with Melinda Coffey Armstead

TIMELINE:

1847 - Chopin sides with Sand's daughter Solange, provoking final break;
last letters written to each in July; opp. 63-65 published

Feb. 16, 1848 concert at Salle Pleyel with Franchomme
Paris Revolution of 1848, Louis Philippe out, new radical republicans in, G. Sand's
associates briefly in power

March 5, 1848 - chance meeting with George Sand at the Marlianis is their last.

April 20, 1848 Chopin arrives in London for 7 months touring England and Scotland at
the invitation of Jane Stirling, who arranges all. (Background - Paris deserted for London by
those with the means to leave including Berlioz, Liszt, Moscheles, Kalkbrenner, Thalberg, Jenny
Lind, Pauline Viardot and many Polish expats.)

Nov. 23 departure from London returning to Paris

1849 - Too weak to teach, financial support from friends, favorite doctor died.
Last 3 moves: from 9 Square d'Orleans to a summer place at 74 Grand rue Chaillot, then
to 12 Place Vendôme on Sept. 9, where he was helped to his bed and never left it.

Aug. 8 Ludwika arrives from Warsaw to nurse him through his final illness.

Oct. 17, 1849 death at 2 AM, surrounded by Ludwicka, Princess Marcelina Czartoryska,
his pupil Adolf Gutmann, friend Thomas Albrecht, Solange Sand, Dr. Cruveilhier, the
painter Teofil Kwiatkowski, the priest Jełowicki. Clésinger rushes to make a death mask,
cast of his left hand, and plans a funeral monument; later wins commission for the statue
now at the Père Lachaise gravesite.

The funeral was held **Oct. 30** at the Madeleine Church, Mozart's Requiem was performed
with soloists and orchestra as Chopin requested, a donation of 5000 francs from Jane
Stirling helped with the costs, 3000 people attended. Pall-bearers included Meyerbeer,
Franchomme, Delacroix, Pleyel and Princes Adam and Alexander Czartoryski. A
procession of thousands walked the 3 miles from the church to the burial site at Père
Lachaise cemetery.

FYI HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

1847 Mendelssohn dies, Charlotte Bronte "Jane Eyre", Emily Bronte "Wuthering Heights",
British Factory Act restricts the working day for women and children ages 13-18 to 10 hours,
Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison born, Mormons found Salt Lake City, William
Hamilton Jeffers (father of Robinson Jeffers) is 9 years old living in Ohio, U.S. forces capture
Mexico City

1848 Donizetti dies, Revolts in Paris & Rome, Revolutions in Vienna, Venice, Berlin, Milan, Parma; Communist Manifesto issued by Marx and Engels, gold discovered in California, first settlers arrive in New Zealand (Dunedin)

1849 Johann Strauss I dies, Dickens “David Copperfield”, speed of light measured by French physicist Armand Fizeau, Edgar Allen Poe dies, Japanese painter Katsushika Hokusai dies, China and Britain are between the two “Opium Wars”.

Posthumous Editions

Ludwicka and Julian Fontana save the unpublished manuscripts and plan a posthumous edition with opus numbers assigned by Fontana. Part 1 appeared in May 1855 and contained the solo piano music: Op. 66 Fantasie-Impromptu in C# minor (1834), Op. 67 Four Mazurkas, Op. 68 Four Mazurkas, Op. 69 Two Waltzes, Op. 70 Three Waltzes, Op. 71 Three Polonaises, Op. 72 Nocturne in E minor (1828), Funeral March (1826), Three Écossaises, Op. 73 Rondo in C for two pianos (1828)

Part 2, devoted to the Sixteen Polish Songs, Op. 74, was published in 1859

REPERTOIRE for Oct. 22:

Prelude in C# minor Op. 45

Funeral March from Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor Op. 35

Mazurka in F minor Op. 68 No. 4 (posthumous)

R. Schumann - “Chopin” from Carnival Op. 9 (1834-35)

F. Liszt - Consolation No. 3 (1850)

Barcarolle Op. 60

*Youtube Chopin: Barcarolle Op.60 (Pollini, Zimerman, Kissin, Horowitz, Argerich)

*Recommended to listen at home: Sonata Op. 65 for Cello and Piano (ca. 25 minutes)

Youtube: Natalia Gutman & Sviatoslav Richter play Chopin Cello Sonata

live at the Pushkin Museum for the December Nights on 30 December 1985.

MORE RESOURCES:

Books - The Parisian Worlds of Frédéric Chopin by William Atwood (1999)

Chopin: Pianist and Teacher by Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger (1986)

Chopin’s letters, E. L. Voynich editor

F. Chopin by F. Liszt (1852) *probably written by Marie d’Agoult and
Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein*

Chopin at the Boundaries by Jeffrey Kallberg (1996), a collection of seven
dense essays on sex, history, and musical genre

Films -“In Search of Chopin” excellent documentary by Phil Grabsky -

“Impromptu” (1991) stylish, smart and comic historical fiction

websites - The Fryderyk Chopin Museum, Warsaw - <https://muzeum.nifc.pl/en>

CDs - Chopin: Solo Piano Works, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Decca set of 13 CDs