

Genius for Pure Beauty

Module 13 of *Music: Under the Hood*

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Osher Course
August 2017

Outline

- Biography of Frédéric Chopin
- *Etude No. 3 in E major, Op 10 no 3*
- *Prelude No. 13 in F# major, Op 28 no 13*

Biography

- Frédéric Chopin, 1810-1849

- Native of Poland

- Father was a French immigrant, tutor for aristocratic families in Warsaw.
- By age 6, Frédéric was playing piano and making up tunes to play for his friends.
- By age 8, he was playing in elegant salons.
- At age 16, began study at Warsaw Conservatory of Music.



Biography

- Musical development

- Parents sent Chopin to Vienna, age 19

- To broaden his experience.

- Settled in Paris, age 22.

- Knew Liszt and Mendelssohn

- Employment in salons provided comfortable life.

- Music grew in sophistication



Chopin's boyhood home

Biography

- Musical development
 - Can be followed in Chopin Museum, Warsaw
 - Listen to compositions chronologically in sound booths.



Biography

- **George Sand**

- **Began affair with Chopin when he was 28**

- Aka Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin, had affairs with several artists.

- **Chopin became ill**

- While living with Sand in Mallorca.
- Sand found treatment and hosted Chopin in her country home for several years.

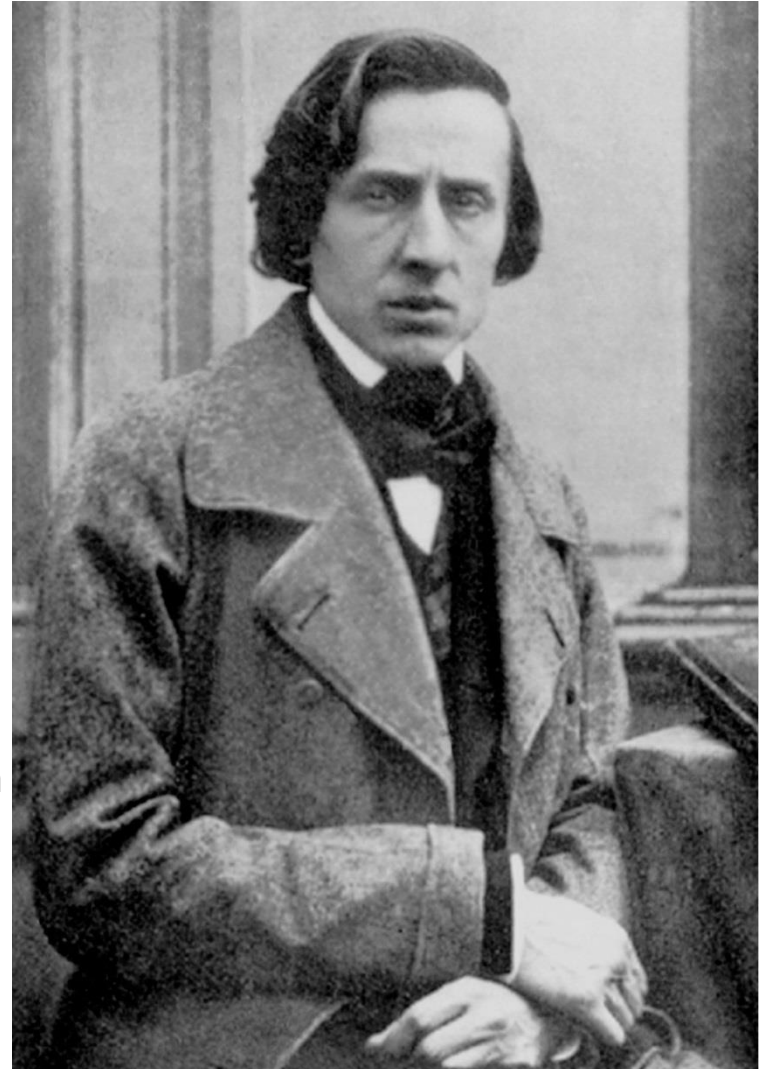
- **Breakup, age 38**

- Chopin died from poor health the next year.



Biography

- Approach to composition
 - Prophet of the piano
 - Wanted the piano to “sing.”
 - Known for elegance, melancholy.
 - Focused on miniatures
 - *Mazurkas, Waltzes, Nocturnes, Etudes, Preludes*
 - Common practice at the time
 - Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann
 - No post-Beethoven solution to large-scale organization.
 - Decided the next day whether to tear up a piece.



Biography

- Legacy
 - Transformed piano literature.
 - One of the most loved classical composers.
 - “Play Bach with respect, Beethoven with passion, Chopin with love.”



Chopin's grave in Père-Lachaise Cemetery, Paris. It has become something of a shrine.

Etude No. 3

- Chopin's *Etudes* are a set of piano exercises
 - He raised technical exercises to works of art.
 - No. 3 has a very different character than the others.
 - Slow, reflective tempo
 - Called *Tristesse* (Sadness)
 - Chopin regarded its theme as his most beautiful melody.
 - The most popular *Etude* today.



Chopin statue, Warsaw

[Audio file](#)

Exposition

Lento ma non troppo (♩ = 100)

Op. 10 - Nr 3

3 *p* *legato*

5 *cresc.* *stretto* *riten. ten.*

10 *cresc.*

15 *stretto* *riten.* *ten.* *con forza* *ff* *ten.* *sempre legato*

19 *ten.* *rallent.* *pp* *dim.* *poco più animato*

43 *con forza* *con fuoco*

46 *f con bravura*

49 *stretto* *cresc.*

52 *riten.* *cresc.* *sf* *p* *legatissimo*

55 *sempre p* *dim.*

Audio file

59 *smorz.* *poco rall.* *a tempo*
legatissimo

Musical score for measures 59-62. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. Measure 59 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The right hand has a melodic line with accents and slurs, while the left hand has a bass line with triplets and slurs. The tempo markings are *smorz.*, *poco rall.*, and *a tempo*. The dynamic marking *legatissimo* is present in measure 62.

63

Musical score for measures 63-66. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand has a steady bass line. The tempo remains *a tempo*.

67 *poco cresc.* *cresc.* *sretto* *cresc.*

Musical score for measures 67-70. The right hand features a more complex texture with chords and slurs. The left hand has a bass line with chords. The tempo is *sretto*. Dynamic markings include *poco cresc.*, *cresc.*, and *cresc.*.

70 *f* *dim.* *pp*

Musical score for measures 71-73. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The left hand has a bass line with slurs. Dynamic markings include *f*, *dim.*, and *pp*. There are handwritten annotations in blue ink above the staff, including the number '5' and some illegible scribbles.

74 *rall.* *smorz.*

Musical score for measures 74-77. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs. The left hand has a bass line with slurs. The tempo markings are *rall.* and *smorz.*. There are handwritten annotations in blue ink above the staff, including the number '5' and some illegible scribbles.

Recapitulation.

[Audio file](#)

Exposition

Repeat, with extension
leading to *fortissimo*
climax

Middle section, part 1
Contrasting theme

Middle section, part 1.
Contrasting theme



Middle section, part 2.
Theme lapses into
minor 6th chords,
as reason begins to
surrender to emotion



Middle section, part 3.
Tritones and minor 7ths.
Tonality disintegrates,
as emotion takes over



Audio file

Middle section, part 4.
Random tritones.
Total breakdown of
tonality!

Musical score for measures 43-45. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. Measure 43 starts with a piano dynamic and the instruction *con forza*. Measure 44 has a handwritten '25' above it. Measure 45 ends with *con fuoco*. The bass line features a tritone (F#-C) in measure 44.

Musical score for measures 46-48. Measure 46 starts with a forte dynamic and the instruction *f con bravura*. The score is characterized by rapid sixteenth-note passages and frequent tritone intervals. Measure 48 includes the instruction *stretto*.

Musical score for measures 49-54. Measure 49 includes the instruction *cresc.*. Measure 52 includes *riten.* and *cresc.*. Measure 53 includes *sf*. Measure 54 includes *p* and *legatissimo*. A green box highlights a tritone (F#-C) in measure 54.

Middle section, part 5.
Bridge to recapitulation,
perhaps the most
beautiful ever conceived

Musical score for measures 55-57. Measure 55 includes the instruction *sempre p*. Measure 57 includes *dim.*. The score features a bridge to the recapitulation with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line with tritones.

Audio file

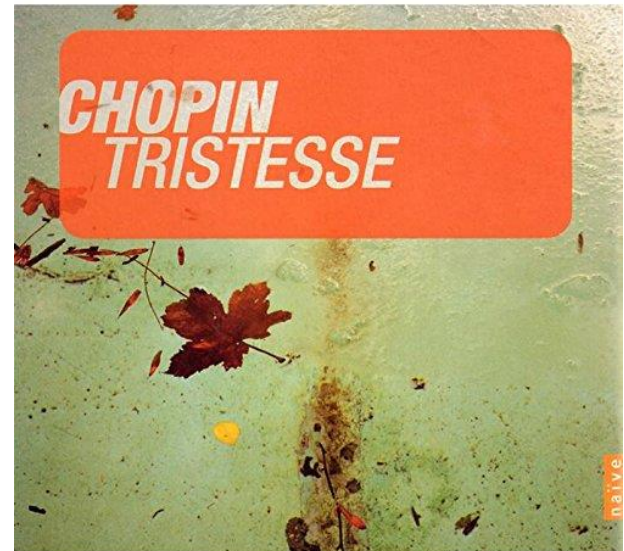
The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of five systems of music. The score is written in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The systems are numbered 59, 63, 67, 70, and 74. The first system (59) is highlighted with a green border and includes the markings *smorz.*, *poco rall.*, and *a tempo*. The second system (63) is highlighted with a blue border. The third system (67) includes *poco cresc.*, *cresc.*, *sretto*, and *cresc.*. The fourth system (70) includes *f* (circled in blue), *dim.*, and *pp*. The fifth system (74) includes *rall.* and *smorz.*. The score features various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Recapitulation.

Fortissimo is now only *forte*, like a memory.

Etude No. 3

- Chopin's original tempo marking was *vivace*!
 - He later changed it to *Vivace ma non troppo*
 - “Lively, but not too lively.”
 - Today it has a completely different marking.
 - *Lento ma non troppo*, “Slow, but not too slow.”
 - In official Paderewski edition, published by Chopin Institute, Warsaw.
 - This is how it is played today.
 - I have seen no satisfactory explanation of this.
 - My guess: Chopin realized the true nature of the music only after he wrote it.



Prelude No. 13

- Chopin's *Preludes* are written in all 24 major and minor keys
 - Reflecting Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*
 - But arranged in the cycle of 5ths rather than chromatically.
 - C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, D \flat , A \flat , E \flat , B \flat , F
 - He was studying the *Well-Tempered Clavier*
 - Chopin wrote no. 13 while staying with George Sand in Mallorca.



Audio file

Sleepy, dreamy atmosphere is due to repeated notes in melody, minimal harmonic movement (mostly staying in tonic key)

Musical score for measures 13-11. The tempo is marked *Lento*. The score includes piano (*p*) and legato markings. Measure numbers 13, 4, 7, and 11 are indicated. A circled **I⁷** chord is highlighted in the right-hand part of measure 11.

Appearance of 7th modulates to subdominant and anticipates recapitulation

Musical score for measures 14-18. Roman numerals are used to denote chords: **IV**, **vi**, **ii**, **(P) V**, **I**, **IV (dim.)**, **V**, and **I**. Measure numbers 14, 18, and 20 are indicated.

Tempo slows for passage of great tenderness

Descending line in counterpoint with melody

Beautiful appoggiaturas and suspensions, creating major 7 chords

“Chimes” now widely imitated.

End with echo of middle section

Plagal cadence resolves on offbeat.

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of seven systems of staves. The score is annotated with various markings and boxes:

- System 1 (Measures 21-24):** Marked *p* and *ritento*. The bass line contains a descending line highlighted with an orange box. Red ovals highlight specific notes in the treble and bass lines.
- System 2 (Measures 27-30):** Marked *Tempo I*. A blue box highlights the right-hand part of the system.
- System 3 (Measures 33-36):** Features four notes in the treble line circled in green, representing the "chimes".
- System 4 (Measures 36-39):** A blue box highlights the right-hand part. An orange box highlights a descending line in the bass line, and a green box highlights a note in the treble line.