

# 50 YEARS



*Chopin*

**CHOPIN-GESELLSCHAFT**  
IN DER BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND E.V.

# **COMMEMORATIVE PUBLICATION**

to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
**1970 – 2020**

## **CHOPIN-GESELLSCHAFT**

**in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland e.V.**  
(Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany)

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Fryderyk Chopin  
Hermann Raunheim – Lithograph – c. 1844

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- Piano-Berg, Darmstadt

## Greetings



**Angela Dorn**  
Hessian Minister  
of Science and Art

### »Chopin would have been impressed«

#### **Dear Members and Friends of the Chopin Society!**

Had Fryderyk Chopin been alive today, he would probably have been a staunch European: with a French father and a Polish mother, Chopin united two cultures, made his musical career in Europe, was buried in Paris and, as a last wish, had his heart taken back to Poland where it rests behind a pillar in the Church of the Holy Cross in the centre of Warsaw.

His music still reaches the hearts of people all over the globe and has inspired musicians worldwide. And the Chopin Society continues to follow this international ideal.

#### **Signs of international understanding**

In 1970, when there was a total lack of communication between West Germany and the People's Republic of Poland, the Polish pianist Maciej Lukaszczuk took a first step towards improving international understanding, when he founded the Chopin Society in Darmstadt. In the ensuing 50 years its members have organised well over 500 concerts, 25 international masterclasses for pianists as well as 11 international Chopin piano competitions.

They even produced a world premiere in the heart of Hesse in March 2015, when 23 young pianists from all over the world performed Chopin's complete works for piano solo in Darmstadt's Kennedy-Haus – 16 hours without a break. Chopin would have been highly impressed!

For half a century, the Chopin Society has been committed to promoting music, preserving the legacy of a great composer and fostering exchange between cultures. For this it deserves our acknowledgement and gratitude. I wish the Chopin Society and its guests a wonderful, varied, inspiring anniversary year with many moments of affinity with Chopin's work and the people who love music.

*Angela Dorn*  
Hessian Minister of Science and Art



**Jochen Partsch**  
Lord Mayor  
of the Science City  
of Darmstadt

### »An artistic gem of the greatest importance«

#### **Ladies and gentlemen!**

The almost complete destruction of Darmstadt in the Second World War meant that the former state capital had to reinvent itself completely after the war. The city government did so by reflecting on the old values installed by Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig, the founder and inventor of the artists' colony, and from then on developing Darmstadt as the »City of the Arts«.

At the end of the war cultural institutions and institutes were relocating here at a rapid pace, for example the »International Summer Courses for New Music«, the »Darmstadt Secession« and the »German Academy for Language and Poetry«, which soon developed international reputations. This climate of cultural growth also attracted countless artists from different cultural sectors. Most of them teamed up with the existing institutions. Rarely did they start something new themselves. Even more rarely did institutions of international importance that have survived develop out of this.



### Chopin rediscovered

Yet just such a feat was accomplished, when the Polish pianist Maciej Lukaszczyk, who had moved to Darmstadt in the 1960s and worked at the State Theatre, founded the »Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany« (Chopin-Gesellschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland e.V.) on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1970. This was a remarkable accomplishment in many respects: in the early 1970s there was no sensibility in Germany for the music of this fascinating composer with Polish-French roots, who had set new standards in piano playing, nor was there any cultural or other exchange between Poland and Germany taking place at that time. The famous Warsaw Genuflection of the then Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt only took place in December 1970. Even the German Polish Institute (Deutsches Polen-Institut), located in Darmstadt, which was founded by Karl Dedicius and in the meantime is highly renowned, was not founded until 1980.

### Influence reaching far beyond Darmstadt

With a multitude of activities, Maciej Lukaszczyk and the members of the Chopin Society succeeded in the following years in forming out of a small circle of enthusiastic Chopin admirers a society with influence reaching far beyond the borders of Darmstadt and thus enormously increasing Chopin's recognition in Germany. The activities of the newly founded Chopin Society included the first Festival of Polish Music and Culture in Darmstadt in 1972 and the founding of the International Masterclasses, which still offer young pianists a week of tuition with master pianists. In 1983 there followed the 1<sup>st</sup> German Chopin Piano Competition, modelled on the oldest and most illustrious Chopin competition in Warsaw. In the following years it developed into the European Chopin Piano Competition, which not only provided countless young pianists with a platform to perform, but also became an important and prestigious station for their careers.

With the world premiere of a Chopin Marathon, the organisation of a Chopin festival or the inaugural concert of a competition given by all the jury members, the current governing body is leading the Chopin Society with undiminished freshness and verve into the next 50 years of its existence.

### Thanks to the governing body

Thus there has developed over the past 50 years in today's culture-loving Science City of Darmstadt, an artistic gem of the greatest importance – both for the international music world as well as for our city. This is due in the first instance to Maciej Lukaszczyk, and meanwhile to his successor Aleksandra Mikulska, as well as the tireless work of the governing body of the Chopin Society, to whom I would like to express my special gratitude.

The constant activities and concerts of the Chopin Society enrich the cultural life of our city at the highest level. We are delighted and happy to have such an excellent institution here in our city.

*Jochen Partsch*  
Lord Mayor

Wissenschaftsstadt  
Darmstadt



**Jakub Wawrzyniak**  
General Consul  
of the Republic of  
Poland in Cologne

50 years have elapsed since the founding of the Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany, so now it is time to celebrate the golden anniversary!

I congratulate the Chopin Society from the bottom of my heart and I am particularly happy and grateful to have been able to enjoy personally the unforgettable musical events time and again in Darmstadt over the past 15 years. The impressive number of concerts and competitions that have been held over the past 50 years, as well as of musicians who have participated in them, can without fail be clearly documented. Just as impressive is the number of musical talents who started their international career via the Science City of Darmstadt. Hardly to be put in numbers, or even words, however, is the significance of the Chopin Society for the national and worldwide popularisation of the music of the greatest Polish composer, as well as for the German-Polish cultural dialogue, for our friendship. Simply priceless!

Fifty years ago, long before the turning point in 1989, the Chopin Society started to build the musical bridge over the Iron Curtain. This exchange has become one of the pillars of German-Polish friendship over the years. Thanks to the international work of the Chopin Society, the whole world not only became aware of Fryderyk Chopin, but also of his homeland Poland.

I would therefore like to thank all those people, who in the past half century, have devoted so much time and effort – all on a voluntary basis – either up front or behind the scenes, and have contributed to its great success. At the same time, I would like to thank everyone who has supported the Chopin Society not only in word and deed, but also financially over the years. After 50 years, one thing is certain: Darmstadt is not only the City of Science, but also, thanks to the Chopin Society, a Chopin stronghold.

Congratulations once again on your anniversary and we are looking forward with growing anticipation to the anniversary concerts and events on offer again in this special Chopin year 2020.

*Jakub Wawrzyniak*  
General Consul and Doyen of the Consular Corps  
in North Rhine-Westphalia



Generalkonsulat  
der Republik Polen  
in Köln



**Prof. Dr. Theodor Kanitzer**  
President of the International Federation of Chopin Societies (IFCS) and the International Chopin Society in Vienna

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany marks a significant artistic and social event. Founded in Darmstadt by the pianist and teacher Maciej Lukaszczuk from Warsaw, it was the first Chopin Society to emerge on West German soil.

Thanks to the generous support of the City of Darmstadt and many enthusiastic music lovers, the Chopin Society was able to engage top-class soloists and ensembles for concerts in the city's representative venues. Numerous international masterclasses, Chopin piano competitions, as well as festivals of Polish music and culture have significantly enriched the cultural life of this cosmopolitan German city, which is also home to the German Polish Institute.

Poland's most important composer and pianist, Fryderyk Chopin, who began his international career in Vienna with two concerts, was also very popular in Germany during his lifetime, as a result of his friendship with Robert and Clara Schumann, who performed many of his works.

Since 2014 the excellent pianist Aleksandra Mikulska has been the Society's deserving president.

Special merit for the Chopin Society has also been earned by the long-term vice president, Jill Rabenau, who has worked tirelessly in a voluntary capacity for decades together with particularly committed members to achieve the many great successes enjoyed by the Society.

The Chopin Society in Darmstadt is one of the most active members of the International Federation of Chopin Societies (currently numbering 40 member societies worldwide), which is committed to promoting the global collaboration of music lovers and admirers of Fryderyk Chopin, citizen of the world.

Sincere congratulations and best wishes for many more years and successful endeavours.

*Theodor Kanitzer*



Delegates attending the annual conference of the International Federation of Chopin Societies (IFCS), hosted by the Chopin Society in Darmstadt in 2017





## Interview

**Aleksandra Mikulska**  
President of the  
Chopin Society in the  
Federal Republic of  
Germany in Darmstadt

### »I would like to make people receptive for transcendence«

Aleksandra Mikulska has been president of the Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany since 2014. In this interview she tells how she had her first encounter with music, what is important to her and where she sees the significance of the Chopin Society.

#### *Aleksandra, when and where did you touch the piano keys for the first time?*

That is quite an adventurous story. At the age of six I was sent to one of the music schools in Warsaw. The rules of admission were very strict. For about 300 children there were only approximately 20 available places. We had to queue up in the corridor until our names were called out. After a jury had assessed our sense of rhythm and established how musical we were, our hands were then examined in order to determine which instrument they were best suited for. I was fortunate and was accepted into the piano class. The next hurdle was the instrument.

Pianos were expensive and difficult to come by, and then the instrument had to be transported to the tenth floor of a communist prefabricated apartment block with a tiny lift and narrow stairwells. While my parents had reservations about the cost, my grandmother stepped in to help. She closed her savings account, which she had originally set up in order to buy a car, so that she could buy me a piano.

#### *How did it go on from there?*

During my time at high school, I found myself in a difficult situation. In 1996 I got to know my later piano professor Peter Eicher during a masterclass in Warsaw. His lessons were so fascinating and enriching that I decided straight after the masterclass to continue studying with him at the music school in Mannheim. My formative teacher was therefore in Germany, while, being in a class of highly talented pupils at a specialist music school in Poland, I had to take my exams and be assessed by a panel of Polish jurors. Of course, this led to conflicts.

In Poland we lived behind the Iron Curtain with hardly any influences from the outside, except for the Soviet Union. Above all, Chopin was something of a national shrine. Everything revolved around him. To develop freely as an artist was almost impossible. Very soon, the musical corset in which I was trapped began to stifle me. I wanted to go out into the world, was eager for new impulses and perspectives. One year after the masterclass, I said goodbye to my teacher in Warsaw and for the next three years travelled together with my mother for a few days to Germany every month, where I was taught by Peter Eicher. In 2000, as a motivated and freshly graduated high school student, I finally packed my bags and moved to Germany to study at the University of Music in Karlsruhe.

#### *Did you always want to be a concert pianist?*

At the age of nine, when I gave my first public performances, I already felt this could become my career. I dreamed of performing on stage, passing on the music to people and thereby experiencing and creating it again. I firmly believed that dreams could be fulfilled. This belief has always inspired and upheld me. Even as a child I had a deep desire to play Chopin. The television at that time used to broadcast a lot of works by Chopin – Preludes, Ballades, Etudes – and they spoke to me directly.

Since I didn't have any music, I tried jotting down the notes during the transmissions, so that I could play them afterwards on the piano – at least for myself. It was like a deep hidden love for this composer, as if you had always known someone. On every occasion I would ask for music by Chopin. Later came my love for Brahms, Liszt, Haydn, Scriabin and finally Szymanowski and Beethoven as well as Prokofiev and other well-known composers. Now there was no turning back anymore, music was my world.

#### *How do you prepare for concerts?*

For me, preparation for a concert consists of two things: mental freshness and good practice at the piano. For my best performance on stage, I need a cool head that is in control of everything and a fervent, alert heart. If these are guaranteed, then the dialogue with the composer and with the audience can flow freely.

#### *How do you feel when the last note has faded away?*

Simply happy! There is no feeling in life more beautiful than standing on stage after a successful concert and celebrating. After a concert I like to end the day having a laugh with friends, but if that doesn't work out, I am still satisfied. Then I look forward to my hotel room and a good night's sleep. But before that, I usually phone my family.

#### *What does music mean to you?*

Music is a universal means of communication, an expression of our inner self, a holy medium. It reflects what moves the hearts of all human beings: the longing for happiness and fulfilment. It needs no translation and knows no foreign language. A person cannot get closer to the universe than through music. Because where words are not enough, music comes to our aid.

#### *Where do you see your musical home?*

Definitely with Chopin, Liszt, Brahms, Haydn and Szymanowski. I am, however, especially close to Chopin. I try to experience his music with all my senses. It expresses everything that cannot be put into words and brings it to life. Although Chopin left his homeland quite early, his music is in its essence strongly characterized by Polish folk music and culture. Chopin bequeathed to his country a holy testament that embodies the great longing for freedom and peace. His wonderful talent for improvisation delighted the whole of Paris and his audiences could hardly wait for his next concert. His innermost desires for fulfilled love and happiness are clearly expressed in his work. Chopin's special devotion to art – and particularly to music for the piano – freed his melancholic soul. He lived and composed intuitively, guided by his profound feelings of transcendence and the question of the meaning of life. His music open hearts.

#### *How is the art of piano playing developing in the international cultural scene?*

In the performance practice of the 17<sup>th</sup> through to the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it went without saying that composers were at the same time interpreters and teachers. This common practice took a new direction in the late 20<sup>th</sup>/early 21<sup>st</sup> century. As in other areas of life, people became more specialised, so there emerged specialist pianists and specialist composers. The speed, pressure of perfection and computerisation of life are partly to blame for turning our back on the free, artistic, imaginative,



meditative experience of music. The piano virtuosos followed this fashion, and, figuratively speaking, climbed to the top of the Himalayas and, taking Franz Liszt as their role model, developed a dexterity, perfection and acrobatics that never before seemed possible.

From this dichotomy and, to a certain extent, from the separation of the musical content and deeper understanding of the work from technical proficiency and sporting ability, there emerged a very dangerous trend for art, which put it on a par with competitive sports. Playing the piano has partly become a fad for those who want to demonstrate their dexterity. The music market is booming with the daily emergence of new, nondescript rising stars. On this level we are often dealing with a distortion of the artistic message. For me, there is no doubt that only a truly creative and pithy artistic personality who has developed his or her own style and deep understanding of art can survive in people's memory and heart.

I view positively the liveliness of the internet, which creates a direct connection between the artist and his or her audience. Agencies are losing their importance because artists can convey their ideas themselves and address their audiences directly. That ensures more justice.

*What priorities do you set as President of the Chopin Society?*

I see my task primarily in the promotion of young talent and in the continuation and consolidation of German-Polish collaboration. Through our international master-classes, exchanges take place between young musicians, who are offered highly professional further training. Our international competition takes place every three years, which is now regarded as the most important Chopin competition after the one in Warsaw. The participants value the competition as a lively podium and a good starting point for an international pianistic career.

In addition, German-Polish understanding is very close to my heart. Maciej Lukaszczyk founded the Chopin Society in Darmstadt at a time when the music of Chopin and Poland were exotic in the West. This situation has changed dramatically in the past few decades. Poland is in the meantime part of the European Union and Chopin is well known throughout the world. My aim is to make the Chopin Society a place open for international exchange, to strengthen German-Polish friendship and to build bridges between our peoples. It is also important to me to bring the unknown aspects of Chopin's life and his compositions to light and to present his successors.

*What is important for you as a person, what gives you strength?*

Faith is an extremely important source of strength for me. I am certain that faith provides access to the universe and at the same time is the key to the heart of the composer and the audience. In everyday life, I try to strike a mental and physical balance through sport, nature, travelling or reading. My husband and my family come first and I draw love and security from these relationships. They provide me with the power and inspiration I need for my playing, through which I would like to make people receptive for transcendence. I see that as my most important task and aim in life, because, as artists, we are only an instrument of God and a serving medium.

*Interview conducted by Claudia Ehry*



Original manuscript of Fryderyk Chopin, Polonaise A flat major op. 53

*»Chopin was a universal genius. His music conquered a wide range of audiences. However, it is not »romantic music« in the sense of Byron. It does not tell stories and it does not paint pictures. It is expressive and individual, but it always remains pure art. Even in our theoretical, nuclear age, in which »feeling« is no longer modern, Chopin remains up-to-date. His music is the universal language of human communication..«*

Artur Rubinstein

# Events in the jubilee year 2020

In the jubilee year of 2020 the Chopin Society is paying tribute to its namesake with an attractive blend of well-known and lesser-known works by the great master. Particular attention is drawn to the gala concert in February featuring four first prizewinners of past Darmstadt competitions and the performance of Chopin's complete works for piano and orchestra in September.

**Sun. 19.1.2020** – New Year's Concert in Darmstadt's Literaturhaus with Boris Bloch, starting at 6 pm, followed by our traditional buffet with homemade delicacies. The programme features works by Mozart, Chopin and Tchaikovsky, as well as Bach and Beethoven, who celebrate special anniversaries this year.

**Sat. 29.2.2020** – Gala Concert with opening ceremony in the Orangerie, starting at 6pm (under the patronage of Jochen Partsch, Lord Mayor of Darmstadt). On this evening no fewer than four first prizewinners of our past Chopin Piano Competitions in Darmstadt are performing works by Chopin, Liszt and Paderewski: **Janne Mertanen** from Finland (1<sup>st</sup> prize 1992), **Joanna Marcinkowska** from Poland (1<sup>st</sup> prize 2002), **Claire Huangci** from USA (1<sup>st</sup> prize 2009), **Ivett Gyöngyösi** from Hungary (1<sup>st</sup> prize 2013).

**Tues. 31.3.2020** – Charity/Memorial Concert for **Yuri Blinov** (1975–2019) in the Akademie für Tonkunst, starting at 6 pm. Participating pianists: **Boris Bloch**, **Aleksandra Mikulska**, **Sabine Simon**, **Viacheslav Spiridonov**. The programme features works by Bach, Beethoven, Busoni, Chopin and Schumann. The highly talented, Belarusian pianist and composer **Yuri Blinov** died unexpectedly on the last meters of a half marathon run in his home country on 21.4.2019. He touched many people through his performances and compositions and will always be a shining example of a great musician and human being, whose memory we wish to keep alive in this concert.

**Sat. 25.4.2020** – Piano Recital by **Hélène Tysman** (1<sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 2006) in the Literaturhaus, starting at 7 pm. Four years after her success in Darmstadt Hélène Tysman reached the final of the prestigious XV International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw. Since then she has been a sought-after soloist in all major concert halls. Her programme consists of works by Bach, Chopin and Ravel.

**Sun. 17.5.2020** – Gems of vocal chamber music: all of Chopin's songs and more with **Valentina Pennino** (soprano) and **Magdalena Hirsz** (piano) in the Literaturhaus, starting at 5 pm. The soprano Valentina Pennino, born in Mannheim, will interpret songs by Chopin and Mozart, accompanied by the Polish pianist Magdalena Hirsz, currently president of the Fryderyk Chopin Institute in Switzerland. Magdalena Hirsz will also demonstrate her musicality and sensitivity as a soloist with piano solo works by Chopin and Mozart. **Sat. 27.6.2020** – Members' Annual General Meeting and Members' Concert in the Literaturhaus, starting at 5 pm.

**Sat. 5.9.2020** – Premiere: Chopin – All works for piano and orchestra in the Orangerie, starting at 7 pm, under the patronage of Jochen Partsch, Lord Mayor of Darmstadt. Of Chopin's six works for piano and orchestra, four have not been performed in Darmstadt since 8<sup>th</sup> November 1980. The Mainzer Kammerphilharmonie (Chamber Philharmonic of Mainz) will set a milestone when all of these six works are presented in one concert with acclaimed pianists **Kevin Kenner**, **Aleksandra Mikulska**, **Sabine Simon** and **Piotr Pawlak**. A sensitive accompaniment by the orchestra under the baton of **Catherine Rückwardt** will ensure that the piano part is showcased exactly as Chopin imagined.

**Sun. 11.10.2020** – Concert of Rarities: Chopin's Chamber Music with **Sabine Simon** (piano), **Romain Garioud** (cello) and **Kyryl Terentiev** (violin) in the Literaturhaus, starting at 5 pm. Just how seductive the chamber music of Fryderyk Chopin can be, will be demonstrated on this evening by the French cellist Romain Garioud and Darmstadt's resident pianist Sabine Simon, whose fingers will have to negotiate Chopin's flood of notes up and down the keyboard, while still keeping the balance of sound in check. In the Piano Trio op. 8, often jokingly referred to as »the little piano concerto« they are joined by Kyryl Terentiev, first violinist with the Rheinische Philharmonie in Koblenz.

**Sun. 15.11.2020** – Piano Recital by **Hisako Kawamura** (1<sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 1999) in the Großer Saal des Kreistags (large hall of the district council) in the Darmstadt suburb of Kranichstein, starting at 5 pm. The triumph for Hisako Kawamura in Darmstadt in 1999 was a springboard for even greater achievements. Ever since winning the *Concours Clara Haskil* in Vevey she caught the attention of the music scene and since then has been enjoying a lively concert career on several continents both as a soloist and as a chamber musician. Since 2015 Kawamura has been a professor for piano at the Folkwang University of Arts in Essen. Her programme will include works by Mozart, Schubert and Chopin.

*Subject to change*



Aleksandra Mikulska   Kevin Kenner   Claire Huangci   Boris Bloch   M. Hirsz + V. Pennino   Ivett Gyöngyösi   Janne Mertanen



Hisako Kawamura   Romain Garioud   Joanna Marcinkowska   Hélène Tysman   Piotr Pawlak   Sabine Simon   Catherine Rückwardt



## 50 Years Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany (Chopin-Gesellschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland e.V.)

The year 2020 marks five decades of musical successes for the Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany, which was founded in Darmstadt in 1970 on the initiative of the Polish pianist Maciej Lukaszczyk (1934 – 2014). The society's aim was to find a new way, based on Chopin's music, for Germans and Poles to come together in a cultural and interpersonal exchange at a time when no diplomatic relations or official cultural ties existed between the two countries. Of central importance was the dissemination of knowledge about the life and work of the ingenious Polish composer and pianist, coupled with the desire to promote the tradition of the Polish pianist school in Germany and to give support to young pianists. To realize these aims there emerged over the years a rich variety of musical programmes. From the start there was

pedagogical work with piano lessons based on the Polish pianist school. In 1972 the first of six »Festivals of Polish Music and Culture« took place in Darmstadt, which had enormous success connecting people. Parallel to this began the series of »International Masterclasses for Pianists« and at the same time the concert series »Forum for Young Pianists«. In 1983 there was the first Chopin piano competition in Darmstadt, which has now become recognized by experts as the second most important All-Chopin piano competition in the world, being surpassed only by the International Chopin Competition in Warsaw, which is a musical world event. This was followed by the series »Concerts of the Award Winners« and »Concerts of the Masters«, in which well-known artists from all over the world presented themselves to the Darmstadt public.



Opening concert of the festival »Chopin-Tage« on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2015 with Kevin Kenner & Piazzoforte in the Orangerie

### Multifaceted Activities

The entire spectrum of events, which also includes orchestral concerts, chamber and vocal concerts, lectures and lecture concerts, offers the local public a lively and diverse musical experience on a consistently high level. »The Chopin Society is one of the most active and popular cultural institutions in our city and, with its appealing events, contributes to the rich cultural programme of our city in a pleasant, stimulating and exclusive way,« wrote Jochen Partsch, Lord Mayor of Darmstadt.

### International Connections

Under the direction of Maciej Lukaszczyk and since March 2014 of his successor, the Polish pianist Aleksandra Mikulska, the society has acquired an excellent reputation as an internationally networked music institution. It belongs to the International Federation of Chopin Societies (IFCS), founded in Warsaw in 1985, which currently comprises 40 organisations worldwide. In 1989 the IFCS was admitted to the UNESCO International Music Council (IMC). The Chopin Society is also a member of the Alink-Argerich Foundation, an independent, worldwide information and service centre for pianists and competitions, founded in 1999. Darmstadt's impulses and experience were the inspiration for the founding of further Chopin societies in Germany and abroad, including Hannover, Oberursel/Hochtaunuskreis, Berlin, Copenhagen and Feldkirch in the Vorarlberg region of Austria.

It should be borne in mind that the motivation to cope with the enormous organisational load does not stem from commercial gain, but from the joy of music. The society is an exclusively non-profit organisation and the members work on a voluntary basis. Nevertheless, this work would be impossible without the financial support of the city and the Sparkasse bank of Darmstadt as well as the Hessian Ministry of Science and Art and the Sparkassenkulturstiftung Hessen-Thüringen, which have always supported our projects and to whom we are greatly indebted.

Jill Rabenau

»Many flowers make Darmstadt's cultural life colourful and diverse. One blossom always has a special radiance – The Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany, based in the city's Literaturhaus. For almost 50 years now, a high level of musical competence in interpreting Fryderyk Chopin's work and an extraordinary personal commitment to promoting young pianists have been combined here. The international masterclasses and the international Chopin competition enjoy the highest recognition in specialist circles as well as among visitors to the many public events. The fact that the Chopin Society also maintains a constant, lively cultural exchange with our neighbours in Poland fills us with pride and gratitude in Darmstadt.

Prof. Dr. Ludger Hünnekens, Culture Officer of the City of Science Darmstadt, 2016

»From the great response to the concerts from the Darmstadt audience, you can see how integrated the Chopin Society is in the cultural life of the city. We cannot imagine being without this society.«

Peter Benz, Lord Mayor of Darmstadt, 1995

»If you imagine a world culture that consists of the very best works of music, literature and the visual arts of all times and of all peoples, a world culture that communicates itself to many people in all cultural nations with creative power, then Fryderyk Chopin's music is a resounding element of this world culture...

The Darmstadt Chopin Society should become the mother of many Chopin circles throughout the country. It is about music and intellectual exchange. Its cause needs friends. It is worth everyone's support.

Heinz Winfried Sabais, Lord Mayor of Darmstadt, 1972



## Chopin in a new light

### Concerts of the Chopin Society

In the course of its 50-year existence the Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany has organised far more than 500 concerts. The very first one took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1971 in the Justus-Liebig-Haus in Darmstadt – the programme featured waltzes and mazurkas by Chopin as well as the C sharp minor Polonaise and the B minor Scherzo. Seated at the piano was the Polish pianist Ewa Maslaczynska. In addition, the singer Bozena Lewgowd, of Frankfurt's municipal theatre company, was engaged for this initial concert. Accompanied by Maciej Lukaszczuk at the piano, she sang songs by Chopin and two arias by Stanislaw Moniuszko, the founder of the Polish National Opera.

### Refuting the prejudice

Showing Chopin in a different light was Maciej Lukaszczuk's objective when he founded the first Chopin Society on West German soil fifty years ago in Darmstadt. As far as Polish culture was concerned, there was a great deal of ignorance in Germany after the Second World War. In an interview with the newspaper, »Darmstädter Echo«, the longstanding president of the Chopin Society explained that he was particularly disconcerted by *»the wrong view of Chopin«*. At that time it was largely the image of Chopin as a French salon composer that dominated public opinion. By organising concerts to which he invited leading Polish Chopin interpreters, Lukaszczuk attempted to refute this prejudice.

Lukaszczuk, who died in 2014, saw Chopin's music *»as a cultural bridge to a Europe without borders«*. In doing so he was particularly concerned with bridging the gap to Poland, which was still behind the Iron Curtain when the Chopin Society was founded. For this purpose the »Festivals of Polish Music and Culture« were created in 1972.

The famous Polish pianist and pedagogue Jan Ekier, who played works by Chopin in the Justus-Liebig-Haus in Darmstadt, opened the first one. Lukaszczuk, who came to Germany in 1964, had studied with Ekier in Warsaw. His good contacts to outstanding pianists from his homeland, whom he had met while still studying, made it possible for the Chopin Society to engage, right from the start, top-class artists for its concerts.

### Unattainably high level

Soon there was an endless coming and going in Darmstadt of the most well known Chopin specialists of their time. These included Halina Czerny-Stefanska, Marta Sosinska, Pavel Gililov and Eric Berchot. The appearance of the prominent Polish Chopin pianist Adam Harasiewicz on 6th October 1979 in the packed Audimax hall of Darmstadt's Technical University falls into this glamorous first phase. *»The level at which he played on this evening was unattainably high. We, the older members of the society, still have this sound in our ears«* recalls Lukaszczuk in his interview with the »Darmstädter Echo«.

An intensive collaboration developed in the early years of the Chopin Society with the Darmstadt State Theatre. Under the direction of General Music Director Hans Drewanz, Jan Ekier played both of Chopin's piano concertos at the opening of the »Second Festival of Polish Music and Culture« in Darmstadt in the large auditorium of the State Theatre in 1974. Further highlights of this fruitful cooperation were the performances of Karłowicz's violin concerto with Jan Kulka and Szymanowski's violin concerto with Jacek Klimkiewicz. Even though Chopin's work was always at the focus of these festivals, other Polish composers lesser known in Germany also gained attention. The aim was to make accessible to the public the broadest possible spectrum of Polish culture.

### Stimuli from the German Polish Institute (Deutsches Polen-Institut)

In addition to the concerts, there were regular lectures and readings. For example, there was a lecture on »Contemporary Polish poetry« given in 1980 during the »Fourth Festival of Polish Music and Culture« by Karl Dedecius, who was then Director of the German Polish Institute. Jan Weber, editor-in-chief of the Polish radio and television stations, held a lecture on »Polish pianists of the golden era«, and Andrzej Chłopecki spoke about »Young Polish pianists of today«.

The previous year, the Chopin Society had announced a composition competition to promote young Polish composers. The prize composition, Czarnecki's »Sinfonie concertante«, was premiered under the direction of Hans Drewanz at the State Theatre in Darmstadt.

The »Festivals of Polish Music and Culture« soon gave rise to further series of programmes: »Concerts of the Masters«, »Forum for Young Pianists«, »Concerts of the Award Winners«, »Music from other countries« as well as the special series »Music and ...«, in which music was viewed in connection with other arts and the spiritual currents of the time. Since in the early days the Chopin Society did not have its own venue, the concerts were held in such places as the Justus-Liebig-Haus, the State Theatre of Darmstadt, the Orangerie and the Mollerhaus.

### Move to the Literaturhaus

Since the Chopin Society moved its seat to the Kennedy-Haus (Literaturhaus) in 1979, a place has been found where events could take place on a regular basis.

Additionally, several important concerts were held every year in Darmstadt's Orangerie concert hall. Big names such as Eric Berchot, Halina Czerny-Stefanska, Jan Ekier, Pavel Gililov, Adam Harasiewicz, Alexander Jenner, Peter Schmalfluss, Jean-Marc Luisada, Dominique Merlet, Edith Picht-Axenfeld, Rolf Plagge, Marta Sosinska and David Wilde all made guest appearances at these master



Literaturhaus (John-F-Kennedy-Haus)

concerts. More recently, many important artists such as Dang Thai Son, Kevin Kenner, Boris Bloch, Jonathan Plowright, Claire Huangci, Kate Liu, Eugene Indjic, Giovanni Bellucci and Eric Lu – to name just a few – accepted the invitation of the Chopin Society.



The teaching room of the Chopin Society in the 1980s

### Exceptional musical moments

The society's musical profile was shaped in the early years by the numerous piano recitals and chamber concerts that the society's president, Maciej Lukaszczyk, gave in Darmstadt. Lukaszczyk's performances as a piano duo with his twin brother Jacek (with whom he had won a special prize in the ARD competition) left a lasting impression. The new president, Aleksandra Mikulska, also continues the tradition of giving concerts and actively helping shape the artistic profile. With her appearances in the filled Orangerie, she has again provided exceptional musical moments.

Each year the Chopin Society puts on around a dozen concerts. Piano recitals in the Orangerie with renowned master pianists form an integral part of the concert calendar as do the prizewinners' concerts of the Chopin Competition taking place every three to four years and the opening and closing concerts of the annual masterclasses and the traditional New Year's concert with accompanying buffet held on the society's premises. In addition, there are chamber music evenings, lectures on musicological and historical topics, vocal recitals and readings.

### Inspiring children for Chopin

Furthermore, the promotion of young pianists is an important issue for the Chopin Society. Therefore, many award winners are invited back to give piano recitals, in which the audience that first saw them during the competition can experience them again in a solo recital. Some first prizewinners such as Hélène Tysman from France (2006) and Claire Huangci from the USA (2009) have made regular guest appearances in Darmstadt since their competition success. In addition, the Chopin Society organised concerts for children both in schools and in the Kennedy-Haus in 2012 and again in 2014 and 2015 under the motto »Chopin 4 U«, in order to introduce children and young people to Chopin's music.

Mainly responsible for the organisation of the concerts is the Society's Vice President, Jill Rabenau, who took over this task from Irmgard Hörl about ten years ago. During her visits to international Chopin festivals and competitions, she establishes contacts with Chopin interpreters from all over the world, many of whom accept an invitation to Darmstadt.

### Unforgotten: The Chopin-Marathon and Yuri Blinov

In addition to the top-class piano recitals in the Orangerie, regularly attended by more than 300 music lovers, the Chopin Society attracted attention in recent years with two spectacular concert events initiated by Jill Rabenau – on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2015 all Chopin's piano solo works were performed non-stop in a marathon event that lasted 16 hours. This extraordinary project, which took place in the Kennedy-Haus from early morning until late into the night, not only generated interest with lovers of Chopin's music, but also struck a chord with the broad public.

Hundreds of visitors flocked to the auditorium of the Kennedy-Haus, which was soon hopelessly overcrowded. Most of those who came stayed and followed the marathon for several hours. The 350 programmes were already sold out by the afternoon.

Twenty-three pianists from twelve countries took part in this event, including a number of prizewinners of the Darmstadt competitions. Starting with the Polonaise in B flat major from the pen of the seven-year-old Chopin until his last Mazurka in F minor op. 64, No. 4, all solo piano works were performed chronologically according to their date of composition. It was no easy task to find pianists to cover the multitude of works, especially the lesser known compositions. The success of this was largely thanks to the huge commitment of Yuri Blinov, a long-time friend and companion of the Chopin Society, who had immediately agreed to study a completely new repertoire especially for this event. His impressive performance of Chopin's first sonata in C minor op. 4, which he gave during the marathon, is unforgettable. We were deeply moved by his untimely death in 2019 at the young age of 43.



The stage in the auditorium of the Kennedy-Haus/Literaturhaus with Mariko Sudo at the piano during the Chopin-Marathon in 2015



The newly furnished »Chopin Salon« in the rooms of the Chopin Society in the Kennedy-Haus/Literaturhaus





Eric Lu in the Orangerie on 18.2.2017



New Year's Concert 2018 in the Literaturhaus with Sabine Simon



The Javorkai Trio in the Literaturhaus on 4.5.2019



Aleksandra Mikulska in the Orangerie on 17.11.2019



Yuri Blinov in the Literaturhaus on 13.12.2015

### Dancing on stage

The »Chopin-Tage« (Chopin Days), was a short festival that took place later that same year. With great success, Kevin Kenner, together with the Polish quintet »Piazzoforte«, performed his own arrangement of Chopin's Piano Concerto in E minor, newly appearing in the Polish PWM edition. The second half of this concert in the Orangerie featured Argentinian Tangos, with two professional tango dancers appearing at one point on stage to the surprise and delight of the capacity audience.

Another highlight in the history of the Chopin Society was the inaugural concert of the 11<sup>th</sup> Darmstadt International Chopin Piano Competition on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in the Orangerie, in which all of the seven jury members participated. A concert in which all the jurors sat at the keys one after the other had never before been witnessed in Germany. Jill Rabenau had had the idea for this extraordinary concert while visiting the All-American Chopin Piano Competition in Miami earlier in the year. The ambitious project demanded quite some sporting spirit from the members of the top-class jury, consisting of two Warsaw winners Kevin Kenner (jury chair) and Dang Thai Son, the many times jury chairman of the Warsaw Chopin Competition Andrzej Jasinski, as well as Ewa Poblocka, Martin Kasik, Tobias Koch and Sabine Simon. Without exception, the seven jurors, who seemed to inspire each other,

showed themselves in top form. Each of them lent their own voice to the instrument, revealing their deep involvement with Chopin spanning decades.

### Longstanding friendships

The Chopin Society has a longstanding friendship with many artists who participate in the jury or give guest performances in Darmstadt. This often creates a special atmosphere during the concert evenings. The newly fashioned rooms in the Kennedy-Haus with the lovingly furnished 19<sup>th</sup> century style Chopin Salon offer artists a pleasant setting and source of inspiration before they go on stage. The intimate atmosphere of the new salon is an ideal place to meet and converse. After the concerts, the audience always has the opportunity to get to know the artists personally. The conclusion of a concert evening is usually a joint restaurant visit with the artists in a very pleasant and relaxed atmosphere. For some time now, the salon has also been the meeting point for a group of passionate amateur pianists who get together regularly to exchange ideas and perform for each other. It also serves as an additional source of inspiration for the students of the president of the Chopin Society during piano lessons.

### All works for piano and orchestra

In the jubilee year of 2020 no fewer than seven prize-winners of past Darmstadt Chopin Piano Competitions will take to the stage. Of course, in addition to Chopin, a whole range of other composers will feature in the programmes, including J. S. Bach and L. van Beethoven, both of whom have special anniversaries this year. However, the anniversary concert in February and the performance of Chopin's complete works for piano and orchestra in September are likely to be the undisputed highlights.

*Silvia Adler*



## The lasting importance of Chopin's piano technique

### Piano education and international master-classes – The Chopin Society feels particularly committed to the Polish pianist school

One of the most important tasks of the Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany has always been – and still remains – piano education based on the piano technique of Fryderyk Chopin. From 1979 to 2014 the Polish pianist, founder and former president of the Chopin Society, conducted piano classes in the society's rooms. Previously his students had received tuition from him in their own homes or in the rooms of the »Musische Gesellschaft Auerbach« in Darmstadt's Riedlingerstrasse. Since 2014 this tuition been taken over and successfully continued by the current president of the Chopin Society, the Polish pianist Aleksandra Mikulska. Tuition is offered for beginners, intermediate and advanced students of all ages, who have the opportunity to perform in students' concerts.

### Open workshop for pianists

While regular tuition between student and teacher usually takes place behind closed doors, the international master-classes that were started in 1972 offer an exciting glimpse into an open workshop for pianists. These classes, conducted by distinguished pianists and teachers, attract piano students from all over the world. Tuition takes place in front of interested listeners, who – just like the students – take home valuable ideas for their own music making or ideas for a better understanding of the music.

The courses deal with general problems encountered in piano literature with special focus on the works of Chopin. Style and interpretation as well as elements such as touch, dynamics and pedal are also part of the course content. These courses are offered to young pianists from all over the world – with a free choice of programme – as preparation for music exams, concerts and competitions. Only a limited number of applicants can be accepted for active participation.

### It began with Jan Ekier

The Chopin Society started its international masterclass series in the autumn of 1972. The course lasted almost three weeks. It was conducted by the Polish pianist, composer, piano pedagogue and leading Chopin expert Prof. Jan Ekier (1913 – 2014) of the Warsaw Music University. Finally yet importantly, Prof. Ekier earned himself an excellent reputation as the editor of the new National Edition of the Works of Fryderyk Chopin, a task he had worked on for well over half a century.

Since then another 24 master classes have been conducted in the rooms of the Chopin Society, each course creating a different impression and individual focus depending on the musical preferences of the course instructor and the choice of works by the candidates. Once the course included piano works for four hands and in 2016 for the first time works for piano and cello were introduced in preparation for the 11<sup>th</sup> Darmstadt International Chopin Piano Competition, where the final round required a piece for piano and cello by Chopin. The year 2019 saw the participation – in addition to eleven pianists – of a piano trio, which added some interesting diversity.



Closing concert of the masterclass in 2019 conducted by Prof. Carmen Piazzini (front right). In the first row from left to right Hartmut Stolzmann (of the governing body), Aleksandra Mikulska (President) and Jill Rabenau (Vice President)

»Immediately the hardness disappears from her touch«

The music journalist Silvia Adler visited the course conducted by Tamás Ungár in 2018 and described her observations in a report for the newspaper »Darmstädter Echo«. Excerpt:

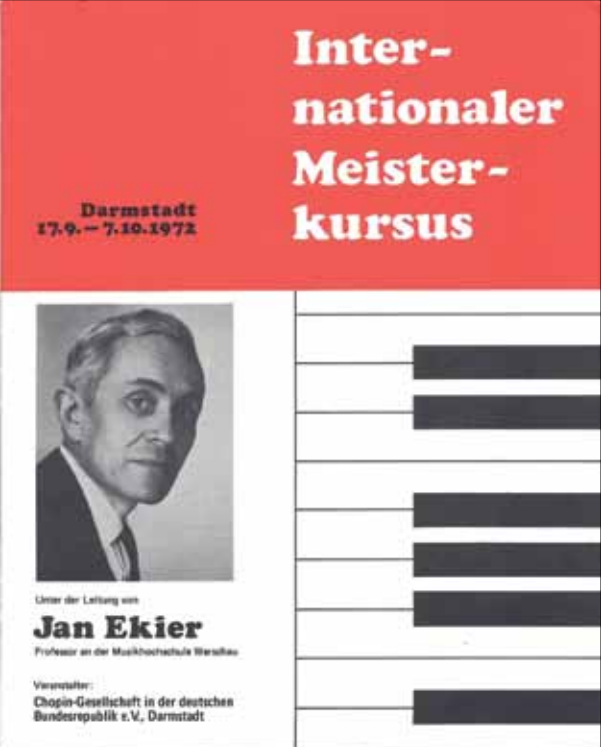
*»Before Ungár even begins to introduce his pupil to the correct phrasing and articulation of the accompaniment, he tries to sharpen her awareness of the revolutionary musical-historical importance of Chopin's studies. Previously pianists only trained their fingers, but Chopin (1810 to 1849) expanded the piano technique by bringing wrists and arms into play. For the awkward intervals that were in the study, it was crucial to pay attention to the correct position of the wrists. Switching as quick as lightning from the excursion into musical history into practice, Ungár challenges the young pianist to try it out, and immediately the hardness disappears from her touch. The flexible movements of the wrists create a sound that comes much closer to the character of romantic piano music.«*

The students appreciate the valuable suggestions and regard the possibility of several public appearances as an excellent preparation for later competitions. Furthermore, the familiar atmosphere makes it easy for them to exchange ideas with fellow students. That the spirit of the masterclasses, however, should be understood less in competitive thinking and more in the sense of intensive artistic development is demonstrated by the fact that, as far as possible, all students join forces to present their skills in a final concert.

New »Mini-Masterclass Series«

Our series of »Mini-Masterclasses« launched in 2018 is attracting increasing interest. It involves offering selected pianists who play a recital with us the opportunity of holding a half-day mini-masterclass, teaching three or four talented piano students from the region. This takes place on the day before or after their recital. So far the resonance has been very positive, because everyone profits from it – students get an extra boost of motivation, and the instructors, whether this be Yeon Min Park or Kate Liu, all gain valuable teaching experience. In addition the audience is fascinated to have the opportunity to get to know the recital pianists in a completely different role.

Jill Rabenau



International Master Classes and tutors since 1972

- 1972 Prof. Jan Ekier (Warsaw)
- 1979 Prof. Halina Czerny-Stefanska and Prof. Ludwig Stefanski (Krakow)
- 1981 Prof. Halina Czerny-Stefanska and Prof. Ludwig Stefanski (Krakow)
- 1985 Prof. Halina Czerny-Stefanska (Krakau) and Maciej Lukaszczyk
- 1988 Prof. Dominique Merlet (Paris)
- 1990 Prof. Marta Sosinska (Poland/Würzburg)
- 1991 Prof. Naoyuki Taneda (Japan/Karlsruhe)
- 1993 Prof. Detlef Kraus (Hamburg)
- 1995 Prof. Halina Czerny-Stefanska (Krakow) and Maciej Lukaszczyk
- 1997 Prof. Rudolf Kehrer (Moscow/Vienna)
- 1998 Prof. Rudolf Kehrer (Moscow/Vienna)
- 2001 Prof. Rudolf Kehrer (Moscow/Vienna)
- 2003 Prof. Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Detmold)
- 2004 Prof. Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Detmold)
- 2005 Prof. Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Detmold)
- 2007 Prof. Sontraud Speidel (Karlsruhe)
- 2008 Prof. Katarzyna Popowa-Zydron (Poland) and Prof. Kevin Kenner (USA)
- 2010 Prof. Boris Bloch (Moscow/Folkwang)
- 2011 Prof. Boris Bloch (Moskau/Folkwang)
- 2012 Prof. Lev Natochenny (Moscow/Frankfurt)
- 2014 Prof. Andrzej Jasinski (Katowitz) and Prof. Elzbieta Karas-Krasztel (Warsaw)
- 2016 Prof. Martin Kasik (Prague), assisted by the cellist Jiri Barta (Prague)
- 2018 Prof. Tamás Ungár (Hungary/USA), Aleksandra Mikulska (Poland/Darmstadt) and Sabine Simon (Darmstadt)
- 2019 Prof. Carmen Piazzini (Argentina/Darmstadt)

rot = Polish tutors



Prof. Tamás Ungár teaching during the masterclass in 2018





Masterclass 2008 with Kevin Kenner



Masterclass 2014 with Andrzej Jasinski



Masterclass 2011 with Boris Bloch



Masterclass 2016 with Martin Kasik





## Chopin Piano Competitions in Darmstadt – a success story

*»Musicians are rightly envious of pianists because they have Chopin«*

(Lev Oborin, winner of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw in 1927)

The Chopin Competition in Darmstadt has a long and rich tradition not shared by too many other competitions. It is solely devoted to the works of Fryderyk Chopin and has been held regularly every three to four years in the month of October since 1983, carefully avoiding those years in which the International Chopin Competition in Warsaw takes place. For the funding of the competition we are largely indebted to the Science City of Darmstadt, the Sparkasse Bank and Foundation and the Hessian Ministry of Science and Art. The competition is planned, organised and run solely by members of the Chopin Society, who are all idealistic and inspired volunteers. It is carefully planned and organised and, as far as is humanly possible, nothing is left to chance. Utmost care is taken to ensure fair conditions for everyone, avoiding any kind of favouritism, and all attempts are made to provide a friendly and caring atmosphere, in which the participants feel comfortable and enjoy the experience of playing to a knowledgeable and appreciative audience and a carefully selected team of jurors. The duration of the competition is typically 11 days with an unspecified number of candidates at the outset, but with typically 20 semi-finalists and 6 to 8 finalists who perform with orchestra.

Over the decades the event has gained in prestige and is now regarded by experts as the second most important all-Chopin competition after Warsaw.

Kevin Kenner, winner of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Chopin Competition in Warsaw, writes:

*»...as an international competition specializing in the works of Fryderyk Chopin, there are few if any other competitions in the world (and there are many) which could be considered more important, except of course the Warsaw Competition itself. It is for this reason that the competition in Darmstadt attracts the attention of young and highly talented pianists from all over the globe.«*

This opinion is also shared by Gustav Alink, founder of the Alink-Argerich Foundation, an independent worldwide information and service centre for musicians and competitions:

*»The Chopin International Piano Competition in Darmstadt takes a special place in the music world. It does not surprise me that there are many competitions around the world dedicated to Chopin. Yet the one in Darmstadt is the most significant one, next to the famous competition in Warsaw.«*

### First steps

The first thoughts of a competition emerged as early as 1972 when, at the end of the first International Master-class in Darmstadt, under the direction of Prof. Jan Ekier, the four most musically and technically mature pianists were selected to give a piano recital. This selection took place without observing the rituals of a formal competition.

The first competition, however, was a composition competition. On the occasion of its tenth anniversary in 1980, the Chopin Society had announced the competition in cooperation with the Polish Composers' Association and the City of Darmstadt. Slavomir Stanislaw Czarnecki won the first prize with the composition »Symphonie Concertante«. The work was premiered during the fourth Festival of Polish Music and Culture by the orchestra of the Darmstadt State Theatre under the direction of General Music Director Hans Drewanz as part of the seventh Symphony Concert.



The pianist Adam Harasiewicz (second from left) complimenting Hiroko Mukunoki from Japan during the first German Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt in 1983. Further from the left: Maciej Lukaszczuk, Mrs Harasiewicz, Halina Czerny-Stefanska, Ernst Weitzel, Jacek Lukaszczuk, Princess Margaret von Hessen und bei Rhein and Rita Mischlich (Foto DE/jüs)

Thirteen years after the foundation of the Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany, the time had finally come – the first German Chopin Piano Competition, initiated by Maciej Lukaszczuk, founder and longstanding president of the society, took place – in Darmstadt. It was to a certain extent a natural consequence of the society's previous activity to arouse interest in Chopin's music and to raise the level of performance of his works in Germany.

At that time there was no special Chopin »school« in the sense of interpreting his music. The first German Chopin Piano Competition was therefore to be a criterion for a convincing style and interpretation of Chopin's works and at the same time a further motivation for local young talents.

### Start in the crowded Orangerie

Forty-five pianists had registered for this first German Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt from 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 1983, of whom 33 turned up to play. Eligible for the competition were students and graduates of German music academies. Adam Harasiewicz, winner of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw in 1955, gave the inaugural concert. This first competition in Darmstadt consisted of two rounds. There were six prize-winners, who performed in a prizewinners' concert to a capacity audience in the Orangerie. Following an invitation from the Hessian Minister for Federal Affairs, this concert was repeated with huge success on 7<sup>th</sup> December in Bonn. On this evening more than three hundred visitors celebrated an important date in German-Polish cultural relations – the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Warsaw Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the People's Republic of Poland.

### International Jury

After the long incubation period of the first competition, the second one followed three years later in October 1986 and consisted of three rounds. Furthermore, not only students and graduates from German, but also Danish and Austrian music academies were admitted. Thirty-three pianists between the ages of 15 and 30 years competed in the Justus-Liebig-Haus. The inaugural concert was given by the world-famous Chopin interpreter and first prizewinner of the 4th International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw in 1949 Halina Czerny-Stefanska, who performed works by Chopin to rapturous applause in the Orangerie. In the third round of the competition when performing Chopin's concertos E minor and F minor, Prof. Jacek Lukaszczuk (Feldkirch), who performed the orchestral part on a second piano, accompanied the finalists.

The international jury decided to award no first prize – which may be proof of the high standards it set – but rather two second and third prizes. In the prizewinners' concert the E minor and F minor concertos were performed for the first time with orchestra. The participating orchestra was the Vorarlberg State Symphony Orchestra.

The third competition, now named European Chopin Piano Competition was held in 1989 and was open to all pianists under the age of 30 who had studied for two semesters or completed a year of piano studies in a European country. This gave young pianists from all European countries the opportunity to measure their artistic abilities with their European colleagues and to effectively promote European cultural exchange across borders. Darmstadt seemed particularly suitable as a venue because the city offered very favourable conditions due to its tradition and its manifold connections with Poland.

### »Diversity of cultures under one roof«

French pianist Dominique Merlet gave a top-class piano recital to a capacity crowd in the Orangerie to open this third competition. 76 young pianists from European, Asian and Latin- American countries, who were studying at music academies in Europe, had registered. 54 turned up to play, 18 advanced to the second round and 6 reached the final. The music critic Klaus Trapp paid tribute to the final concert on October 23<sup>rd</sup> in the »Darmstädter Echo«:

*»...proved how captivating it can be when the music of a composer like Chopin, who himself was in transit between Poland and France, is interpreted from different cultural standpoints. Diversity of cultures under one roof, as it were, was the motto.«*

The first prize money of DM 3 000 (c. EUR 1 500) in the first two competitions had increased threefold to DM 9 000 (c. EUR 4 500).

Seventy-one candidates registered for the 4<sup>th</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt in 1992. The number of jury members was extended to nine. David Wilde from Hanover gave the inaugural concert in the Orangerie, performing works by Beethoven, Liszt and Chopin. For the final round, which took place for the first time with orchestra, it had been possible to recruit the Merck Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Zdenek Simane. The second round required the performance of one movement from the chosen piano concerto with accompaniment on a second piano. This was provided by Prof. Jacek Lukaszczuk. The final round with orchestra was held in the Justus-Liebig-Haus, while the first two rounds had taken place in the new venue of Darmstadt's Akademie für Tonkunst.



The 5<sup>th</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition in 1996 saw 68 candidates from 21 nations register. The chair of the jury was Prof. Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Detmold), who had taken over from Maciej Lukaszczuk, the latter providing this time the orchestral accompaniment on a second piano for the concerto movement in the second round of the competition. The first two rounds were held at the Akademie für Tonkunst, while the inaugural concert with the young Russian Rem Urasin, prizewinner at the 13<sup>th</sup> International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw in 1995, and the final round with the German Chamber Orchestra from Frankfurt am Main, had taken place in the Justus-Liebig-Haus.

### Tribute to the anniversary of Chopin's death

In the UNESCO Chopin Year of 1999 the 6<sup>th</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition from 8<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> October stood under the banner of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chopin's death. 89 candidates from 24 nations congregated in

Darmstadt for the competition. The French pianist Marc Laforet, a prizewinner at the 11th International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw in 1985 opened the competition with an all-Chopin piano recital in the Orangerie. The first two rounds of the competition took place in the Akademie für Tonkunst and the final round in the Orangerie, where the six finalists were joined by the Symphony Orchestra of the Warsaw Fryderyk Chopin Music Academy.

Günther Metzger, Darmstadt's Lord Mayor, hands the first prize to Janne Mertanen (Finland) at the awards ceremony in 1992. On the right Dr. Helmut Kelleter, former Vice President of the Chopin Society





For the prizewinners' concert in the Orangerie the date chosen could not have been more appropriate: October 17<sup>th</sup>, the day on which Chopin had passed away 150 years before.

For the 7<sup>th</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt from 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2002 the value of the first prize had been increased to EUR 10 000, for which 69 candidates were competing. The total prize money had more than doubled compared with the last competition – from DM 23 000 (c. EUR 11 500) to EUR 25 000. The inaugural concert in the Orangerie, an all-Chopin recital, was given by the Rumanian pianist Mihaela Ursuleasa (1978 – 2012). Again, the first two rounds of the competition were held at the Akademie für Tonkunst and the final round in the Orangerie, where the six finalists were accompanied by the Symphony Orchestra from Plock, Darmstadt's twin city in Poland.

#### Across the globe

The 8<sup>th</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition in 2006 was the last one under the direction of Irmgard Hörl († 2012), a longstanding member of the governing body, who contributed greatly to its success. It was also the first time the competition had been open worldwide without restriction to all pianists up to the age of 30. Notwithstanding, there were only 43 candidates who registered and – disappointingly – only 23 who actually turned up to play. Kevin Kenner, winner of the 12<sup>th</sup> Chopin Competition in Warsaw in 1990 gave the opening concert in a stunning recital that illustrated Mozart's influence on Chopin and Chopin's influence on Paderewski. All three rounds of the competition were held in the Akademie für Tonkunst, the finalists being accompanied by the Russian Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra St. Petersburg, based in Frankfurt am Main, under the baton of Juri Gilbo.



Candidates participating in the 9<sup>th</sup> Darmstadt Competition in 2009



Claire Huangci, winner of the 9<sup>th</sup> Darmstadt Competition in 2009, receiving a cheque for EUR 10 000

The next competition took place under the direction of Jill Rabenau and under a new name: »9<sup>th</sup> Darmstadt International Chopin Piano Competition« in 2009. Since all restrictions regarding nationality had been lifted even prior to the last competition, the name »European Competition« now seemed too confining in an age of globalisation and might have been regarded as a deterrent for pianists from other continents. The name change had the desired effect and applications were received from 130 pianists from 30 countries, aged between 15 and 30 years. Of these 93 were accepted and of these 64 turned up to play.

#### Recognition for Darmstadt

The inaugural concert, featuring works by Schubert, Schumann and Chopin, was given by Eugen Indjic, a main prizewinner in Warsaw (1970), Leeds (1972) and Tel Aviv (1974). All 3 rounds of the competition were held at the Akademie für Tonkunst and for the first time 8 candidates (instead of previously only 6) advanced to the final round, where they were accompanied by the Russian Chamber

Philharmonic Orchestra St. Petersburg, based in Frankfurt am Main, under the direction of Juri Gilbo.

The success of many of these »Darmstadt candidates« in the Warsaw Chopin Competition one year later in 2010 was acknowledged by the Polish media with high recognition for Darmstadt.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Darmstadt competition in October 2013 again attracted a large number of excellent candidates (almost 100 applicants from 25 countries). That, together with an impressive line-up of Chopin experts in the jury, attracted public attention. Dang Thai Son (Vietnam/Canada), winner of the 10<sup>th</sup> Chopin Competition in Warsaw in 1980, played the opening concert, enchanting his audience in the Orangerie with a sublime recital of works by Debussy, Chopin and Liszt. All three rounds of the competition took place in the Akademie für Tonkunst, where the 8 finalists performed Chopin's concertos in E and F minor together with the Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice from the Czech Republic under the baton of Marko Ivanovic. Six main prizes were awarded.

The 11<sup>th</sup> competition in 2017 saw over 50 candidates from four continents register, of whom 33 turned up to play. After the death of Maciej Lukaszczyk in 2014, the chair of the jury was taken over by Kevin Kenner.

In this competition the following innovations were introduced:

- More freedom given to the candidates in compiling their competition programme
- The option of improvisation in the first round
- The obligatory performance of an additional chamber work for piano and cello by Chopin in the final round.

#### »A highlight in the history of the society«

The inaugural concert on October 6<sup>th</sup> marked a premiere, as this was given by all seven jury members. The unique spectacle left a lasting impression not only on the audience, but also on the music critic Silvia Adler, who wrote in the Darmstädter Echo on 9<sup>th</sup> October:





First prizewinner Ivett Gyöngyösi with conductor Marko Ivanovic and the Bohemian Chamber Philharmony from Pardubice (Czech Republic) during the 10<sup>th</sup> International Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt in 2013.

*»Even before the first round of the 11<sup>th</sup> Darmstadt International Chopin Piano Competition had started, one thing was already certain – the inaugural concert on Friday evening in the packed Orangerie marks a highlight in the history of the Chopin Society, founded in 1970. One after another the jury members approached the piano in an illustrious row and gave a sample of their art. For the audience it was a unique opportunity to experience seven world-class pianists in a single concert in Darmstadt. A concentrated musical display of fireworks, where climax followed climax.«*

A further novelty consisted in the publication on the Chopin Society's website after the event of the individual points awarded to the candidates. This transparency was very much welcomed. Eight candidates had reached the final round of the competition and were accompanied in the concerto by the Russian Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra St. Petersburg, based in Frankfurt am Main, under the baton of Juri Gilbo. In the obligatory work for piano and cello they were accompanied by the French cellist Romain Garioud.



The finalists of the competition in 2017 with members of the Chopin Society. From left to right: Hartmut Stolzmann (member of the governing body), Piotr Pawlak, Yeon-Min Park, Michal Szymanowski, Misora Ozaki, Katarzyna Golofit, Xin Luo, Angelo-Thomas Curuti, Nagino Maruyama, Aleksandra Mikulska (President) and Jill Rabenau (Vice President and Competition Director).





Joanna Goranko from Poland was the youngest pianist to reach the final in 2017 at 16 years of age



Piotr Pawlak from Poland, first prizewinner, performing in the final round in 2017



For the first time in 2017 a chamber music work was required in the final round. Here the accompanying cellist Romain Garioud and the winner of the third prize and chamber music prize Yeon-Min Park



The seven jury members after their memorable performances at the inaugural concert of the 11<sup>th</sup> Chopin Competition in 2017 in the Orangerie: Andrzej Jasinski (3<sup>rd</sup> from left), Kevin Kenner (5<sup>th</sup> from left), next to him Dang Thai Son, Martin Kasik and Tobias Koch. Seated, from left to right: Ewa Poblocka and Sabine Simon. Also on the photograph, from the Chopin Society: Hartmut Stolzmann on the left (member of the governing body), next to him Aleksandra Mikulska (President) and Jill Rabenau (Vice President and Competition Director)

With all the radiance that emanates from these illustrious competition events, one has to note with regret and disappointment that especially in this millennium hardly any German pianists have taken part. One reason can certainly be attributed to the fact that the percentage of German piano students at German academies is extremely small. Furthermore, the cultivation of a Chopin style of interpretation in Germany is often still only a minor matter. It therefore seems all the more compelling for the Chopin Society to honour Chopin and his work and to encourage young pianists to search for ways to best interpret his music. *Jill Rabenau*



The Chopin Society is a member of the Alink-Argerich Foundation, an independent worldwide information and service centre for musicians and competitions.



# Warsaw impressions

Already on touching down at Warsaw’s airport, »Lotnisko Chopina«, I felt this city was embracing me. Soon I sensed Chopin’s spirit all around me. I had come here to get to know him better, to intensify our relationship, and to experience things at first hand that he conveyed to me through his music.

My first unforgettable moment occurred in Lazienki Park in the late-afternoon, autumnal sunshine on catching sight of this huge and magnificent monument to Chopin. I stood before it in awe. The grandeur of this work of art was overwhelming and inspired me to write the poem »Pomnik Chopina«.

In the course of the week we visited Chopin’s birthplace in Zelazowa Wola and the church in Brochów, where he had been christened. We experienced the wide-open, flat countryside where he had spent the first twenty years of his life and which had left such an indelible mark on his soul. We were invited to a wedding reception where we heard folk music and songs, danced a polonaise, saw locals wearing original costumes and learned about traditions. I spoke my half a dozen words of Polish and noticed how friendly and heartily people reacted to this. It was very moving.

In the Church of the Holy Cross, we saw where Chopin’s heart rests and noted the inscription on the pillar: *Gdzie skarb twój, tam i serce twoje* (Where your treasure is, there is your heart). I experienced the undying love of his fellow countrymen when on 17<sup>th</sup> October, the 156<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chopin’s death, Mozart’s Requiem was performed. The church was full to the brim. Many people had to stand.

At the graves of his parents, sisters and teachers, Wojciech Żywny and Józef Elsner, I saw names that were so familiar to me from books. It moved me to see an old, humpbacked woman cleaning the grave of Chopin’s parents and lighting a candle and putting flowers down. Tears came to my eyes.

In Warsaw I heard the language that was his mother tongue, which he loved to speak throughout his life and in

which he wrote most of his letters. I observed and heard all the fascinating declensions of his name: Fryderyka Chopina, Fryderykowi Chopinowi, Chopinowie etc.

## Finals week in the Philharmonic Hall

In the large Philharmonic Hall, the 15th International Chopin Competition was taking place. It was the week of the finals with twelve finalists. We heard Chopin’s E minor concerto performed ten times, but the F minor one only twice. It seemed to me as though, musically speaking, I had been waiting my whole life for this very moment. Which candidate would come nearest to meeting my taste?

The first evening was exciting but not breathtaking. Not until the second evening did I have goosebumps. Then came the third evening and again the E minor concerto was played three times. First to play was a Russian, who messed up right at the beginning and was well below the level of the others, and I wondered whether that was it, for I thought we must have heard the first prizewinners by now. Only two more candidates to go.

Then a Korean pianist performed the E minor concerto. Was it the same concerto that the Russian had just played? Hard to believe. This was another world, a world of moonlight and stars, where I was floating and dreaming.

Finally a young Polish pianist by the name of Rafał Blechacz sat down at the piano and captured the hearts of the audience. Instinctively I knew he had to be the winner. I was beside myself with excitement. Blechacz had nuances and phrasings in his playing that almost took one’s breath away and yet everything was so clear and natural. Nothing was exaggerated. This is how I imagined Chopin to be. What’s more, he had his figure and posture, modest and at the same time quite noble, had light brown locks and was Polish. I could not go to sleep before I knew who had won.

The jury kept us waiting. Not until half past one in the morning was I able to decipher the message on Polish television that Blechacz had won and that a second place had not been awarded. The Korean took third place. I was ecstatic. Now I could go to sleep.

I often think of this trip in 2005. The impressions and feelings will stay with me all my life. From time to time I listen to the live recording of the E minor concerto that Blechacz played on this evening in the knowledge that I was present

when it took place. The orchestra has not finished before thunderous applause sets in. It thrills me every time and every time I am overwhelmed.

*Jill Rabenau*

## Pomnik Chopina (Chopin’s Monument)

*There he sits, not as he was,  
But how we choose to see him:  
Sculpted from a heart’s desire,  
A Delacroix conception.*

*Seated silent on his throne,  
Eyes closed in rapt enchantment,  
Under a willow’s guarding claw,  
Engaging in creation.*

*Gentle genius, aloof, divine,  
Hearing sounds ethereal:  
Angels singing, willows weeping,  
Mutating into song.*

*Sensing signals all around,  
Voices from an unseen world,  
Melodies that earthward stray,  
Forging wondrous harmonies.*

*Magic moments, filled with bliss,  
Bewitching sounds bequeathed to us,  
Is any monument big enough  
For this beloved genius?*

Jill Rabenau



The Chopin monument in Lazienki Park, Warsaw, Jill Rabenau walking past

## Building bridges – Festivals of Polish Music and Culture in Darmstadt

As well as spreading and nurturing the music of Chopin, another important point on the agenda of the Chopin Society right from the very beginning was the promotion of Polish music and culture throughout Germany and especially in Darmstadt. Because of the war and the Iron Curtain there were big gaps in knowledge about our neighbour Poland. The Chopin Society saw itself early on as a bridge builder. It was founded at a time when connections to Poland were just being re-developed. Much of what we take for granted today was not possible at the time, or was only possible with considerable bureaucratic effort. Thus the neighbouring country Poland remained largely unknown. Moreover there were no institutions like today's that concentrated on the cultural relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Poland. For the most part it was left to active individuals to tackle the problem and establish important connections to Poland. It was therefore important at the time to incorporate cultural aspects that arose out of the music of Fryderyk Chopin into the programme.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture 1972

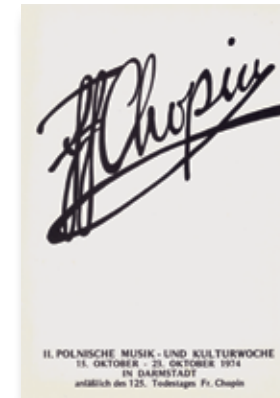
Already two years after the founding of the Chopin Society the first Polish Music and Culture Festival was organised with the following motto: *»Our aim is to be a unifying and communication point for people who would have had to remain permanently alienated from each other and to create loyal friendship.«*

The greetings by Wiktor Weinbaum, General Director of the Polish Chopin Society in Warsaw, and Darmstadt's Lord Mayor Heinz-Winfried Sabais already made clear how important such initiatives are. They claimed that by improving the level of knowledge on both sides, as well as through extensive exchanges of information and friendly encounters, prejudices on both sides are reduced. The borders on maps are not spiritual borders. They should always be open to tolerance and understanding, to courage and goodwill to work together in all areas of our lives. These principles were likewise valid for all the remaining festivals.

At the opening concert in the Justus-Liebig-Haus Prof. Jan Ekier from Warsaw, who had close contacts to Darmstadt, played works by Chopin. Prof. Ekier was a distinguished pedagogue in Warsaw, under whom many successful pianists had studied. His greatest achievement, however, consisted in editing the new National Edition of the Works of Fryderyk Chopin. During the Festival of Polish Music and Culture he conducted an international master class.

Special mention should be made of the fact that Karl Dedecius, on whose initiative the German Polish Institute in Darmstadt was founded some years later, delivered a lecture during the festival titled »Germans and Poles, tradition and similarity«.

Further highlights were two exhibitions of Polish poster and photographic art.



### 2<sup>nd</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture 1974

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October stood under the banner of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chopin's death. For the opening concert it had been possible to engage the orchestra of the Darmstadt State Theatre under the

direction of General Music Director Hans Drewanz. On this evening both of Chopin's piano concertos were performed. The soloist was Prof. Jan Ekier.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture 1977



Works predominantly by Polish composers such as Baird, Karłowicz and Szymanowski featured at the third edition of this festival from 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October. Once again, it was possible to engage the orchestra of the Darmstadt State Theatre for the opening concert, which focused on the violinist Konstanty Kulka performing the violin concerto in A major op. 8 by Karłowicz. In addition, lectures and exhibitions were held to promote mutual cultural understanding.

Inspired by the exhibition of Polish poster art on the Friedensplatz, a Darmstadt department store offered on its own initiative culinary delights and folk art from Poland.



### 4<sup>th</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture 1980

The fourth festival of this kind took place from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> November, as part of the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of the Chopin Society. Halina Czerny-Stefanska opened the festival with a piano recital in the Orangerie, playing works by Fryderyk Chopin, Karol Szymanowski, Juliusz Zareski, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Liszt.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture 1985

The fifth festival from 29<sup>th</sup> September to 5<sup>th</sup> October formed part of the celebrations of the fifteenth anniversary of the Chopin Society. In addition to concerts, lectures and exhibitions there was also an evening of »Music and Dances from the High Tatras.«

A quote from the introduction of the programme booklet by the founder of the Chopin Society, Maciej Łukaszczyk, demonstrates how important this event was for him:

*»I am particularly pleased that we can introduce you to another characteristic element of Polish culture,*

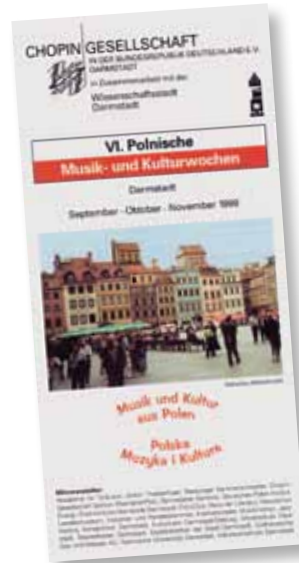
*the original folk music from the High Tatras. This natural music full of beauty, which I hope will bring you closer to Poland and which awakes in me personally memories of my childhood and youth, will be heard in Darmstadt.«*





### 6<sup>th</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture 1998

The next festival – thirteen years had elapsed since the last one – extended over a period of two months, from September to November. It was planned together with the Science City of Darmstadt and involved a large number of important cultural institutions in the city. Just like the Chopin Society, these institutions were convinced that even after German reunification in 1990, there was still a need to intensify the music and cultural exchange with our neighbour in the east.



In October, members of the choir of the music academy from Lodz and the Darmstadt church choir performed Rossini's »Petite Messe solennelle« with Polish and German soloists. The Polish chorists stayed with the families of members of the Darmstadt choir during their stay in Darmstadt. A further highlight was the premiere of a work that had been specially commissioned for the festival, »Darmstadt Concertino for Solo Violin, Piano and Orchestra« by Zdzislaw Szostak. It was performed by the Lodz Philharmonic Orchestra with the soloists Lukasz Blaszczyk, violin, and

Mariusz Drzewicki, piano. In addition to numerous concerts with Polish soloists or programmes with Polish composers, especially Fryderyk Chopin, many other events also took place.

These included in particular

- lectures, readings and seminars on the relationship between Poland and Germany
- a photo exhibition
- an exhibition of Polish posters
- an exhibition of pictures by young female Polish artists

- a three-day workshop with representatives from the technical universities of Darmstadt and Warsaw on German-Polish aspects of research

Meetings on both sides had already taken place in the run-up to the sixth festival. In October 1997, alongside other high-ranking guests from both countries, the President of the Republic of Poland, Alexander Kwasniewski, and the German President, Roman Herzog, had visited Darmstadt at the invitation of the German Polish Institute. During a panel discussion in the State Theatre, the message was clearly conveyed that the great opportunity for a better understanding between Poland and Germany must be seized. Hence, the Chopin Society in collaboration with the Science City of Darmstadt made every effort to ensure that as many encounters as possible took place between people from both countries.

A contribution to this was a concert tour by the Darmstadt church choir to Poland. Three performances of the Brahms composition »A German Requiem« took place with Polish and German soloists. This included a meeting with the choir of the Music Academy of Lodz, which was involved in the festival. This meeting laid the foundation for the joint artistic work of both choirs in the autumn of 1998 in Darmstadt.

### Conclusion

This article has only roughly sketched the content of the Polish Music and Culture Festivals in Darmstadt. All the events, which took place at a time of great upheaval (fall of the Iron Curtain between East and West), pursued one major goal, and that goal was achieved – it paved the way for meetings and events on both sides to take place thereafter as a matter of course and without any great effort.

*Reinhard Schütt*

Former member of the advisory body of the Chopin Society and co-organiser of the 6<sup>th</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture in 1998

In 1983 the street between Mozartweg and Richard-Wagner-Weg in Darmstadt's composer district (Komponisten-viertel) was re-named CHOPINWEG. (Foto: Günther Jockel)



## The early years of the Chopin Society

On coming to Darmstadt in 1972 I wanted to take piano lessons at the Akademie für Tonkunst (at that time still situated at the top end of the Hermannstrasse) and was put on the waiting list. To bridge the waiting time, Maciej Lukaszczyk was recommended to me as a piano teacher. This was how I got to know him and of course, he soon won me over as a member of the very young Chopin Society he had founded. As far as I can remember, this consisted at that time mainly of a number of families, whose children were all piano pupils of Maciej Lukaszczyk, other than that of a small circle of music lovers from such places as the Technical University Darmstadt, and of the pianist Peter Schmalfuss and private acquaintances. At the concerts it was more or less the same group of people who met.



The office of the Chopin Society at that time was in Eberstadt, where several of the founding members lived, including Maciej Lukaszczyk. The concerts mostly took place in the Justus-Liebig-Haus and lessons and members' concerts were held in the rooms of a student organisation in Darmstadt's Riedlingerstrasse. If I remember correctly, the twin brother of Maciej Lukaszczyk, Jacek Lukaszczyk founded around the same time a Chopin society in Feldkirch in Austria. Both brothers had good connections to Poland. A close friend in Warsaw was extremely helpful amongst other things in organising later trips to Poland.

The twin brothers were at that time one of the few existing piano duos. They recorded for the German radio station 'Südwestfunk' such works as Brahms' op. 34 and Grieg's op. 51, pieces that were broadcast time and time again long afterwards.

A special experience was the trip to Warsaw for the Chopin Competition in 1980, when Dang Thai Son won the competition and Ivo Pogorelic was disqualified. It was particularly impressive how all of Warsaw was filled with this music. In every taxi you could hear Chopin from the car radio, in every newspaper kiosk. The concert hall was so crowded that young people were sitting on the steps and in the window niches.

In the meantime, Darmstadt had also held its first Chopin competition, which was initially limited to the Federal Republic of Germany. The competition took place in the Justus-Liebig-Haus. As a special service, every candidate received a taped recording of his or her playing, which I and another member had made.

*Detlev Jordan*



Stanislaus Heimerl, Ernst Weitzel, Irmgard Hörll and Ms Schmidt in the office of the Chopin Society c. 1980



## Maciej Lukaszczyk – A life dedicated to Chopin



Helga Grützer, who has been a member of the Chopin Society for nearly 45 years, still remembers her first encounter with Maciej Lukaszczyk. At that time she was looking for a piano teacher for her son. Acquaintances from Eberstadt told her about a Polish pianist who lived in her immediate vicinity. At the time he was living in the basement of a grey house that stood a little further back than the rest, Im Strohweg 31. »I shall never forget this first meeting in 1976, because he was quite different from how I had imagined a »president« to be. This meeting took place upstairs in the apartment of the house owners, the Hartmanns, because Maciej Lukaszczyk did not have a

»proper« abode. He lived downstairs in a furnished basement – or was it a spruced up garage? In any case, it was a makeshift abode in the most humble circumstances – such as was familiar to me from my own refugee days – where you did not receive foreign guests. Here in the »basement« the pianist used to play the piano for hours on end, sometimes together with his twin brother Jacek, whenever Jacek came to visit him from Austria to play duets together.... How fortunate, that the Hartmanns befriended him and made available their living room upstairs for the president and his guests – just as we later experienced with the Weitzels in Eberstadt and other friends.«

Lukaszczyk, born in Warsaw in 1934, had left his homeland Poland in 1964 and had initially moved to Vienna, until he settled in Darmstadt a year later.

»When you go out into the world, don't forget Chopin.« Maciej Lukaszczyk received this instruction from Jerzy Zurawlew, the founder of the Warsaw Chopin competition, as he recalls in an interview with the »Frankfurter Rundschau«. The pianist took these words to heart and in 1970 founded the first Chopin society on West German soil. Throughout his life he saw himself as an ambassador for the music of his Polish compatriot.

### Biographical parallels

»Almost every musician has a preference for a specific composer«, explains Lukaszczyk. »Even when I was studying at the Warsaw Academy, Chopin's music was very close to me in terms of its sound and atmosphere. When I look back at my own life, I discover certain biographical parallels: my studies in Poland; my critical attitude toward socialist Poland, the state where I lived; a yearning for my Polish homeland. Hence I could relate well to Chopin's melancholic spirit my whole life long.«

Even if Lukaszczyk initially lived in the most modest circumstances in his Eberstadt domicile, the most renowned Polish Chopin experts still accepted his invitation to Darmstadt and in the early years of the Chopin Society in Eberstadt's »Strohweg«, there was a constant coming and going of illustrious interpreters and piano pedagogues.

During the Cold War, when there were no diplomatic relations between Germany and Poland, the cultural exchange flourished in Darmstadt. »We artists were ahead of the politicians«, states Lukaszczyk, who was awarded the Officers Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1991, as a bridge builder between East and West, and the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland in 1999. His goal was to allow for a new, unprejudiced view of Chopin's music in Germany.

In addition, it was important to him to promote young pianists. To this end, the Chopin Society, which he had founded, organised masterclasses and launched the International Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt. As a representative of the Polish pianist school, Lukaszczyk held masterclasses in various European countries and seminars at American universities. In his piano lessons, which he conducted in the rooms of the Chopin Society until 2014, he taught the tradition of Polish Chopin interpretation.

Maciej Lukaszczyk played more than 50 times in Chopin's birthplace in Zelazowa Wola, here in 1974

### Early love of music

Lukaszczyk had started learning the piano at the age of eight. His first encounter with Chopin would remain vividly in his memory: in the apartment where they lived, provided by his father's work – his father was one of Poland's leading doctors – there was a grand piano on which an acquaintance of the family was practising Chopin's A major Polonaise. At that time he was seven years old and was immediately enchanted by the sound of this music. Despite the difficult wartime circumstances, his parents made it possible for him and his brother Jacek to take regular piano lessons, for his father was not only



an eminent oncologist, who had worked as an assistant to Marie Curie, but also a great music lover. He particularly enjoyed listening to his son improvise. Although a medical career seemed predestined, both twins opted for music. Maciej Lukaszczyk studied in Warsaw from 1951 to 1957 with the professors Kazuro-Trombini, Drzewiecki and Ekier.

In 1955 the twins made their successful debut as a piano duo in Poznan. Concert tours followed in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria and the Soviet Union. In Chopin's birthplace Zelazowa-Wola alone, Lukaszczyk played more than 50 concerts. As a soloist and as the duo partner of his brother, he recorded for radio, television and the Polish record company »Muzak«.

In 1964 he moved to Vienna and continued his studies with Hans Kann, who finally took him with him to Darmstadt and helped him secure a job as an accompanist at the regional theatre, as it was then. »There I learned a lot about the systematic German way of working«, Lukaszczyk recalls in a conversation with the »Darmstädter Echo«. However, the strictly hierarchical principle of running things in the theatre business did not suit him very well. »After all, I left Poland in order to have a bit more freedom and not to let myself be ordered around in the theatre!« The pianist, who had made a name for himself in the meantime in Darmstadt as a Chopin interpreter, gave up his job at the theatre and devoted himself from then on to his concerts and his pedagogical work. A circle of followers soon formed around him, out of which the »Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany« developed. The official day of its foundation was the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1970, in memory of the day of the German assault on Poland in 1939. Although the day of its founding only coincidentally fell on this historic date, in retrospect this was of great symbolic value for Lukaszczyk. He had witnessed the outbreak of war in Warsaw as a child.

### Concerts in the coffee house

In the times of the German occupation, he and his family often visited the Warsaw music café »Woytowicz«, where many well-known concert pianists and chamber musicians gave concerts without permission. Apart from Chopin's mazurkas and polonaises, which were banned because of their Polish-patriotic character, works by Mozart were frequently performed there, for which Lukaszczyk had also felt a close affinity since childhood. »Mozart's music in its incomparable clarity unconsciously showed us a light from a better world as children. Today I still remember the Sonata in A major with the »Turkish March« or the Sonata for two pianos in D major (KV 448). The concerts were often interrupted by the singing of soldiers marching along the Nowy Swiat, which brought us back to the stark reality of the here and now. At those moments the magic of Mozart's music sounded even more intense by contrast.«

During his studies in Vienna Lukaszczyk learned to understand Mozart even better. »Especially his human side against the background of the charming lightness and conviviality of Vienna. As a Polish pianist with a strong affinity for Chopin, I think of the great admiration that Chopin felt for Mozart. One should not forget that after his death, in accordance with Chopin's wish, the Mozart Requiem was performed at his funeral service in the church of Sainte Madeleine in Paris. At the Chopin Competition in Warsaw, the Mozart Requiem can always be heard in a festive atmosphere in the Holy Cross Church on October 17<sup>th</sup>, the day of Chopin's death«, Lukaszczyk recalls.

### Successful twin brother duo

In 1956 the pianist together with his twin brother Jacek was awarded the second prize at the Polish Mozart Competition for Piano Duos in Katowice. In 1965 the piano duo won third prize at the prestigious international ARD Competition in Munich. As a successful piano duo, the brothers performed in the world's major concert halls. Guest appearances took them through Europe and the USA. Reviews raved about »pianistic fireworks«, »inspired twins« and »one heart and twenty fingers.«

The two pianists also made names for themselves as soloists, Jacek Lukaszczyk especially as a Schubert expert, Maciej as a Chopin interpreter. The latter gave his first Chopin recital in Darmstadt in 1970. Numerous solo recitals followed in front of a large auditorium.

The pianist continued to give public performances into old age. Even at the celebrations for his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in the Orangerie Restaurant, the birthday boy did not miss the



opportunity to sit down at the grand piano and play Chopin. Many guests remembered this last appearance in Darmstadt as a moving moment. Until his death Lukaszczyk involved himself with Chopin's music and was always able to discover something new in it.

### Passionate search for truth

The »Darmstädter Echo« wrote the following about his piano recital on 19th June 2010 in the Kennedy-Haus: »Passion has not faded (...) Lukaszczyk successfully achieved a wonderful balance of expressive

power and dreamily subtle inwardness in Chopin's four ballades, whose dramatically triumphant interpretation was enthusiastically celebrated by the audience. Even if he has been involved with the works of his Polish compatriot for more than fifty years, there is no trace of matter-of-fact routine in Lukaszczyk's rousing interpretation of Chopin. Bold and headstrong, his playing still seems to stem from a passionate search for truth.«

Maciej Lukaszczyk was president of the Chopin Society for forty-four years. In 2014 he ceded his office to Aleksandra Mikulska. He died on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014 in Poznan in Poland, just six months after his brother Jacek, who had passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013 in Austria.

*Silvia Adler*

The successful twin brother duo  
Jacek and Maciej Lukaszczyk



Tabular history of the Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany 1970–2020

red = Festivals of Polish Music and Culture    green = International Materclasses  
blue = Chopin Competitions in Darmstadt    purple = Special Events in recent years

K-H = Kennedy-Haus/Literaturhaus;    J-L-H = Justus-Liebig-Haus;    Or = Orangerie;  
AU = Audimax of the Technical University;    Kong = Congress Hall in the Luisencenter;  
Th-G-H = Large auditorium of the State Theatre;    M-G-A = Haus der Musischen Gesellschaft Auerbach, Darmstadt;  
G-M-H = Georg Moller Haus

24. 9. 1970	Founding of the Chopin Society in Darmstadt	
26. 11. 1970	Official registration as a society in Darmstadt	
3.3. 1971	First public concert with Ewa Maslaczynska (piano), Bozenna Lewgowd (soprano), accompanied by Maciej Lukaszczyk on the piano	J-L-H
17. 9. – 7. 10. 1972	1 <sup>st</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture in Darmstadt. Opening concert is a piano recital given by Prof. Jan Ekier (Warsaw)	J-L-H
20. 9. 1972	A second piano recital by Jan Ekier	J-L-H
17. 9. – 7. 10. 1972	1 <sup>st</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Jan Ekier	
1974	From now on, tuition and concerts given by pupils can take place in the House of the Auerbach Music Society, Darmstadt, Riedlingerstr. 3.	
14. – 21. 9. 1974	First trip to Poland of a group of members of the Chopin Society	
15. – 23. 10. 1974	2 <sup>nd</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture	
15. 10. 1974	Jan Ekier and the Orchestra of the State Theatre of Darmstadt under the direction of Hans Drewanz perform both of Chopin's piano concertos.	Th-G-H
16. 10. 1974	All-Chopin recital with Milosz Magin (Paris)	J-L-H
26. 9. 1975	Celebrations to mark the 5 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chopin Society. Peter Schmalfluss and Maciej Lukaszczyk play Chopin	G-M-H
15. 10. 1975	Piano Duo Lukaszczyk performs works for two pianos and percussion	J-L-H
23. 11. 1975	Matinée concert with Peter Schmalfluss	
10. 1975	Study trip to Warsaw to the International Chopin Competition	
22. 5. 1976	First competitive auditions by the students of the piano class of Maciej Lukaszczyk	M-G-A

13. 10. 1976	Piano recital with M. Lukaszczyk (Chopin, Ravel and Rachmaninov)	J-L-H
10. – 16. 10. 1977	3 <sup>rd</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture	
10. 10. 1977	Opening concert with the Orchestra of the State Theatre under the direction of GMD Hans Drewanz. Soloist: Konstanty Kulky (violin)	Th-G-H
13. 10. 1977	Symphony concert with the Merck Chamber Orchestra and the Piano Duo Lukaszczyk	AU
15. 10. 1977	Piano recital by Adam Harasiewicz (PL), Works by Chopin	AU
1978	7 concerts by the students of the piano class of M. Lukaszczyk	M-G-A
13. 1. 1979	Handing over to the Chopin Society of the rooms in the John-F-Kennedy-Haus provided by the City of Darmstadt	
3. 3. 1979	Festive opening of the rooms in the Kennedy-Haus and concert with Maciej and Jacek Lukaszczyk and Helga Wähdel (violin)	
3. 3. 1979	Alexander Jenner (Vienna) plays Chopin	Or
1979	The Peace Plaque of the City of Darmstadt is awarded to Maciej Lukaszczyk	
21. – 30. 9. 1979	2 <sup>nd</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Halina Czerny-Stefanska and Ludwik Stefanski (Krakow)	K-H
6. 10. 1979	Piano recital with Adam Harasiewicz (PL) in the Audimax of the TU	AU
28. 11. 1979	Symphony concert with the Merck Chamber Orchestra and the Piano Duo Lukaszczyk	Or
1980	Anniversary publication to celebrate 10 Years Chopin Society in the Federal Republic of Germany	
1980	Founding of the German Polish Institute (Deutsches Polen-Institut) with its seat in Darmstadt	
10. 1980	Study trip to Warsaw to the International Chopin Competition	
2. – 10. 11. 1980	4 <sup>th</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture. Opening concert with Halina Czerny-Stefanska	Or
8. 11. 1980	Symphony concert with the Merck Chamber Orchestra, direction: Zdenek Simane. Soloists: Hans Graf, Ewa Osinska, J. u. M. Lukaszczyk. (Works for Piano and Orchestra by Chopin)	Kong
9. u. 10. 11. 1980	The composition <i>Symphony Concertante</i> (1979) by Slawomir Stanislaw Czarnecki wins first prize in the competition for Polish composers announced by the Chopin Society and receives its first performance in the large auditorium of the State Theatre in Darmstadt by the Orchestra of the State Theatre of Darmstadt as part of the ten-year celebrations of the Chopin Society.	Th-G-H
19. – 27. 9. 1981	3 <sup>rd</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Halina Czerny-Stefanska and Prof. Ludwig Stefanski (Krakow)	K-H

7.3.1981	Piano recital with Pavel Gililov (Ukraine)	Or
17.10.1981	Jacek and Maciej Lukaszczyk, Ewa Osinska and Hans Graf play Chopin	J-L-H
29.11.1981	The Piano Duo Lukaszczyk plays Brahms, Rachmaninov, Gorecki and Bartok (with percussion)	J-L-H
1981	Maciej Lukaszczyk receives from the Polish State the Order of Merit for his services to Polish culture abroad	
30.10.1982	Piano recital by Erik Berchot (Paris, prizewinner in Warsaw 1980)	Or
4.1983	Official naming of the street »CHOPINWEG« by the Magistrate of the City of Darmstadt	
7. – 12.10.1983	1 <sup>st</sup> German Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt	J-L-H
07.10.1983	Opening concert with Adam Harasiewicz	Kong
1984	Ernst Weitzel, chairman of the Chopin Society receives the award »Services to Polish Culture« from the ambassador of the People's Republic of Poland	
10.3.1984	Piano recital with the Piano Duo Lukaszczyk	Or
5.5.1984	Edith Picht-Axenfeld plays Chopin	J-L-H
16.6.1984	Piano recital with Lydia Grychtolowna	K-H
2.3.1985	Piano recital with Regina Smendzianka (Warsaw)	J-L-H
1.6.1985	Piano recital with Robert Hamilton (USA)	J-L-H
6. – 10.9.1985	4 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Halina Czerny-Stefanska (Krakow) and Maciej Lukaszczyk (Darmstadt)	K-H
29.9. – 5.10.1985	5 <sup>th</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture	
29.9.1985	Symphony concert with the Orchestra of the State Theatre of Darmstadt under the direction of Hans Drewanz	Th-G-H
4.10.1985	Songs by Polish composers with Maria Sartova (soprano) and Jacek Lukaszczyk (piano)	K-H
5.10.1985	Junko Otake (1 <sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 1983) plays Chopin	Or
10.1985	Study trip to Warsaw to the International Chopin Competition	
17.10.1985	Founding in Warsaw of the International Federation of Chopin Societies (IFCS). Maciej Lukaszczyk is a member of the governing body until 2005. For the first time ever a worldwide culture organisation is founded, whose activities are dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of the works of one single composer.	
22.2.1986	Rolf Plagge (best German candidate in the Warsaw Competition 1985) plays Chopin and Liszt	Or

6.3.1986	Recital of works by Chopin in the town hall of Oberursel with Maciej Lukaszczyk to celebrate the opening of the Oberursel-Hochtaunuskreis branch of the Chopin Society	
3. – 10.10.1986	2 <sup>nd</sup> German Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt. Opening concert: Halina Czerny-Stefanska plays Chopin	Or
17.1.1987	Lecture concert with Detlev Eisinger (Munich)	K-H
14.3.1987	Piano recital with Jean-Marc Luisada (Prizewinner in Warsaw 1985)	Or
14.11.1987	Piano recital with David Wilde (Hanover)	J-L-H
4.3.1988	Piano recital with Alexander Jenner (Vienna)	Or
8. – 13.7.1988	5 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Dominique Merlet (Paris)	K-H
18.11.1988	Dang Thai Son (Vietnam, 1 <sup>st</sup> prize Warsaw 1980) plays Chopin and Rachmaninov	Or
1989	The International Federation of Chopin Societies (IFCS) becomes a member of UNESCO when it is accepted onto the International Music Council (IMC) of this organisation	
1989	First cooperation with the Chopin Society in the GDR. Maciej Lukaszczyk gives concerts in Cottbus and Leipzig. Pianists from the GDR play in Darmstadt	
20.5.1989	The Piano Duo Lukaszczyk plays works for four hands	Or
13. – 21.10.1989	3 <sup>rd</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt (Name changed to »European Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt«) Opening concert with Dominique Merlet	Or
25.11.1989	Piano recital with Maciej Lukaszczyk	J-L-H
11.5.1990	Piano recital with Marta Sosinska (3 <sup>rd</sup> prize Warsaw 1965)	Or
11. – 15.9.1990	7 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Marta Sosinska (Würzburg)	K-H
1990	Anniversary publication to celebrate 20 Years Chopin Society	
1990	Erna and Ernst Weitzel receive honours from the Magistrate of Darmstadt	
15.11.1990	Gala concert to celebrate 20 Years Chopin Society with Tatiana Szabanova (Moscow, 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize Warsaw 1980). The Chopin Society hosts the board meeting of the IFCS as part of the Society's 20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations	Kong
25.5.1991	Piano recital by Margarita Shevchenko (Moscow, prizewinner in Warsaw 1990)	Or
13. – 17.9.1991	8 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Naoyuki Taneda (Karlsruhe)	K-H
1991	Maciej Lukaszczyk is awarded the Officers Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for his many years of promoting international understanding	



1991	Irmgard Hörl and Erna Weitzel receive awards from the ambassador of the Republic of Poland for »Services to Polish culture abroad«	
25. 4. 1992	Piano recital with Robert Hairgrove (USA)	Or
2. – 11. 10. 1992	4 <sup>th</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt Opening concert with David Wilde (Hanover)	Or
9. 5. 1993	Piano recital with Janne Mertanen (Finland, 1 <sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 1992)	Or
20. – 25. 9. 1993	9 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Detlef Kraus (Hamburg)	K-H
30. 10. 1993	Anniversary concert of the Sparkassen-Kulturstiftung Hessen-Thüringen, Frankfurt, with the Chamber Orchestra of Frankfurt am Main. Soloist: Janne Mertanen (Finland, 1 <sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 1992)	Or
16. – 24. 4. 1994	International Festival of Piano Duos with concerts for two and four pianos. Opening concert: »120 Years (2 x 60) Lukaszczyk« performing works for two pianos	Or
28. 10. 1994	Piano recital with Kevin Kenner (Winner of Warsaw Competition 1990)	Or
1994	Maciej Lukaszczyk receives the bronze medal of merit from the city of Darmstadt for his services to Darmstadt	
15. – 20. 9. 1995	10 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Halina Czerny-Stefanska (Krakow) and Maciej Lukaszczyk (PL/Darmstadt)	K-H
24. 9. 1995	Gala concert to celebrate 25 Years Chopin Society. The Piano Duo Maciej and Jacek Lukaszczyk plays works for two pianos	Or
1995	Anniversary publication for 25 Years Chopin Society	
2. 3. 1996	Piano recital with Kevin Kenner (Mendelssohn, Schubert and Chopin)	J-L-H
12. – 21. 10. 1996	5 <sup>th</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt. Opening concert: Rem Urasin (Prizewinner in Warsaw 1995) plays Chopin	Or
16. 11. 1996	Piano recital with Stephen Prutsman (Prizewinner at the Tchaikovsky and Queen Elisabeth Competition 1990)	J-L-H
30. 4. 1997	Irmgard Hörl receives an honorary citizens' award from the city of Darmstadt	
21. – 27. 9. 1997	11 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Rudolf Kehrler (Moscow/Vienna)	K-H
20.–26. 10. 1997	Visit to the Russian Chopin Society in Moscow	
24. 3. 1998	Piano recital with Hisako Kawamura (Japan)	J-L-H
5. 9. – 27. 11. 1998	6 <sup>th</sup> Festival of Polish Music and Culture with many different events both with and without orchestra	

5. – 13. 9. 1998	12 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Rudolf Kehrler (Moscow/Vienna)	K-H
14. 11. 1998	Sabine Simon plays Chopin	J-L-H
12. 6. 1999	Piano recital with Boris Giltburg (1 <sup>st</sup> prize Ettlingen 1998)	K-H
8. – 17. 10. 1999	6 <sup>th</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt Opening concert with Marc Laforet (2 <sup>nd</sup> prize Warsaw 1985)	Or
1999	Maciej Lukaszczyk receives the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland	
30. 5. 2000	Gala concert to celebrate 30 years Piano Duo Lukaszczyk	Or
9. 9. 2000	Gala concert with the Symphony Orchestra from Plock (Chopin's F minor concerto). Soloist: Hisako Kawamura (1 <sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 1999)	Or
10. 11. 2000	Nocturne by candlelight with prizewinners of Chopin competitions in Darmstadt: Daria Monastyrski, Akiko Tamura, Camillo Radicke and Sabine Simon	Or
2000	The Chopin Society receives an award from the Polish Ministry of Culture for its services to the promotion of Polish art and culture	
18. 5. 2001	Piano recital with Ingrid Fliter (Argentina, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize Warsaw 2000)	Or
6. – 12. 10. 2001	13 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Rudolf Kehrler	K-H
23. 3. 2002	Piano recital with the Piano Duo »Duo d'Accord«	Or
1. – 10. 10. 2002	7 <sup>th</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt Opening concert: Mihaela Ursuleasa plays Chopin	Or
15. 2. 2003	Piano recital with Jean-Frédéric Neuburger (France, 1 <sup>st</sup> prize Ettlingen)	K-H
11. – 17. 10. 2003	14 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Detmold)	K-H
2004	Maciej Lukaszczyk is awarded the »Johann Heinrich Merck Award« by the city of Darmstadt for his life's work	
11. 3. 2004	Birthday Concert: Maciej and Jacek Lukaszczyk play works for piano duo and for two pianos and percussion	Or
4. – 10. 9. 2004	15 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Detmold)	K-H
22. 1. 2005	Piano recital with Sunwook Kim (Korea, 1 <sup>st</sup> prize Ettlingen)	K-H
29. 9. 2005	35 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Chopin Society. Symphony concert with the German Chamber Orchestra of Frankfurt. Soloist: Eugen Indjic	Or
1. 10. 2005	Piano recital with Leonel Morales (Spain)	Or
2. – 8. 9. 2005	16 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Detmold)	K-H

18. 2. 2006	Piano recital with Frédéric Vaysse-Knitter (France)	K-H
13. 5. 2006	Piano recital with Sofia Gülbadamova (Russia)	K-H
14. – 25. 10. 2006	8 <sup>th</sup> European Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt. Opening concert with Kevin Kenner (USA), Winner of the 12 <sup>th</sup> International Chopin Competition in Warsaw 1990)	Or
16. – 20. 9. 2007	17 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Sontraud Speidel (Karlsruhe)	K-H
16. 2. 2008	Piano recital with Hélène Tysman (France, 1 <sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 2006)	K-H
7. 6. 2008	Piano recital with Martin Kasik (Prague)	K-H
6. – 12. 9. 2008	18 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Katarzyna Popowa- Zydrón (PL) and Prof. Kevin Kenner (USA)	K-H
22. 11. 2008	Piano recital with Sontraud Speidel	K-H
5. 12. 2008	Piano recital with Hardy Rittner	K-H
24. 1. 2009	Piano recital with Claire Huangci (USA)	K-H
12. 3. 2009	Gala concert »150 Years Piano Duo Maciej and Jacek Lukaszczuk«	K-H
25. 4. 2009	Piano recital with Alexander Krichel (Germany)	K-H
9. – 18. 10. 2009	9 <sup>th</sup> Darmstadt International Chopin Piano Competition (Name change and recognition by experts as second most important All-Chopin Piano Competition in the world)	
20. 2. 2010	Piano recital with Janne Mertanen	K-H
26. 3. 2010	Gala concert with Hisako Kawamura, (1 <sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 1999) to celebrate the bi-centenary of Chopin's birth and the 40 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chopin Society	Or
4. 6. 2010	Gala concert with Kevin Kenner	Or
19. 6. 2010	Piano recital with Maciej Lukaszczuk	K-H
11. 9. 2010	Piano recital with Sabine Simon	K-H
27. 9. – 3. 10. 2010	19 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Boris Bloch (Folkwang). Opening concert with Boris Bloch	K-H
6. 11. 2010	Piano recital with Joanna Marcinkowska (1 <sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 2002)	K-H
2011	The Chopin Society receives a prize of recognition as part of the »Ludwig-Metzger-Prize« for its voluntary work as a non-profit organisation	
29. 1. 2011	New Year's Concert with Martin Kasik (Czech Republic)	K-H
7. – 14. 10. 2011	20 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Boris Bloch (Folkwang). Opening concert with Boris Bloch	K-H

12. 11. 2011	Piano recital with Aleksandra Mikulska (Poland)	K-H
25. 2. 2012	Piano recital with Pawel Wakarecy (Poland)	K-H
21. 4. 2012	Piano recital with Einav Yarden (Israel)	K-H
16. 6. 2012	Piano recital with Yeol Eum Son (Korea, 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize Tchaikovsky Competition 2011)	K-H
17. & 19. 7. 2012	Two concerts for children with Yuri Blinov (Belarus)	K-H
15. 9. 2012	Piano recital with Yuri Blinov (Belarus)	K-H
7. 7. 2012	Irmgard Hörl, »Motor and soul of the Chopin Society«, dies after a long illness	
26. 9. – 3. 10. 2012	21 <sup>st</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Lev Natochenny (Frankfurt). Opening concert with Nami Ejiri (2 <sup>nd</sup> prize Darmstadt 1996)	K-H
10. 11. 2012	Piano recital with Benjamin Moser (Germany)	K-H
1. 12. 2012	Piano recital with Nuron Mukumiy (Uzbekistan)	K-H
22. 2. 2013	Beneficiary concert with Boris Bloch in aid of the 10 <sup>th</sup> Darmstadt International Chopin Piano Competition	Or
16. 3. 2013	Last concert of Maciej Lukaszczuk in Darmstadt: Duo concert with Nina Volynskaya, violin (Russia)	K-H
13. 4. 2013	Piano recital with David Theodor Schmidt (Germany)	K-H
17. 5. 2013	Beneficiary concert with Aleksandra Mikulska in aid of the 10 <sup>th</sup> Darmstadt International Chopin Piano Competition	Or
14. 9. 2013	Piano recital with Claire Huangci (USA)	K-H
11. – 21. 10. 2013	10 <sup>th</sup> Darmstadt International Chopin Piano Competition Opening concert with Dang Thai Son (1 <sup>st</sup> prize Warsaw 1980)	Or
25. 11. 2013	Prof. Jacek Lukaszczuk dies in Feldkirch (Austria)	
7. 12. 2013	Chamber music with Romain Garioud (cello) and Andre Jussow (piano)	K-H
25. 1. 2014	Piano recital with Jonathan Plowright (GB)	K-H
22. 2. 2014	Piano recital with Giovanni Bellucci (Italy)	Or
3. 2014	Aleksandra Mikulska becomes new president of the Chopin Society	
4. 6. 2014	Maciej Lukaszczuk dies in Poland	
13. 9. 2014	»Memories of Warsaw 1939 – 1945« with readings from the diary of Wladyslaw Szpilman with Aleksandra Mikulska (piano) and Bozena Zolynska (recitation and song)	K-H



10. – 16.10.2014	22 <sup>nd</sup> International Masterclass conducted by Prof. Andrzej Jasinski (Katowice) and Prof. Elzbieta Karas-Krasztel (Warsaw)	K-H
1.11.2014	Memorial concert for Maciej Lukaszczuk with Sabine Simon, Aleksandra Mikulska and Boris Bloch.	K-H
14.2.2015	Piano recital with Ivett Gyöngyösi (Hungary, 1 <sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 2013)	K-H
21.3.2015	World premiere: Chopin-Marathon. 23 young pianists from all over the world perform Chopin's complete works for piano solo. The 204 works are played in the order of their composition. Duration: 16 hours without intermission	K-H
16.4.2015	Gala concert to celebrate the 45 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chopin Society with Jonathan Plowright (GB)	Or
27.6.2015	Piano recital with Nadejda Vlaeva (Bulgaria)	K-H
11. – 13.9.2015	Festival »Chopin-Tage«: Five concerts on one weekend to celebrate the 45 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chopin Society. Opening concert in the Orangerie with Kevin Kenner & the Piazzoforte Quintet. To end the festival a performance of Chopin's chamber works with the Polish Trio Mariusz Patyra (violin), Tomasz Strahl (cello) and Agnieszka Przemyk-Bryla (piano).	Or
6.10.2015	Jill Rabenau (Vice President) receives the Order of Merit for »Services to Polish Culture« from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in Warsaw	
21.11.2015	Piano recital with Eugene Choi (Korea)	K-H
13.12.2015	Piano recital »Voices from the East« with Yuri Blinov and Uwe Balser	K-H
22.4.2016	Piano recital with Aleksandra Mikulska	Or
5.6.2016	Piano recital with Boris Bloch in Darmstadt's Prinz-Emil-Schlösschen	
25.6.2016	Chamber concert with Sabine Simon (piano) and Pamela Smits (cello)	K-H
23. – 30.9.2016	23 <sup>rd</sup> International Masterclass conducted by Martin Kasik (piano) and Jiri Barta (cello). First time with works for piano and cello. Opening concert with Martin Kasik and Jiri Barta	K-H
2016	The practice room in the K-H is furnished in the style of Chopin's time	
18.2.2017	Gala concert with the 19-year old Eric Lu (USA, 4 <sup>th</sup> prize in Warsaw 2015)	Or
22.4.2017	Piano recital with Marek Kozak (CZ, 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize Darmstadt 2013)	K-H
6. – 16.10.2017	11 <sup>th</sup> Darmstadt International Chopin Piano Competition Première: At the 11 <sup>th</sup> Darmstadt International Chopin Piano Competition all 7 jury members participate in the inaugural concert.	

	Chamber music and improvisation are introduced for the first time into the competition repertoire in Darmstadt Darmstadt hosts the annual conference of the Chopin Federation. 25 delegates from all over the world meet in Darmstadt	Or
20.1.2018	New Year's Concert with Sabine Simon	K-H
17.2.2018	Gala concert with Claire Huangci (USA, 1 <sup>st</sup> prize Darmstadt 2009)	Or
2.6.2018	Chopin's chamber music with Yeon-Min Park (piano, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize Darmstadt 2017), Romain Garioud (cello), Aida-Carmen Soanea (viola)	K-H
21. – 28.9.2018	24 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Tamás Ungár (USA), Aleksandra Mikulska (PL/D) and Sabine Simon (Darmstadt)	K-H
3.11.2018	»Im Fieberrauch der Töne« (»In the fever of music«) – Dramatic reading compiled by Silvia Adler with music of Tchaikovsky to celebrate the 125 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tchaikovsky's death with Sona MacDonald and Christian Nickel (recitation) and Boris Bloch (piano)	Or
22.2.2019	Gala concert with Kate Liu (USA, 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize in Warsaw 2015)	Or
25.10. – 2.11.2019	25 <sup>th</sup> International Masterclass, conducted by Prof. Carmen Piazzini (Argentina/Darmstadt) with opening concert by Carmen Piazzini	K-H
17.11.2019	»Fryderyk Chopin – Tracing the footsteps of a genius« – Presentation of a book of essays on Chopin by Piotr Wierzbicki with Steffen Möller (recitation) and Aleksandra Mikulska (piano). Moderation: Peter Oliver Loew	Or
2020	Anniversary publication »50 Years Chopin Society«	
19.1.2020	New Year's Concert with Boris Bloch	K-H
29.2.2020	Gala Concert with opening ceremony to celebrate the 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Chopin Society. Performances by four 1 <sup>st</sup> prizewinners of Darmstadt Chopin competitions: Janne Mertanen, Ivett Gyöngyösi, Joanna Marcinkowska and Claire Huangci.	Or

For want of space, the above list contains only a small selection of the events that actually took place during this span of time. Every year 6 to 8 concerts of all different types were regularly held in the Kennedy-Haus/Literaturhaus and 2 to 3 in the Orangerie (piano recitals, piano and other duos, chamber music, lecture concerts, readings accompanied by music etc.) A more comprehensive list can be found on our homepage at [www.chopin-gesellschaft.de/ueber-uns/](http://www.chopin-gesellschaft.de/ueber-uns/)

Until 2010 trips were organised every five years to the International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw. Further trips such as those to Vienna (1978), Paris and Nohant (1981), Mallorca (1988), Duszniki Zdrój (Bad Reinerz) and Marienbad (Czech Republic) had as their destinations the places where Chopin had lived or resided. Apart from these, group visits were also undertaken to Gaming and Vorarlberg in Austria and on many occasions to the High Tatra region of Poland. No further group visits are currently planned. *Jill Rabenau*

## Thoughts on Fryderyk Chopin

Chopin let his emotions flow almost exclusively in his music. By nature he was indecisive, oversensitive and fragile, but as an artist he was self-assured and full of confidence in his abilities. An individualist whose complex personality reflected the wave of revolution and romanticism that had gripped Europe in the nineteenth century.

**Stanislav Bunin**

(\*1966 Russian pianist and winner of the XI Chopin Competition in Warsaw 1985)

»Chopin. He is a unique phenomenon of his kind; he is nobility, beauty, the living breath of music – of man. He is simply a genius.«

**Nelson Freire**

(\*1944 Brazilian classical pianist)

»He (Chopin) demands a lot of things. You have to be a fully equipped pianist with a great mastery of legato and *perlé*. You have to be lots of opposite things at the same time: to have a lot of sentiment but no sentimentality; to be free and yet very disciplined; to have a natural sense of the *rubato*, to be very sound-conscious, to have a singing tone, very good taste, elegance, some exuberance and lots of other things. Sometimes you should have the strength of thunder and the delicacy of a flower... You see, most important of all, you must love him unconditionally in order to play his music well. And then he will tell you if he likes you or not.«

**Sir Charles Hallé**

(1819 – 1895, Anglo-German pianist and conductor, pupil of Chopin, founder of the Hallé Orchestra)

*Autumn 1836*

»The same evening I heard him (Chopin) play, and was fascinated beyond expression. It seemed to me as if I had got into another world, and all thought of Kalkbrenner was driven out of my mind. I sat entranced, filled with wonderment, and if the room had suddenly been peopled with fairies, I should not have been astonished. The marvellous charm, the poetry and originality, the perfect freedom and absolute lucidity of Chopin's playing at that time cannot be described. It was perfection in every sense. He seemed to be pleased with the evident impression he had produced, for I could only stammer a few broken words of admiration, and he played again and again, each time revealing new beauties, until I could have dropped on my knees to worship him.«

**Hector Berlioz**

(1803 – 1869, French Romantic composer, acquaintance of Chopin)

»As an interpreter and composer, Chopin is of a very special kind – in no way comparable to any other musician I know. One finds harmonic combinations of surprising depth, in some of his works he has created a kind of chromatic tendril whose effect is so strange and charming that it is impossible to describe.«

**Thomas Mann**

(1875 – 1955, German author and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, »Doctor Faustus«, Chapter XVI)

»Playing a lot of Chopin and reading about him. I love the angelic in his figure, reminiscent of Shelley, the peculiarly and very mysteriously veiled, unapproachable, elusive, unadventurous nature of his being – that not-wanting-to-know, that rejection of material experience, the sublime incest of his fantastically delicate and seductive art. How much speaks for the man the deep, intent friendship of Delacroix, who writes him, *J'espère vous voir ce soir*,

*mais ce moment est capable de me faire devenir fou.*«  
All manner of things possible for the Wagner of painting! However, there are quite a few things in Chopin that not only harmonically, but in a general spiritual sense, more than anticipate Wagner, indeed surpass him. Take the Nocturne in C sharp minor, Opus 27 No. 1, and the duet that begins after the enharmonic change from C sharp to D flat major. This surpasses in despairing beauty of sound all the Tristan orgies – and that in the intimate medium of the piano, not as an all-out battle of voluptuousness and without the bullfight character of a theatrical mysticism robust in its very depravity. Take above all his ironic relationship to tonality, his teasing way with it, obscuring it, rejecting it, keeping it hovering, mocking at the key signature. It goes far, divertingly and movingly far ...«

**Gottfried Benn**

(1886 – 1956, German poet, essayist and physician)

CHOPIN (English translation by Martin Travers)

Not particularly forthcoming in conversation, opinions were not his strength; opinions talk around the subject. Whenever Delacroix formulated his theories he became ill at ease. For his part, he could not provide a justification for his nocturnes.

A poor lover,  
a mere shadow in Nohant,  
where George Sand's children  
refused to accept his advice on their education.

Consumptive of the kind  
with bleeding and scar formations,  
a protracted ailment.  
A quiet death  
in contrast to one with paroxysms of pain  
or one by a rifle salvo.  
They brought his grand piano (an Erard) to his door  
and Delphina Potocka  
sang the song of violets  
in his final hour.

He travelled to England with three grand pianos: a Pleyel, an Erard, a Broadwood, played a quarter of an hour every evening for twenty guineas for the Rothschilds, the Wellingtons, in Strafford House and to numerous Orders of the Garter. Downcast through fatigue and the approach of death he returned home to the Square d'Orléans.

Then he burnt all his sketches and manuscripts, no drafts, no fragments, no notes should remain: those insights that betray.  
At the end he said:  
»my efforts were simply in proportion to that which was in my power to achieve«.

Every finger was to play to its strength. The fourth was the weakest (mere Siamese twin to the middle-finger). When he started playing, they came to rest on E, F sharp, G sharp, B, C.

Whoever heard him play any of his preludes, whether it was in a country house or in a mountain retreat or from the open terrace doors of a sanatorium, for example, will never forget them.

Never composed an opera, a symphony neither. Only those tragic progressions out of artistic conviction, and with a slender hand.



Chopin's hand



Chopin: His life, his works, his times

1810	Fryderyk (Frédéric) Chopin is born on 1 <sup>st</sup> March in Żelazowa Wola near Warsaw. He is the second child of Nicolas Chopin (born in Alsace-Lorraine) and his Polish wife Justyna (née Krzyżanowska). In the Autumn the family moves to Warsaw, where the father takes on a teaching post at the Warsaw Lyceum.	Robert Schumann is born.
1811	Birth of sister Izabela. (Ludwika, the oldest sister was born in 1807.)	Franz Liszt is born.
1812	Birth of sister Emilia.	Polish troops participate in Napoleon’s campaign against Russia. <i>Beethoven: Symphonies No. 7 and 8</i>
1813	Chopin’s father Mikołaj (Nicolas) is appointed professor of French language and literature at the Warsaw Lyceum.	Napoleon is defeated at the Battle of Leipzig. Wagner and Verdi are born.
1814	Chopin hears his sister’s piano playing and is entranced by it.	Napoleon’s exile to Elba.
1815	Chopin is given encouragement at the piano by his sister Ludwika.	Restoration of Europe at the Vienna Congress. Creation of Congress Poland in personal union with the tsars of Russia. Tsar Alexander I crowned King of Poland.
1816	Chopin already shows talent at the piano before receiving any formal tuition.	In the following years, increasingly restrictive and authoritarian Russian foreign rule. <i>Schubert: Symphony No. 5</i> <i>Rossini: The Barber of Seville</i> <i>Spohr: Violin Concerto No. 8</i>
1817	Wojciech Zywny becomes Chopin’s first teacher. <i>(Polonaises in G minor and B flat major)</i>	
1818	Chopin gives his first concert.	<i>Beethoven: Hammerklaviersonate</i>
1819	Chopin is developing a reputation as a child prodigy.	<i>Schubert: Trout Quintet</i>
1820	Princess Catalani presents Chopin with a golden pocket watch as a gift for his talent.	<i>Beethoven: Piano Sonata op. 10</i> <i>Spohr: Piano Quintet</i>
1821	Chopin regarded in Warsaw as a child prodigy. <i>(Polonaise in A flat major without opus number)</i>	

1822	Wojciech Zywny has taught Chopin all he can and terminates their lessons. Chopin takes private music lessons with Józef Elsner.	César Franck is born. <i>Beethoven: Piano Sonatas op. 110 and 111,</i> <i>Schubert: Unfinished Symphony, Wanderer Fantasy</i> <i>Weber: Der Freischütz</i>
1823	Chopin is admitted to Class IV of the Warsaw Lyceum. Friendship with some of the well-to-do pupils living in the boarding house for boys, run by his parents.	
1824	Summer holidays in Szafarnia and first contact with Polish folk music. <i>(Variations on a German folksong)</i>	Bruckner and Smetana are born. <i>Beethoven: Symphony No. 9</i>
1825	Chopin plays on the newly invented »Aeolomelodikon«, a kind of harmonium with copper pipes, for the tsar, who presents him with a diamond ring. Organ lessons with Wenzel Wilhelm Würfel. <i>(Rondo C minor op. 1)</i>	Nicholas I becomes Russian tsar. Continuation of authoritarian rule in Poland, which leads to anti-Russian sentiments among the Polish population and the elite classes. <i>Beethoven: Streichquartett op. 130</i>
1826	Chopin and his sister Emilia go with their mother in August for a five-week »cure« to the spa town of Bad Reinerz (Duszniki Zdroj), where he gives two concerts in aid of orphans. Visit to Prince Radziwill in Antonin. In September enrolment at The Warsaw Conservatory. <i>(Rondo à la Mazur op. 5)</i>	<i>Mendelssohn: Overture to »A Midsummer Night’s Dream«</i>
1827	In April sister Emilia dies of tuberculosis, aged 14. Summer holidays in Kowalewo and Pomerania. The Chopin family moves to a new home in the Krasinski Palace. <i>(Variations on »La ci darem la mano« op. 2)</i>	Beethoven dies. <i>Schubert: »A Winter Journey«</i>
1828	Concerts by Johann Nepomuk Hummel in Warsaw impress Chopin. Summer holidays in Sanniki in Mazovia. Educational trip to Berlin in September. <i>(Sonata No.1 in C minor, Krakowiak, Grande Fantaisie op. 13, Rondo op. 73)</i>	<i>Schubert: Last 3 piano sonatas, Great Symphony in C major, String Quintet, Schwanengesang.</i> Schubert dies.
1829	Inspired by the violin maestro Niccolò Paganini, Chopin composes Souvenir de Paganini. Graduation from the Warsaw Conservatory with flying colours. Elsner’s report describes him as a »musical genius«. Infatuation with the singer Konstancja Gładkowska, who becomes the inspiration for the Larghetto of his F minor Piano Concerto. Visit to Vienna where he gives two successful concerts.	In May celebrations in Warsaw to mark the coronation of Tsar Nicholas I as King of Poland. Pursuing an even more authoritarian policy than his predecessor results

	Return journey via Prague, Teplitz, Dresden, Breslau. ( <i>First versions of studies op. 10</i> )	in increasing Polish resistance to foreign rule. <i>Mendelssohn: Songs without Words (Vol. 1)</i>
<b>1830</b>	Last visit to Żelazowa Wola. Chopin plays his E minor concerto in his »farewell« concert in Warsaw. Departure from Poland on November 2nd, never to return. Traveling via Wrocław, Dresden and Prague he reaches Vienna at the end of November, where news reaches him of the Polish uprising against the Russian occupying troops. ( <i>Concerto No. 2 in F minor and No. 1 in E minor</i> )	July revolution against the restrictive rule of Charles X in France. Louis Philippe becomes the »Citizen King«. The liberal tendencies emanating from France spread to half of Europe, but are suppressed in Warsaw. November uprising against Russian rule. <i>Schumann: Abegg Variations</i> <i>Berlioz: Sinfonie fantastique</i>
<b>1831</b>	In July departure from Vienna via Salzburg, Munich and Stuttgart, where he learns of the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising. Arrival in Paris in October. ( <i>Scherzo No. 1, Etudes op. 10, Nocturnes op. 9</i> ).	After the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising by the Russians in September, start of the »Great Emigration« of Polish intellectuals, especially to Paris, where a large, politically and culturally active Polish community emerges. <i>Bellini: Norma</i> <i>Mendelssohn: Piano Concerto No. 1</i> <i>Schumann: Papillons</i> <i>Meyerbeer: Robert le Diable</i>
<b>1832</b>	First public concert in Paris. Introduction to the most important Parisian salons. Friendship with Liszt, Berlioz, Bellini, Hiller, Mendelssohn, Kalkbrenner and other artists and Polish emigrants. Chopin supports the Polish cause for many years and becomes the most sought-after piano teacher of influential society. ( <i>Nocturnes op. 15, Rondo op. 16, Grand Duo Concertant</i> )	Cholera returns to Paris. <i>Mendelssohn: Hebrides Overture</i>
<b>1833</b>	Chopin participates in numerous concerts. ( <i>Bolero op. 19, Waltzes op. 18, Nocturnes op. 15, Mazurkas op. 17, Variations brillantes op. 12</i> )	Brahms and Borodin are born. <i>Schumann: Toccata</i> <i>Bellini: I Puritani</i> <i>Mendelssohn: Italian Symphony</i>
<b>1834</b>	Visit with Hiller to the Lower Rhine Music Festival. ( <i>Andante spianato et Grande Polonaise brillante op. 22, Fantaisie-Impromptu op. 66</i> )	<i>Liszt: Harmonies poétiques et religieuses</i> <i>Berlioz: Harold en Italie</i>
<b>1835</b>	Journey to Carlsbad and reunion with his parents. From there to Dresden, where he falls in love with the 16-year old Maria Wodzinska. Return journey to Paris via Leipzig and another meeting with Mendelssohn. First meeting with Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck. ( <i>Ballade No. 1, Mazurkas op. 24, Polonaises op. 26, Nocturnes op. 27, Waltzes op. 69</i> )	Bellini dies. Saint-Saens is born. <i>Schumann: Carnival</i>

<b>1836</b>	Visit to Marienbad and Dresden and secret engagement to Maria Wodzinska. Return journey via Kassel and meeting with Louis Spohr. In Paris first encounter with George Sand. ( <i>Etudes op. 25</i> )	<i>Meyerbeer: Die Hugenotten</i>
<b>1837</b>	Maria's parents annul the engagement. Chopin falls ill. He declines an invitation from Tsar Nicholas to become »Pianist to the Imperial Russian Court«. He acquires a French passport. First trip to London with his friend and publisher Camille Pleyel. ( <i>Scherzo No. 2, Impromptu op. 29, Mazurkas op. 30, Nocturnes op. 32</i> )	<i>Schumann: Davidsbündler Tänze, Symphonic Variations for Piano</i> <i>Mendelssohn: Piano Concerto No. 2</i> <i>Liszt: Dante Sonata (Original version)</i> <i>Lortzing: Tsar and Carpenter</i>
<b>1838</b>	Start of the relationship with George Sand and ill-fated trip to Mallorca in the Autumn with her and her two children Maurice and Solange. ( <i>Polonaises op. 40, Mazurkas op. 33, Waltzes op. 34</i> )	Bizet is born. <i>Schumann: Scenes from Childhood, Kreisleriana</i>
<b>1839</b>	Chopin's illness (tuberculosis) worsens and forces them to return to France in February via Barcelona and Marseille. From there a short trip to Genoa. On June 1 <sup>st</sup> they finally arrive at George Sand's country estate in Nohant where Chopin stays until early October. ( <i>Sonata No. 2, Mazurkas op. 41, Ballade op. 38, Préludes op. 28, Scherzo op. 39, Impromptu op. 36, 2 Nocturnes op. 37, Trois Nouvelles Études</i> )	Mussorgski is born. <i>Liszt: Piano Concerto No. 2 (original version)</i>
<b>1840</b>	On his 30th birthday Chopin decides largely to give up public concerts and devote himself to composing. ( <i>Waltzes op. 42 and Polonaises op. 40</i> )	Schumann marries Clara Wieck. Tchaikovsky is born. <i>Schumann: First song cycles</i>
<b>1841</b>	Chopin gives a successful recital in Paris in the Salle Pleyel in April. Chopin and Sand return to Nohant for the Summer. ( <i>Polonaise op. 44, Tarantella op. 43, Ballade op. 47, Prélude op. 45, Nocturnes op. 48, Allegro de concert op. 46, Fantaisie op. 49, Mazurkas op. 50</i> )	Liszt and Wagner meet for the first time in Paris. Dvořák is born. <i>Mendelssohn: Variations sérieuses</i> <i>Schumann: Piano Concerto (1<sup>st</sup> movement), Symphony No. 1</i> <i>Wagner: The Flying Dutchman</i>
<b>1842</b>	Chopin gives another recital in the Salle Pleyel in February with resounding success. Third Summer in Nohant, where they are joined by Delacroix. ( <i>Polonaise op. 53, Scherzo op. 54, Ballade op. 52, Impromptu op. 51, Berceuse op. 57</i> )	<i>Schumann: Piano Quintet</i> <i>Mendelssohn: Scottish Symphony</i> <i>Verdi: Nabucco</i>



<b>1843</b>	Fourth Summer in Nohant. ( <i>Nocturnes op. 55, Mazurkas op. 56</i> )	Grieg is born.
<b>1844</b>	Fifth Summer in Nohant. News of his father's death in Warsaw devastates Chopin, whose health suffers. Sister Ludwika visits him in Paris and in Nohant. ( <i>Sonata No. 3 in B minor</i> )	Rimsky Korsakov is born. <i>Mendelssohn: Violin concerto</i>
<b>1845</b>	Sixth Summer in Nohant. First signs of a rift in the relationship between Sand and Chopin. ( <i>Mazurkas op. 59</i> )	<i>Schumann: Piano concerto (Movements 2 and 3)</i> <i>Wagner: Tannhäuser</i>
<b>1846</b>	Last Summer in Nohant. Growing alienation between Chopin and Sand. Chopin returns to Paris alone. ( <i>Barcarolle op. 60, Polonaise-Fantaisie op. 61, Nocturnes op. 62, Mazurken op. 63</i> )	Uprising in Krakow. <i>Liszt: Petrarch Sonnets</i>
<b>1847</b>	Final rift between Chopin and Sand after her daughter Solange marries the sculptor Clésinger. ( <i>Cello sonata op. 65, Waltzes op. 64</i> )	Mendelssohn dies. <i>Verdi: Macbeth</i>
<b>1848</b>	Chopin's last public recital in the Salle Pleyel. Second visit to Britain at the instigation of his pupil Jane Stirling. He plays for Queen Victoria. Long stay in Scotland. Recitals in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester. He returns to Paris in November, critically ill. ( <i>Nocturne op. 72</i> )	Revolution and cholera bring Paris to a standstill. Abdication of Louis Philippe and proclamation of the Second French Republic. Uprisings in Prussia and Austria. <i>Schumann: Album for the Young</i> <i>Liszt: 3 Etudes (Lamento, Leggerezza, Sospiro)</i> <i>Wagner: Lohengrin</i>
<b>1849</b>	Financial worries, as Chopin can no longer teach. Rapid worsening of his tuberculosis. Jane Stirling sends him an anonymous gift of money, which is mysteriously »lost« and traced with the help of a clairvoyant. Sister Ludwika visits him again. In the Summer Chopin moves to an apartment with more sunlight. He dies on October 17 <sup>th</sup> . Funeral service in the Madeleine Church on October 30 <sup>th</sup> , where Mozart's Requiem is performed. Burial in the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. Chopin's heart is taken back to Poland by his sister Ludwika and interred in Warsaw's Church of the Holy Cross. ( <i>Final work: Mazurka in F minor op. 68,4</i> )	<i>Liszt: Totentanz, Piano Concerto No. 1</i>

Compiled by Thomas Nickelsen and Jill Rabenau



Chopin's grave in the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, created and erected by Jean Baptiste Clésinger in 1850.

Chopin piano competitions in Darmstadt

I.	Official name and date of the 1st competition	I. Bundesdeutscher Chopin-Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt, 7 – 12 October 1983
	Cash prizes total	7 100 DM
	Participants age	Up to 30 years
	Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
	Number of jury members	6
	Names of jury members	Maciej Lukaszczyk (Poland, chair) Halina Czerny-Stefanska (Poland) Edith Picht-Axenfeld (Germany) Pavel Gililov (Ukraine) Adam Harasiewicz (Poland) Julian von Karolyi (Hungary)
	Names of main laureates	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: Junko Otake (Japan) 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: Iwan König (Germany) 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: Hiroko Mukunoki (Japan) 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize: Keum-Bong Kim (Korea)
	Number of participants	45
	Number of rounds	2
	Additional Info	Only piano solo works
II.	Official name and date of the 2nd competition	II. Bundesdeutscher Chopin-Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt, 3 – 10 October 1986
	Cash prizes total	10 300 DM
	Participants age	Up to 30 years
	Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
	Number of jury members	6
	Names of jury members	Maciej Lukaszczyk (Poland, chair) Halina Czerny-Stefanska (Poland) Edith Picht-Axenfeld (Germany) Marta Sosinska (Poland) Karl-Heinz Kämmerling (Germany) Julian von Karolyi (Hungary)
	Names of main laureates	1 <sup>st</sup> prize: Not awarded 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: David Satyabrata (Indonesia) 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: Birgitta Wollenweber (Germany) 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize: Vedat Kosal (Turkey)

	Number of participants	33
	Number of rounds	3
	Additional Info	Concertos with piano accompaniment in final round
III.	Official name and date of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> competition	III. Europäischer Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt 13 – 21 October 1989
	Cash prizes total	34 500 DM
	Participants age	Up to 30 years
	Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
	Number of jury members	7
	Names of jury members	Jozef Kanski (Poland) Detlef Kraus (Germany) Dominique Merlet (France) Germaine Mounier (France) Karl-Heinz Pick (Germany) Marta Sosinska (Poland) Naoyuki Taneda (Japan)
	Names of main laureates	1st Prize: Edward Wolanin (Poland) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize: Yoshiko Iwai (Japan) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize: Marta Zabaleta Barandiaran (Spain) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize: Camillo Radicke (Germany)
	Number of participants	76
	Number of rounds	3
	Additional Info	Concertos with piano accompaniment in final round
IV.	Official name and date of the 4 <sup>th</sup> competition	IV. Europäischer Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt 2 – 11 October 1992
	Cash prizes total	21 000 DM
	Participants age	Up to 30 years
	Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
	Number of jury members	9
	Names of jury members	Maciej Lukaszczyk (Poland, chair) Halina Czerny-Stefanska (Poland) Lidia Grychtolowna (Poland) Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Germany) Karl-Heinz Pick (Germany) Marta Sosinska (Poland) Naoyuki Taneda (Japan) Adam Wibrowski (Poland) David Wilde (Great Britain)



	Names of main laureates	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize: Janne Mertanen (Finland) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize: Not awarded 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize: Jee-Min Lee (Korea) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize: David Boehler (Germany) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize:: Natasa Lipovsek (Great Britain)
	Number of participants	71
	Number of rounds	3
	Additional Info	Final round with orchestra
<b>V.</b>	Official name and date of the 5 <sup>th</sup> competition	V. Europäischer Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt 12 – 21 October 1996
	Cash prizes total	24 000 DM
	Participants age	Up to 30 years
	Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
	Number of jury members	7
	Names of jury members	Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Germany, Chair) Halina Czerny-Stefanska (Poland) Christopher Elton (Great Britain) Constantin Ionescu-Vovu (Romania) Jacek Lukaszczyk (Austria) Friedrich Wilhelm Schnurr (Germany) Naoyuki Taneda (Japan)
	Names of main laureates	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize: Kayo Ishihara (Japan) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize: Nami Ejiri (Japan) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize: Daria Monastyrski (Israel)
	Number of participants	68
	Number of rounds	3
	Additional Info	Final round with orchestra
<b>VI.</b>	Official name and date of the 6 <sup>th</sup> competition	VI. Europäischer Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt 8 – 17 Oktober 1999
	Cash prizes total	23 000 DM
	Participants age	Up to 30 years
	Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
	Number of jury members	7
	Names of jury members	Maciej Lukaszczyk (Poland, Chair) Halina Czerny-Stefanska (Poland) Rudolf Kehr (UdSSR) Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Germany) Hans Leygraf (Sweden) Evgeni Malinin (Russia) Naoyuki Taneda (Japan)

	Names of main laureates	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize: Hisako Kawamura (Japan) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize: Andrej Jusov (Ukraine) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize: Catherine Gordeladze (Georgia) 4 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Joanna Lawrynowicz (Poland) 5 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Oleg Vainstein (Russia) 6 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Piotr Szychowski (Poland)
	Number of participants	89
	Number of rounds	3
	Additional Info	Final round with orchestra
<b>VII.</b>	Official name and date of the 7 <sup>th</sup> competition	VII. Europäischer Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt 1 – 10 October 2002
	Cash prizes total	27 500 Euros
	Participants age	Up to 30 years
	Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
	Number of jury members	7
	Names of jury members	Maciej Lukaszczyk (Poland, Chair) Gerhard Erber (Germany) Sachiko Kodama (Japan) Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Germany) Salvatore Spano (Italy) Valerie Shatski (Belarus) Regina Smendzianka (Poland)
	Names of main laureates	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize: Joanna Marcinkowska (Poland) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize: Konstantinos Kalakonas (Greece) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize: Slawomir Wilk (Poland) 4 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Ai Matsumoto (Japan) 5 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Galina Tschistjakowa (Russia) 6 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Maki Inoue (Japan)
	Number of participants	69
	Number of rounds	3
	Additional Info	Final round with orchestra
<b>VIII.</b>	Official name and date of the 8 <sup>th</sup> competition	VIII. Europäischer Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt 14 – 25 October 2006
	Cash prizes total	28 100 Euros
	Participants age	Up to 30 years
	Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
	Number of jury members	7

Names of jury members	Maciej Lukaszczyk (Poland, Chair) Kevin Kenner (USA) Renate Kretschmar-Fischer (Germany) Leonid Sintsev (Russia) Salvatore Spano (Italy) Sontraud Speidel (Germany) Naoyuki Taneda (Japan)
Names of main laureates	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize: Helene Tysman (France) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize: Aiko Yajima (Japan) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize: Gajane Saakjana (Latvia) 4 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Katarzyna Malinowska (Poland) 5 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Misuzu Kikuchi (Japan) 6 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Francesca Hun-Jae Kim (Korea)
Number of participants	43
Number of rounds	3
Additional Info	Final round with orchestra
<b>IX.</b> Official name and date of the 9 <sup>th</sup> competition	IX. Internationaler Chopin-Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt, 9 – 18 October 2009
Cash prizes total	27 400 Euros
Participants age	Up to 30 years
Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
Number of jury members	7
Names of jury members	Maciej Lukaszczyk (Poland, Chair) Eugen Indjic (France) Constantin Ionescu-Vovu (Romania) Sachiko Kodama (Japan) Gabriel Kwok (Hong Kong) Ilja Scheps (Russia) Jerzy Sterczynski (Poland)
Names of main laureates	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize: Claire Huangci (USA) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize: Jingdan Gu (China) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize: Da Sol Kim (Korea) 4 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Tzu-Yi Chen (Taiwan) 5 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Jacek Kortus (Poland) 6 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Mischa Kozlowski (Poland)
Number of participants	77
Number of rounds	3
Additional Info	Final round with orchestra

<b>X.</b> Official name and date of the 10 <sup>th</sup> competition	X. Internationaler Chopin-Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt, 11 – 21 October 2013
Cash prizes total	28 400 Euros
Participants age	Up to 30 years
Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
Number of jury members	7
Names of jury members	Maciej Lukaszczyk (Poland, Chair) Giovanni Bellucci (Italy) Boris Bloch (Ukraine) Dang Thai Son (Vietnam) Martin Kasik (Czech Republic) Katarzyna Popowa-Zydron (Poland) Sabine Simon (Germany)
Names of main laureates	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize: Ivett Gyöngyösi (Hungary) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize: Kausikan Rajeshkumar (Great Britain) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize: Marek Kozak (Czech Republic) 4 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Jamie Bergin (Great Britain) 5 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Miyako Arishima (Japan) 6 <sup>th</sup> Prize: Lukas Klansky (Czech Republic)
Number of participants	72
Number of rounds	3
Additional Info	Final round with orchestra
<b>XI.</b> Official name and date of the 11 <sup>th</sup> competition	XI. Internationaler Chopin-Klavierwettbewerb in Darmstadt, 6 – 16 October 2017
Cash prizes total	31 000 Euros
Participants age	Up to 30 years
Programme (composers, compositions) summarized	Exclusively Chopin
Number of jury members	7
Names of jury members	Kevin Kenner (USA, Chair) Andrzej Jasinski (Poland) Dang Thai Son (Vietnam) Martin Kasik (Czech Republic) Ewa Poblocka (Poland) Tobias Koch (Germany) Sabine Simon (Germany)



Names of main laureates

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Piotr Pawlak (Poland)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Kararzyna Golofit (Poland)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Yeon-Min Park (South Korea)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Prize: Michal Szymanowski (Poland)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Prize: Nagino Maruyama (Japan)
- 6<sup>th</sup> Prize: Misora Ozaki (Japan)

Number of participants

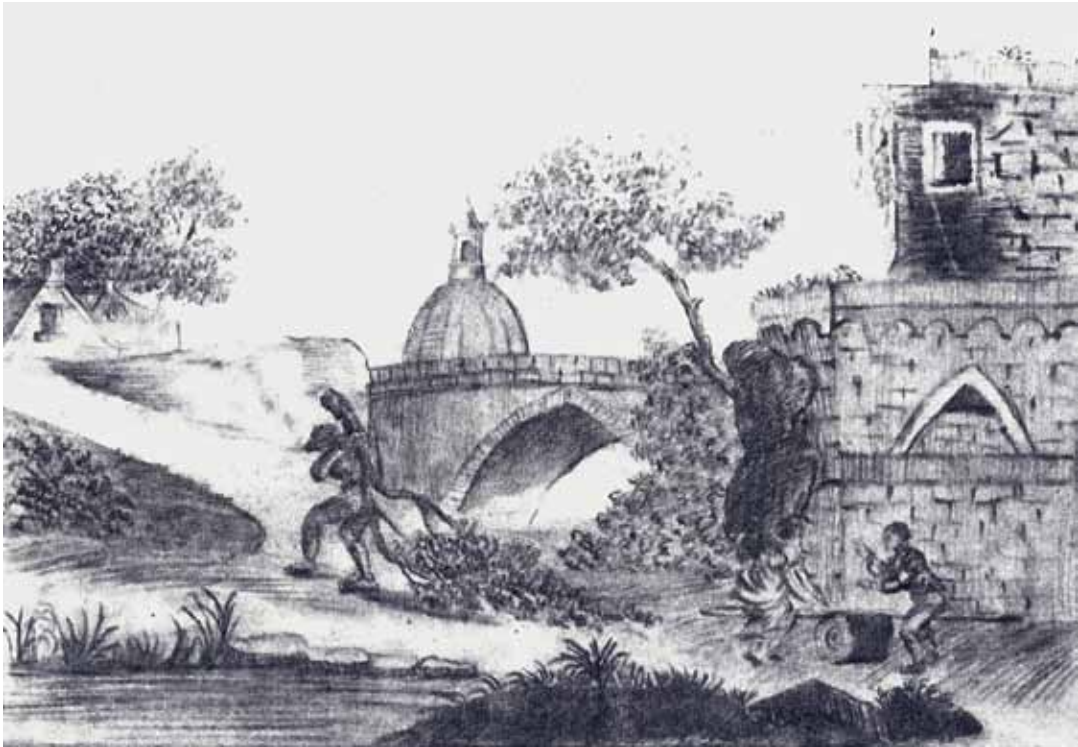
47

Number of rounds

3

Additional Info

Final round with orchestra.  
One work by Chopin for piano and cello  
required additionally in final round.  
Option of improvisation in 1<sup>st</sup> round.



»Paysage fait par Fryderyk Chopin« (Drawing of a landscape by Fryderyk Chopin)



Autograph of Fryderyk Chopin, Impromptu in A flat major

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Kasinostraße 3, Kennedy-/Literaturhaus, 64293 Darmstadt

Telefon: +49 (0)6155 7952606

office@chopin-gesellschaft.de

www.chopin-gesellschaft.de

Editor: Jill Rabenau

Photographs:

Hartmut Stolzmann (15)

Günther Jockel (3)

Stanislaw Kubalok (2)

Dorothee Stolzmann (2)

Jochen Müller (1)

Katrin Müller-Frorath (1)

Erhard Rabenau (4)

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