

- *What was the artistic environment in Chopin's upbringing?*
- *Who were some of the composers who influenced the young Chopin?*
- *Who were the composers influenced by Chopin?*

If you are curious about these questions, this is the concert you would not want to miss.

It is no exaggeration to say that Fryderyk Chopin was and is one of the most original geniuses in the history of music. We do not often think of the artistic milieu from which all this incredible music emerge; nor do we think of composers whose creations may have influenced young Chopin. When we look at a beautiful flower, we tend not to think of the soil that caused it to grow.

Tobias Koch's recital, "The Polish Romantics", will give us a glimpse into works of composers active before, during and after Chopin.

After Poland lost her independence in 1795, the arts and culture of the Polish assumed the task of sustaining the national spirit of her people. In music, Poland's folk tradition became an important source of influence for composers. Music written around this time – works full of charm, shifting moods, melancholy, lyricism, but also of heroism – reflects the temperament and emotions of the people of Poland. Music became a channel in bemoaning the fate of the homeland, and in recalling the glorious age of Poland's past.

In dance music written in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a gradual transition from functional to artistic dances – Polonaises and Mazurkas to be listened to. We hear this shift from the functional to the stylized in the Mazurkas written by Maria Szymanowska. Chopin then took the dance forms of the Polonaise and Mazurka and raised them to unparalleled heights, making them truly dances of the soul.

At the recital, you will hear Michał Kleofas Ogiński's "Farewell to the Homeland", written as early as 1794, a very popular work at the time. In addition, Koch will perform compositions of Kurpiński and Elsner, Chopin's composition teacher.

In the same concert, you will also hear works by composers influenced or inspired by Chopin - works by Edward Wolff, Karol Mikuli (Chopin's own student), Raoul Koczalski, Ignacy Friedmann, and even the great Paderewski. There will, of course, also be music by Chopin.

The concert will be performed on a beautifully restored 1852 Broadwood piano.

A specialist in performing on period pianos, as well as in historically informed performances; Tobias Koch is one of the leading performers in romantic

performance practice. He has a discography of over 25 CDs, and his career as a solo pianist, chamber musician, and Lied collaborator has taken him to music festivals all over Europe.

If you are a lover of music of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or curious about works by composers we do not often get to hear, don't miss this concert.

Tobias Koch's "The Polish Romantics" will be held on at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, at downtown's beautiful Christ Church Cathedral. For details about the programme, or to purchase tickets, visit the website of The Vancouver Chopin Society ([www.chopinsociety.org](http://www.chopinsociety.org)) or Early Music Vancouver ([www.earlymusic.bc.ca](http://www.earlymusic.bc.ca)).