

Simply Charlotte Mason presents

Music Study With the Masters

by Sonya Shafer



chopin

*“Let the young people hear good music as often as possible,
... let them study occasionally the works of a single great master
until they have received some of his teaching, and know his style.”*

—Charlotte Mason

With **Music Study with the Masters** you have everything you need to teach music appreciation successfully. Just a few minutes once a week and the simple guidance in this book will influence and enrich your children more than you can imagine.

In this book you will find

- Step-by-step instructions for doing music study with the included audio recordings.
- Listen and Learn ideas that will add to your understanding of the music.
- A Day in the Life biography of the composer that the whole family will enjoy.
- An additional longer biography for older students to read on their own.
- Extra recommended books, DVDs, and CDs that you can use to learn more about the composer and his works.

Simply
Charlotte Mason

Frederic Chopin
(1810–1849)

by Sonya Shafer

Excerpts from Charlotte Mason's Original Home Schooling Series are surrounded by quotation marks and accompanied by a reference to which book in the series they came from.

Vol. 1: Home Education

Vol. 2: Parents and Children

Vol. 3: School Education

Vol. 4: Ourselves

Vol. 5: Formation of Character

Vol. 6: A Philosophy of Education

Music Study with the Masters: Chopin

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Contents

Charlotte Mason on Music Study.	5
How to Use Music Study with the Masters.	7
A Day in the Life of Chopin.	9
The Story of Chopin	15
For Further Study.	33

Listen and Learn

Waltz No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 18, “Grande valse brillante”	34
Nocturne No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2	35
Mazurka No. 13 in A Minor, Op. 17, No. 4.	36
Waltz No. 6 in D-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 1, “Minute”.	37
Prelude No. 15 in D-flat Major, Op. 28, No. 15, “Raindrop”.	38
Étude No. 12 in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 12, “Revolutionary”	39
Étude No. 5 in G-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 5, “Black Keys”.	40
Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 35, “Funeral March”	41
Complete Track Listing	45

Charlotte Mason on Music Study

“Let the young people hear good music as often as possible, and that *under instruction*. It is a pity we like our music, as our pictures and our poetry, mixed, so that there are few opportunities of going through, as a listener, a course of the works of a single composer. But this is to be aimed at for the young people; let them study occasionally the works of a single great master until they have received some of his teaching, and know his style.” (*Formation of Character*, p. 235)

How to Use Music Study with the Masters

1. Play the music recordings often and mention the composer's name when you do. You can play them as background music during a meal, while running errands in the car, at nap time or bedtime, or while the students work on some handwork. (Try not to keep them playing all day or during noisy times when other sounds or conversation would distract.) Encourage students to describe what the various pieces make them think of, to "draw the music" with art, or to move to the music. Allow them to form their own relations with it.
2. Read the A Day in the Life biography to the students and ask them to narrate. Enter this composer in your Book of Centuries. You can assign the The Story of Chopin expanded biography to older students for independent reading during the weeks you linger with this composer. Other For Further Study resources are listed if you would like to learn more.
3. Once every week or so, give focused listening to a particular piece. Use the Listen and Learn ideas in the back of this book to guide your listening and discussion.

As opportunity presents itself, go to a concert that features the music of this composer so students can listen to a live performance.

A Day in the Life of Chopin

(From *The Private Life of the Great Composers* [1893]

by John Frederick Rowbotham, edited)

Chopin is a late riser. His first pupil of the morning is a very fashionable lady, whose great ambition is to play one of his waltzes correctly. But she is kept waiting some time while the composer gets ready and partakes of a slight breakfast, which is all his slender appetite is capable of at this early hour of the day. Since the composer is the fashionable music-master of Paris, countesses, duchesses, and even princesses contend for the privilege of being his pupils. Alone with his pupil at last, and sitting by the side of the piano, he is the most amiable of men but seems to take more interest in conversation than in the more serious question of notes and fingering. His fair pupil appears to be similarly disposed and the lesson passes pleasantly along, to the accompaniment of a good deal of chatting and as little music as can conscientiously be imparted in the short space of one hour.

The first pupil goes and is succeeded by a second, with whom the lesson proceeds in similar fashion. This young lady has a great deal to tell Chopin about the Duchess of B___'s ball last night and who were there. He listens with apparently the greatest interest, occasionally recalling her to the piece of music before her and suggesting that perhaps it would be better if she were to vary her conversation by a little playing.

This method of dealing with his pupils was in a measure forced upon Chopin, since his principal connection as a teacher of the pianoforte was with the idle Parisian upper class. They desired nothing more from his lessons than the reputation of having studied under him and were entirely disinclined to approach the music seriously or to engage in any laborious exercises to improve their playing. Occasionally, however, a pupil came to him of exceptional abilities and with a strong

The Story of Chopin

(From *The Great Composers, or Stories of the Lives of Eminent Musicians* [1883]
by C. E. Bourne, edited)

Part 1—“Oh, mamma, everybody looked only at my collar!”

The music of Chopin, as the noblest expression of the refined romantic spirit of modern music, stands alone. True, his range was limited, and he wrote hardly anything but music in dance measures, nocturnes, preludes, and études; but it is not too much to say, that in his hands the familiar forms became changed, infused with a new life of classic beauty. His life was like his music—it might have been so much nobler and greater, and yet it was so beautiful, and full of a pathos of its own.

Though Polish life and music were from first to last such an integral part of Chopin's existence, it was only on one side, his mother's, that he could boast of Polish blood, for his father was a Frenchman. Frederic Francois Chopin was born on 1st March 1810, at Zela Zowa Wola, a little village near Warsaw.

The child very early showed his sensitiveness to music, and prevailed upon his parents to allow him to share the lessons given to his eldest sister. Many are the tales of his performances as a child, but, perhaps, the best is the one of his appearance at a public concert for the benefit of the poor, when he was not quite nine years old. He was announced to play Adalbert Gyrowetz's pianoforte concerto, and, a few hours before, he was put on a chair, and there dressed with more than ordinary care, being arrayed in a new jacket, with an ornamented collar, specially ordered for the occasion. When the concert was over, and Frederic returned to his mother, who had not been present, she asked him what the public liked best. “Oh, mamma, everybody looked only at my collar!” He evidently did not think of his playing as having astonished people so much.

Listen and Learn

Waltz No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 18, “Grande valse brillante”

(Disc 2, Track 1; approx. 6 minutes)

The nickname of this waltz gives the listeners a clue as to what to expect. *Valse* is a French term for “waltz,” so we know it will have a 1-2-3, 1-2-3 feel, as waltzes do.

But the second word also gives a key description: *brillante*. This waltz depicts the brilliance and vivacity of a Paris ballroom—an elegant ballroom with elegant couples, a scene of liveliness mixed with aristocratic refinement. Another composer, Robert Schumann, expressed the idea, “It should be danced, at the very least, by countesses.”

See if you can hear the seven different dance themes Chopin wrote into this brilliant waltz.

Music Study with the Masters: Chopin

Complete Track Listing

All music courtesy of Naxos of America, Inc.

Disc 1

Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 35, "Funeral March" (24:08)

Performed by Idil Biret

1. I. Grave - Doppio Movimento (6:10)
2. II. Scherzo (7:03)
3. III. Marche funebre: Lento (9:14)
4. IV. Finale: Presto (1:41)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21 (32:03)

Performed by Idil Biret, Slovak State Philharmonic Orchestra, Kosice,
Robert Stankovsky

5. I. Maestoso (14:13)
6. II. Larghetto (9:24)
7. III. Allegro vivace (8:26)

Disc 2

Waltz No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 18, "Grande valse brillante" (5:29)

Performed by Idil Biret

1. Waltz No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 18, "Grande valse brillante" (5:29)

Nocturne No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2 (4:31)

Performed by Idil Biret

2. Nocturne No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2 (4:31)

Fantasy-Impromptu in C-sharp Minor, Op. 66 (5:34)

Performed by Idil Biret

3. *Fantasy-Impromptu* in C-sharp Minor, Op. 66 (5:34)

Mazurka No. 11 in E Minor, Op. 17, No. 2 (2:29)

Performed by Idil Biret

4. Mazurka No. 11 in E Minor, Op. 17, No. 2 (2:29)

- Mazurka No. 13 in A Minor, Op. 17, No. 4 (4:37)
Performed by Idil Biret
5. Mazurka No. 13 in A Minor, Op. 17, No. 4 (4:37)
- Waltz No. 6 in D-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 1, "Minute" (1:50)
Performed by Idil Biret
6. Waltz No. 6 in D-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 1, "Minute" (1:50)
- Polonaise No. 3 in A Major, Op. 40, No. 1, "Military" (6:27)
Performed by Idil Biret
7. Polonaise No. 3 in A Major, Op. 40, No. 1, "Military" (6:27)
- Prelude No. 15 in D-flat Major, Op. 28, No. 15, "Raindrop" (5:50)
Performed by Idil Biret
8. Prelude No. 15 in D-flat Major, Op. 28, No. 15, "Raindrop" (5:50)
- Prelude No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 28, No. 4 (2:25)
Performed by Idil Biret
9. Prelude No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 28, No. 4 (2:25)
- Étude No. 12 in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 12, "Revolutionary" (3:02)
Performed by Idil Biret
10. Étude No. 12 in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 12, "Revolutionary" (3:02)
- Mazurka No. 23 in D Major, Op. 33, No. 2 (2:30)
Performed by Idil Biret
11. Mazurka No. 23 in D Major, Op. 33, No. 2 (2:30)
- Étude No. 5 in G-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 5, "Black Keys" (1:49)
Performed by Idil Biret
12. Étude No. 5 in G-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 5, "Black Keys" (1:49)
- Waltz No. 7 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2 (3:52)
Performed by Idil Biret
13. Waltz No. 7 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2 (3:52)
- Nocturne No. 20 in C-sharp Minor, Op. posth. (3:59)
Performed by Idil Biret
14. Nocturne No. 20 in C-sharp Minor, Op. posth. (3:59)