

Who was Fryderyk Chopin?

*'A native of Warsaw, a Pole at heart,
with the talent of a world citizen'*
Cyprian Kamil Norwid



Fryderyk Chopin was born in 1810 in Żelazowa Wola. His date of birth is most often considered to be March 1, although his baptismal certificate bears the date February 22. When he was just a few months old, his family moved to Warsaw, where he grew up and developed his musical talent. They lived in a variety of places, but their home was always located in the vicinity of

Krakowskie Przedmieście, where the cultural life of Warsaw remains vibrant to this day. Fryderyk grew up in a home where singing was often heard and various instruments were played: the piano, flute, and violin. It comes as no surprise that Chopin first tried his hand at music as a young boy. Fryderyk was admired in the salons of Warsaw's aristocracy. The capital's newspapers were delighted with the boy who composed his first pieces before his eighth birthday. After a period of home schooling, he started attending the Warsaw Lyceum. There he acquired comprehensive knowledge, but also forged friendships that he cherished for the rest of his life. In 1830, after graduating from the Main School of Music, Fryderyk went to Vienna, where he received news of the outbreak of the November Uprising. Although he missed his beloved homeland very much, the family persuaded

him not to return to the country. Fryderyk moved to Paris and quickly found himself among the French capital's most prominent personalities. His popularity is evidenced by the words of Polish violinist and composer Antoni Orłowski: 'He is turning the heads of all the French women, and arousing the envy of the men. He is currently in fashion, and soon the world will see gloves à la Chopin'. Chopin lived in Paris until his death. He died at the age of 39, probably from tuberculosis. He was buried in the Père Lachaise cemetery. Chopin's heart, in accordance with his will, was brought to Warsaw by the composer's sister, Ludwika. We invite you to take a walk in Chopin's footsteps around Warsaw.

Chopin benches



DID YOU KNOW?



In a dozen or so places on the Royal Route in Warsaw you will find multimedia benches that bring you closer to Fryderyk Chopin and his music. Press the button and listen to one of his most famous compositions: a mazurka, waltz, ballad or nocturne.

Fryderyk Chopin Monument in Royal Łazienki Gardens (Pomnik Fryderyka Chopina w Łazienkach Królewskich)



Fryderyk Chopin probably did not expect that a monument would one day be erected to him in Warsaw and that it would become one of the capital's most important symbols. The massive work by Wacław Szymanowski was designed to celebrate the centenary of the composer's birth. The monument was unveiled in 1926 in Royal Łazienki Gardens—the extensive grounds surrounding the summer residence of the last king of Poland, Stanisław August. For over 50 years, the foot of the monument has been the venue for Chopin Concerts that enjoy great popularity among tourists and Warsaw residents alike. Performances by outstanding pianists take place every Sunday, from May to September at 12:00 and 16:00. More information: estrada.com.pl/koncertychopinowskie • [Al. Ujazdowskie](http://Al.Ujazdowskie), www.lazienki-krolewskie.pl

Fryderyk Chopin Museum (Muzeum Fryderyka Chopina)



The museum is located in the historic Ostrogski Palace. Thanks to the exhibits and multimedia attractions here, you will learn both about the composer's life and work. You will find out everything about his childhood and youth spent in Warsaw, as well as his life in exile. The exhibits include: a priceless Pleyel piano, a gold watch given to the 10-year-old artist in recognition of his talent, letters written both by and to him, his drawings, and hand-written letters and composition manuscripts. The museum organises recitals and concerts of Chopin's music.

• [ul. Okólnik 1](http://ul.Okólnik1), muzeum.nifc.pl



The Church of the Holy Cross (Kościół Św. Krzyża)



Visit the church, which in the early 19th century was the largest Catholic church in Warsaw. Many important moments from the history of the Chopin family are connected with it: the baptisms of Fryderyk's sisters Izabella and Emilia were held there. In accordance with Chopin's final will, his oldest sister Ludwika brought his heart to Warsaw, where it was embedded in a pillar in the church.

• [ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 3](http://ul.KrakowskiePrzedmieście3)



DID YOU KNOW?

Chopin wanted his body to return to Poland after his death but due to the political situation this was not possible. Through the efforts of his relatives, the composer's heart was removed during the post mortem, placed in a sealed jar, preserved with alcohol, and transported from France by his eldest sister, Ludwika. It found its final resting place in Holy Cross Church 96 years after the composer's death.

Zamoyski Palace (Pałac Zamoyskich)



The building is associated with the history of Fryderyk Chopin's piano, which was located in the apartment of the composer's sister, Izabella. In 1863, an attempt was made in the vicinity of the palace to assassinate the tsar's governor—Teodor Berg. In retaliation, the Russians ransacked the building and threw the instrument out of the window into the street. The Polish poet Cyprian Kamil Norwid commemorated this event in his poem entitled 'Chopin's Piano'. Today, the palace houses lecture halls of the University of Warsaw.

• [ul. Nowy Świat 67/69](http://ul.NowyŚwiat67/69)

Kazimierzowski Palace (Pałac Kazimierzowski)



Take a look at the 17th-century palace, whose architecture contains Baroque and Classical elements (you will find it on the University of Warsaw campus behind the Library building). The Chopin family lived on the second floor in the right wing of the building. Fryderyk often played and sat with a book in the botanical garden adjacent to the palace. The building also housed the Warsaw Lyceum, which Chopin attended.

• [ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28](http://ul.KrakowskiePrzedmieście26/28)

DID YOU KNOW?

Chopin exhibited exceptional talent from childhood, tried composing before the age of eight, and was called a 'child prodigy'. After 6 years of tuition, his first piano teacher, Wojciech Żywny, stopped the lessons, explaining that Fryderyk's abilities exceeded his own teaching capabilities.

Czapski Palace (Pałac Czapskich)



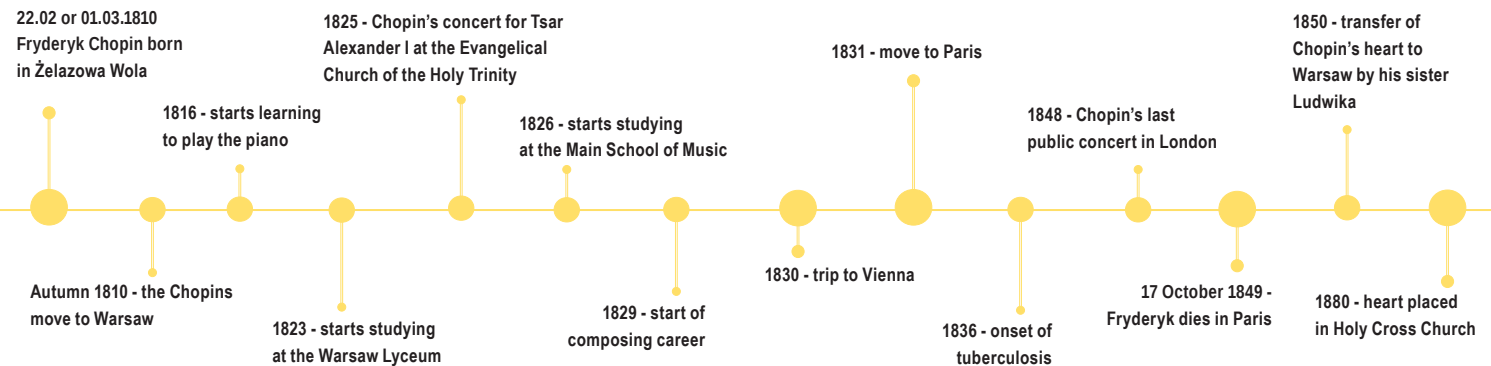
Fryderyk family's had another apartment in the left wing of the palace, which they moved into in 1827. This is where Warsaw's elite met and the Chopins were visited by artists, scientists and young people. Rehearsals with orchestral musicians were even held here. This is where Fryderyk spent his last years before leaving the country permanently in 1830. Here he composed two concertos considered his most important works of the so-called Warsaw period.

• [ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 5](http://ul.KrakowskiePrzedmieście5)

The Visitationists church (Kościół Wizytek)

The young Fryderyk played the organ many times during mass for pupils from the Warsaw Lyceum, which he attended. This 17th-century church survived World War II and most of the original decoration has survived to this day. Pay attention to the Baroque pulpit in the shape of a boat—one of the most interesting parts of the interior.

• [ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 34](http://ul.KrakowskiePrzedmieście34)





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DID YOU KNOW?

In the Visitationist Church, Fryderyk met Konstancja Gładkowska—his first love, who sang solo during services. Fryderyk and Konstancja were united by affection. The composer later dedicated the Larghetto movement of his Piano Concerto No 2 in F minor to her.

The Presidential Palace (PałacPrezydencki)

In Fryderyk's time, the palace was the seat of the tsar's governor. Eight-year-old Fryderyk Chopin gave his first public performance here. The performance evoked great enthusiasm and aroused the interest of local newspapers. After Poland regained its independence in 1918, the building became the seat of the prime minister and the government, and from 1994 the President of the Republic of Poland.

• [ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 46/48](#)



RONDO IN C MINOR, OP. 1

Wessel Palace (Pałac Wesslów)

In 1830, it was precisely from this place that Chopin was bid farewell by his friends and left Warsaw forever as he set off for Vienna. During this period, the palace served as the office of the Saxon Post Office and postal stables.

• [ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 25](#)



GRAND POLONAISE BRILLANTE IN E FLAT MAJOR, OP. 22

Piłsudski Square and Saxon Garden (Plac Piłsudskiego i Ogród Saski)



MAZURKA in B FLAT MAJOR, OP. 7

NOCTURNE IN E FLAT MAJOR, OP. 9

Until 1817, the Saxon Palace housed the Warsaw Lyceum, where Chopin's father, Mikołaj, found work as a French language teacher, a job which came with a staff apartment. Unfortunately, the palace no longer exists today—it was destroyed during World War II. The Palace's only remnant is a colonnade which houses the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Work is currently underway to rebuild the Palace and restore it to its splendour of 1939. However, you can visit the Saxon Garden and stroll along the pathways where Fryderyk ran 200 years ago.

• [pl. Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego](#)

Church of the Holy Trinity (Kościół Świętej Trójcy)



In 1825, the fifteen-year-old Fryderyk Chopin gave a concert at the Evangelical-Augsburg church. For his performance, he received a diamond ring from Tsar Alexander I. The classical church from the 18th century served as a viewing deck and observation tower.

• [pl. Stanisława Małachowskiego 1](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

Another valuable gift Fryderyk received was a gold pocket watch with the inscription: 'January 3, 1820—to ten-year-old Fryderyk'. It was given to him by the great singer Angelica Catalani, who admired his talent. Today, this watch can be seen at Warsaw's Fryderyk Chopin Museum.



The Birthplace of Fryderyk Chopin in Żelazowa Wola (Dom Urodzenia Fryderyka Chopina)

Here, in 1810, Fryderyk Chopin came into the world. A few months after his birth, the Chopins moved to Warsaw. However, Fryderyk often spent holidays at the estate. From May to September, every Saturday and Sunday at 12.00 and 15.00 you can listen to Chopin recitals, and during the week at 11.00 there are mini-concerts as part of the 'Musical Quarter Hours'.

• [Żelazowa Wola 15, 96–503 Sochaczew \(about 50 km from Warsaw\)](#), [muzeum.nifc.pl](#)



DID YOU KNOW?

We are still not sure of Chopin's date of birth. Sources contain two contradictory pieces of information. The baptism register of the church in Brochów indicates February 22, 1810, although March 1 is more likely—that is the day on which Fryderyk's mother sent him birthday wishes. But we will never know the truth.

St. Rocco and St. John the Baptist Church in Brochów (Kościół w Brochowie)

Fryderyk's parents Mikołaj Chopin and Justyna Krzyżanowska were married in the church in Brochów. It is also where, on 23 April 1810, Fryderyk was christened. Surrounded by a wall with corner towers, the church is one of the most valuable Renaissance religious monuments that also had a defensive function.

• [Brochów 70, 05-088 Brochów \(about 60 km from Warsaw\)](#)
[www.brochow-parafia.pl](#)



FESTIVALS AND CONCERTS

• Chopin Concerts in Royal Łazienki Gardens

For over 50 years, Chopin Concerts have been held at the foot of the Fryderyk Chopin Monument in Royal Łazienki Gardens. Recitals by outstanding pianists take place every Sunday, from mid-May to the end of September, at 12.00 and 16.00. They are popular among Varsovians and tourists alike and are a unique opportunity to listen to classical music while sitting on a blanket in the shade of trees.

Venue: Łazienki Królewskie

• 'Chopin and His Europe' Festival

An attraction for lovers of classical and contemporary music, it has been organised in Warsaw since 2005 by the Fryderyk Chopin Institute with each edition having its own leitmotif. The event is attended by outstanding artists from Poland and around the world.

Venue: National Philharmonic, Basilica of the Holy Cross, Witold Lutosławski Concert Studio of Polish Radio

• International Chopin Piano Competition

Since 1927, the world's greatest piano talents have come to Warsaw every five years to compete in the International Chopin Piano Competition. The initiator of this magnificent event was Jerzy Żurawlew—a distinguished pianist and teacher who wanted to popularise the great composer's music. The competition's prestige and the global careers of its winners ensure that it enjoys unwavering interest.

Venue: National Philharmonic

• Daily recitals

No matter when you visit Warsaw, you can listen to the music of Fryderyk Chopin. There is no shortage of places in the city centre where you can enjoy daily recitals by Polish and international pianists.

More information: [go2warsaw.pl](#)

CHOPIN'S WARSAW



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