

A black and white portrait of pianist Góran Filipec is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image. He is shown from the chest up, looking slightly to the left of the camera with a serious expression. He has dark, wavy hair and is wearing a dark, high-collared shirt. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and hair against a dark background.

CHOPIN

Preludes Nos. 4 and 18
Fantasy in F minor
Polonaise No. 6 'Heroic'

A faint, sepia-toned portrait of Frédéric Chopin is visible in the lower center of the image. It shows his face from the chest up, looking slightly to the right. He has a full, curly beard and is wearing a cap. The portrait is semi-transparent and serves as a background element for the text.

GORAN FILIPEC

Fryderyk CHOPIN (1810–1849)
24 Preludes – Nos. 4 and 18
Fantasy in F minor • Polonaise No. 6 ‘Heroic’

Born in 1810 into a Franco-Polish family in Żelazowa Wola, Frédéric François (Fryderyk Franciszek) Chopin was recognised as an exceptional talent at an early age, and studied at the Warsaw School of Music under Józef Elsner. At the age of 19 Chopin made his debut in Vienna, and had his first composition printed by the Viennese publisher Tobias Haslinger. After his arrival in Paris in 1831, Chopin's reputation grew rapidly. The success of his concert at the Salle Pleyel, organised by Friedrich Kalkbrenner, assured him a contract with Schlesinger, the leading Parisian publishing company, as well as numerous students and admirers. There, Chopin became friends with personalities of the cultural milieu such as Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Sigismond Thalberg, Vincenzo Bellini and Eugène Delacroix, as well as with Adam Mickiewicz and Albert Grzymalda, his Polish compatriots. Unlike some of his keyboard virtuoso friends, he disliked public performances and appeared in concerts rarely and rather unwillingly. He realised that the extreme delicacy of his pianistic style was not to everyone's taste in larger concert environments and preferred to disclose the finesse of his artistry in intimate, more ambient spaces. During his companionship with George Sand, probably the brightest and the most creative period in his life, Chopin spent most of his time in Nohant in central France, leaving for Paris mainly during the winters. His health problems, which had pursued him since youth, were aggravating with time, and in the year following his last concerts held in Glasgow and London in 1848, he died from tuberculosis. He was buried at the cemetery of Père Lachaise in Paris while his heart, in accordance with his will, was brought by his sister to Warsaw where it was placed in an urn installed in a pillar of the Church of the Holy Cross.

In the context of his time, Chopin's intimate, miniaturist pianistic style was unique and somewhat peculiar. It was rather seen as the successor of the art of Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Johann Baptist Cramer and John Field rather than aligned with some of the tendencies of his time, which were oriented towards bolder pianistic effects. We remark that his contemporaries such as Liszt and Rubinstein developed experimental, innovative and progressive styles, which were destined for larger halls, and these can be regarded as opposite to Chopin's aesthetic. Pianists such as Carl Tausig, Theodor Leschetizky, Aleksander Michałowski or Ferruccio Busoni tried to adapt Chopin's works to the context of the time and spaces within which they were performing, and arranged parts or passages of Chopin's works in the spirit of the 'grand style'. For this present recording different sources were used in order to try to trace the practices of these pianists, whose rendering of Chopin was rather majestic. In the spirit of Liszt's 'modernisation' of Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* or Tausig's rewriting of Chopin's *First Concerto*, some of the passages of the recorded repertoire were rewritten in more efficient and idiomatic pianistic forms. In these minor interventions Chopin's original idea was always preserved.

Fantasy in F minor, Op. 49

The *Fantasy in F minor, Op. 49* (pub. 1842) shares with the ballades the formal resemblance to sonata form, as well as similar proportions, but in terms of the narrative goes far beyond what can be heard in the latter. Probably one of the most fiery and heroic of Chopin's works, this piece starts with two marches, one of which makes allusion to *Litwinka*, a Polish insurrectionary song by Karol Kurpiński. After a section of improvisatory character, the passionate main thematic material, is revealed, contrasting boldly with the operatic prayer-like interruption in the middle section. In the present recording the *Fantasy* is coupled with *Prelude, Op. 28, No. 18*, which corresponds to its tonality and character.

Polonaise No. 6 in A flat major, Op. 53 ‘Heroic’

Probably the most majestic of Chopin's polonaises, this piece has attracted attention since it was composed. Its commonly used title, 'Heroic', was taken from a letter written by George Sand, and it was never actually attributed to the work by the composer. Written in a large ternary form with an introduction and a coda, the work exposes a dance section in the first part, and a military-like scene followed by a lyrical episode in the central passage. Its time of publication corresponds to those of *Ballade No. 4* and *Scherzo No. 4* (1843). *Prelude, Op. 28, No. 4* was intended to serve as an introduction to *Scherzo No. 1*, which can be heard on the album *Chopin: Preludes, Ballades and Scherzos* (Naxos 8.574660).

Goran Filipec

Goran Filipec

Widely renowned for his exceptional interpretations of the Romantic repertoire, Goran Filipec (b. Rijeka, 1981) is a pianist of fiery virtuosity and evocative pianistic style, often performing his own arrangements and adaptations. Initially a pupil of Evgeny Zarfants and Oxana Yablonskaya, Filipec studied with Naum Grubert and Natalia Trull at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague and the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory. He also holds a PhD in music from Sorbonne Université and the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse of Paris. His recordings for Naxos have received exceptional critical acclaim. *Paganini Studies* (8.573458) and *Hungarian Fantasy* (8.573866) were awarded the Grand Prix du Disque by the Liszt Ferenc Society of Budapest. A laureate of several international piano competitions, Filipec has appeared internationally as a recitalist and soloist with symphony orchestras worldwide. He has been invited to appear at the Faces of Modern Pianism International Festival (Mariinsky Theatre), Progetto Martha Argerich and Dubrovnik Summer Festival. Filipec is co-founder and president of the Société Franz Liszt de Genève. www.goran-filipec.com



Photo © Elisa Caldana

The extreme delicacy and finesse of Chopin's pianistic style was unusual in an era when star pianists such as Liszt and Anton Rubinstein were developing more virtuosic and experimental effects. It led some performers of the day to adapt Chopin's works to suit the context of their time. Goran Filipec has traced the practices of these pianists to fashion a programme of Chopin's works performed in the spirit of the 'grand style'. Filipec's album *Chopin: Préludes, Ballades and Scherzos* is available on 8.574660.

**Fryderyk
CHOPIN**
(1810–1849)

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| 1 | 24 Preludes, Op. 28 – No. 18 in F minor (1838–39) | 0:52 |
| 2 | Fantasy in F minor, Op. 49 (1841) | 11:26 |
| 3 | 24 Preludes, Op. 28 – No. 4 in E minor (1838–39) | 1:33 |
| 4 | Polonaise No. 6 in A flat major, Op. 53 'Heroic'
(1842–43) | 7:20 |

Goran Filipec, Piano

Recorded: 28–30 July 2024 at Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden, UK
Producers and editors: Tim Burton (K&A Productions Ltd) **1–3**,
Andrew Walton (K&A Productions Ltd) **4**
Engineer: Deborah Spanton (K&A Productions Ltd)
Booklet notes: Goran Filipec • Cover photo of Goran Filipec by Elisa Caldana
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