

A detailed illustration of several purple flowers, likely pansies or violas, with green leaves and stems. The flowers are positioned on the left side of the cover, with one large flower in the upper left and several others below it. The background of the entire cover is a light beige color with a faint, repeating pattern of musical staves and notes.

The
Chopin
Connection

Vol. I

Frédéric Chopin
Charlotte de Rothschild

Inbar Rothschild | piano



Frédéric Chopin
Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863)

Foreword

When celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2025, we reflected on a legacy that is as much personal as it is professional. For us, this volume represents a profound homecoming; we grew up with Chopin's *Nocturnes* sat enthroned on our family piano, our father—CRD's founder—often closing his days by playing works found in this very collection. This was our entrance into classical music and connected (our) father to (us) children, setting us on a voyage of discovery that – little did we know it at the time – would eventually see us marking a half-century of the oldest independent classical label's dedication to artistic exploration and excellence.

The Chopin Connection explores the vibrant mid-19th-century Parisian salon of the Rothschild family, a creative epicentre that supported many great artists, including Frédéric Chopin.

We are proud to champion two women composers who carried on Chopin's tradition through the two volumes of this collection: *Charlotte de Rothschild*, who was both a patron and a pupil of Chopin, and a gifted composer, in Vol. 1; and *Mathilde de Rothschild* in Vol. 2.

As we surface the voice of one of many gifted women composers often sidelined by history, we also present the masterworks Chopin dedicated to Charlotte, including the monumental *Ballade No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 52*. Described by Alfred Cortot as possessing the 'greatest wealth of musical substance', this piece stands out at the pinnacle of Chopin's creative development. By featuring Charlotte's pieces alongside Chopin's *Ballade* and other related works (including an assortment of waltzes, mazurkas and nocturnes), we invite you to (re)experience Chopin and celebrate with us the enduring power of musical partnerships, past and present.

Emma Pauncefort
Tom Pauncefort

Directors



Performer's note

The Chopin Connection offers a rare insight into the piano works of Chopin, connecting much-loved repertoire with little-known compositions from two of Chopin's pupils from the Rothschild Family, Charlotte (1825-1899) and Mathilde (1832-1924). The aim of this two-volume collection is to champion two immensely gifted women composers whose pieces reflect a particular voice and style and simultaneously reveal new facets in the teaching of their admired mentor. This first volume connects Chopin with Charlotte de Rothschild.

The Rothschild family's salon was at the centre of Parisian culture in the mid-19th century, supporting major figures in the arts community, including Gioacchino Rossini, Honoré de Balzac, Eugène

Delacroix, Heinrich Heine and, critically, Frédéric Chopin. Here, we discover two-way creative traffic: Chopin developed a close connection to his patrons and expressed his appreciation towards the family by dedicating some of his most beloved works, including his celebrated **Ballade No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 52** and his **Waltz in C Sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2** to Baroness Charlotte de Rothschild.

Charlotte de Rothschild herself began studying with Chopin in 1841. Although she was later primarily identified as a painter, the set of four pieces, which was first published in 1860, expresses an air of delicacy, aristocracy, and romance, showing high musical refinement and promise. The **C Minor Nocturne** and the **A Minor Waltz** – the first and the third piece of the set – were later believed to

have been composed by Chopin himself, and were subsequently published as posthumous pieces of the illustrious composer over 70 years later. Recent research has, however, corrected the historical record and placed authorship back in the hands of Charlotte, with acknowledged contributions by Chopin: Swiss musicologist Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger has established that the pieces were composed primarily by Charlotte in 1847 and revised with Chopin during Charlotte's lessons. This set therefore affords us a rare glimpse of the output of a special teacher-pupil connection.

As for Chopin's compositions, the chosen repertoire mainly revolves around works dedicated to the Rothschild family. It also includes an earlier draft of the **Mazurka in A Minor, Op. 67, No. 4**, which

was written and signed by the composer in the Rothschild's *Livre d'Or*. To complete the collection, I chose pieces that correspond with the Rothschild repertoire, such as the **Nocturnes, Op. 48**, which were especially meaningful to my late teacher, and also include a C Minor key signature, as in Charlotte's *Nocturne*.

These works reflect Chopin's later style, characterised by profound emotional depth, great compositional complexity, and meaningful harmonic advancements, creating an intriguing juxtaposition with the musical language of his younger pupil.

One final connection I would like to highlight is my own – as a pupil of the tradition myself, I hope I bring a distinct and personal

perspective to the works. Having studied with the great Israeli pianist Pnina Salzman, I was raised on the poetic legacy of her distinguished musical ancestry. I have also researched this tradition in the course of my PhD at the Royal Academy of Music in London, tracing back from my own teacher to Alfred Cortot to Émile Decombes and to Chopin himself.



École Normale de Musique de Paris, 1934

Courtesy of the family of Pnina Salzman.

Left: Pnina Salzman

Right: Alfred Cortot

Charlotte de Rothschild

QUATRE PIÈCES POUR PIANO

Charlotte de Rothschild published her set of **Four Pieces for Piano**, including a nocturne, a polka, and two waltzes, in 1860. Decades after Chopin's and Charlotte's death, two pieces of this collection, the *Nocturne* and the *A Minor Waltz* were re-credited to Chopin himself (in 1937 and 1955 respectively).

This attribution, in and of itself, teaches of the appreciation these compositions received due to their delicate melodic and expressive qualities. Nevertheless, the differences between the mature master and his younger pupil are apparent, and recent research suggests that Charlotte's pieces may have been 'absorbed' into

Chopin's papers during lessons and thus misattributed to the famous Polish composer.

The sentimental *C Minor Nocturne* provides a fascinating example of Chopin's style and spirit in simplified form. Imbued with charm, lyricism and expressive sincerity, the work presents various phrasing ideas, ornaments, melodic variations, and harmonic fluctuations that were highly characteristic to Chopin's writing in slower lyrical movements.

The *Polka in C Minor* offers a contrast to the *Nocturne* with its vigorous folk-dance rhythm. The clear rhythmic base of the left hand provides the ground for a vivid melody with sudden dynamic contrasts that contribute to the lively atmosphere.

The *A Minor* and *F Minor Waltzes*

resemble Chopin's expression in his own minor waltzes, often perceived as a nostalgic memory or a dream of a dance rather than its actual realisation. Their naïve and personal nature combines basic waltz accompaniment with flowing and communicative melodies, rendering their sensitive spirit with a dance-like sway.



Charlotte de Rothschild
Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904)

Frédéric Chopin

A PREFATORY NOTE

I was first introduced to the artistry of Alfred Cortot (1877-1962) during my studies with renowned Israeli pianist Pnina Salzman (1922-2006). Salzman, who travelled to Paris to study with Cortot in 1930 upon his personal invitation, went on to perform worldwide, faithfully embodying Cortot's poetic ideals and teachings decades after his death.

It was through Salzman that I discovered Cortot's recordings and extraordinary study editions of Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt. Above all, I was exposed to a tradition of experiencing music through a highly imaginative and personal engagement. My intense connection to my teacher and my 'teacher's teacher' solidified

further during my doctoral studies in which I set out to preserve and explore Salzman's musical heritage. Consequently, much of my own research was inspired by Cortot's ideas, which echoed and revived the methods of Chopin himself.

A scholar as well as a virtuoso, Cortot was taught by Chopin's pupils and undertook thorough research into the composer's music and writings. In preparing this collection, I returned to his study editions, reviewing his extensive commentary, fingerings, and musical markings. As a homage to this musical ancestry, I have also incorporated many of Cortot's reflections into these programme notes.

Waltzes Op. 64

Defined by Cortot as 'the true creator' of the 'salon waltz', Chopin's style did not conform with the German/Viennese dances of the era, turning towards a more intimate expression with hints of his native mazurka rhythms. Cortot captured the essence of Chopin's waltzes as 'Dream dances for lovesick hearts, secret echoes of whispered vows and passing regrets, flirtatiousness betrayed by a tear – all these come to life under the aristocratic fingers of the delicate Polish musician; poems of sentiment, these waltzes with their disconcerting mélange of witfulness and joy.'

Chopin's popular '*Minute Waltz*' *Op. 64, No.1 in D Flat*, also known as '*Waltz of the Little Dog*', has been told to be inspired by a real-life whimsical caricature, as recounted

by Cortot: 'George Sand's favourite dog loved to chase its own tail, turning round and round. Chopin, challenged to translate such an amusing flurry into musical terms, sketched this imitative figure, whose inventive charm quickly overshadows the image of the futile chase which triggered it, leaving one free to delight solely in its aural paraphrase.'

The enchantingly noble *Waltz in C Sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2* was dedicated to Baroness Charlotte de Rothschild. Its subtle noble spirit was defined by Cortot as 'an aristocratic conciseness of form and notation, and a feeling of furtive nostalgia... in which dance merges with dreams on chords of rare and fragile beauty, conjuring visions of a heart afflicted with the beguiling sadness of thoughts of yesteryear.'

'Closing the aesthetically refined triptych' of Chopin's last publication for piano solo is the less familiar of the three waltzes, *Op. 64, No. 3 in A Flat*. This 'delicate cross between waltz and mazurka' is full of 'marvellously fresh ideas, reflected in the unpredictable wanderings of an endearing melody.' The free and improvised nature of the opening and closing material gives way to a more expressive tendency in the work's middle section 'as if it were emerging from a dream,' gradually 'coloured with a more personal feeling... of secretive intensity.'

Mazurkas

Having written a record number of 51 pieces bearing this title, the mazurka was undoubtedly one of Chopin's favourite musical forms. Despite its miniature proportions, Chopin was able to articulate a

wide range of emotions, nuances, and musical thought, alternating between dance and dream, song and speech, love, pride, hope and sorrow. Perhaps above all, the mazurka allowed Chopin to express his most intimate feelings of longing to his beloved homeland, childhood memories of people and places he cherished, and dreams of a lonesome heart yearning for a simpler existence, happiness, and love.

The collection of the four *Mazurkas Op. 67* includes a mixture of works written between 1835 and 1849, which were published by Fontana posthumously in 1855. According to Cortot: 'Compositions in the latter manner require other qualities of execution and imaginative research than those of the youthful beginnings of a too brief career'.

In accordance, Cortot views the *Mazurka Op. 67, No. 1 in G Major* (1835) as 'clearly oriented in the direction of popular entertainment, constructed in the manner of Ländlers... [with] rare frankness of accent and rhythm, suggestive of a picturesque rustic choreography.'

In comparison, *Mazurka Op. 67, No. 2 in G Minor* (1849) is described as 'discreet and sensitive, dated from the very year of Chopin's death... one of the most touching interpretations of Polish national sentiment. It seems that, near his end, Chopin wanted to draw inspiration from the most distant memories of his youth and his country, and that, of their own accord, his fingers have found on the keyboard the secret of the simple melodies invented there, on the threshold of the cottages, in the evening that falls on a melancholy horizon.'

The indulgent and engaging *Mazurka Op. 67, No. 3 in C Major* (1835) 'attests... the spontaneous freshness of the compositions of this period.' Its form based on the varied repetition of the initial theme, diversified only by a middle section with several slightly altered repeats.

Lastly, *Mazurka Op. 67, No. 4 in A Minor* (1846) 'is characterised by the opposition of two musical arguments of secretly contradictory significance. The first, composed of the main subject and its minor complement, evolving under the sign of a slight anxious feverishness, despite its... aristocratic choreography. The second, acting as a major trio, testifies, on the contrary, to the most reassured feeling as well as the most amiably engaging expression.'

This final mazurka was also sketched in the Rothschild's 'Livre d'Or' marked 'Paris, 28 Nov. 1847'. Its intriguing draft includes several changes in comparison to the version which was ultimately published by Fontana. These seemingly minor alterations are nevertheless extremely telling as they expose some of the subtleties in Chopin's compositional thought, as well as key features in the performance practice.

Nocturnes

Chopin's **Nocturnes Op. 48** were composed in 1841 and published the following year. I chose to focus on this specific set to convey my deep love for and admiration of my late teacher and her artistry as both pieces were especially meaningful to her and feel very close to my heart as well.

Salzman often said that most of Chopin's pieces in four-crotchets meter reminded her of a funeral march, which is especially apparent in this piece. Indeed, the **C Minor Nocturne** has been considered one of Chopin's greatest emotional achievements. Chopin's contemporary, pianist Theodor Kullak, said of the piece: 'The design and poetic contents of this **Nocturne** make it the most important one that Chopin created; the chief subject is a masterly expression of a great powerful grief.'

Cortot captured the spirit of the **F Sharp Minor Op. 48, No. 2** as an embodiment of the Polish 'Zal', defined by Liszt as 'a secret mixture of unformulated aspirations and unfocussed regrets.' The main subject is built upon 'the insistent repetition of a single melodic idea', which, 'rather like a throbbing

obsession... imparts to the work a quality of indefinable melancholy'; In sharp contrast, the interlude of the middle section brings a poetic atmosphere of almost philosophical contemplation, alternating between clear and steady chord progression and free-formed melodic improvisations.

Ballade No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 52

Composed in 1842, the **Fourth Ballade** was dedicated to Baroness Charlotte de Rothschild, most likely as a wedding gift upon her nuptials to Nathaniel de Rothschild. In the preface to his study edition of Chopin's **Ballades**, Cortot claims that 'the last Ballade is without a doubt the most beautiful of the four and rejoices in the greatest wealth of musical substance.' Indeed, the work demonstrates Chopin's lyrical

and refined style, his exquisitely innovative and ingenious developments in counterpoint, structure, texture and harmony (especially towards the end of his life), and his incredible imaginative, expressive and poetic qualities, altogether sweeping the listener along a fantastic journey through the music.

Inbar Rothschild, 2026

All quotes from Cortot are taken from

Alfred Cortot, *Chopin Valses / Study Edition*, trans. John Schneider (Paris: Editions Salabert, 1999).

Alfred Cortot, *Edition de Travail des Oeuvres de Chopin Mazurkas* (Paris: Editions Salabert, 1930).

Alfred Cortot, *Chopin Ballades / Study Edition*, trans. David Ponsoby (Paris: Edition Salabert, 1931).

Combining '*poetry, warmth, feeling, imagination, sincerity... and a brilliant technique*', Inbar Rothschild has given concerts throughout Israel, Europe and New York, and recorded for Israeli, Czech and Swiss radio stations.

She completed her bachelor's and master's degrees summa cum laude under the guidance of Prof. Prina Salzman at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music in Tel Aviv University, winning prizes and scholarships for her musical performances. In addition to an active career as a concert pianist and an avid chamber musician, Rothschild completed her Ph.D. at the Royal Academy of Music in London, exploring the musical heritage that was instilled in her by Salzman, following in the footsteps of Alfred Cortot.

Dr Briony Cox-Williams, one of Rothschild's doctoral examiners, described her study as '*a detailed and very personal portrait of Salzman's method that allows us to experience second-hand the almost intangible alchemy employed by many great artists in their teaching. The range of research and the thought behind it makes the research a significant addition to pedagogical and pianistic thought, offering new and insightful ways of working with the materials*'.



Menuhin Hall, January 2025

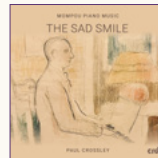
Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude to British soprano Charlotte de Rothschild, who introduced me to the works of Mathilde and Charlotte, shared their fascinating story, and sent copies of their scores, including handwritten manuscripts that have not been published before. As their direct family member and an expert on their music and lives, her support in this project has been invaluable. Many thanks to The Rothschild Archive for their attentiveness and help with the album's artwork and details. I would also like to extend my great appreciation and thanks to the incredible recording team I was privileged to work with: to producer and engineer Simon Weir and Morgan Roberts, for their professional work and advice

from the recording stage to the sensitive editing and mastering of these intimate pieces; to Michael Hamilton for the tailored video photography and editing; to the Menuhin Hall for the use of their beautiful space and facilities; and finally, to Emma Pouncefort of CRD Records for her heartfelt support and encouragement, which made this project possible.

COMPANION RELEASE

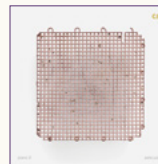
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Michael Beek, BBC Music Magazine, ★★★

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CHARLOTTE DE ROTHSCHILD

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Quatre pièces pour piano

No. 1 Nocturne in C Minor	3:50
No. 2 Polka in C Minor	1:31
No. 3 Waltz in A Minor	2:12
No. 4 Waltz in F Minor	2:25

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

Waltzes Op. 64

No. 1 in D Flat Major ("Minute Waltz")	1:46
No. 2 in C Sharp Minor	3:55
No. 3 in A Flat Major	3:01

Mazurkas Op. 67

No. 1 in G Major	1:22
No. 2 in B Minor	2:20
No. 3 in C Major	1:39
No. 4 in A Minor	3:19
No. 4 in A Minor: MS Paris, 28 Nov. 1847 (Rothschild 'Livre d'Or' Version)	3:27

Nocturnes Op. 48

No. 1 in C Minor	7:08
No. 2 in F Sharp Minor	7:27

Ballade No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 52

11:40

Artwork – Collage

Mazurka Op. 67, No. 4 in A Minor: MS Paris, 28 Nov. 1847
Frederick Hulme, *Sweet Violet*, 1877

Executive Producers

Emma Pauncefort, Tom Pauncefort

Piano – Steinway Model D

Recorded

Menuhin Hall, UK
24-25 January & 8 November 2025

Producer & Mastering Engineer

Simon Weir

Engineer – Morgan Roberts

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