

WIGMORE HALL 125

Thursday 11 December 2025
7.30pm

Pavel Kolesnikov piano

Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849)

Nocturne in E flat Op. 9 No. 2 (pub. 1832)

Jacques Duphy (1715-1789)

From *Deuxième Suite in C minor* (1744)
*Allemande • La Boucon • La Larare •
Rondeau • La Millettina*

Fryderyk Chopin

Prelude in E minor Op. 28 No. 4 (1838-9)

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

From *Suite in A minor* (1726-7)
I. Allemande • II. Courante

From *Pièces de clavecin avec une methode pour la
mechanique des Doigts* (pub. 1724)
XIII. Les soupirs • XVII. Les tourbillons

From *Nouvelles suites de pièces de clavecin* (c.1729-30)
XV. L'Egyptienne • XIII. Les sauvages

Interval

Fryderyk Chopin

Piano Sonata No. 3 in B minor Op. 58 (1844)
*I. Allegro maestoso • II. Scherzo. Molto vivace •
III. Largo • IV. Finale. Presto non tanto*



Help us raise £125,000
for 125 years of music

To find out more visit wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate



Join & Support
Donations

Wigmore Hall is a no smoking venue. No recording or photographic equipment may be taken into the auditorium nor used in any other part of the Hall without the prior written permission of the management. In accordance with the requirements of City of Westminster persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions. Disabled Access and Facilities - full details from 020 7935 2141. Wigmore Hall is equipped with a loop to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use this facility by switching hearing aids to 'T'.



Please ensure that watch alarms, mobile phones and any other electrical devices which can become audible are switched off. Phones on a vibrate setting can still be heard, please switch off.

The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP • [Wigmore-hall.org.uk](https://wigmore-hall.org.uk) • John Gilhooly Director

Wigmore Hall Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Kent, KG
Honorary Patrons Aubrey Adams OBE; André and Rosalie Hoffmann; Louise Kaye; Kohn Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan

The 18th Century *Notturmo* was a piece of instrumental music for outdoor performance. By 1830, when **Chopin** completed his first Nocturne, the Irish pianist-composer John Field (1782-1837) had established the pianoforte nocturne as something very different: in the words of Carl Czerny, 'really an imitation of those vocal pieces which are termed Serenades'. Like Field's, each of Chopin's Nocturnes starts from the idea of the lover's serenade; a long, singing right-hand melody 'accompanied' by the left-hand. But to an artist of Chopin's sensibility, the imaginative possibilities of the 'night-piece' were boundless, though there's an unmistakable touch of *bel canto* in the Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2 (1832); a melody that has come to seem indelible, actually crafted with profound care and imagination.

Some mystery surrounds the life of **Jacques Duphy** (or Du Phly), the Normandy-born organist who settled in Paris as one of the best-known harpsichord teachers of his age – a master whose technique was compared to Rameau's, and who possessed (according to his friend, the philosopher Rousseau) 'above all, a perfection in fingering'. And yet at his death in 1789 he had published nothing for decades. He appeared to have no family, and his modest garden apartment contained an extensive library, but no harpsichord.

Duphy's published music comprised four volumes of harpsichord pieces, published between 1744 and 1768 and intended as a showcase for his own playing, as well as a handbook of musical taste. 'He has much lightness of touch', wrote one fellow-harpsichordist, 'and a certain softness, which, sustained by ornaments, marvellously render the character of his pieces'. Character is the life and soul of these five pieces from 1744, dedicated to the Duc d'Ayen (a soldier and amateur singer) – whether the standard forms of the *Allemande* and the *Rondeau* or the ingenious musical miniatures that Duphy named after friends and patrons: *La Larare*, *La Millettina*, and the music-loving Anne-Jeanne Boucon.

A wholly new (and free) sense of the keyboard's possibilities also shaped **Chopin's** 24 *Preludes* Op. 28. He was forced to be original: in 1838 he was living on Majorca and local customs officials had impounded his piano. The fourth *Prelude*, marked *Largo*, distils a bottomless depth of melancholy into a bare two minutes: it would be played (on the organ) at its composer's funeral.

Jean-Philippe Rameau was born in Dijon, and was unable, even as a boy, to contain his passion for music: the Jesuit priests charged with his education noted that he disrupted classes by bursting into song. He moved to Paris, where his widely-admired *Traité de l'harmonie* won him the soubriquet 'the Newton of Music'. But with his first opera, *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733) Rameau became one of the most celebrated – and provocative – figures in French culture. 'This man will eclipse us all!' declared the composer André Campra, while the philosopher Denis Diderot, declared that 'Rameau is singular, brilliant, complex, learned – too learned, sometimes'. Rameau's fans were mocked as 'Ramoneurs' (chimney-sweeps).

Even today, there's no disputing the energy, imagination and wit of Rameau's music, and his early instrumental works share the fantasy and imaginative verve of his operas – bringing an unmistakable freshness even when (as in the *Allemande* and *Courante* of the first of his self-published *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin*, of c.1729) he is working within the conventional forms of the Baroque keyboard suite. With his *Pièces de clavecin avec une methode pour la mecanique des Doigts* (1724) Rameau offered an education in emotional expression as well as keyboard technique. The falling sighs of *Les Soupirs* and the bustling energy of *Les Tourbillons* (inspired, said Rameau, by 'the whirlwinds of dust excited by high winds') present an open invitation to the imaginative performer. And in *L'Egyptienne* and *Les sauvages*, two spirited and quirky character-pieces from the *Nouvelles Suites*, the future opera-composer brings a breath of the imagined Orient into fashionable Parisian salons.

Chopin's father Nicolas died on 3 May 1844. The composer was devastated by the news, and his partner George Sand promptly took him away from Paris to her country house at Nohant. It was there, on 29 May 1844, that he began work on a piano sonata – his third, though only the second that he acknowledged in his lifetime. He had effectively suppressed his First Sonata of 1828, and the dazzlingly original Second of 1839 had bewildered his contemporaries. Structured around its *Marcia funèbre* slow movement, and with a finale that flashes past in barely two minutes, Chopin's Second Sonata astonished even the sympathetic Robert Schumann: 'He seems to have taken four unruly children and put them together'.

Was it with a sense of his own mortality – of the judgement of posterity – that Chopin sat down in the weeks after his father's death to create a mature piano sonata on classical lines? Completed in November 1844, the Piano Sonata No. 3 stands with the Cello Sonata (1847) as Chopin's single mightiest achievement in a large-scale classical form. From the dramatic opening gesture to the wholly distinctive way it re-shapes sonata form, the first movement is music shaped and imagined in terms of the keyboard (Liszt certainly paid attention; there's a good reason why his own solitary Sonata is in B minor).

The gossamer *Scherzo*, too, is wholly unlike Chopin's four stand-alone Scherzos – this is music conceived as part of a greater whole. The *Largo* begins like bronze gates swinging open onto an enclosed, pensive world of its own; intimate poetry with a steady, Schubert-liked tread. And with a short bravura introduction, Chopin launches his rondo finale in urgent terms – though there'll be humour, poetry and glittering splendour before it arrives, cascading, at the final jubilant flourish. Whatever Chopin's personal sorrows, art emerges triumphant in the Third Sonata.

© Richard Bratby 2025

Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.