

## *In the footsteps of Frédéric Chopin*

Frédéric Chopin                                      Four Mazurkas op. 6

Robert Schumann                                    Arabesque op. 18

Frédéric Chopin                                    Three Nocturnes op. 9

Ballade No. 1 op. 23 in G minor

*Break*

Johann Sebastian Bach                            Prelude and Fugue in B minor  
from the "Well-Tempered Clavier" Volume I  
BWV 869

Frédéric Chopin                                    Sonata No. 3 op. 58 in B minor  
- Allegro maestoso  
- Scherzo. Molto vivace  
- Largo  
- Finale. Presto non tanto

From early to late: this concert programme ventures a look at the beginning and end of Chopin's musical cosmos.

In the first half, Chopin's first works are presented - commented on by Robert Schumann.

There are the first four Mazurkas, the first three Nocturnes and the first Ballade written by the young Chopin. It is the smallest at the start: the music moves in the tightest of spaces as singing, dancing, dreaming and romancing take place in the mazurkas. These dances float by and yet, like a lens, they concentrate many-coloured features of Chopin's character.

A greeting from the likewise still young Robert Schumann follows. His Arabesque already contains the motif of ornamentation and embellishment in its title and thus provides the keyword for a genuine moment in Chopin's Nocturnes. Here, "saying it again" becomes an event, for Chopin knows inexhaustible nuances that he can elicit from each melody.

At the end of the first half comes a work that brings together the discoveries made so far: Chopin's first Ballade op. 23 in G minor. Here, the music unfolds in rapid succession, the scenery changes from minute to minute, the density of this music is unsurpassed. Chopin observes how his melodies repeatedly gain so much expressivity that they explode, as it were, and space is created for something new.

With the beginning of the second half, the horizon widens. The glance at Johann Sebastian Bach is a glance at the roots, for Chopin inhaled the Well-Tempered Clavier throughout his life and let his music be inspired by it. In this prelude and fugue in B minor, the mood is one of the end of time, pain as a subject enters the stage...

... and remains present as a protagonist in Chopin's last, large sonata in the same key. In dialogue with Bach's fugue, the encounter between chromaticism and diatonicism takes place in this late work by Chopin - there are the furrowed rocks and music on a silken string. The second movement emerges as fresh as dew, the third begins baroque-dramatically and then unfolds the most beautiful cantilena in the world. The music falls into a delicate daze before it is driven forward by its passion in the finale. Only on the last metres the sun finally breaks through the clouds.