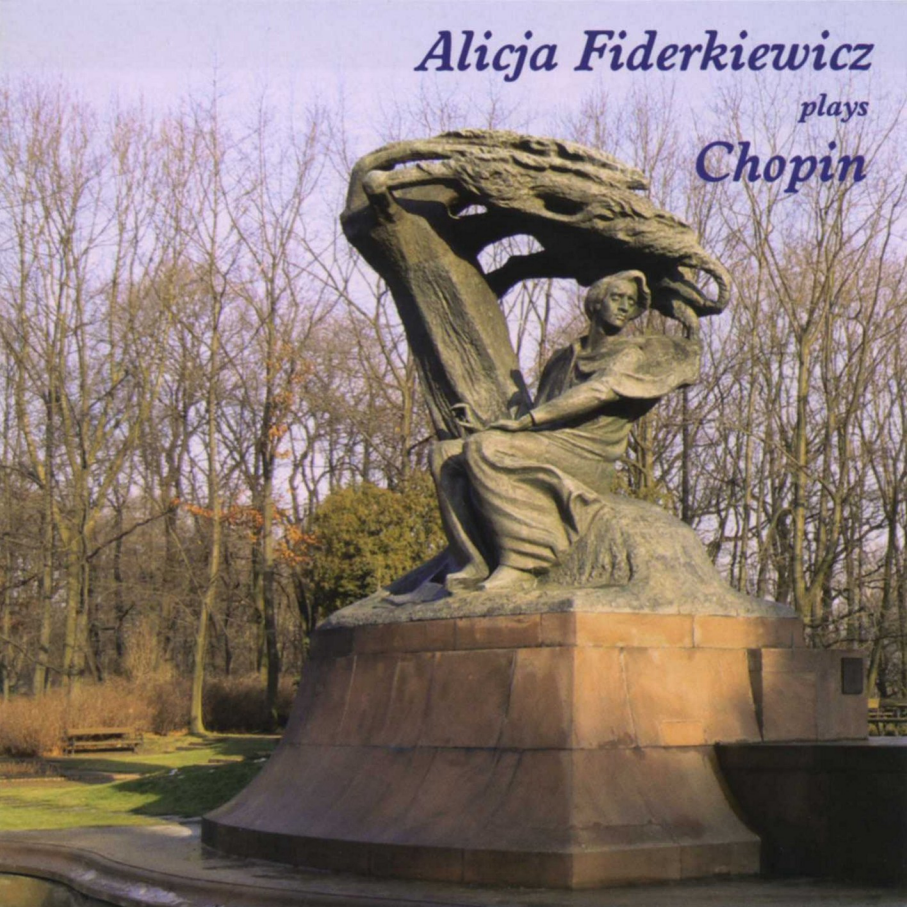


*Alicja Fiderkiewicz*  
*plays*  
*Chopin*



**Fryderyk F. Chopin (1810-1849)**

**Two Nocturnes, Op. 48**

- |   |                                       |         |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | No. 13 in C minor, Op. 48 no.1        | [ 6.30] |
| 2 | No. 14 in F sharp minor, Op. 48 no. 2 | [8.24]  |

**Four Mazurkas, Op. 24**

- |   |                       |        |
|---|-----------------------|--------|
| 3 | No. 1 in G minor      | [2.54] |
| 4 | No. 2 in C major      | [2.39] |
| 5 | No. 3 in A flat major | [2.25] |
| 6 | No. 4 in B flat minor | [5.09] |

**Three Mazurkas, Op. 59**

- |   |                        |        |
|---|------------------------|--------|
| 7 | No. 1 in A minor       | [4.25] |
| 8 | No. 2 in A flat major  | [2.44] |
| 9 | No. 3 in F sharp minor | [3.25] |

10	<b>Ballade no. 3 in A flat major, Op. 47</b>	[7.56]
----	--	--------

11	<b>Prelude no. 25 in C sharp minor, Op. 45</b>	[6.34]
----	--	--------

12	<b>Polonaise-Fantasie in A flat major, Op. 61</b>	[13.57]
----	---	---------

<b>Total CD duration:</b>		<b>[67.04]</b>
---------------------------	--	----------------

# The Music

The Nocturnes of the Irish composer John Field presented a pianistic version of *bel canto*; the right hand tracing an embellished melody over a simple accompaniment. Chopin took his lead from Field and produced works of transcendent beauty. As Camille Bourniquel observed, the Nocturnes are ‘a way of abandoning oneself, of slipping into a state of diffused sensibility’. They are also night pieces of contemplation tinged with regret; like smiling through tears. The two *Nocturnes*, Opus 48, date from 1841. The first, in C minor, is like a dramatic oration; its rich texture underlining the portentous mood.



Octaves rumble ominously in the middle section and the opening theme returns in an orchestral guise. The second nocturne of the set, in F sharp minor, offers a more rarefied texture with the long stream of melody unfurling over a gently oscillating left hand. The quiet melancholy is momentarily dispelled by contrasting music in D flat.

Schumann wrote of Chopin's mazurkas: '*If the Northern tyrant knew the enemy which threatens in the simple melody of those mazurkas, he would surely banish them beyond recall*'.

Although Chopin left Poland in 1830 never to return, he never forgot his homeland; indeed a jar of Polish soil given to him by his friends upon his leaving Poland was the composer's most treasured possession. It is no wonder Chopin composed so many pieces called *Polonaise* or *Mazurka* – the dances of his country. It was as if he were recreating his memories and love of Poland through his fingers. It was more than nostalgia that stirred





A plaintive modal phrase heralds the trio. In the coda Chopin presents a new theme which dies away – *smorzando*. The set of three Mazurkas, Opus 59, date from 1845. The first in A minor has a freely modulating and chromatic character. With ease and subtlety Chopin turns unusual modulations; he recapitulates the main theme in G sharp minor before sliding into the ‘correct’ key some bars later. The second mazurka is in A flat and has a Schubertian innocence about it. The last of the set is in F sharp minor and once again shows the composer’s fondness for the augmented second interval. The trio is in a radiant F sharp major.

Much speculation surrounds the supposed programmes that lie behind Chopin’s four Ballades. It is thought that the Lithuanian Ballads of Mickiewicz influenced the composer; Chopin certainly knew them and indeed the poet was an acquaintance of his. The third Ballade in A flat has been connected with Undine, the story of a wicked water sprite. Regardless of any such literary allusion, Chopin’s work creates its own unwritten narrative. The mood is one of heartfelt lyricism with a lilting rhythm akin to a waltz or a barcarolle never far away. The gentle theme heard at the outset opens like the petals of a flower:



This theme later returns in a glorious apotheosis.

Chopin wrote his 25<sup>th</sup> Prelude, in C sharp minor, in 1841, two or three years after the group of 24 that constitute Opus 28. Schumann wrote perceptively about the preludes as ‘sketches, the beginnings of studies, or, if you will, ruins, eagles’ feathers, all strangely intermingled’. They are certainly different from the grand manner of the Etudes. James Huneker commented on the ‘Brahmsian colouring’ of the 25<sup>th</sup> Prelude. After some ambiguous triads, sighing appoggiaturas float over left hand arpeggios that rise up from the depths

like curls of smoke The music of the prelude seems to hover between moods of mystery and hope and its kaleidoscopic harmonies may have influenced later composers such as Scriabin.

Chopin's Polonaise-Fantasia in A flat of 1845 is one of the composer's last works and one of his most profound. His fondness for abrupt harmonic changes reaches its apogee in this work as can be heard in the opening. These uneasy tonal shifts, with the roots of the chords moving in thirds, dominate the opening before the Polonaise rhythm is established. However there is none of the heroic martial swagger of the Polonaise in A, Op. 40 no.1, or the Polonaise in A flat, Op. 53. Instead the trumpets and drums are very much under the surface as Chopin states a theme of great yearning and poignancy:



After a calm episode in B major a halo of trills leads to the tonally ambiguous introductory music. The main theme is subjected to an apotheosis as in many of Chopin's works but the effect is quite disturbing; at one point he hurls the music into B major with an almost delirious result. The ending is haunted by rumbling trills in the bass and flattened sevenths and sixths; the final chord perhaps a hollow victory. Chopin created his most complex Polonaise with this work; one where his exile from Poland and perhaps his own physical suffering are felt most keenly. According to Bartomeu Ferrà the jar of Polish soil given by his friends so many years previously was opened after Chopin's death and its contents scattered over the composer's grave in the cemetery of Père-Lachaise; Chopin had found his way home.

## ***Bibliography***

Bourniquel, Camille - *Chopin*, Evergreen Books, London, 1960

Huneker, James - *Chopin The Man and His Music*, Dover, New York, 1966

Ferra, Bartomeu - *Chopin and George Sand in Majorca*, Palma de Majorca, 1961

Recorded on 20 February 2008 at the Whiteley Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester, England

Piano technician: Peter Lyons

Recording and Post-production: Jim Pattison (Dunelm Records)

Recording Assistant: Joyce Pattison

Front cover: Chopin's Statue, Lazienki, Warsaw

Back cover: Wilanów Park, Warsaw

Photographs by: Teresa Barucka

Photo of Alicja Fiderkiewicz by Castle Photographic, Carlisle

Portrait of Chopin (inner traycard) by Ary Sheffer, 1847

All images are copyright – all rights reserved.

**Alicja Fiderkiewicz** was born in Warsaw, Poland. She began to learn the piano at the age of seven; two years later she was accepted by the Central School of Music in the Moscow Conservatoire as a pupil of Professor Tatiana Kestner. Her studies continued in Warsaw with Professor Wanda Losakiewicz and Professor Zbigniew Drzewiecki, followed by tuition at the the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England, by the Polish pianist Professor Ryszard Bakst. She graduated in the late 1970s with distinctions in both teaching and performing.

Miss Fiderkiewicz began to fulfil regular professional engagements when she was fifteen. In Poland her outstanding abilities were recognised with the award of a Chopin Scholarship in four consecutive years. She went on to give recitals throughout her native land, including several at Chopin's birthplace, Zelazowa Wola. Her début in the United Kingdom took place in 1972 at Manchester's Free Trade Hall.

She won first prize in the Dudley National Piano Concerto Competition followed by other awards: she was a prizewinner in the 1977 Premio Dino Ciani International Piano Competition at La Scala, Milan and, in 1979, proved to be the only pianist to be awarded the three year Calouste Gulbenkian Music Fellowship.

Having made her début in London's Wigmore Hall in 1975, in more recent years Miss Fiderkiewicz has performed extensively in Poland, Soviet Union, Italy, Switzerland, Israel, Spain, Japan, and Great Britain – including the Isle of Man. She has appeared as a soloist with the Manchester-based Hallé Orchestra, the Manchester Camerata, Da Camera, the Polish Radio and TV Symphony Orchestra, La Scala Theatre Orchestra, and numerous others. There have also been recordings for the BBC, both for radio and television.

## *Other recordings by Alicja Fiderkiewicz:*

### **Diversions DDV 24159**

Franck, Chopin and Hindemith (Live recital)

*"An outstanding release...Alicja Fiderkiewicz...a pianist of rare quality... gives memorable accounts of this music. Personal but never idiosyncratic, direct but never prosaic, eloquent but never remotely sentimental"* – Daniel Stearns (Piano Magazine)

*"Not all Polish pianists achieve this mixture of passion and poetry... a lucid and enticing performance"* – Michael Kennedy (Daily Telegraph)

### **Diversions DDV 24160**

Szymanowski and Chopin (Live recital)

*"A rare communicative character and ardour... scrupulously sensitive to both the letter and spirit of the scores... a rare balance of sense and sensibility"* – Bryce Morrison (International Piano)

### **Diversions DDV 24158**

Schumann (Live recital)

*"For years we have hailed Alicja Fiderkiewicz as a high-priestess of Chopin; we have now to regard her as a leading exponent of Schumann. Technically she is superb; but more than that, she gets to the heart of the composer in the two major works here. The performance is full of drama, thrust and character. The disc is highly recommendable, not just as a memento of a great occasion, and not just to Schumann aficionados but to all lovers of fine piano playing"* - Philip Scowcroft (MusicWeb)

"...quite delightful and was well worthy of the several curtain calls she received at the end of her performance. Listening to her, one could well appreciate why she is already gaining an international reputation...the whole recital was performed by a pianist engrossed in her music." Inverness Courier

"....masterly and beautiful music making". - Daily Telegraph.

"Pianist Alicja Fiderkiewicz gave a superb recital...demonstrating all this brilliant musician's wide range of musical sympathy and expressive power." - Manchester Evening News

"....the quality of imagination is given to a rare few (pianists). It was evident throughout the whole of Miss Fiderkiewicz's recital...(to each work played) she brought her own individuality and intensity of expression." - Liverpool Daily Post.

"...Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* was a tour de force of subtle colouring and flexible – yet disciplined – rhythm." - Daily Telegraph

"Her flair for communication showed throughout Mozart's Concerto K467, in the tonal beauty of the slow movement, and even more in her imaginative shaping of passage work in the outer ones." – The Guardian

"Her playing is distinguished by her innate sense of style and immaculate articulation. These qualities combine with true musicianship to give performances of uncommon interest. Her interpretation of Beethoven's "Pathetique" Sonata was masterly; the strength which underlies her playing is always finely controlled and her phrasing delineates the development of the music. The slow movement especially, was most beautifully played with a sober elegance and a wealth of controlled feeling." - Daily Telegraph

"[Alicja Fiderkiewicz] ...demonstrated the truth of the great Rubinstein's saying – that 'only Poles can play Chopin properly'...her playing was brilliant, with changes of tone and tempo that vividly interpreted and illuminated this endlessly fascinating and intriguing music." -Daily Telegraph



# DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP

INNOVATIVE | ECLECTIC | FASCINATING | INSPIRATIONAL

Over 500 titles, with full track details, reviews, artist profiles and audio samples, can be browsed on our website. All our recordings are available at any good record store or download provider or direct from our secure online shopping website:

**[www.divineartrecords.com](http://www.divineartrecords.com)**  
(CD, 24-bit HD, FLAC and MP3)

Diversions LLC (Divine Art USA) email: [sales@divineartrecords.com](mailto:sales@divineartrecords.com)

Divine Art Ltd. (UK) email: [uksales@divineartrecords.com](mailto:uksales@divineartrecords.com)

Printed catalogue sent on request

Also available in digital download through Primephonic, Qobuz, iTunes, Amazon, Spotify and many other platforms

follow us on facebook, youtube and twitter



WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom, licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd, 1, Upper James Street, London W1R 3HG.





*Front cover: Chopin's statue, Łazienki, Warsaw   Above: Wilanów Park, Warsaw*