

## **Lesson 2 Chopin: early life in Poland**

**Chopin is famous, of course, together with elegant image of salon life in Paris. But his cultural attachment to Poland was so strong. This is because of complicated Polish history and cultural background.**

**It is not easy to understand it. Its territory was not stable because of neighboring countries such as Russia, Prussia, Hapsburg. Polish people have strong identities and are proud of their culture. But we can see a lot of tragedies in its history due to the loss of their land. As it's history is very long, let's us have a short look at them in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These circumstances are related to Chopin's life and his true feeling.**



### **1. Poland is the 9th largest country in Europe**

Poland isn't a small country, it's actually one of the largest ones. bigger than Italy and the UK.

### **2. The name "Poland" (Polska) has a meaning.**

It originates from the name of the tribe *Polanie*, which means "people living in open fields".

### **3. Polish history is very complicated**

During Medieval History (the period from 1138 to 1320), the country was invaded or fought for freedom over 40 times. Poland even disappeared from world maps between 1772 and 1795.

### **4. Poland's constitution was the 2nd in the world**

Poland adopted its first written constitution in the spring of 1791 the 2nd in the world valid legal document. However, it was only in effect for only 14 months.

### **6. During the WWII, Warsaw was almost completely destroyed**

The Old Town in Warsaw isn't the actual Old Town from before the war. The original completely bombed at in the 40s rebuilt it after the war using Bernardo Bellotto's detailed paintings. That's why now looks as it did in the 14th century, rather than the 20th.

## Partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795)

Three territorial divisions of Poland, perpetrated by **Russia**, **Prussia**, and **Austria**, by which **Poland's** size was progressively reduced. After the final partition, the state of Poland disappeared from the map in 1795.

## The birth of Duchy of Warsaw 1807

However, the **Napoleonic Wars** against **Russia** and **Austria** resulted in the creation of the **Duchy of Warsaw** (ワルシャワ公国) in 1807 (Napoleon did a good job !!) .



## **But in 1815, ... after the defeat of Napoleon**

**After the defeat of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna (1815) ended the existence of Poland in 1815, and solidified the long-term division of Poland among Russia, Prussia and the Habsburg Empire.**

**The Austrian Empire annexed territories in the South, Prussia took control over the semi-autonomous Grand Duchy of Poznań in the West, and Russia assumed hegemony over the semi-autonomous east territories.**

**Despite numerous protests by various Polish politicians, Grand Duke Constantine had no intention of respecting the Polish constitution(one of the most progressive in Europe).**

**He abolished Polish social and patriotic organizations.**

# The November Uprising (1830–31)

The November Uprising (1830–31)(11月蜂起), the Polish–Russian War 1830–31, was an rebellion in the heartland of partitioned Poland against the Russian Empire.

The event began on **29** November 1830 in Warsaw when the young Polish officers from the local Army of the Congress Poland's military academy revolted, led by Piotr Wysocki. Large segments of the peoples of Lithuania, Belarus, and the Right-bank Ukraine joined the uprising.

Although the insurgents achieved local successes, a Imperial Russian Army under Ivan Paskevich crushed the uprising. The Russian Emperor Nicholas I decreed that Poland would lose its autonomy and become an integral part of the Russian Empire.

**Chopin** left Warsaw on 2 November just before this event.





# Frédéric Chopin

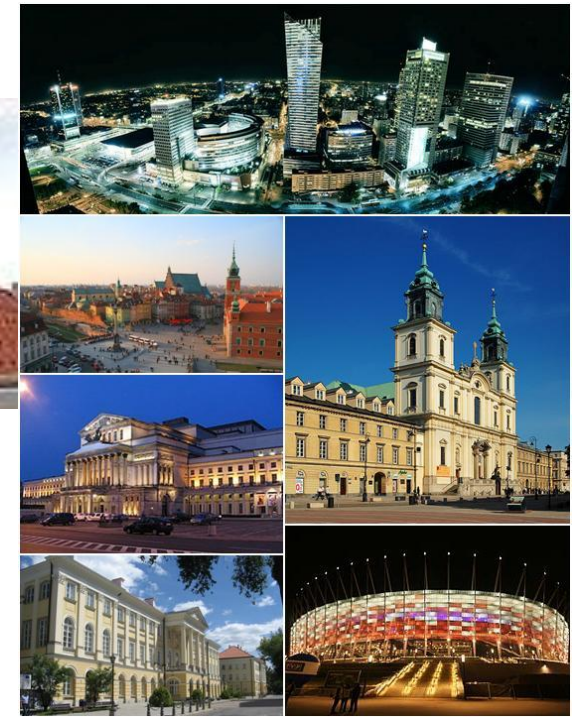
Born March 1, 1810, Warsaw, Duchy of Warsaw. grew up in Warsaw.

Chopin's father, Nicholas, was a French émigré (移民) in Poland. He was a tutor to various aristocratic families. When Frédéric was eight months old, Nicholas became a French teacher at the Warsaw lyceum. Chopin attended that lyceum from 1823 to 1826.

Chopin by age six (1816) was trying to reproduce new tunes. He started piano lessons with the 61-year-old Wojciech Zywny(ヴォイチェフ・ジヴヌィ) .

Wojciech Zywny taught the classical music such as Bach, Mozart.

From 1823 to 1826, he received organ lessons from the Czech musician Wilhelm Würfel.



## Chopin's political stance with Russia

Chopin played at private soirées. He performed in the presence of the Russian tsar Alexander I, who was in Warsaw to open Parliament.

At seven he wrote a *Polonaise in G Minor*, which was printed and performed before the Russian grand duke Constantine for his military band to play on parade.

From these facts, Chopin was quite neutral in terms of political affairs in Poland. He was not so against Russian politics. However, he became quite nationalistic later. Why ?

## Chopin's teacher; Elsner



When he was 16, he enrolled him at the newly formed Warsaw Conservatory of Music. This school was directed by the Polish composer **Joseph Elsner**, a Romantically inclined composer. Elsner followed the music theory of **Johann Nikolaus Forkel** (1749 –1818). Forkel considered the music as “rhetoric”.

**Rhetoric:** 修辞学のこと。読者の感動に訴えて説得の効果をあげるために言葉や文章の表現方法を研究するもの。

## **“Music is the language of emotion” Elsner**

Elsner followed the musicology of Forkel for his lessons. Elsner thought that the music is “the language” which conveys feeling and emotion.

In this context, Elsner respected Chopin’s individual imaginations, emphasizing that Chopin’s feeling must not be checked only by purely academic demands.

## **Influence of nationalism in Poland**

Chopin showed interest in the folk music of the Polish countryside.

He gave those impressions and coloring to his work.

He developed mazurkas, based upon folksongs of Województwo mazowieckie (マゾフシェ県、central Poland).

Although there are not clear links with folksongs, Chopin was inclined to integrate melodies, rhythm from farmers’ music in Poland.



## A short visit to Berlin in 1828

In September 1828 Chopin, visited Berlin with a family friend, enjoying operas and attending concerts by **Carl Friedrich Zelter**, **Felix Mendelssohn**.

In 1829 in Berlin, he was a guest of Prince Antoni Radziwiłł, governor of the Grand Duchy of Posen. For the prince and his pianist daughter Wanda, he composed his Introduction and Polonaise brillante in C major for cello and piano, Op. 3.

## Paganini

Back in Warsaw, Chopin heard **Niccolò Paganini** play the violin, and composed a set of variations, *Souvenir de Paganini*.

This experience encouraged him to write his first **Études** (1829–32), exploring the capacities of his own instrument to enable others to master the technical difficulties in his new style of piano playing.

## Departure for Vienna in 1930

In 1829, he wrote his *Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor* and his *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E Minor* (1830).

In March and October 1830 he presented his new works to the Warsaw public.

On 2 November 1830, he left Poland, Warsaw "with no very clearly defined aim". He had gone for Vienna when the **November 1830 Uprising** broke out.

But during his stay in Vienna, Chopin felt so lonely and stressed, and became nostalgic for his homeland. He then decided to go to Paris.

## His life in Paris (to be continued)

He quickly established ties with many Polish émigrés and with a younger generation of composers, including [Franz Liszt](#) and [Hector Berlioz](#) and, briefly, [Vincenzo Bellini](#) and [Felix Mendelssohn](#).