

**Four Mazurkas**  
**By Fryderyk Chopin**  
**Recomposed for String Quartet**

**John Klopotoski**  
**2020-2021**



# **Four Mazurkas by Fryderyk Chopin**

## **Recomposed for String Quartet**

I. Op. 7, No. 1 in Bb Major

II. Op. 67, No. 2 in G Minor

III. Op. 17, No. 4 in A Minor

IV. Op. 68 No. 3 in F Major

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## **Performance Notes:**

### **1) Metronome indications:**

Suggested metronome settings are taken either from the original scores (Paderewski Edition), or based on review of current performance practice by pianists.

### **2) Dynamics and phrasing:**

All markings are conventional.

### **3) Bowing:**

Phrase markings are not meant to be bowing indications. The phrase markings are intended to convey the sense of the musical idea as marked in the original scores.

### **4) “Hairpins”:**

I subscribe to the Chopin performance practice of treating the “hairpin” (crescendo/diminuendo in same phrase) as an indication to vary both dynamics and tempo. (This topic is a subject of debate in pedagogic circles, but I feel it is the authentic performance practice related to Chopin’s music.)

*Total Duration: about 11 minutes*

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*With gratitude to Peter Jarvis for his expert work and assistance in preparing this score.*

Full Score

# Four Mazurkas by Fryderyk Chopin

Recomposed for String Quartet

## I (Op. 7, No. 1)

John Klopotoski, 2020-21

$\text{♩} = 135, \text{Vivace}$

Violin I  
*f* *energico*  
*ff* *trill*

Violin II  
*f* *sf*

Viola  
*f* *sf*

Violoncello  
*f* *sf*

5

*mp* *mf* *f* *trill*

*p* *p* *p*

9

*f* *tr* *f* *f*

13

*f* *tr* *f* *f* *sempre* *sempre*

17

*f* *tr* *f* *f*



Four Mazurkas - I

3

21

*f* *tr* *f* *p dolce*

25

*p* *p* *tr* *p sostenuto*

29

Stretto ..... poco rall. .... a tempo

*p* *tr* *mf* *p*

33

*f* *tr* *sf* *p*

37

*f* *mf* *f* *tr*

41

*(p)* *(p)* *f* *p dolce* *f* *f* *(p)*

Four Mazurkas - I

5

45 pizz.

*p*

pizz.

*p*

pizz.

*p*

49

*p*

arco

*mf*

53

*f*

arco

*f*

*sf*

*p*

57

*f* *f* *tr*

61

*f* *mf* *f* *p* *p* *f* *f*

65 **Meno Mosso** ♩ = 112

*p* *p* *tr* *3*

Four Mazurkas - I

7

69

**rubato**

**poco rall.**

rubato col vln. 2

*p* sotto voce

*f*

*p*

tr

3

rubato col vln. 2

73

**Tempo I** ♩ = 135

subito

*f*

*sf*

*f*

*sf*

*f*

*sf*

tr

77

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

tr

81

*f* *f* *f* *f*

85 **Meno Mosso** ♩ = 112

*p* *p sotto voce* *p*

89 **rubato** ----- **poco rall.** . . . .

*rubato col vln. 2* *p sotto voce* *p*

Four Mazurkas - I

9

93 **Tempo I** ♩ = 135

*subito*

*f* *sf* *tr*

97

*f* *tr*

101

*f* *tr*

*(f)*

to my grandmother  
Helena Kłopotowska

II (Op. 67, No. 2)

$\text{♩} = 108$ , Not too fast

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

6



II (Opus 67, Number 2)

11

11

11

*p* *f* *mp* *f*

16

*p* *sfmp* *p* *sfmp* *p* *sfmp*

21

*pp* *pp* *pp* *p* *sfp* *p*

26

*p* *p leggiero* *sfmp* *pp* *pp* *sfp* *pp*

31

*p* *p sotto voce, espr.*

37

*pp* *mf* *mp* *poco* *mp*

II (Opus 67, Number 2)

13

42

42

*mf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

47

47

*sf* *sf* *mf* *sf* *mf* *sf* *sf* *mf* *sf* *mf*

52

52

*mf* *f* *p* *poco rit.* *p* *p* *p*

to my grandfather,  
Edward Klopotoski

## III (Op. 17, No. 4)

$\text{♩} = 96$ , Lento, ma non troppo

Violin I *pp*

Violin II *pp* sotto voce *rubato*

Viola *pp*

Violoncello *pp* sotto voce *rubato*

pizz.

*pp*

pizz.

*pp*

*mp* *espr.*

pizz.

*pp*

3

6

*ten.*

*poco*

*p*

11

*delicatissimo*

3 3 3 5 5 5

16

*ten.* *arco* *pp* *mf* *tr* *pp* *arco* *pp*

6

21

*mp espr.* *tr* *ten.* *3* *poco* *p*

26

*p* *mp* *p* *p*

6 3 3

31

*ten.* *tr* *mf*

5 5 5 6

36

*f* *appass.* *f*

3 3 3

Four Mazurkas - III

17

41

**poco rit.** . . . . . **a tempo**

*p subito* *pp* *pizz.*

*p subito* *pp*

*mp espr.* *pizz.* *pp*

*p subito* *pp*

46

*tr* *ten.*

*poco* *mp*

51

*arco* *mp* *pizz.*

56

*ten.*

*f*

*tr*

*arco*

*p*

*p*

61

*arco*

*mp dolce*

*p*

*p*

*3*

*p*

66

*mp*

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*



71

76

81

86

(mp)

(p)

(p)

(p)

3

91

ff

ff

ff

mp espr.

pizz.

p

p

pizz.

p

3

poco

96

pizz.

p

ten.

p

arco

p

p

## Four Mazurkas - III

21

101 arco

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

*mp* *mf* *mp*

*ten.*

106

*f* *p espr.* *pp*

6

*f* *pp* *f* *pp*

111

*f* *pp*

116

pizz.

(pp)

pizz.

(pp)

pizz.

(pp)

121

*p* sempre più arco

*pp* arco

*pp* arco

arco *pp*

*pp*

127 Ritard ----- con sord.

con sord.

*pp* sotto voce con sord.

*pp* sotto voce con sord.

*pp* sotto voce con sord.

*pp* sotto voce

3

# IV (Op. 68, No. 3)

23

♩ = 126, Allegro, ma non troppo

Violin I  
*f marcato*

Violin II  
*f marcato*

Viola  
*f marcato*

Violoncello  
*f marcato*

6

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

11

Musical score for measures 11-15. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat. It features four staves: Treble, Treble, Alto, and Bass. The melody is in the first Treble staff, with accompaniment in the other three. Measures 11-15 show a sequence of eighth and quarter notes with some slurs and ties.

16

Musical score for measures 16-20. The score continues with four staves. Measures 16-20 show a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. Dynamic markings *ff subito* are present in measures 16, 17, 18, and 19.

21

Musical score for measures 21-25. The score continues with four staves. Measures 21-25 show a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. Dynamic markings *p subito*, *sf*, and *p dolce* are present in measures 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25.

26

Musical score for measures 26-30. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The melody is primarily in the upper staves, with accompaniment in the lower staves. The music consists of eighth and quarter notes, some with slurs and ties.

31

Poco Più Vivo ♩ = 160

Musical score for measures 31-35. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features four staves. Measures 31-32 show the continuation of the melody. Measures 33-35 show a change in the lower staves, with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The upper staves have whole rests in these measures.

36

*mf* *energico*

Musical score for measures 36-40. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features four staves. Measures 36-40 show a more energetic section with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. The upper staff has a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the lower staves have a steady accompaniment of eighth notes.

Ritard ----- Tempo 1 ♩ = 126

41

*p* *f subito* *f subito* *p* *f subito*

46

51

*p dolce* *p dolce* *p dolce* *p dolce* *f subito*



56

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The second staff is also in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The third staff is in alto clef with a key signature of one flat. The fourth staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The music is in 3/4 time. Measures 56-60 show a melodic line in the first staff, a harmonic accompaniment in the second staff, and a bass line in the fourth staff. The third staff appears to be a continuation of the harmonic accompaniment. The piece ends with a double bar line at measure 60.

(*p*)

(*p*)

(*p*)

(*p*)

to my father,  
Henryk Kłopotowski  
(1921-1996)

## **Background and Dedications**

I was working in downtown San Francisco on a late Tuesday afternoon in October 2019 and planned to travel home to Oakland by way of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) rail system. As I approached the UN Plaza BART station on foot I heard the unmistakable sound of string music, faintly, but it sounded like live playing. The sound gradually became louder, and by the time I took the steep escalator down to the station entrance it was clear to me that I was hearing a live string ensemble. I felt a good deal of curiosity because this station is located in a high-crime urban area, and the sound of live string playing was quite out of place. But, whatever was taking place seemed to immediately transform the physical space from one you might rush through, to one where passersby were invited to linger.

My curiosity would have been aroused by what I was hearing, but was intensified because at that time I was immersed in re-reading H. C. Robbins Landon's book "Beethoven: A Documentary Study," and was thinking quite often of the accounts of musical life in Vienna and string quartet music. As the escalator approached the station platform I wondered how often I might be treated to a similar event were I to live there at that time. And then, as we reached the entrance I saw a string quartet made up of children, two boys and two girls dressed in concert attire. My immediate reaction was shock, followed quickly by admiration and enjoyment. They played in tune, in time, and with great verve.

There was a crowd gathered of perhaps twenty people, most likely commuters, in a respectfully distanced semi-circle and listening intently with

very surprised expressions. I did not recognize what they were playing as I entered the platform, and there was no visible information that I could discern about the group. They then launched into the first movement of Mozart's famous "Eine Kleine Nachtmusic." After listening to this I needed to leave, but not before approaching the players to offer my sincere compliments and give them all the cash that I had in my pocket as a gratuity. I found out that they are the "Stars Aligned Siblings" String Quartet, a local family quartet and all students at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Once I had departed and could reflect on it, I continued to marvel at the unique nature of the experience. I also was struck generally, again, by the power of the string quartet. The group was playing in an inhospitable environment but the music transformed it into a respectful concert venue. I had been fortunate as a college music student to hear live quartet rehearsals in small rooms, and was always impressed by the great sound and intensity of a typical quartet, especially when heard in close quarters. This led to my composing a quartet before my last year as an undergraduate student that was performed in 1978 with an enthusiastic reception. And on the train home that evening I began to think about composing for string quartet again.

As I thought more about this, I considered scoring a group of Chopin Mazurkas. Later, I went so far as to read through several pieces while imagining a score, and what the sound might be like. This idea then went dormant for some time, but I did not forget hearing the Stars Aligned Siblings live in the train station, a truly remarkable event.

A few months later the COVID pandemic struck the world, and San Francisco quickly shut down in response. At this writing a year later, the UN Plaza BART station remains open but ridership has dropped by almost 90%. The event that I witnessed is not possible in the current time. But I continued to want to write something for the group, and due to the imposed isolation had additional time to do the work. In combination with this scenario, my father's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday would have been in January 2021. I also wanted to pay tribute to him, and in November of 2020 began work on the Mazurka transcriptions with the goal of preparing a version for string quartet, for 2021 publication.

My father had been a violinist as a child and teenager in Poland, and this provided fertile ground for my musical imagination as I worked on the score. One morning while walking I was thinking again about the quartet at the BART station, and how I had learned that in the Vienna of Beethoven's time there were many amateur quartets. In the past, just as music at home often meant reading transcriptions at the piano, it might also mean having a family string quartet for some. Sadly, events during World War II took the lives of my grandfather and aunt, and my grandmother and father were both imprisoned. But I thought happily of an imaginary history, one where my Polish family survived the war and had a string quartet with my father as the first violinist. Once I indulged this fantasy it was easy to 'assign' the other chairs to my aunt and grandparents, and I have had many happy listening sessions to recordings of quartets when I imagine them performing.

The preceding story then, is how I arrived at the dedications. First, I express my genuine gratitude to the Stars Aligned Siblings for their live

performance; they inspired this score to come to life and brought joy to many people on that afternoon in San Francisco.

Additionally, each of the four mazurkas has the following individual dedications:

**Mazurka 1, Op. 7 No. 1 in Bb Major: Dedicated to my grandmother, Helena Klopotoska**

I hear this as a ‘simple’ mazurka, with echoes of the Viennese waltz. Chopin composed this as a young man around the time of triumphant recitals in Vienna; it was equivalent to a hit popular tune in Warsaw and elsewhere. That said, it strikes me as more a memory or dream of what the ancient Polish folk mazurkas sounded like, with instruments such as violin, bagpipes, and the hammered dulcimer played by Polish peasant musicians in the countryside. Chopin heard this music as a child on summer vacations and remembered it throughout his life in these pieces.

**Mazurka 2, Op. 67 No. 2 in G Minor: Dedicated to my grandfather, Edward Klopotoski**

This elegant mazurka is identified as the last composed in Chopin’s lifetime, likely in Paris. I imagine my grandfather as the cellist, playing the solo in the middle section.

**Mazurka 3, Op. 17 No. 4 in a minor: Dedicated to my aunt, Janina Klopotoska**

My grandmother would be the violist in the imaginary quartet, and the viola is featured throughout this haunting mazurka composed when Chopin was a teenager. I imagine the solo part as a tribute to the spirit of my aunt, a type of elegy.

**Mazurka 4, Op. 68 No. 3 in F Major: Dedicated to my father, Henryk Kłopotowski**

Both my grandfather and father were Polish veterans, and my grandfather was a Polish Cavalry Officer. This posthumous mazurka has a march-like quality juxtaposed with a mercurial middle section that suggests an image of my father jumping barrels while ice-skating, something I would see when I was a child.

Also, I wish to thank a favorite music teacher, Dr. Jeffrey Kresky, for first introducing me to this piece many years ago and instilling an admiration for and interest in Chopin's music that has only grown since then. For interested readers I recommend his excellent book "*Tonal Music: 12 Analytic Studies*;" this mazurka is included.

I am also grateful to another inspirational teacher, composer John Lessard, for passing on to me the tradition and skills that made creating this score a possibility. I have never visited Paris, but I received a first-class French musical education through Professor Lessard.

The unique character of the mazurkas is expressed through Chopin's melodic sense and gift for chromatic harmony and voice leading, along with other musical attributes.

Regarding the source of his music, according to Franz Liszt, Chopin was once asked about this after a performance in Paris. His answer was that it came from his "żal," a Polish word connoting remorse, grief, sorrow, regret, longing, even anger; but is not possible to directly translate into English.

Finally, if string players desire direction for interpretation, I strongly recommend the recordings of pianist Arthur Rubinstein. His playing is a model of Chopin performance practice, and features the dynamic treatment of the hairpin mentioned in the performance notes.

John Klopotoski  
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Spring 2021