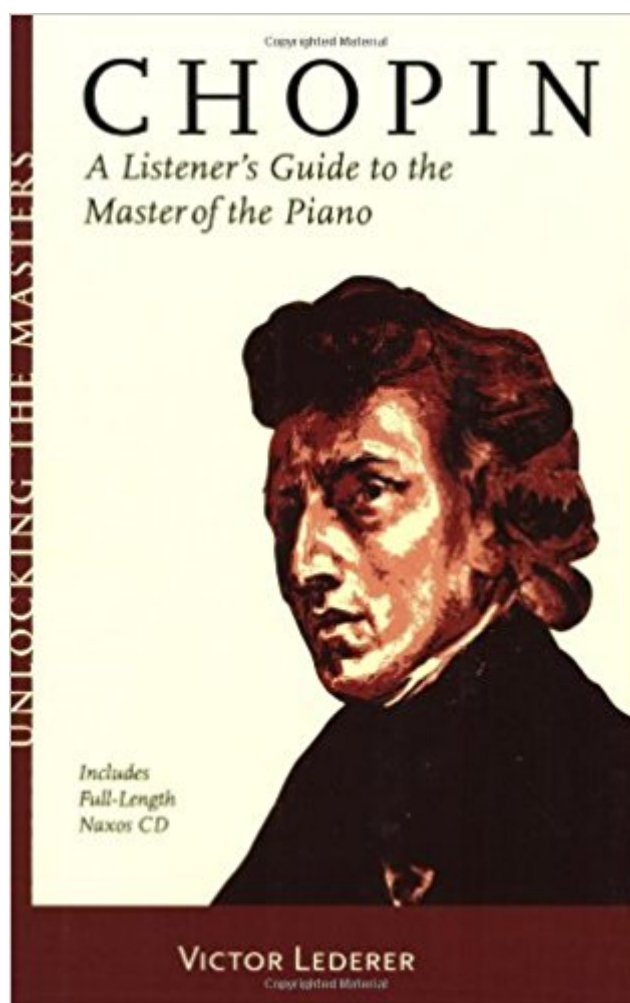


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# Chopin - A Listener's Guide To The Master Of The Piano: Unlocking The Masters Series



## Synopsis

(Unlocking the Masters). Frederic Chopin died a famous man with his place in the musical pantheon secure. Yet the works that were once most popular tended to be his lightest and least challenging, leading many listeners and critics to view him as a miniaturist and composer for the salon. The bold pieces now revered as his masterpieces-the epic and tragic structures of the ballades, scherzos, polonaises, and sonatas, and the compact but daring preludes and mazurkas-were rarely played and poorly understood. In fact, a larger proportion of Chopin's pieces are now in the active repertory than that of any composer. *Chopin A Listener's Guide to the Master of the Piano* takes a detailed tour through the life and oeuvre of the sovereign master of the keyboard. The composer's metabolic adaptation of the melodic structures of Italian opera and the folk music of his native Poland for the resources of the piano are examined in detail, as are the originality and boldness he displayed throughout his tragically short, astonishing career. The book is accompanied by a CD containing 15 complete compositions (and one full movement from his Piano Sonata No. 2) performed by pianist Idil Biret, from her complete survey of the composer's music on the Naxos label.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Amadeus Press has filled a underserved niche in the classical music literature with these marvelous little guides to the great composers and their greatest compositions. They fill the gap between the highly detailed, scholarly volumes of the lives of the great composers ... and the too-superficial tiny

guides that offer too little program notes on the music or the composer. It gives you a compelling "play-by-play" description of each composition without venturing into musicology that would lose a beginner. The entire series is extremely well written and make a great guides to new discoveries. It should appeal to beginners as well as classical veterans alike. This Chopin volume is proving to be a valuable guide as I explore in depth Chopin's music and the great performances on disc. Every major category is covered in satisfying depth to give you solid understanding of what is behind each work - and what in particular is historically and musically significant in them. ALL major works are covered: the lilting Waltzes .. the pensive and sometimes turbulent Nocturnes ... the weighty Sonatas, Scherzos and Ballades ... the delicate miniatures ... the amazing early piano concertos ... the showpieces, Etudes, Preludes and even the few chamber pieces of Chopin are explored to reveal many curious historic details. This volume on Chopin makes for compelling reading and is one of the only modern volumes of program notes on the piano music of Chopin I could find. The number of works covered is large and satisfying with enough detail to give you a deep appreciation of the significance, musical structures and impact of each work. In a way, it reads much like program notes in a CD, but covering the entire range of Chopin's life and works. Other reviews below outline the range covered. The volume, supplemented by classic volume like Schonberg's "Lives of the Great Composers" should give a high quality education to the music of Chopin. This book includes a Naxos CD containing performances by Idl Bieret which gives a quality intro to Chopin, but some listeners will surely want to explore the great Chopin performances of pianists like Rubinstein, Horowitz, Kissin, Perahia, Argerich and many others. Bottom line: these "Unlocking the Masters Series" are a great investment to deepening one's appreciation that will not go out of style any time soon. 5 stars.

This book really helped me understand and appreciate a Chopin Prelude I am learning. His music goes so deep, is so rich, that learning about the man and his music, from his contemporaries and his history is extremely helpful in guiding my playing of his music.

I got this book for my birthday and was instantly hooked. I read the whole thing, loving every page. I adored it until I heard the CD. It's not Idil Biret's playing, but I heard this constant clicking sound on most songs. It was ridiculously annoying, rendering the disk unlistenable. I don't know if anybody else has this problem, but it is terribly annoying!!!

I bought this for my goddaughter who is an enthusiastic piano student. She happens to love Chopin

and the romantic era. This was a nice accompaniment to her lessons.

These small books from Amadeus concentrate on one composer, one of the masters. In these books a brief biography (25 or so pages) set the tone for a discussion of the man's music. In the case of Chopin, this can be summed up as a case of being considered a musical genius at a very early age, followed by increasing fame as a composer even as he was spending years dying from tuberculosis. In the sections on the music, an expert author describes what the best consensus of our time is saying about the works. In the case of Chopin these are broken down into the types of works: Etudes and Preludes, Music for Piano and orchestra, The Waltzes, The Nocturnes, The Sonatas, Patriotism and Tragedy: The Polonaises, Individual works, The Impromptus and Scherzos, The Mazurkas, and The Ballades. A CD included with the book contains fifteen complete compositions of Chopin's works. Having the CD with the book means that the author can refer to the music in his writing knowing that you will have exactly the music he is discussing. This is a great concept that adds immeasurably to the book.

Pair a full-length classical cd from the classical music publisher Naxos with a book surveying Chopin's biography and influences and you have the perfect introduction to Chopin - and a pick recommended not just for public library holdings, but for schools seeking to introduce students to Chopin. Descriptions of his works, styles, and diversity come from a New York-based critical music writer whose addition to the 'Unlocking the Masters' series provides newcomers with a most accessible way of understanding Chopin's music. Diane C. Donovan California Bookwatch

This is a GREAT book for students studying Chopin! As a recent student myself, I wish I would have had this book for general information on Chopin, his life, and his works. The book is laid out in a simple format, making easy for anyone to use. It goes into the styles of his songs and what made them unique. It also includes a CD which the book tells you what and how to listen for things that are specifically Chopin. This book is a must-have for any student studying or performing the works of this master of the piano.

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