

# Chopin 4 Ballades – Zimmerman, piano (sheet music)

## Chopin 4 Ballades – Krystian Zimmerman, piano ([with sheet music](#))

[00:00](#) – Ballade Op.23 No.1 in G minor [09:36](#) – Ballade Op.38  
No.2 in F (A minor) [17:28](#) – Ballade Op.47 No.3 in A-flat [24:57](#)  
– Ballade Op.52 No.4 in F minor

Krystian Zimmerman (born 5 December 1956) is a Polish pianist and conductor who has been described as one of the finest living pianists. In 1975, he won the IX International Chopin Piano Competition.

## Zimmerman'n short biography

Zimmerman was born in Zabrze, Poland, and studied at the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice under Andrzej Jasiński. His international career was launched when he won the 1975 Warsaw International Chopin Piano Competition. He performed with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1976, conducted by Herbert Blomstedt.

He debuted in the United States with the New York Philharmonic in 1979. He has toured widely and made a number of recordings. Since 1996, he has taught piano at the Music Academy in Basel, Switzerland. In 1999, Zimmerman created the Polish Festival Orchestra to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Frédéric

Chopin's death.

Zimerman is best known for his interpretations of Romantic music, but has performed a wide variety of classical pieces and is a supporter of contemporary music. Witold Lutosławski wrote his piano concerto for Zimerman, who has recorded it two times.

Among his best-known recordings are the concerti of Grieg and Schumann with Herbert von Karajan; the Brahms concerti with Leonard Bernstein, the piano concerti of Chopin, one recording conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini and a later one conducted by himself at the keyboard; the Third, Fourth and Fifth Piano Concertos of Beethoven under Bernstein (Zimerman himself led the Vienna Philharmonic from the keyboard in Beethoven's First and Second Concertos); the first and second piano concerti of Rachmaninoff; the piano concerti of Liszt with Seiji Ozawa, the piano concerti of Ravel with Pierre Boulez, and solo piano works by Chopin, Liszt, Debussy and Schubert.

In 2006, Zimerman recorded Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Sir Simon Rattle (DG 477 5413; Limited Edition DG 477 6021).

Zimerman has collaborated with conductors and artists such as Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, Charles Dutoit, Carlo Maria Giulini, Bernard Haitink, Herbert von Karajan, Kirill Kondrashin, Erich Leinsdorf, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Stanisław Skrowaczewski or Wolfgang Sawallisch.

On 26 April 2009, Zimerman vowed to his audience at Los Angeles's Walt Disney Concert Hall that, in protest of America's placement of a missile defense shield in Poland, this would be his final appearance in the United States. He had made a similar comment in 2006, stating he would not return until George W. Bush was out of office.

As of November 2019 he has not made any further appearances in the United States. Part of his disenchantment with the USA may be the increased security at US airports, which makes it difficult to bring his piano into the country. In incidents in 2001 and 2006, one of his Steinway pianos was completely destroyed and another one damaged by security staff at New York JFK airport.

## Awards and honours

Voivod-wide Prokofiev Competition (First prize) (1974; Katowice)

International Chopin Piano Competition (First prize) (1975; Warsaw)

Accademia Musicale Chigiana Award, (1985; Siena, Italy)

Léonie Sonning Music Prize (1994; Denmark)

Honorary doctor of the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice (2005)

National Order of the Legion of Honour (2005; France)[16]

Gold Medal for Merit to Culture – Gloria Artis (2010)

Commander's Cross with Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta (2013)

Diapason d'Or (2015; France)

Honorary doctor of the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw

## Chopin's Ballades

Frédéric Chopin's four ballades are single-movement pieces for solo piano, composed between 1831 and 1842. They are considered to be some of the most challenging pieces in the standard piano repertoire.

The term ballade was used by Chopin in the sense of a balletic interlude or dance-piece, equivalent to the old Italian ballata, but the term may also have connotations of the medieval heroic ballad, a narrative minstrel-song, often of a

fantastical character. There are dramatic and dance-like elements in Chopin's use of the genre, and he may be said to be a pioneer of the ballade as an abstract musical form. The four ballades are said to have been inspired by poet Adam Mickiewicz. The exact inspiration for each individual ballade, however, is unclear and disputed.

Though the ballades do not conform exactly to sonata form, the "ballade form" created by Chopin for his four ballades is a variant of sonata form with specific discrepancies, such as the mirror reprise (presenting the two expositional themes in reverse order during the recapitulation). The ballades have directly influenced composers such as Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms who, after Chopin, wrote ballades of their own.

Besides sharing the title, the four *ballades* are entities distinct from each other. According to composer and music critic [Louis Ehlert](#), "Each [ballade] differs entirely from the others, and they have but one thing in common – their romantic working out and the nobility of their [motifs](#)." Modern theorists have shown, however, that the ballades do have much in common, such as the "ballade meter" ([6/4 or 6/8](#)) and certain formal practices like the mirror reprise and delaying the structural [dominant](#).

