

# 1484. Chopin: Nocturne No. 20

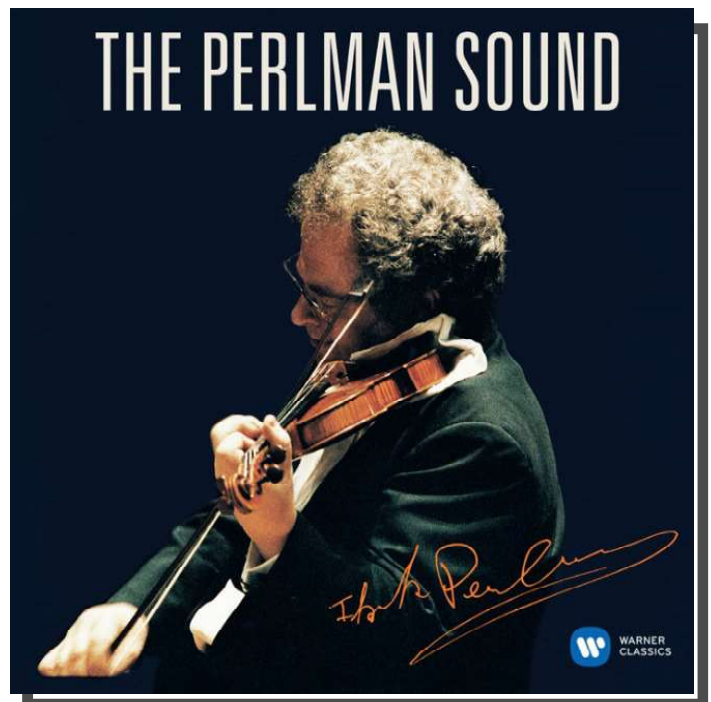
Backgrounds Of S. Radic

Nocturne No. 20 in C# minor is a solo piano piece composed by Frédéric Chopin in 1830 and published in 1870. Chopin dedicated this work to his older sister Ludwika Chopin, stating, "To my sister Ludwika as an exercise before I begin the study of my second concerto." The piece was not published until 21 years after the composer's death and is usually referred to as "Lento con gran espressione" because of its tempo marking.

**History.** The title is sometimes called Reminiscence. Reminiscence (Latin *reminisci* "to remember") is a term for a memory or an echo of something earlier. The piece was performed by Holocaust survivor Natalia Karp for Nazi concentration camp commander Amon Goeth, and Goeth was so impressed by the performance that he spared Karp's life.

Nocturne No. 20 was also the piece played by Holocaust survivor and famed Polish pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman (the central character of the 2002 Roman Polanski film "The Pianist") during the last live broadcast of Polish radio on September 23, 1939, when Warsaw was besieged by the German army. Five years later, Szpilman also played this piece for German army officer Wilm Hosenfeld at their first meeting. Hosenfeld later helped Szpilman hide and provided him with food during the last months of the war.

Personally, I have always "loved" to listen to this piece - but because of the key of "C# minor" as a



Pupils to play rather avoided. This title is the absolute reminiscence of innumerable "sad fates", which have happened not only in the course of the Holocaust history, but also in my personal environment (very early death of my mother and the death of the beloved father).

And then a few weeks ago I encountered this title again, but this time not as a piano solo, but as a violin solo by violin virtuoso Itzhak Perlman. Those who still remember his theme music from the film "Schindler's List" (MWP-No.825) now know that this feeling of sadness has seized me again - and that is why we are playing it today. I have now transposed the C# minor key as vers.2 to C minor - and in addition I have put a musically identical A minor version as "vers.1" (Key1+Org1) to everyone's side, because some passages in the Nocturno-20 will probably require some more practice time. But: some passages Perlman apparently modified a bit for his violin playing. The arrangement really challenges the "sample violin" of any organ. The accompaniment is provided by the O piano arrangement with Pno+Str.



Violin transcription of the Chopin nocturne played by Itzhak at the White House accompanied by Ken

**Klassik-8-Beat, T=70**

The score is divided into two main sections: **Main 1** and **Main 2**. Above the staves, circled letters indicate specific parts: **B** and **C** are positioned above the Piano R staff, **A** and **D** are positioned above the Strings R staff.

- Piano R:** Main 1 has notes with circled **B**; Main 2 is marked *Advanced*.
- Piano L:** Main 1 has a rhythmic line; Main 2 is marked *Advanced*.
- Strings R:** Main 1 is marked *Advanced*; Main 2 has notes with circled **D**.
- Strings L:** Main 1 is silent; Main 2 has a rhythmic line.
- Bass:** Main 1 has notes; Main 2 has notes.
- Drums:** Main 1 has notes with circled **A** and annotations *HH-open*, **BD**, and *Rimshot*. Main 2 has notes with circled **D** and annotation **SD**.

**Programming instruction**

As usual with all "classic styles", the rhythm is also kept very sparse here. In the drum section there is a fixed combination of dotted bass drum and incomplete 8-HiHat-open for both Mains. The change only affects the quarter-beat, which consists once of RIMSHOT (snare edge) and once of the disco snare. This distinction should happen in the A+B parts. In the C+D parts the disco snare is needed and the style will sound more powerful here. The piano and strings parts can be switched as *ADVANCED* as desired.