

# Polonaise

## Typical rhythm of a Polonaise

The **polonaise** is one of the fifth national [Polish](#) dance. It started as a folk dance and then became popular among the Polish [nobility](#). It is in 3/4 time. It follows a distinctive rhythm as illustrated above. Many polonaises are composed in what is called [ternary form](#), or [song form](#), or [minuet and trio](#). These forms all follow an A-B-A pattern. The music of the A sections is similar in both sections, if not exactly identical. The B section is entirely different. It provides contrast in some way to the A sections. In the courts of the [aristocracy](#) musicians would often play a polonaise from the gallery while the people danced below in the reception hall.

## Chopin's Polonaise at a ball in the Hôtel Lambert in Paris

Polish culture was very popular and greatly influenced European dance and music as well as European ballrooms. Polonaise was introduced to France in the 16th century. [Composers](#) started to write polonaises for the piano. Pieces called *Polonaise* had already been composed by [Bach](#), [Handel](#), [François Couperin](#) and others, but it was [Frédéric Chopin](#) who in the [19th century](#) wrote several Polonaises for piano which became famous. Most of them are very difficult to play, especially the famous Polonaise in A flat, Op. 53. Polonaise is the French word of the dance meaning the Polish woman/girl, Polish adjective feminine, the original Polish name is Chodzony meaning „the walking dance”, or Wielki meaning "grand/great"

Several [Russian](#) and other international composers wrote polonaises to give a Polish atmosphere, e.g. [Tchaikovsky](#) in his ballets [The Sleeping Beauty](#) and in his [opera Eugene Onegin](#) .

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