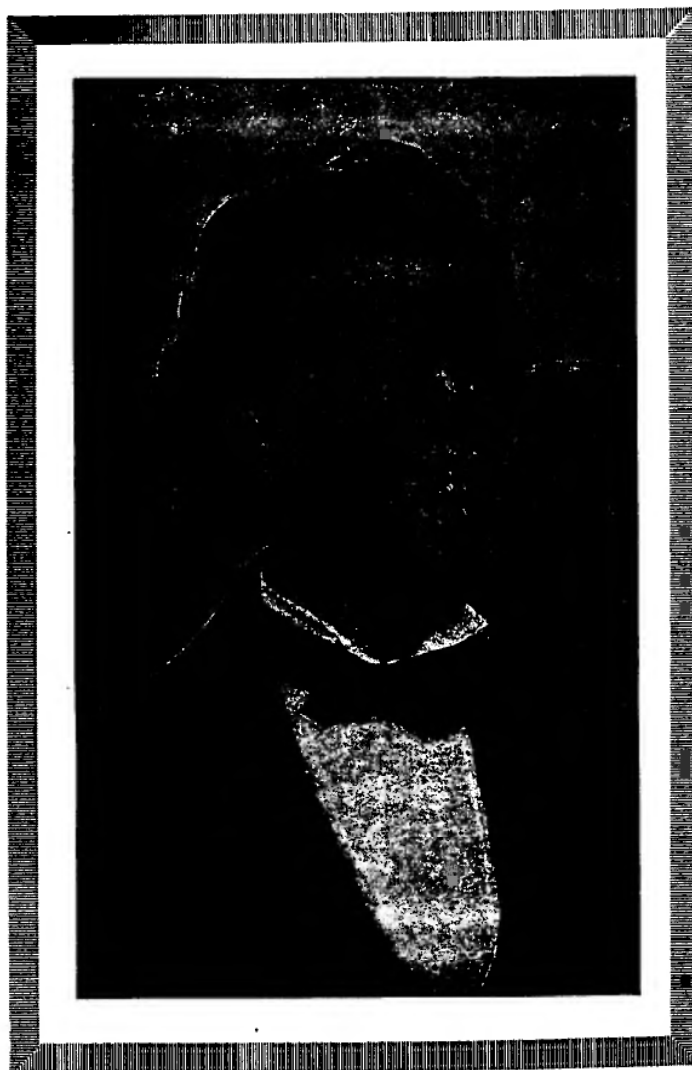


TROIS ECOSSAISES

Op. 72, No. 3

By

FRÉDÉRIC FRANÇOIS CHOPIN



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ANNOTATIONS ON FORM AND STRUCTURE
AND METHOD OF STUDY

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TROIS ÉCOSSAISES

Biographical Sketch—Frédéric François Chopin

Born at Zelazowa-Wola, near Warsaw, Poland, February 22, 1810

Died in Paris, October 17, 1849

FRÉDÉRIC FRANÇOIS CHOPIN was of mixed Polish and French blood. He studied under Elsner at the Warsaw School of Music, and before he was twenty-one shone as a new star in the musical firmament through Germany, France, and England, both in the world of piano playing and in piano composition.

A concert tour across Germany brought him to Paris, and in that world center he finally settled, honored and beloved as a teacher and composer. Here he was brought into close touch with musicians of the caliber of Berlioz and Liszt; and, in particular, with the ardors and enthusiasms of the romantic movement whose literary side was represented by George Sand, Alfred de Musset, and Victor Hugo.

During the short span of forty years, this great composer left to the world a wealth of piano music which is absolutely unique, a knowledge of which forms an indispensable part of the equipment of every pianist. He was so entirely original that one wonders from what source he obtained his inspiration. His music is extremely poetic, his harmonizations rich and varied, and his melodies, while showing Polish characteristics very strongly, are ornamented with a profusion of scintillating arabesques that seem to reveal a new world to the hearer. Chopin was by no means the first composer to study this decorative side of the art; but up to his day it may be said that ornate decorations were used to cover up very thin music. Chopin turned this meaningless elaboration into a thing of the utmost delicacy and refinement, and also of real musical beauty.

Except for about a dozen songs, a trio and a cello sonata, Chopin made the piano his sole vehicle of expression. From first to last he was a piano composer. His principal works are preludes, études, ballades, polonaises, impromptus, nocturnes, waltzes, scherzos, sonatas, and concertos.

General Information: The dance known in France as an *Ecossaise* is not to be confounded with the dance called the *Schottische*. The *Ecossaise* was a country dance of Scottish origin, introduced into France toward the close of the eighteenth century. In its original form it was in either $\frac{3}{2}$ or $\frac{2}{4}$ measure, and was accompanied by the bagpipes. Later it took the form of a *Contredanse* in quick $\frac{2}{4}$ measure. The *Schottische*, on the contrary, was danced in England as early as 1848; it was then known as the *German Polka*, the music being very similar to that of the *Polka*, excepting that the tempo was slower. The fact that Chopin marked *vivace* as the tempo of his three *Ecossaises* proves that he was modeling them with no idea of the *Schottische* in his mind. Moreover, the fact that he composed them in his sixteenth year when he was still under the influence of Schubert—who wrote a number of *Ecossaises* (see Schubert's op. 18, Nos. 33, 49, and 67)—would seem to point to the derivation of Chopin's youthful inspiration.

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TROIS ÉCOSSAISES

Interpretation: The first little piece is to be played with a very sharp rhythm, with the rests slightly exaggerated. The student should never fail to discriminate between dotted notes, which are intended to be sustained, and notes followed by short rests; the latter demand a distinct detachment from the notes which follow. In instances where wide skips occur, as in the treble of the first six measures of this *Écossaise*, the hand should glide close to the keys, and the fingers should take the proper positions above the keys to be played an instant before actually depressing them. This careful preparation will make less likely the chance of touching wrong keys, even when playing at a rapid tempo. In m. 6 before the E in the right-hand part there may be a slight hesitation, compensated for by an *accelerando* in mm. 7-8. The Section beginning with m. 9 should be a little quieter, yet as far as mm. 9-12 are concerned, equally clear and detached. Care must be taken to articulate the triplet groups in mm. 13-15 and the first half of m. 16 clearly and evenly.

The first two notes of the second *Écossaise* are to be taken rather slowly, each with a separate impulse, after which the lively tempo is at once taken up again. For some hands the following fingering for the triplet groups may be found easier:



The wrist participates in the execution of these groups; it is to be raised at each eighth-note, thus leading the fifth finger easily over the upward leap of a sixth. Indeed the whole of the first Section of this *Écossaise* requires very free wrist action, particularly in the lateral movement. It is well to give an added accent to the bass notes which have upward stems, in mm. 1, 2, 5, and 6. Beginning with m. 9 the chords in the treble require massive treatment. Even in a composition of such small proportions the contrasts should be strong, and by commencing this part *forte* and gradually diminishing the tonal volume to *piano* at m. 13 a charming effect is produced.

The monotonous effect of the third *Écossaise* is due to the alternating tonic and dominant in the bass (with tonic triad and dominant seventh harmony), and to the repeated A \flat in the triplet groups of the right-hand part. In order to increase the uncouth, peasant character of these measures, it is advisable to play mm. 1-8 without any *crescendo* or *diminuendo*; then the *forte* at m. 9 and the brilliant scale passage give a bravura close to these three musical miniatures.

Form and Structure: These tiny pieces are so simple in structure as to require little explanation.

I

Three-part Song-form. Key of D Major.

Part 1 (mm. 1-8a) is repeated, beginning and ending in the tonic.

Part 2 (mm. 9-16a) is repeated, beginning with the first inversion of the dominant seventh chord, and closing with the tonic triad.

Part 3 (mm. 17-25) is a repetition of Part 1 (mm. 1-8b), closing with the second ending. Note that the phrase in mm. 13-16a is a variation of the preceding phrase.

II

Three-part Song-form. Key of G Major.

Part 1 (mm. 1-8a) is repeated, beginning and ending in the tonic.

Part 2 begins on the dominant of the relative minor (e) at m. 9 and closes with the same chord at m. 12.

Part 3 consists of a repetition of the after-phrase of Part 1 (mm. 5-8b). Parts 2 and 3 (mm. 9-16a) are then repeated, closing in the tonic at m. 16b.

Trois Ecossaises

(Posthumous)

Op. 72, No. 3.

Revised and edited by Leopold Godowsky

FRÉDÉRIC FRANÇOIS CHOPIN

No. 1

Vivace $\text{♩} = 108$

mf brillante

1. *mf brillante*

2. *f*

3. *mp*

4. *cresc.*

5. *f*

6. *f*

7. *f*

8. *f*

9. *mp*

10. *mp*

11. *cresc.*

12. *cresc.*

13 *p*

14

15 *cresc.*

16^a *f*

16^b

17

18

19 *cresc.*

20

21 *f*

22 *f*

23

24

No. 2

$\text{♩} = 108-120$

Measures 1-4 of the first system. The treble staff features a melody with triplets and slurs, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present in measure 1. A first ending bracket spans measures 3 and 4.

Measures 5-8 of the first system. The treble staff continues the melodic line with triplets. The bass staff has a steady accompaniment. Measure 8 includes a first ending bracket with two options, labeled 1 and 2.

Measures 9-12 of the first system. Measures 9 and 10 feature chords in the treble staff. The bass staff continues with a rhythmic pattern. Measures 11 and 12 show a more active treble melody. Fingerings and slurs are used throughout.

Measures 13-16 of the first system. Measure 13 is marked *p leggiero*. Measure 14 is marked *cresc.* (crescendo). Measures 15 and 16 include first ending brackets with two options, labeled 1 and 2. Measure 16 is marked *16^a* and *16^b*.

No. 3

♩ = 108-128

1 *mf* 1 2 3

2 3

4 *p* 5 6 7

8 *f* 9 10 11 12

13 *fz* 14 15 16^a 16^b