

NEWS RELEASE

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Fryderyk Chopin & the Romantic Piano

ROM exhibition celebrates bicentennial of the composer's birth



Grand Pianoforte
Ignace Pleyel et Cie, Paris, France
1832-1833. © ROM. All rights reserved.

(Toronto, Ontario – September 21, 2010) Commemorating the bicentennial of the renowned composer's birth, the ROM presents *Fryderyk Chopin & the Romantic Piano*, on display in the Level 3 Samuel European Galleries from **October 9, 2010 to March 27, 2011**. The intimate exhibition explores the life and legacy of 19th century Polish composer and piano virtuoso Fryderyk Chopin and the Romantic Age of music in which he played a pivotal role.

Fryderyk Chopin & the Romantic Piano features Chopin's instrument of choice—a Pleyel grand piano—as well as letters by his contemporaries, costume plates and decorative arts of the Romantic Period. ROM visitors will have a unique opportunity to view rarely displayed original musical scores, on limited-time loan from the Fryderyk Chopin Museum, Warsaw, as they learn about Chopin's public and personal worlds and his contributions to an era that helped shape European history.

“The ROM is pleased to offer a glimpse into the life of one of history's most celebrated and enigmatic composers,” said Krzysztof Grzymiski, Vice President & Senior Curator, World Cultures Department. “*Fryderyk Chopin & the Romantic Piano* provides an occasion to pull from the vaults some of the Museum's superior collection of musical instruments as well as never-before-seen original letters by famed Romantic personages. Complementing the exhibition, the ROM proudly offers a variety of concerts, films, lectures and programs celebrating Poland and Chopin.”

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Fryderyk Chopin & the Romantic Piano features over 60 artifacts illuminating Chopin's life, work and the era in which he lived. Featured objects include a Pleyel grand pianoforte dating from circa 1833. Ignace Pleyel et Compagnie was a French manufacturer of musical instruments founded in 1809. Chopin preferred the muffled silvery tone of Pleyels beyond that of any other piano and owned several throughout his life. Also on display is an upright piano, circa 1808, crafted by John Broadwood & Sons, London. Chopin owned and played on a number of Broadwood pianos throughout his life. Other exhibition highlights include a gold pendant owned by Chopin as well as two original scores in Chopin's own hand on display for a limited time. Artifacts courtesy of the Fryderyk Chopin Museum Collection at the Fryderyk Chopin Institute, Warsaw, including Chopin's *Impromptu in A flat major, opus 29* and *Mazurka in F minor, opus 68, no. 4*, are displayed until November 15, 2010. Once the originals are removed from display, they will be replaced by high quality facsimile photographs.



Impromptu in A flat major, opus 29
Fryderyk Chopin, numbered Stichvorlage of the first edition by Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, dated "15 Octobre 1837". Image courtesy of the Fryderyk Chopin Museum, Warsaw, Poland.

Also showcased are 12 autographed letters from Chopin's contemporaries, including George Sand, Franz Liszt, Robert Schumann, Hector Berlioz and Felix Mendelssohn. Three fashion plates depicting men's clothing during mid 19th century Europe and over 40 period decorative art pieces which includes ceramics, glass and precious metals, create a vivid picture of Chopin's era.

ABOUT CHOPIN AND THE ROMANTIC PERIOD



Caricature of Chopin by Pauline Viardot-Garcia, circa 1839. Image courtesy of the Fryderyk Chopin Museum, Warsaw, Poland.

Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin (1810 - 1849), is considered one of history's most cherished composers and talented pianists. Recognized as a musical prodigy from age seven with his first piano composition *Polonaise in G Minor*, Chopin creatively combined the folk music of his native Poland with the European classics. Chopin's style exemplified that of the Romantic Era, a period of European musical history which roughly spanned from 1815 to 1848. Breaking away from the conventions and established forms of the Classical period that preceded it, Romantic music expanded upon these formal structures to create music conveying more passion and expressivity. Many musicians and composers flourished during the Romantic Period, however, 200 years after his birth, Chopin's genius and musical legacy still particularly resonates.

OTHER INFORMATION

Celebrating the bicentennial of the composer's birth the ROM presents a variety of lectures, concerts and films paying homage to Chopin. For more information on ROM programs relating to *Fryderyk Chopin & the Romantic Piano*, visit: <http://www.rom.on.ca/programs/index.php>.

Janina Fialkowska: Words and Music on the Theme of Chopin

Described as “a born Chopin interpreter” by legendary pianist Arthur Rubinstein, Montreal-born Janina Fialkowska celebrates the opening of the ROM's exhibition, *Fryderyk Chopin & the Romantic Piano* on **Tuesday, October 5, from 7:00 to 7:45 pm** with a talk and brief performance of music by her favourite composer. All tickets include a special preview of the exhibition, which opens to the public on Saturday, October 9, 2010. Janina Fialkowska has enchanted audiences for more than 30 years with her lyrical sound, her sterling musicianship and her profound sense of musical integrity. Tickets are \$44, \$39 for ROM members.

Leonard Gilbert: Chopin Piano Recital

First prize winner of the Third Canadian Chopin Piano Competition in 2010 and four-time national first prize winner of the Canadian Music Competitions, Leonard Gilbert performs a **free** concert for ROM visitors on **Sunday, November 7 from 1:00 to 2:00 pm**. Renowned for his poetic and insightful playing, as well as his sensitive touch and technical command, he performs extensively in concerts in Canada and abroad. The concert is free with Museum admission.

Chopin: The Voice of the Piano

On **Tuesday, November 16 from 7:00 to 8:00 pm**, Alan Walker pays tribute to Fryderyk Chopin with a lecture illustrated by archival recordings played by some great Chopin pianists of the past. Speaker Alan Walker is Professor Emeritus of Music at McMaster University. He has broadcast for the BBC, CBC, and CJRT-FM (Toronto), and lectures on the music of the Romantic Era. Tickets are \$18, \$15 for ROM members.

Chopin Films

On Sundays October 10, November 7 and December 4 from 2:00 to 3:00 pm, visitors to *Fryderyk Chopin & the Romantic Piano*, may complement their experience with **free** short films screening in the Signy and Cléopée Eaton Theatre:

Colour Studies of Chopin, 1944, 11 minutes

The Chopin Recital in Duszyniki, 1947, 13 minutes

Chopin's Mazurkas, 1949, 12 minutes

Chopin in Paris, 1969, 10 minutes

All films are courtesy of the Consulate General of Poland in Toronto and Filmoteka Narodowa in Warsaw. Film screenings are included free with Museum admission.

ROM Restaurants and Retail

Inspired by *Fryderyk Chopin & the Romantic Piano*, both ROM restaurants celebrate the rich culture of Poland with special menu items offered during the exhibition's run. **c5 Restaurant Lounge**, the ROM unique fine dining destination located atop the Michael Lee-Chin Crystal, presents elegant Polish menus for lunch and dinner as well as a special Chopin vodka cocktail. **Food Studio**, the Museum's casual family-friendly restaurant, offers a selection of Polish beer as well as traditional family favourites such as borscht and cabbage rolls just like your *matka* used to make! The **ROM Museum Store** pays homage to Chopin with number of his musical recordings as well as a range elegant products including giftware, home décor, jewellery, apparel and books all inspired by Europe in the Romantic Era.

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The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) is an agency of the Government of Ontario. Opened in 1914, the ROM is Canada's largest museum of natural history and world cultures with collections and galleries showcasing art, archaeology and natural science. For 24-hour information in English and French, please call 416.586.8000 or visit the ROM's web site at www.rom.on.ca. ROM tickets now available online: www.rom.on.ca.

Upcoming ROM Exhibitions:

September 25, 2010	<i>Jane Ash Poitras: New Acquisitions of Contemporary First Nations Art</i>
October 2, 2010	<i>Position As Desired/Exploring African Canadian Identity: Photographs from the Wedge Collection</i>
October 9, 2010	<i>Fryderyk Chopin & the Romantic Piano</i>

Upcoming Institute for Contemporary Culture at the ROM Exhibitions:

September 25, 2010	<i>Walls and Barriers: A Collaborative Project</i>
October 2, 2010	<i>El Anatsui: When I Last Wrote to You about Africa</i>