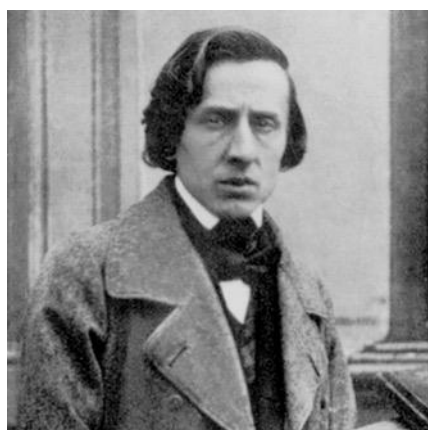


FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810-1849)

Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7 A GUIDE TO INTERPRETATION

BY COSMO BUONO



TEMPO & RUBATO

Choose a tempo in which you can get faster and slower because rhythm is very consistent in the Prelude in A Major, and a good performance will need to be flexible to express each phrase fully. Decide on how the rubato will be for each of the phrases that lead to the climactic moment in measure 12. Each of the five phrases that precede it should be different in how the dotted rhythm and the succeeding quarters are handled.

Andantino



1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12

climactic chord

Consider the dynamics of each phrase and decide on whether they move continuously toward the climax or whether they rise and fall as they approach it. There are opportunities to change the color of the phrases: think of how the balance can change from the melody to the accompaniment and how the chords are voiced in terms of thickness of sound.

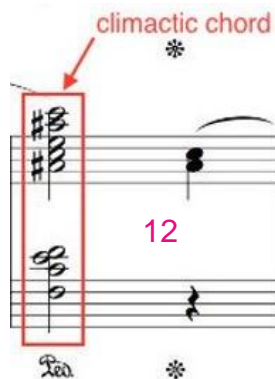
The climactic chord is an interpretive issue as to how fast you will play the rolled notes. A faster roll will create a more dramatic moment, and a slower one will produce a large but gentler effect -- or you may reduce the chord and play it solidly. Think back from the final measure as to how you wish the dynamics and rubato to bring the work to its end.

To create the diverse color effects in the Prelude in A Major, experiment with the angle of the fingers from the melody finger to the ones that play the accompaniment so that you physically find the angle of each finger to produce the desired effect.



As soon as you play the bass note of each phrase, move your **left hand** quickly into place so that you are ready to play the next notes. In this way you can focus attention on the quick preparation of the right hand as it moves from the 16th note to the next quarter. This will not only help you keep it in time, but will prepare the hand to have more control over the sound than if you were moving the hand quickly. The pedal will hold everything needed.

For the rolled chord in measure 12, play the first four notes of the right hand with that hand and then cross the left hand over for the final C-sharp. I think that gives you more control over the sound of that final note. An alternative would be to leave out the bottom A-sharp in the right hand and then play the chord as a solid one. It is up to each performer.



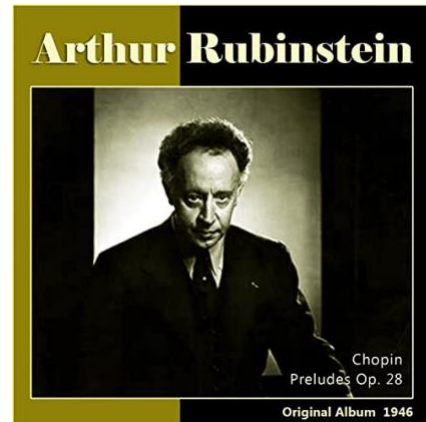
FURTHER STUDY:

I would suggest listening to [Claudio Arrau](#), [Arthur Rubinstein](#), [Ivo Pogorelich](#) and [Martha Argerich](#) for the direct simplicity and wonderful expressiveness that they all bring to their performances of the Chopin Prelude in A Major.

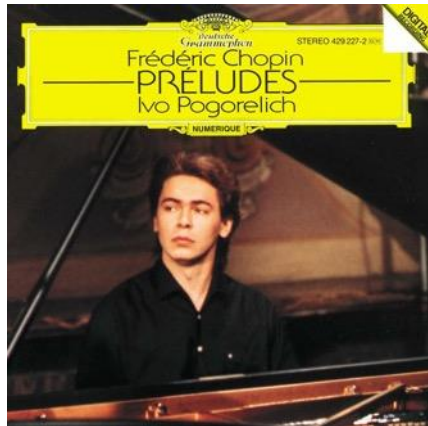
Recordings:



[Claudio Arrau](#)



[Arthur Rubinstein](#)



[Ivo Pogorelich](#)

Notice how Pogorelich takes a very deliberate tempo. He really does not do much with the interpretation until he changes the dynamic to *piano* and creates quite a wonderful moment. His separation of the melodic line from the accompaniment gives him great control over the melody, and the simplicity with which he treats the work is quite engaging.



[Martha Argerich](#)

Argerich takes a much faster tempo. ([Martha Argerich & Tempo Rubato](#)) This is one of the great things about music in that tempo, rubato and color are all open to the individual's interpretation. She colors each phrase beautifully. Listen to how she controls her final *decrescendo*, bringing it to the final chord.