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Hey there and welcome to episode 40 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I am delighted to have you joining me today for musical discoveries.

This episode is scheduled to air on March 1st, which also happens to be the 211th birthday of Frederic Chopin, a Polish composer and virtuoso pianist who is the subject of today's podcast.

Chopin was born in 1810 in a small town just outside of Warsaw, Poland. He was a famous child prodigy when it came to piano. Do you know what it means to be a child prodigy? It means that he had exceptional, above average talent for playing and composing music at a young age. We used this term when we learned about Mozart, who was also considered a child prodigy. In fact, many compared Chopin to Mozart. Chopin studied music as a child and then at Warsaw Conservatory of Music as a teenager. He was already giving public piano concerts and composing major piano works at 7-years-old.

When Chopin was 20 years old, there was an uprising in Poland, and he left for Paris. While in Paris, he earned his living by teaching piano lessons and selling his piano compositions. His income from this was enough that he no longer had to give piano concerts, which he hated doing. All of the pieces Chopin composed included the piano and he was called the poet of the piano, which was becoming an increasingly popular instrument during this period of music. Many of his pieces are technically very difficult to play.

This period of music is called the Romantic period of music. The music of the time was expressive, complicated and passionate.

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A lot of composers put battle sounds into their music, including Chopin. One of Chopin's famous works is his Military Polonaise. Do you think the music in this piece sounds military like? Drums were often used in battle during this time, and I hear the piano imitating the sounds of drums in this piece. Though Chopin didn't spend his adult years in Poland due to war and conflict, he always dreamed of Poland being reborn and rising in power again. This piece is a symbol of his dream of Polish glory.

Chopin also incorporated folk music into his piano compositions. While many of Chopin's pieces incorporate folk music and dance traditions from his beloved Poland, the piece you're listening to now was inspired by Italian folk music. Now folk music is music that is traditionally popular to a certain culture. This piece, called Barcarolle which, translated, means "boat song" was the traditional folk song sung by Venetian gondoliers. Do you hear the gentle waves of the rivers as the gondoliers steer their boats?

Chopin was in poor health for most of his life and died of tuberculosis in Paris at the young age of 39. If you head over to my podcast show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/40, you'll find the link to your curated list of Chopin works over on YouTube. You'll have the chance to listen to some of Chopin's incredible piano solos and even a concerto when you pull up this playlist. Again, you'll find that playlist within my show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/40.

Thanks so much for joining me today to learn a little bit about Polish composer Frederic Chopin. I hope you'll join me again in 2 weeks for another brand new episode of Busy Kids Love Music. Bye for now!