

COMPOSER SPOTLIGHT



STEPHEN HELLER

1813–1888

Style: Romantic



A Rising Star

Stephen Heller was a Hungarian pianist, teacher, and composer born in Budapest. He originally planned to study law, but life had other plans for him! His musical talent was discovered at the age of nine when he performed a concert with his teacher at the Budapest Theater.

Vienna Years

The successful concert resulted in Heller being sent to Vienna, Austria to study with Carl Czerny. However, he was unable to afford Czerny's expensive lessons and instead became a student of Anton Halm. He made his concert debut at the age of 15 in Vienna and embarked on a European concert tour.



Carl Czerny

Paris, Home Sweet Home

Heller moved to Paris at the age of 25 where he quickly became acquainted with powerhouse composers of the day such as Berlioz, Chopin, and Liszt. He succeeded as both a concert performer and a teacher. One of his students eventually became the head of the Conservatoire de Paris.



Final Years

Heller spent his last twenty-five years living in Paris. Unfortunately, he outlived his fame and was not well-known when he died in 1888. Lucky for us, his music was rediscovered and has become a staple in the piano teaching repertoire. Despite the waning popularity of his music during his later years, he remained an important influence on many Romantic-era composers.

Significant Works:

- 25 Etudes, Op. 45
- 30 Etudes, Op. 46