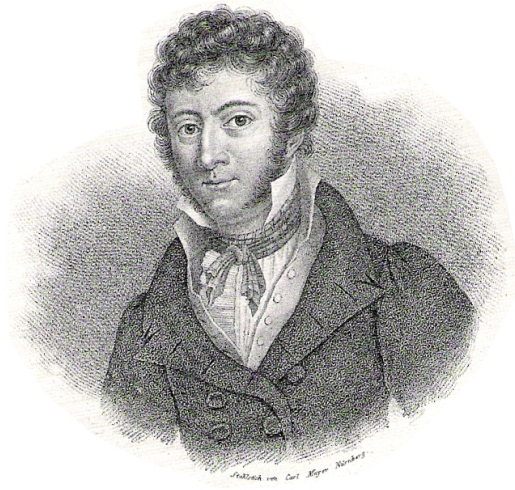




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**John Field**  
(1782- 1837)

# 18 Nocturnes

for Pianoforte solo



# Content ?

Page

## Preface

4

## Nocturnes

5

H. 13	Nocturne in E	Lento	<i>mf</i>	6
H. 14	Nocturne in A	Andante	<i>mf</i>	15
H. 24	Nocturne in Eb	Molto moderato	<i>mf dolce</i>	19
H. 25	Nocturne in c	Moderato e molto espressivo	<i>mf</i>	23
H. 26	Nocturne in Ab	Un poco allegretto	<i>p</i>	27
H. 30	Nocturne in Eb	Andantino	<i>mf dolce</i>	32
H. 36	Nocturne in A	Poco adagio	<i>mf dolce</i>	35
H. 37	Nocturne in Bb	Andante	<i>mf cantabile</i>	40
H. 40	Cradle song / Wiegenlied	Andante (Nocturne in F)	<i>mf cantabile</i>	43
H. 45	Nocturne in C	Moderato	<i>f</i>	47
H. 46	Nocturne in e	Adagio	<i>p</i>	51
H. 54	Nocturne in E	Allegretto "Le midi" (Rondo)	<i>mf</i>	54
H. 56	Nocturne in Eb	Moderato	<i>p</i>	61

	Page
H. 58 Nocturne in G	67
H. 59 Nocturne in d	69
H. 60 Nocturne in C	72
H. 61 Nocturne in C	80
H. 62 Nocturne in F	83

## Klavierstücke / Piano pieces

H. 22 Air Russe	88
H. 51 Walzer/Waltz in E	92
H. deest Variation in a	94

## Preface

Our Edition contains all Nocturns by John Field.

A nocturne (from the French which meant nocturnal, from Latin *nocturnus*) is usually a musical composition that is inspired by, or evocative of, the night. Historically, *nocturne* is a very old term applied to night Offices and, since the Middle Ages, to divisions in the canonical hour of Matins.

The name *nocturne* was first applied to pieces in the 18th century, when it indicated an ensemble piece in several movements, normally played for an evening party and then laid aside. Sometimes it carried the Italian equivalent, *notturmo*, such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Notturmo in D*, K.286, written for four lightly echoing separated ensembles of paired horns with strings, and his *Serenata Notturna*, K. 239. At this time, the piece was not necessarily evocative of the night, but might merely be intended for performance at night, much like a serenade. The chief difference between the serenade and the *notturmo* was the time of the evening at which they would typically be performed: the former around 9:00pm, the latter closer to 11:00 pm.

In its more familiar form as a single-movement character piece usually written for solo piano, the *nocturne* was cultivated primarily in the 19th century. The first *nocturnes* to be written under the specific title were by the Irish composer John Field, generally viewed as the father of the Romantic *nocturne* that characteristically features a cantabile melody over an arpeggiated, even guitar-like accompaniment.

However, the most famous exponent of the form was Frédéric Chopin, who wrote 21 of them. One of the most famous pieces of 19th-century salon music was the "Fifth Nocturne" of Ignace Leybach, who is now otherwise mostly forgotten. Later composers to write *nocturnes* for the piano include Gabriel Fauré, Alexander Scriabin, Erik Satie (1919), Francis Poulenc (1929), as well as Peter Sculthorpe. In the movement entitled 'The Night's Music' ('*Musiques nocturnes*' in French) of *Out of Doors* for solo piano (1926), Béla Bartók imitated the sounds of nature. It contains quiet, eerie, blurred cluster-chords and imitations of the twittering of birds and croaking of nocturnal creatures, with lonely melodies in contrasting sections. American composer Lowell Liebermann has written eleven *Nocturnes* for piano of which one of them, No.6, was arranged by the composer as *Nocturne for Orchestra*. Other notable *nocturnes* from the 20th century include those from Michael Glenn Williams, Samuel Barber and Robert Helps.

All 18 *Nocturnes* by John Field are included in this edition:

- Nocturne in E for piano, H 13
- Nocturne in A for piano, H 14
- Nocturne No. 1 in Eb for piano, H 24, 1812
- Nocturne No. 2 in c minor for piano, H 25, 1812
- Nocturne No. 3 in Ab for piano, H 26, 1812
- Nocturne No. 9 "Romance" in Eb for piano, H 30, 1816
- Nocturne No. 4 in A for piano, H 36, 1817
- Nocturne No. 5 in Bb for piano, H 37, 1817
- Nocturne No. 6 "Cradle Song" in F for piano, H 40, 1817
- Nocturne No. 7 (13) in C for piano, H 45, 1821
- Nocturne No. 8 (9) in E for piano, H 46, 1821
- Nocturne No. 10 in e minor for piano, H 54, 1829
- Nocturne No. 11 in b for piano, H 56, 1832
- Nocturne No. 12 (14) in G for piano, H 58, 1822
- Nocturne No. 13 (15) "Dernière Pensée" in d minor for piano, H 59, 1834
- Nocturne No. 14 (16) in C for piano, H 60, 1835
- Nocturne No. 15 (17) in C for piano, H 61, 1836
- Nocturne No. 16 (18) in F for piano, H 62,1836

The given number is different in the editions published so far, so our edition is arranged according to the H-No. (H = Hopkinson No., 1961 introduced by the Field catalog of Cecil Hopkinson).

In addition, a selection of major piano works by John Field is included.

## Sources:

- Handwritten scripts of the composer
- First editions of the works
  
- and Urtext Editions by
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  - Louis Köhler: *18 Nocturnes*, Leipzig: C.F. Peters, n.d.(ca.1881). Plate 6515
  - Hugo Riemann, Leipzig: Steingräber, n.d.(ca.1885). Plate 398
  - Louis Köhler , Braunschweig: Litolf, n.d. Plate 2774
  - André van Ryckeghem - Werner Icking Music Collection.
  - Moscow: P. Jurgenson, n.d.[1872]. Plate 1878
  - Moscow: Muzgiz, n.d.
  - Moscow: C. Meykov, n.d.(before 1889)
  - IMSLP - Petrucci Music Library des Internet (*International Music Score Library Project*)



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