

## CHATEAUX of the LOIRE

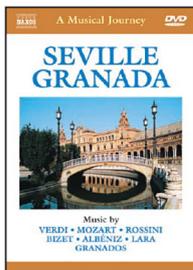
### The Places

The great châteaux and country houses of the Loire arose largely from the decision of François I, who came to the throne in 1515, to move his court for part of the year to the Loire valley. This coincided with a period of French architecture in which the Italian Renaissance style was notably influential, often combined with the existing Gothic. An extraordinarily large number of imposing châteaux resulted, from Chambord and Blois to Azay-le-Rideau.

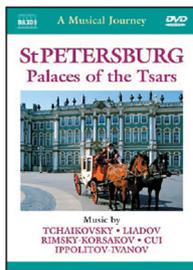
### The Music

The music accompanying this tour of the Loire is all by Fryderyk Chopin. Born in Poland of a Polish mother and émigré French father, Chopin settled in Paris and his liaison with the writer George Sand (Aurore Dudevant) allowed him generally to spend summer months with her at her Château de Nohant in the upper valley of the Indre, the so-called Black Valley. The music chosen here is taken from his many *Waltzes*, a popular dance that he elevated from the ball-room to the concert salon.

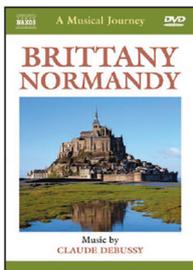
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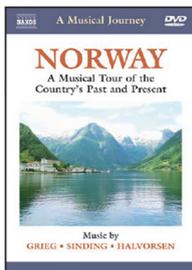
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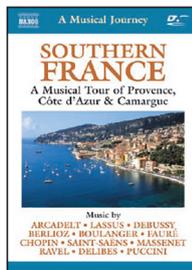
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