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Franz Peter Schubert (1797-1828), an early romantic Austrian composer, is best known for his lieder - German art songs (a poem set to classical music, usually for voice and piano)

The lieder of Franz Schubert assumed great importance during the 19th century as a result of several cultural and sociological developments in Germany, which included the new profusion of lyric poetry, particularly in the works of Goethe (1749-1832), and the evolution of the piano into a highly complex mechanism. As a composer, Schubert possessed an astonishing lyric gift and at times turned out several songs in a day. In musical history Schubert stands with others at the **beginning of the romantic movement**, anticipating the subjective approach to composition of later composers but lacking Beethoven's forcefulness and inventive treatment of instrumental music. Despite his more conservative tendencies, however, Schubert's contributions include the introduction of cyclical form in his Wanderer Fantasy for piano, the use of long-line melodies—instead of motto-type themes—in his piano sonatas and chamber music, and the increased emphasis on the role of the piano accompaniments in his lieder. Many of his large-scale instrumental pieces were unknown until after the middle of the 19th century. (The Unfinished Symphony, for example, did not receive its first public performance until 1865, 43 years after it was written) Furthermore, unlike many of the other romantic composers, such as Carl Maria von Weber, Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, and Richard Wagner, Schubert was not a conductor or virtuoso performer. Consequently he did not achieve considerable public recognition during his lifetime.

Schubert was born in Vienna on Jan. 31, 1797, the fourth son of Franz Theodor Schubert, a schoolmaster, and Elizabeth Vietz, in domestic service in Vienna. Franz received instruction in the violin from his father, his older brother Ignaz, and Michael Holzer, the organist at the Liechtenthal parish church. In 1808, through a competitive examination, Franz was accepted into the choir of the Imperial Court Chapel as well as the Stadtkonvikt (Royal Seminary), where he received a fine education and his talents were encouraged by the principal. A 20-year-old law student, Joseph Spaun, who founded an orchestra among these students, formed a lifelong friendship with Schubert. In 1814 the genius of Schubert was first manifest in Gretchen am Spinnrade, inspired by his reading of Goethe's Faust. His first Mass, which included solos for a young woman friend, Therese Grob, and his first symphony appeared about this time and showed the influence of Franz Joseph Haydn. Schubert modeled his earliest songs, particularly the ballads, for example, Hage's Klage (1811), after those by Johann Rudolf Zumsteeg. Besides Gretchen, Schubert wrote five other Goethe songs that year. Before he died, he had set approximately 57 poems by the poet, at times exceeding in his music the high attainment of Goethe in the poetry.

By the end of 1814 Schubert was an assistant in his father's school and had begun to make the acquaintance of numerous poets, lawyers, singers, and actors, who

soon would be the principal performers of his works at private concerts in their homes or in those of their more affluent friends.

While still a schoolmaster, Schubert composed Symphonies No. 2 through No. 5, the outer two works being in the key of B-flat, a tonality he seems to have favored. At this time he also wrote many of the delightful dances, waltzes, and Ländler for which he was known during his lifetime. By 1817 Schubert was installed in the home of his friend Schober, where the presence of an excellent instrument may have inspired him to write several piano sonatas. In his father's house there had been no piano. Examination of the sonatas will prove Schubert to have been rather daring in his juxtaposition of keys, particularly in development sections.

Between 1820 and 1823 Schubert achieved his musical maturity. Two of his operettas and several of his songs were performed in public; amateurs and professional quartets sang his part-songs for male voices; and some of his works began to be published. Private concerts at the Sonnleithners and other middle-class residences soon brought Schubert a degree of renown. In September 1821 Schubert and Schober left Vienna for the country with the intention of writing *Alfonso und Estrella*, his only grand opera. Shortly after his return to the city, he met Edward Bauernfeld, who introduced him to Shakespeare's works. In the fall of 1822, having completed his Mass in A-flat, Schubert began work on the Symphony in B Minor, which became known as the Unfinished. Three movements were sketched; two were completed. The reasons for the work being left incomplete are open to conjecture. **Schubert's health deteriorated**, and in May he spent time in the Vienna General Hospital.

In 1826 and 1827, despite a recurrence of his illness, Schubert wrote four masterpieces, each of which has remained a staple in the repertory: the String Quartet in G, the Piano Sonata in G, the Piano Trio in B-flat (all 1826), and the second Piano Trio in E-flat (1827). In his final years his style changed considerably. On March 26, 1827, Beethoven died, and Schubert, who, with the Hüttenbrenners, had supposedly visited the dying man on March 18, was one of the torchbearers at the funeral.

Toward the end of that year Schubert completed his two series of piano pieces that he himself entitled *Impromptus*, thus enabling us to disregard Robert Schumann's suggestion that D. 935 (Opus 142) was conceived as a sonata. **In 1828, the last year of his life**, Schubert composed several first-rate works: the magnificent F-Minor Fantasy for piano duet dedicated to Esterhazy, the C-Major Symphony, the E-flat Mass, and nine songs to Ludwig Rellstab's poems, which Schubert may have intended as a cycle. Seven of these songs, six Heinrich Heine songs, and one setting of a poem by J. G. Seidl appeared as *Schwanengesang* (Swan-song), a title given them by the publisher. On March 26, 1828, Schubert participated in the only full-scale public concert devoted solely to his own works. On November 11, suffering from nausea and headache, he took to his bed in the house of his brother Ferdinand. Five days later the doctors diagnosed typhoid fever. One of the two doctors was a specialist in venereal disease; thus the suspicion that Schubert had syphilis is well founded. **He was correcting the proofs of the second set of his song cycle *Die Winterreise*** when he became delirious and died 2 days later on Nov. 19, 1828.

Song Cycle – the stringing together of a number of songs into a unified concept both in text and music -(concept album's in our lifetime e.g. **The Beatles** – “**Sgt. Pepper**” then was not exactly a new idea!). Unlike composers of previous generations where successions of songs were somehow “tied together” by some unifying thread, Schubert essentially constructed a miniature drama in which the effect is cumulative. Some have commented that to listen to the complete cycle is rather monotonous, however, almost each one of the songs individually is a masterpiece.

In *Winterreise* – based on poem cycles by Wilhelm Mueller (1794 -1827), Schubert raises the importance of the pianist to a role equal to that of the singer. In particular the piano's rhythms constantly express the moods of the poem. As far as the settings go, here was an opportunity to paint in music the romantic scenes he loved so well. He was not so much a townman now that he did not take the opportunity to escape in his imagination into the countryside where he could no longer afford to travel.

Early on the wanderer sings about his beloved. As the song cycle develops he starts to sing more about the problems of being a beggar.

Symphony part 1 –

Franz Schubert composed his famous Symphony No. 8 in B Minor in 1822. However he abandoned the project in mid-stream, leaving only two completed movements. Those two movements, however, comprise nearly 30 minutes of some of his best music.

The first movement is a monumental struggle between tragedy and tranquility. The ominous opening bars suggest a distant thunderstorm, with towering black clouds, blurry white flashes of lightning and growls of thunder. Think of this storm as a metaphor for something deeply unsettling and flawed within the human condition itself.

About a minute and a half into the movement, the music brightens suddenly into a major key, with a new elegant and jaunty melody. Imagine now the sun coming out from behind the storm clouds and shining, tentatively at first but then stronger and brighter.

About 4 minutes into the first movement there is a reprise of the ominous opening section, the thunderheads blotting out the sun once again. There are a couple of stormy interjections sprinkled throughout the remainder of the movement too, as if the storm isn't quite ready to go away. The struggle between light and dark continues until the end of the movement, and surprisingly, the stormy minor key wins out in the end.

However, tranquil sunshine gets the last laugh. The "*Andante con moto*" second movement begins with a tender, pastoral theme, and then transitions into a lilting, energetic dance. Imagine a group of friends having a picnic in the countryside, alternating between placid enjoyment of their idyllic surroundings and boisterous conversation, laughter and games with one another

But once again, about 4 minutes into the movement, turmoil interrupts the party. It's much more superficial than the gloomy tragedy in the first movement, and much briefer. Maybe a couple of the picnickers are arguing, but it's quickly resolved and the fun continues as before.

The storm makes one final, last-ditch effort to spoil the picnic about 9 minutes into the second movement, but the threat lasts only for a moment, and calmness is soon restored. The sunny, optimistic key of E major wins out in the end.

Symphony no.9

After composing six complete symphonies between 1813 and 1818 in the manner of Haydn and Mozart, Schubert completed only one more in the remaining decade of his brief life. This was The Great C major, written during 1825-1826 (rather than 1828 as was supposed until quite recently), and thus is the allegedly lost "Gastein" Symphony. Although he dated a copy of the score "March 1828," it really is No. 9, despite an army of scholars that variously tagged it No. 7, 8, and even 10. This work wasn't performed in its entirety until March 21, 1839, at Leipzig, with Mendelssohn conducting.

A soft but accented horn theme in the slow introduction foreshadows others to come in the exposition; it returns triumphantly in a long coda. The main body of the movement, marked "not too fast," is rhythmically so powerful and relentless that an unmodified Allegro tempo would have risked destroying it

Robert Schumann 1810 -1856

Schumann first tried writing a symphony as early as 1832 (22 years of age); but after virtually completing three movements and sketching a finale a lack of confidence resulted in his abandoning the work. He therefore spent the rest of his "twenties" drawing strange and fanciful new sounds from the piano. In 1839 he heard Mendelssohn conduct Schubert's "Great C major" – this fired him up with the idea of composing a symphony. In 1841, the year after his marriage to Clara, he took up the challenge writing both his first, and what is now known as his 4th symphonies. His symphony no. 2 was completed in 1846.

Schumann's Third Symphony, the 'Rhenish', is his last symphony (the Fourth was actually written after the First). It was written in 1850, after Schumann's appointment as conductor of the orchestra at Dusseldorf. It represents the height of Schumann's 'Classical' period which began with the Second Symphony, and continued with works such as the Konzertstück for Four Horns and the Violin Concerto. With these works, Schumann said that he wanted to develop ideas in his head rather than on the keyboard. The result is a more intellectual and contrapuntal style of composition than in his earlier works.

As its name suggests, the symphony is a celebration of the glorious Rhineland, which inspired generations of German composers, most notably Richard Wagner. Interestingly, the symphony is in five movements rather than the more usual four. The 'extra' fourth movement, originally subtitled 'In the style of an accompaniment to a solemn ceremony', was inspired by a visit to a Cologne cathedral.

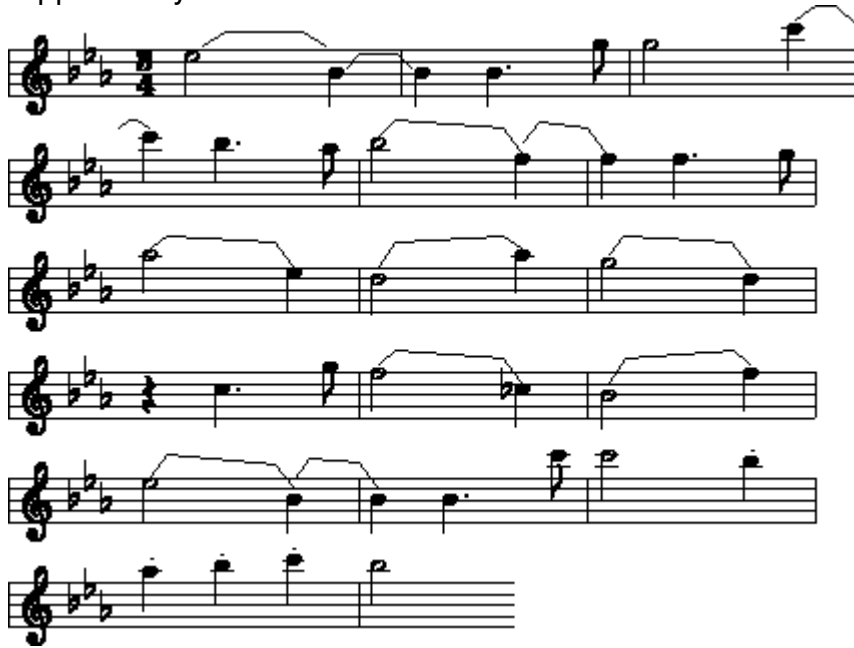
Scoring: 2 [flutes](#) | 2 [oboes](#) | 2 [clarinets](#) | 2 [bassoons](#)
4 [horns](#) | 2 [trumpets](#) | 3 [trombones](#)
[Strings](#), [Timpani](#)

FIRST MOVEMENT : Lebhaft (Lively)

FORM: [Sonata Form](#)

KEY: E flat

The symphony opens with a broadly majestic principal subject, played by the violins and supported by the wind and brass sections:



Example 1 shows six staves of musical notation. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last four are in bass clef. The music is in E-flat major and 4/4 time. It features a broad, majestic principal subject with long intervals and a slow, steady rhythm. The melody is supported by harmonic accompaniment in the lower staves.

Ex. 1

A transitional passage is formed from two scale-like motifs (Exs. 2 and 3), both of which play a major role in the development of the movement:



Example 2 is a single staff of musical notation in treble clef, E-flat major, 4/4 time. It consists of a scale-like motif starting with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes ascending and then descending.

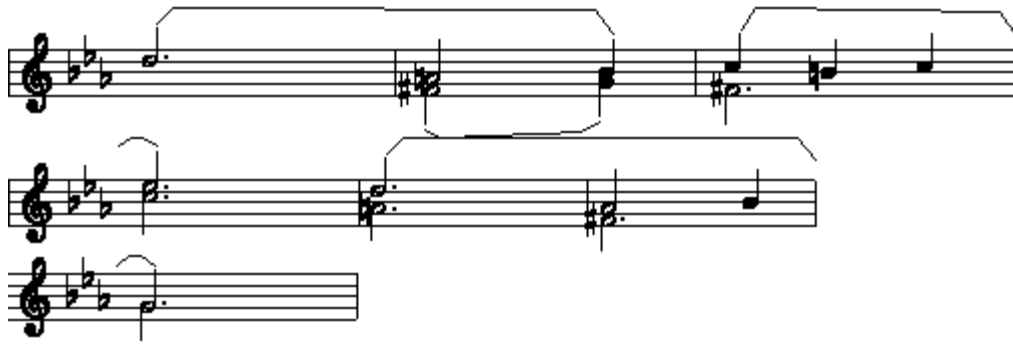
Ex. 2



Example 3 consists of two staves of musical notation in treble clef, E-flat major, 4/4 time. The top staff shows a scale-like motif with a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff shows a similar motif with a different rhythmic pattern, featuring more eighth notes.

Ex. 3

These motifs are combined with fragments from the principal subject, and modulate into G minor for the wistful secondary subject, played by the woodwind:



Ex. 4

This melody is immediately followed by a closing section, mainly consisting of a modified version of the principal subject:



Ex. 5

There is a brief restatement of the secondary subject by the strings, followed by the scale motifs, and finally the modified principal subject. The exposition ends joyfully in B flat major.

A varied and resourceful development section follows, utilising all of the thematic material introduced in the exposition. The recapitulation is announced in a grand manner by the four horns, followed by a recapitulation, with a shorter, modified transitional passage. The secondary subject returns in C minor, and the movement ends in the home key of E flat with a short, declamatory coda.

SECOND MOVEMENT: Scherzo (Sehr maessig)
FORM: Synthesis of [sonata form](#), [ternary form](#), and [variations](#)
KEY: C

This Scherzo is one of Schumann's most masterly and innovative symphonic creations. The melodies are based on the Landler, which is a German folk-dance. Structurally it is a fascinating synthesis of ABA Scherzo form, Variation form, and Sonata form.

The movement opens with a rustic tune in C major, first stated by the violas, cellos, and bassoons, with the rest of the orchestra joining in later on:



Ex. 6

This is followed by something akin to a variation of the main theme, using ascending staccato figures:



Ex. 7

A new theme is then introduced in A minor by the horns, then continued by the wind:



Ex. 8

A brief development section follows, using both of the main themes.

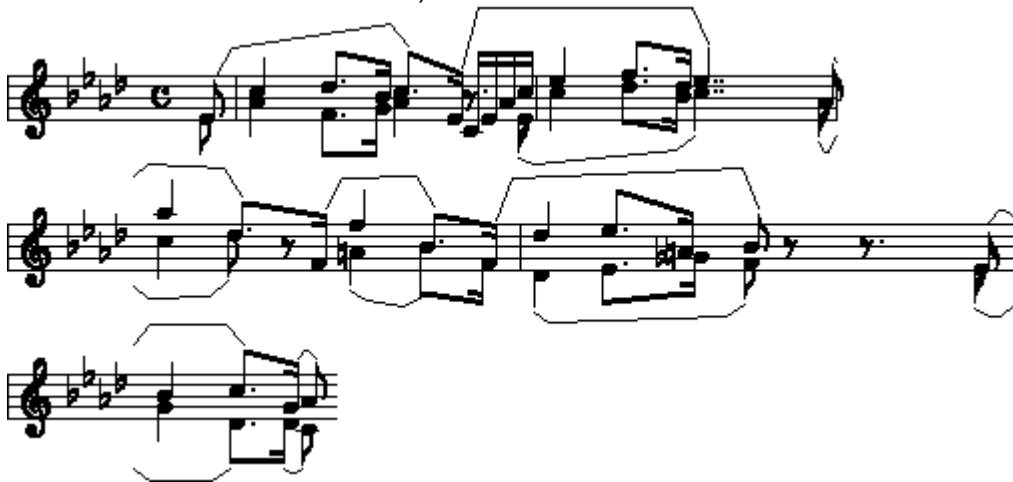
Eventually we end up back in C major for the return of the main theme. There is coda utilising the full brass section, and the movement gradually winds down, ending with a soft pizzicato note in the strings.

THIRD MOVEMENT: Nicht Schnell (Not fast)

FORM: [Ternary form](#)

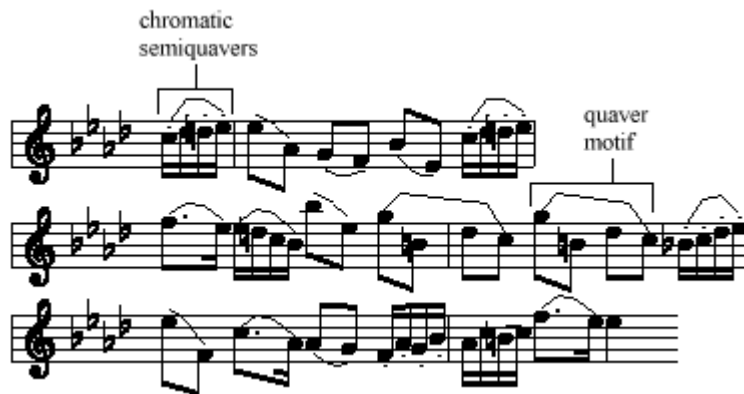
KEY: A flat

The slow movement opens with a gentle, lilting melody for the woodwind (the main theme of the movement):

Musical notation for Ex. 9, showing three staves of woodwind melody. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The melody is characterized by a gentle, lilting quality with a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes. Brackets are used to group specific phrases across the staves.

Ex. 9

This is continued by the strings. Note the two important motifs - a chromatically ascending semiquaver figuration, and a quaver motif:

Musical notation for Ex. 10, showing three staves of string accompaniment. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The accompaniment features a chromatically ascending semiquaver figuration and a quaver motif. Labels with arrows point to these specific motifs: 'chromatic semiquavers' and 'quaver motif'.

Ex. 10

The violas and bassoons begin the central development section with a new theme:



Ex. 11

The development uses this theme in combination with the two motifs mentioned earlier.

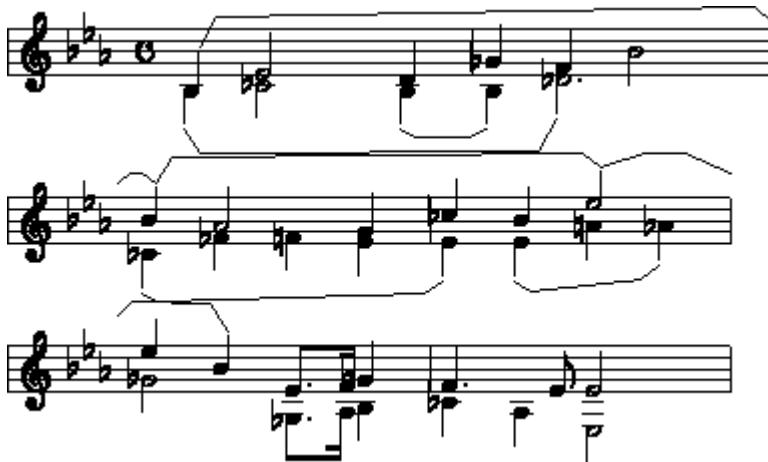
The main theme returns, and the movement ends peacefully in A flat major.

FOURTH MOVEMENT: Feierlich (Solemnly)

FORM: Free [contrapuntal](#) fantasia on two subjects

KEY: E flat minor

The mood of the symphony changes abruptly with this dark, sinister slow movement in E flat minor. The movement is another astounding creation, rich in contrapuntal invention. It is basically built on two subjects, one broad and imposing (Ex. 12), the other short and pointed (Ex. 13):



Ex. 12



Ex. 13

The movement is too complex to go into great detail here, but the style of development is much like that of Bach's fugues.

The full brass and wind burst forth near the end of the movement with a triumphant chorale in B major:



Ex. 14

The movement returns to E flat major, and concludes somberly.

FIFTH MOVEMENT: Lebhaft (Lively)

FORM: Modified [sonata form](#)

KEY: E flat

Schumann's natural optimism returns in this bright, jaunty movement. It is again formally unusual - it is a kind of Sonata form movement without a development section.

The movement consists of several themes that are stated and recapitulated in a fairly free manner. The first of these themes (the principal subject) is played by the strings, then repeated:



Ex. 15

This is followed by another theme, a little lighter in feel:



Ex. 16

Another theme follows, with important implications for the scheme of the movement:



Ex. 17

A transition leads to a theme in B flat major, stated by the woodwind:



Ex. 18

Ex. 17 returns in a modified guise, forming what could be called the secondary subject.

A series of fascinating modulations eventually lead into F sharp minor, where

material from the fourth movement returns:



Ex. 19

The exposition ends with a chorale-like theme stated by the brass, firstly in C flat major, then in the dominant key of B flat major:



Ex. 20

This theme is then stated in the home key of E flat.

A free recapitulation follows, with many passages modified or shortened.

The coda recalls the main theme of the fourth movement, and the symphony ends triumphantly in E flat major.

Berlioz 1803-1869

“Beethoven is dead,” Paganini wrote to Berlioz in 1838 after hearing *Harold in Italy*, “and Berlioz alone can revive him.” Paganini was merely echoing Berlioz’ own belief that he was Beethoven’s successor. He was a Romantic in life and deed, as well as music. He wrote passionately, intensely, turbulently, as well as egotistically. His *Symphonie fantastique* (with movements entitled, e.g. Dreams, Passions; The March to the Gallows; and Dreams of the Witches’ Sabbath) was written only three years after Beethoven died and is a huge departure from all symphonic structures and procedures established by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert.

Mendelssohn 1809-1847

Felix Mendelssohn is regarded by classical music aficionados and critics alike, as one of the most prolific and gifted composers the world has ever known. Even those who could not name any of his works have heard it, as his “Wedding March” from “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, which has accompanied many a bride down the aisle.

Whether he was born with his incredible talent or was the product of an artistically and intellectually-inclined family will remain a mystery, but like all prodigies, Mendelssohn showed signs of true genius from childhood.

Regarded by some critics as the 19th century equivalent of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and others as a great composer whose contribution would have been greater, had his life been marred with more hardships, everyone should agree that he deserves his place amongst the best, and most influential. It has, therefore, become somewhat of a cliché to compare the tranquility and well-being of his life with that of his music. He was born rich. From the beginning, he was encouraged to cultivate his immense talent. He had early success and saw it develop, as the years passed, to heights achieved by few other musicians of his time. His music, like his life, is singularly free of struggle, torment, frustration or passion – quite the opposite, for example, of Berlioz! He never chased the new kinds of musical expression pursued by the likes of Berlioz and Schumann; in fact, he was happy to remain within the classical structures of the symphony, concerto, string quartet and oratorio.

Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849), the Polish composer and pianist, was born on 1 March 1810, according to the statements of the artist himself and his family, but according to his baptismal certificate, which was written several weeks after his birth, the date was 22 February.

The musical talent of Fryderyk became apparent extremely early on, and it was compared with the childhood genius of Mozart. Already at the age of 7, Fryderyk was the author of two polonaises (in G minor and B flat major), the first being published in the engraving workshop of Father Cybulski. The prodigy was featured in the Warsaw newspapers, and "little Chopin" became the attraction and ornament of receptions given in the aristocratic salons of the capital. He also began giving public charity concerts. His first professional piano lessons, given to him by Wojciech Zywny (b. 1756 in Bohemia), lasted from 1816 to 1822, when the teacher was no longer able to give any more help to the pupil whose skills surpassed his own. The further development of Fryderyk's talent was supervised by Wilhelm Würfel (b. 1791 in Bohemia), the renowned pianist and professor at the Warsaw Conservatory who was to offer valuable advice as regards playing the piano and organ.

From 1823 to 1826, Fryderyk attended the Warsaw Lyceum where his father was one of the professors. He spent his summer holidays in estates belonging to the parents of his school friends in various parts of the country. For example, he twice visited Szafarnia in the Kujawy region where he revealed a particular interest in folk music and country traditions. The young composer listened to and noted down the texts of folk songs, took part in peasant weddings and harvest festivities, danced, and played a folk instrument resembling a double bass with the village musicians; all of which he described in his letters. Chopin became well acquainted with the folk music of the Polish plains in its authentic form, with its distinct tonality, richness of rhythms and dance vigour. When composing his first mazurkas in 1825, as well as the later ones, he resorted to this source of inspiration which he kept in mind until the very end of his life.

In the autumn of 1826, Chopin began studying the theory of music, figured bass and composition at the Warsaw High School of Music, which was both part of the Conservatory and, at the same time, connected with Warsaw University. After completing his studies, Chopin planned a longer stay abroad to become acquainted with the musical life of Europe and to win fame.

Upon his return to Warsaw, Chopin, already free from student duties, devoted himself to composition and wrote, among other pieces, two Concertos for piano and orchestra: in F minor and E minor. This was also the period of the first nocturne, etudes, waltzes, and mazurkas

In the autumn of 1831 Chopin arrived in Paris where he met many fellow countrymen. In Paris, his reputation as an artist grew rapidly. Letters of recommendation which the composer brought from Vienna allowed him immediately to join the local musical milieu, which welcomed him cordially. Chopin became the friend of Liszt, Mendelssohn, Ferdinand Hiller, Berlioz among others. Later on, in 1835, in Leipzig, he also met Schumann who held his works in great esteem and wrote enthusiastic articles about the Polish composer. Upon hearing the performance of the unknown arrival from Warsaw, the great pianist Friedrich Kalkbrenner, called the king of the piano, organized a concert for Chopin which took place on the 26th of February 1832 in the Salle Pleyel. The ensuing success was enormous, and he quickly became a famous musician, renowned throughout Paris. This rise to fame aroused the interest of publishers and by the summer of 1832, Chopin had signed a contract with the leading Parisian publishing firm of Schlesinger. At the same time, his compositions were published in Leipzig by Probst, and then Breitkopf, and in London by Wessel.

The most important source of Chopin's income in Paris was, however, from giving lessons. He became a popular teacher among the Polish and French aristocracy and Parisian salons were his favourite place for performances. As a pianist, Chopin was ranked among the greatest artists of his epoch.

In July 1837, Chopin travelled to London in the company of Camille Pleyel in the hope of forgetting all unpleasant memories. Soon afterwards, he entered into a close liaison with the famous French writer George Sand. This author of daring novels, older by six years, and a divorcee with two children, offered the lonely artist what he missed most from the time when he left Warsaw: extraordinary tenderness, warmth and maternal care. The lovers spent the winter of 1838/1839 on the Spanish island of Majorca, living in a former monastery in Valdemosa. There, due to unfavourable weather conditions, Chopin became gravely ill and showed symptoms of tuberculosis. For many weeks, he remained so weak as to be unable to leave the house but nonetheless, continued to work intensively and composed a number of masterpieces: the series of 24 preludes, the Polonaise in C minor, the Ballade in F major, and the Scherzo in C sharp minor.

On his return from Majorca in the spring of 1839, and following a convalescence in Marseilles, Chopin, still greatly weakened, moved to George Sand's manor house in

Nohant, in central France. Here, he was to spend long vacations up to 1846, with the exception of 1840, returning to Paris only for the winters. This was the happiest, and the most productive, period in his life after he left his family home. The majority of his most outstanding and profound works were composed in Nohant. In Paris, the composer and writer were treated as a married couple, although they were never married.

Grievous personal experiences as well as the loss of Nohant, so important for the health and creativity of the composer, had a devastating effect on Chopin's mental and physical state. He almost completely gave up composition, and from then to the end of his life wrote only a few miniatures. In April 1848, persuaded by his Scottish pupil, Jane Stirling, Chopin left for England and Scotland. On 16 November 1848, despite frailty and a fever, Chopin gave his last concert, playing for Polish emigrés in the Guildhall in London. A few days later, he returned to Paris

His rapidly progressing disease made it impossible to continue giving lessons. On 17 October 1849, Chopin died of pulmonary tuberculosis in his Parisian flat in the Place Vendôme. He was buried in the Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris. (Where Jim Morrison of 'the Doors' was buried nearly 150 years later!) In accordance with his will, however, his heart, taken from his body after death, was brought by his sister to Warsaw where it was placed in an urn installed in a pillar of the Holy Cross church in Krakowskie Przedmiescie.

Franz Liszt 1811-1887

...was a renowned performer throughout Europe during the 19th century, noted especially for his showmanship and great skill with the piano. Today, he is considered to be one of the greatest pianists in history. Liszt is frequently credited with re-defining piano playing itself, and his influence is still visible today, both through his compositions and his legacy as a teacher. He is credited with the invention of the symphonic poem, as well as the modern solo piano recital in which his virtuosity won him approval by composers and performers alike. In Vienna, he studied with Czerny, who had worked with Beethoven and proved to be the only professional piano teacher Liszt ever had. Salieri taught him the technique of composition and fostered the young Liszt's musical taste. In 1823 Liszt gave a concert at which, according to legend, he impressed Beethoven to such an extent that he personally congratulated Liszt, kissing him on the forehead and giving him enthusiastic praise.

Liszt left Vienna in 1823 to travel. On April 20, 1832 he attended a concert by Paganini and became suddenly determined to become as great a virtuoso on the piano as Paganini was on the violin. He often took to seclusion in his room, and was heard practicing for over five hours a day. After 1842, when "Lisztomania" swept across the European continent, Liszt's recitals were in an overwhelming demand. His admirers praised and courted him, and ladies reputedly fought over his handkerchiefs and green silk gloves as souvenirs, which they often ripped to pieces in their struggle. Some of Liszt's contemporaries saw this kind of worship as vulgar and inappropriate, and eventually came to despise Liszt because of it.

Liszt was a prolific composer. Most of his music is for the piano and much of it requires formidable technique. His transcriptions met with less criticism. His piano works have always been well represented in concert programs and recordings by pianists throughout the world. Many of his works have been recorded a multitude of times. However, the only pianist who has recorded his entire pianistic oeuvre is the Australian Leslie Howard. The project took almost 15 years to complete, and comprised 95 full-length CDs. Howard was awarded a place in the Guinness Book of Records for having completed the largest recording project ever in the history of music (including both pop and classical). The series has also earned several *Gramophone Grand Prix du Disque*, and a special award from the Hungarian government. This massive undertaking included a number of premiere recordings, including many unpublished pieces, recorded from manuscript, which had not been played by anyone since Liszt himself.

Liszt wrestled daily with the demons of desolation, despair and death, bringing forth music that utterly failed to find its audience. We now know, in retrospect, that Liszt's contemporaries were offered a glimpse into a mind on the verge of catastrophe. Liszt's works from this period fall into three categories: *Music of retrospection *Music of despair *Music of death.

The first category contains pieces in which a troubled spirit seeks consolation in memories of the past. Liszt referred to this music as his "forgotten" pieces — sardonically referring to compositions forgotten before even played, with titles such as *Valse oubliée*, *Polka oubliée* and *Romance oubliée*. The second category, music of despair, can appear much more important since the titles of the pieces in this category would seem to point to a troubled mind. The third category, music of death, contains pieces where Liszt raised grief to high art. Memorials, elegies, funerals and other aspects of the grieving process find their place in this music.

Liszt's playing was described as theatrical and showy, and all those who saw him perform were stunned at his unrivalled mastery over the piano. Perhaps the best indication of Liszt's piano-playing abilities comes from his *Douze Grandes Etudes* and early [Paganini Studies](#), written in 1837 and 1838 respectively, and described by [Schumann](#) as "studies in storm and dread designed to be performed by, at most, ten or twelve players in the world". To play these pieces, a pianist must connect with the piano as an extension of his own body (Walker, 1987).

Liszt claimed to have spent ten or twelve hours each day practicing scales, arpeggios, trills and repeated notes to improve his technique and endurance. All of these piano techniques were frequently applied in his compositions. He would challenge himself and his immaculate fingering by presenting random problems to his playing.

Perhaps a large contributing factor to Liszt's affinity for extreme technical difficulty was the structure of his own hands. An original 19th century plaster cast of Liszt's right hand has been reproduced, and is now held in the Liszt House at Marienstrasse 17 (also known as the Liszt Museum). The plaster cast reveals that while Liszt's fingers

were undoubtedly slender, they were of no exceptionally abnormal length. However, the small "webbing" connectors found between the fingers of any normal hand were practically nonexistent for Liszt. This allowed the composer to cover a much wider span of notes than the average pianist, perhaps even up to 10 whole steps. During the 1830s and 1840s — the years of Liszt's "transcendental execution" — he revolutionized piano technique in almost every sector.

While revolutionary and famously spectacular, Liszt's playing was far from mere flash and acrobatics. He also was reported to have played with a depth and nobility of feeling that would move sturdy men to tears. It seems that this quality to his playing may have continued to develop during his life, overtaking the youthful fire and bravura. Indeed, reports of his playing in old age include observations that it was surprisingly and distinctly subtle and poetic, with great purity of tone and effortless execution; in distinction to the more tumultuous "Liszt school" of playing, which by then had already started to become traditional in Europe. Examination of the late piano works seems to back up this expressive requirement, where the composer seems to be deliberately rejecting the showiness of his earlier works.

Assignment: Define all musical terms used in the analysis of Schumann Symphony no.3