

Franz Schubert

Life Dates: 1797-1828

Country of Origin: German

Musical Era: Romantic



Franz Schubert

"No one understands another's grief, no one understands another's joy... My music is the product of my talent and my misery. And that which I have written in my greatest distress is what the world seems to like best."

Franz Schubert was born in Austria into a musical family. His father was a schoolmaster for the church as well as a cook and a cellist. Franz's older brothers played the violin and piano, and the family taught Schubert to play as well. However, he quickly surpassed his older brothers at the piano, and also became quite skilled at singing and playing the organ.

When he was older, Schubert studied at a seminary in order to learn church music. The students didn't have an easy life there; they were often cold and hungry. Schubert left the seminary to teach at his father's school but he wasn't a very good teacher. He didn't like to keep track of students or to do busywork. After school was out for the day, he wrote music for his own enjoyment.

One summer, Schubert worked for a court of important aristocrats: the Eszterházy family in Hungary. He taught music to their family and continued to write his own. Schubert also enjoyed meeting with friends and playing his music for them. These friends encouraged him to stop teaching and make composition his full-time job. His friends also introduced him to people who could pay him to compose and perform.

Although Schubert is well-respected now, his music wasn't widely appreciated while he was alive. Today, he is known as the composer who bridged Classical and Romantic music, and for his beautiful melodies and unusual harmonies that created different moods. During his life he wrote many song cycles, symphonies, string quartets, and piano sonatas. He also tried writing operas, but these were not successful. Schubert fell ill at age 25, and died when he was 31.

Questions from the reading: Was Schubert's music popular while he was alive?
Why was Schubert able to write music full-time?

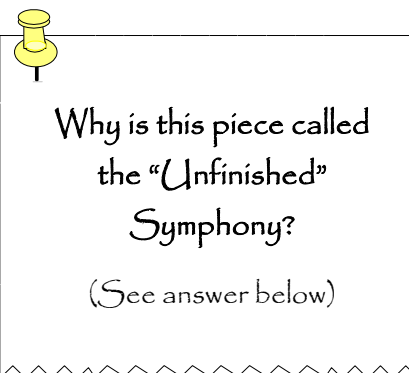
Questions for research: What is an aristocrat?
Where is Hungary? Why would an Austrian person often go to Hungary in that time period?
What language do they speak in Austria?
Why would Schubert use poems from German literature?
What is a song cycle?

Lesson Plan for Symphony No. 8 “Unfinished” by Franz Schubert

Standards: Music/Visual Arts Intermediate

Performance Indicators for Students:

- Listen to, analyze and describe music related to specific art work
- Evaluate the techniques of composition in music and art works
- Understand the relationship between music and art
- Compose music within specific guidelines



Objectives:

- To prepare the students for the RPO Intermediate concert
- To introduce subject/background relationship as it relates to music and art
- To familiarize the students with a compositional technique used in music as well as painting so they are able to recognize this technique in other compositions and forms of art.

Materials:

- Picture of and information about the composer
- Overhead projector
- Transparencies of music and art examples

Listening Repertoire:

- Symphony No. 8 in B minor, “Unfinished” by Franz Schubert
- “Theme from ET,” or “Theme from Star Wars” by John Williams
- Symphony No. 3 in C minor, “Organ Symphony” (students will know this as the theme from the movie “Babe”)
- “Mars” from *The Planets* by Gustav Holst

Prior Knowledge:

- Students should have prior knowledge of the composer Franz Schubert
- Students will have knowledge of the following vocabulary words: Melody, Accompaniment, Background, Foreground, Texture, Harmony

Procedures:

- Review vocabulary words
- Look at a piece of art work with one subject—have students identify the subject
- Play any or all of the familiar musical examples listed above
- Have the students identify the melody of each example
- Make a comparison between the art subject and the melody
- Listen again for the accompaniment and/or harmony and have the students think of adjectives to describe it (for example, nervous, tense, rippling, etc.)

Obviously, because he didn't finish it! He wrote the first two movements and only sketched out the third and fourth movements. Nobody really knows why he didn't complete the entire symphony.

Procedures (cont.)

- Make a comparison between the art background and the accompaniment and think of adjectives to describe the background
- Listen to the first eight measures of Schubert's Symphony No. 8 (musical example, Theme 1.) The students will identify this as a melody with no accompaniment
- Play Theme 2 and 3 with no accompaniment (background) and identify it as a melody
- Play Theme 2 and 3 from the recording and have the students raise their hand if they heard the melody
- Describe the accompaniment of each example (possible words are nervous, anxious, mysterious, playful), then show the transparency of the musical examples, pointing out the texture of the background and making comparisons with the art work - the subject is prominent while the background gives feeling to it
- Look at the art work with more than one subject - students will identify the subjects and describe the background and how it sets off the subjects
- Play the last part of the Schubert and have the students identify each of the three themes by raising their hands and indicating with their fingers which theme they hear

Indicators of success:

- Students will be able to recognize the difference between melody and accompaniment in music and relate those elements to subject and background in a piece of visual art
- Students will be able to identify the three main themes of Schubert's Symphony No. 8 according to the activities above

Follow-up:

- Provide more information on Franz Schubert and the significance of this composition
- After the concert experience have the students review these concepts and compose a piece using melodic or percussion instruments representing subject/background

 Link Up!

www.redludwig.com/gracenotes/archive/080902.html