

SCHUBERT

Three Sonatas for Violin and Piano



Hyejin Chung • Warren Lee

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Sonatas for Violin and Piano, D.384, D.385 & D.408

Franz Schubert was born in Vienna in 1797, the son of a schoolmaster, and spent the greater part of his short life in the city. His parents had settled in Vienna, his father moving there from Moravia in 1783 to join his schoolmaster brother at a school in the suburb of Leopoldstadt and marrying in 1785 a woman who had her origins in Silesia and was to bear him fourteen children. Franz Schubert was the twelfth of these and the fourth to survive infancy. He began to learn the piano at the age of five, with the help of his brother Ignaz, twelve years his senior, and three years later started to learn the violin, while serving as a chorister at Liechtental church. From there he applied, on the recommendation of Antonio Salieri, to join the Imperial Chapel, into which he was accepted in October 1808, as a chorister now allowed to study at the Akademisches Gymnasium, boarding at the Stadtkonvikt, his future education guaranteed.

During his schooldays Schubert formed friendships that he was to maintain for the rest of his life. After his voice broke in 1812, he was offered, as expected, a scholarship to enable him to continue his general education, but he chose, instead, to train as a primary school teacher, while devoting more time to music and, in particular, to composition, the art to which he was already making a prolific contribution. In 1815 he joined his father as an assistant teacher, but showed no great aptitude or liking for the work. Instead he was able to continue the earlier friendships he had formed at school and form new acquaintances. His meeting in 1816 with Franz von Schober allowed him to accept an invitation to live in the latter's apartment, an arrangement that relieved him of the necessity of earning his keep in the schoolroom. In August 1817 he returned home again, when room was needed by Schober for his dying brother, and resumed his place, for the moment, in the classroom. The following summer he spent in part at Zseliz in Hungary as music tutor to the two daughters of Count Johann Karl Esterházy von Galánta, before returning to Vienna to lodge with a new friend, the poet Johann Mayrhofer, an arrangement that continued until near the end of 1820, after which Schubert spent some months living alone, now able to afford the necessary rent.

By this period of his life it seemed that Schubert was on the verge of solid success as a composer and musician. Thanks to his friends, in particular the older singer Johann Michael Vogl, Leopold von Sonnleithner and others, his music was winning an audience. There was collaboration with Schober on a new opera, later rejected by the Court Opera, but in other respects his name was becoming known as a composer, beyond his immediate circle. He lodged once again with the Schobers in 1822 and 1823 and it was at this time that his health began to deteriorate, through a venereal infection that was then incurable. This illness overshadowed the remaining years of his life and was the cause of his early death. It has been thought a direct consequence of the dissolute way of life into which Schober introduced him and which for a time alienated him from some of his former friends. The following years brought intermittent returns to his father's house, and a continuation of social life that often centred on his own musical accomplishments and of his intense activity as a composer. In February 1828 the first public concert of his music was given in Vienna, an enterprise that proved financially successful, and he was able to spend the summer with friends, including Schober, before moving, in September, to the suburb of Wieden to stay with his brother Ferdinand, in the hope that his health might improve. Social activities continued, suggesting that he was unaware of the imminence of his death, but at the end of October he was taken ill at dinner and in the following days his condition became worse. He died on 19th November.

It was in March and April 1816 that Schubert wrote his first three sonatas for violin and piano. These were to be published posthumously, in 1836, by Diabelli, who, presumably for commercial reasons, advertised them as three easy sonatinas. For Schubert, and for his brother Ferdinand who saw to their later publication, these three works were 'sonatas'. Over the years, however, they have also served a pedagogical purpose as an introduction to a form that was to develop in complexity. The three sonatas have much in common with the later violin sonatas of Mozart.

The first of the set, the *Violin Sonata in D major, D.384*,

published by Diabelli as *Op. 137, No. 1*, opens with a theme in unison between the violin and piano, the left hand doubling the theme at the octave, the opening rising triad retaining importance, echoed also in the more fragmentary second subject and in the development, after the repetition of the initial exposition. The A major second movement has, at its heart, a section in A minor, after which the first theme returns, accompanied by running figuration from the violin. The sonata ends with an *Allegro vivace*, its main theme entrusted to the violin, then taken up by the piano and providing a framework for more dramatic interventions.

The *Violin Sonata in A minor, D.385, Op. 137, No. 2*, opens with a wide-spaced theme for the piano, the violin following with even wider-spaced dramatic intervals, and a second subject entrusted at first to the piano. The exposition is repeated as is the second part of the movement, a brief development and a recapitulation. The piano introduces the F major second movement, the material later developed with running accompanying figuration and presented in the key of A flat major, before the original key is restored. The third movement, a *Minuet* in name, but more akin to a *Scherzo*, is

in D minor, with a contrasting *Trio* in B flat major. The principal theme of the final *Allegro* is presented by the violin and serves as a unifying framework for an extended movement.

The third of the set, the *Violin Sonata in G minor, D.408, Op. 137, No. 3*, opens with a bold declaration for the violin, with octaves in both right and left hand for the piano. The theme is taken up by the piano, leading to a B flat major second subject, accompanied by tremolo and then semiquaver violin accompaniment. The exposition is duly repeated as is the second half of the movement, a central development and recapitulation. The second movement is an E flat major *Andante*, its principal theme entrusted first to the violin, its central section providing contrast in hints of Schubert's 1815 setting of Goethe's *Erlkönig*. The third movement is a lively B flat major *Minuet*, framing an E flat major *Trio*. The sonata ends with a further display of Schubert's gift for singing melody, bringing the work to a conclusion in the tonic major key of G major.

Keith Anderson

Hyejin Chung

Hyejin Chung studied with Takako Nishizaki at the Academy for Performing Arts in Hong Kong and graduated with an Advanced Certificate in violin performance. Subsequently she went to Russia and studied with S.I. Kravchenko, a student and assistant of Leonid Kogan, at the Moscow State Conservatory. Among his students are many prizewinners of international competitions such as Viktoria Mullova and Alexander Kagan. She graduated with a Doctorate in Musical Arts in 2011. While in Russia, she won a number of competitions and performed with various orchestras. She also appeared as soloist with orchestras in her native Korea and Austria. After settling in Hong Kong, she focused on playing chamber music and teaching advanced students at the Takako Nishizaki Violin Studio. This is her first recording for Naxos and future recording projects include the complete concertos of Seitz as well as a number of other rarely performed concertos. Hyejin Chung speaks English, Russian and Chinese as well as her Korean mother tongue.

Warren Lee

Warren Lee made his début with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra at the age of six. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London and Yale School of Music, he was the first-prize winner of the Stravinsky Awards International Piano Competition and the Grand Prix Ivo Pogorelich in 1995. He has appeared on four continents, often in collaboration with international artists and leading orchestras in Asia. His recordings for Universal Music (Hong Kong) and Naxos have garnered favourable reviews worldwide. A Steinway Artist as well as an award-winning composer, Warren Lee received the Ten Outstanding Young Persons Award in Hong Kong in 2012 and was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2015 for his contribution to the music profession. For more information, please visit www.warren-lee.com.



Photo: Lam He-man

Schubert composed his three sublimely alluring *Sonatas for Violin and Piano* in the spring of 1816, though they had to wait until 1836 for posthumous publication by Diabelli, who re-named them 'sonatinas'. With their sometimes subordinate role for the violin and deceptively uncomplicated style, these pieces sidestep the influence of Beethoven and return more to the world of Mozart's later violin sonatas. The minor-key works develop Schubert's gift for drama and vocal melody further, including hints of his famous song *Erkönig* from the previous year.

Franz
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(1797–1828)

Three Sonatas for Violin and Piano

Sonata in D major, Op. 137, No. 1, D.384	14:39
1 Allegro molto	5:00
2 Andante	4:57
3 Allegro vivace	4:40
Sonata in A minor, Op. 137, No. 2, D.385	24:51
4 Allegro moderato	9:28
5 Andante	7:36
6 Menuetto: Allegro	2:42
7 Allegro	4:58
Sonata in G minor, Op. 137, No. 3, D.408	24:34
8 Allegro giusto	8:05
9 Andante	7:47
10 Menuetto: Allegro vivace	2:44
11 Allegro moderato	5:55

Hyejin Chung, Violin • Warren Lee, Piano

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Playing Time
64:17



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