

# Symphony No. 3 in D major, D.200

FRANZ SCHUBERT

---

## **Born**

January 31, 1797, in Liechtenthal, then a suburb of Vienna (now incorporated into that city), Austria

## **Died**

November 19, 1828, in Vienna

## **Work composed**

May 24–June 19, 1815

## **World premiere**

probably by a private musical society at Otto Hatwig's Vienna home shortly after the piece was written. The first indisputably documented public performance was of the last movement only, on December 2, 1860, at Vienna's Redoutensaal, Johann Herbeck, conductor. The complete symphony was first performed on February 19, 1881, August Manns, conductor, at London's Crystal Palace.

## **New York Philharmonic premiere**

November 6, 1930, Erich Kleiber, conductor

## **Most recent New York Philharmonic performance**

October 4, 1997, Kurt Masur, conductor

## **Estimated duration**

ca. 25 minutes

Europe might reach a workable balance of power based on legitimate government. Then, in the first week of March, Napoleon sprang loose: Europe hung on tenterhooks until he met his Waterloo 100 days later. By the time everyone went home, in June, the Congress of Vienna had charted a map of Europe that would hold more or less firmly until World War I. Further, they had provided Vienna with an excuse to adopt a festive air that, according to many accounts, resembled nothing so much as a nine-month-long carnival.

While all this was going on, Franz Schubert celebrated his 18th birthday and was beginning to hit his stride as a composer. Although he was unhappily working as an assistant teacher in his father's school, he had already composed a good deal of music, 382 pieces to be precise, including at least one obvious masterpiece (the song "Gretchen am Spinnrade"). He wrote his Second Symphony during the first three months of 1815, and embarked on his Third two months thereafter. From date-markings on the autograph score we know that he began at the beginning, completing the *Adagio maestoso* introduction and the opening measures of the ensuing *Allegro con brio* before setting the score aside for a few weeks. He returned to the project on July 11, finished the first movement the following day, began the second movement on July 15, and completed the symphony on the 19th.

This ultra-charming work doesn't evoke the politically hyperactive world into which it was born. While Beethoven's cantata *Der glorreiche Augenblick* (written specifically for the Congress of Vienna) and *Battle Symphony* (*Wellington's Victory*, composed the year before), delighted the eminent attendees, Schubert was writing

The year 1815 spelled heady times in Vienna. The Congress of Vienna had convened the preceding September, saturating the city with monarchs, ministers, and diplomats from throughout Europe. With Napoleon Bonaparte exiled on the island of Elba, they gathered to plan how the nations of

more intimate music. Although he would surely have welcomed more public exposure, his compositions of the time were essentially for private consumption.

In fact, many of his pieces were unveiled in at-home musicales. These had begun, in about 1814, as Sunday afternoon family string-quartet sessions at the Schubert home. Friends soon joined in, and by the autumn of 1815 the group included a number of professional players. Its somewhat steady membership swelled to include seven first violins, six second violins, three violas, three cellos, and two basses, plus whatever wind instruments could be brought in; as the group expanded it moved from the Schuberts' living room to larger venues.

The ensemble would remain together for about three years, eventually performing

for themselves and a small audience at the apartment of the concertmaster, Otto Hatwig, a Bohemian-born violinist in the Burgtheater orchestra and a composer of modest talent. That apartment provided a great service to the young Schubert. The ensemble was accomplished enough to tackle the more difficult symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, and it gave Schubert almost all of the opportunities he would ever have to hear his symphonic music played by an orchestra. We know for sure that three of his symphonies were first performed by this group; it quite possibly may have served as midwife for his first six.

**Instrumentation:** two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

---

## Listen for ...

Schubert's Third Symphony is a concise, clearly plotted piece that recalls the scale and something of **the flavor of late Haydn**. In the slow, searching introduction in the historically "grand" key of D major, pulsating wind chords provide a stable but energizing background for ascending scales in the strings, and the flute and clarinet engage in a dialogue. After this majestic beginning, **the first movement's main section** seems to slip in through the back door as the solo clarinet (which plays an active role throughout this symphony) peeps out a chipper little theme, *pianissimo*, with a touch of fanfare to it:

**Allegro con brio**

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's Third Symphony, first movement, starting at the beginning of the main section. The tempo is marked "Allegro con brio". The score is in D major and 3/4 time. It features a clarinet part with a chipper theme and a string part with pulsating chords. The tempo is marked "Allegro con brio". The score is in D major and 3/4 time. It features a clarinet part with a chipper theme and a string part with pulsating chords. The tempo is marked "Allegro con brio".

Winds: clarinet, oboes & horns, clarinet, oboes & horns

Strings: p

etc.