

Classical Composers

Teaching with Johann Franz Schubert

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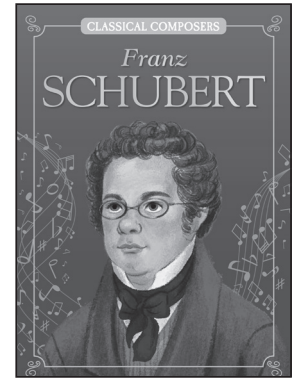
Introduction

Franz Schubert was born on January 31, 1797, in Himmelfortgrund, near Vienna. His family didn't have much, but there were always instruments around and someone was usually playing one.

Franz's dad played the cello, his brothers played the violin and Franz got the viola. Imagine them all squeezed into a small living room, bows moving, strings singing... their own family band!

And it wasn't just instruments. Franz could sing too and sing well. By the time he was 11, he was off to a big music school in Vienna, wearing the choir uniform and singing in a huge church. He even played in the school orchestra and once in a while, waved the conductor's stick when the teacher wasn't there.

But voices change and so did his. When that happened, he had to leave the school. His dad thought teaching was a safer job, so Franz worked at his father's school for a while. Still, whenever he could, he scribbled down tunes, covering sheet after sheet. Back then, he wasn't thinking about fame — he just couldn't stop making music.



Lexile: 570L Words: 871

Vocabulary Review to supplement the Glossary

1. COMPOSER

Definition: A person who writes music.

Example: Schubert wrote songs, operettas, and big pieces for orchestras.

2. CHOIR

Definition: A group of people who sing together.

Example: Schubert sang in his school choir until his voice changed.

3. LIEDER

Definition: That's the German word for "songs."

Example: Schubert loved taking poems and turning them into music. Schubert wrote more than 500 lieder.

4. STRING QUARTET

Definition: Four string instruments: 2 violins, 1 viola and 1 cello.

Example: Schubert's family played in their own string quartet.

5. ORCHESTRA

Definition: A large group of musicians playing together.

Example: Schubert played violin in the school orchestra.

6. SYMPHONY

Definition: A long, multi-part piece of music for an orchestra. .

Example: One of Schubert's most famous is his Symphony No. 8, also called the "Unfinished Symphony"... because he never finished it!

7. OPERETTA

Definition: A short opera, often light and funny.

Example: Schubert wrote operettas for plays and theaters.

8. CONDUCTOR:

Definition: The person who leads a choir or orchestra.

Example: Schubert sometimes led the school orchestra when the conductor was away.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Where was Franz Schubert born and what was his family like?

Answer: Franz was born on January 31, 1797, in a small place near Vienna (Himmelpfortgrund). At home, there was always music: his dad on the cello, his brothers on the violin and Franz joining in with the viola.

2. What instruments did Schubert learn to play as a child?

Answer: First, his father showed him the viola. Then his brothers got him into the violin. Over time, he also figured out how to play the piano and the organ.

3. Why did he have to leave the Imperial and Royal Seminary?

Answer: Like a lot of kids, his voice changed as he got older. One day he could hit the high notes, and the next... not so much. Since he couldn't sing in the choir anymore, he had to leave the school.

4. What are lieder and how many did Schubert write?

Answer: In German, the word Lieder means "songs," usually with poems as the words. Schubert was crazy about writing them and he ended up creating over 500.

5. What were "Schubertiads"?

Answer: They were like little house parties with a twist. Friends would gather, maybe share some food, talk and then Schubert would sit at the piano and fill the room with music. Sometimes there was even dancing.

6. Why is Schubert's Symphony No. 8 called the "Unfinished Symphony"?

Answer: Because he started it, wrote part of it and never finished. Nobody's really sure why, but what we do have is still so good that people play it all over the world.

DISCOVER Franz Schubert's music here to play for students.

<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/schubert>



Writing Activity

Activity: "A Night at a Schubertiade"

- Imagine you're at one of Schubert's music gatherings.
- Describe what the room looks like, who's there, the sounds of the music and how it makes you feel
- Use at least three vocabulary words (like lieder, orchestra, or composer).

Music & Art Activities

1. Musical Story Walk

- **Listen:** Play one slow and calm piece by Schubert, then a faster energetic one.
- **Activity:** While the music plays, students walk around the room matching their steps and movements to the rhythm and feeling of the music. When the music is soft, they move slowly and smoothly; when it's fast, they take quicker steps and use bigger, more energetic gestures.
- **Goal:** Help students feel the changes in rhythm and energy in their bodies, not just in their ears.

2. Poem-to-Song Challenge

- **Prepare:** Give each student (or group) a short, simple poem, just 2 to 4 lines. These can be made up by the teacher or chosen from children's poetry.
- **Pick the mood:** Decide if their song will sound happy, sad, mysterious, or energetic... just like Schubert did with his lieder.
- **Create the rhythm:**
 - Option 1: Clap or tap a rhythm that fits the words.
 - Option 2: Hum a simple melody to match the text.
- **Practice:** Repeat the piece a few times, adjusting the speed or volume to match the chosen emotion.
- **Share:** Perform the rhythm or melody for the class.
- **Goal:** Show how the same words can sound completely different when set to different musical moods.

Evaluation Questions and Answers

Comprehension

1. What challenges did Schubert face after leaving school?

He lost his spot in the choir, had to work as a teacher in his father's school and didn't have many chances to perform in public.

2. How did Schubert share his music with others during his life?

Mostly at *Schubertiads*, small gatherings with friends.

3. Why is Schubert remembered today?

For creating music full of beauty and feeling (especially his lieder) and for works like the *Unfinished Symphony* that people still play today.

Vocabulary

1. What is a string quartet?

A group of two violins, one viola and one cello.

2. What is an operetta?

A short, light opera, often funny or playful.

3. What are lieder?

German songs, often based on poems, that Schubert set to music.