



COMPLETE SCHUBERT SONATAS

DIANE WALSH, PIANIST

Sonata in A minor, op. 42, D. 845

Sonata in D major, op. 53, D. 850



COMPLETE SCHUBERT SONATAS, VOL. 1

79:37

FRANZ SCHUBERT

DIANE WALSH, PIANIST

Sonata in A minor, op. 42, D. 845

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|---------------------------------|-------|
| 1. I. Moderato | 11:20 |
| 2. II. Andante poco moto | 12:54 |
| 3. III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace | 7:58 |
| 4. IV. Rondo: Allegro vivace | 5:26 |

Sonata in D major, op. 53, D. 850

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| 5. I. Allegro vivace | 9:34 |
| 6. II. Con moto | 13:18 |
| 7. III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace | 9:16 |
| 8. IV. Rondo: Allegro moderato | 9:07 |

Sonata in A minor, op. 42, D. 845 (1825)

Schubert had a gift for friendship. Since he was often penniless, he was fortunate to have generous friends who came through for him, with money to pay café bills, offers to share apartments or invitations to the countryside. In May of 1825 he had the use of Wilhelm August Rieder's piano a few streets away in Vienna. By pre-arranged signal, if the curtains of the piano room were open, Schubert was welcome to come in to compose. During this month he began work on the Sonata in A minor.

The opening bars are strangely tentative, almost mysterious, the music rising in the treble like a question, then answered sternly in the bass. The question is stated again, a step higher, and the answer is now extended to become a yearning question of its own. After this halting introduction, the motor rhythm which will form the motivic spine of the movement is finally introduced in *forte*, a martial rat-a-tat-tat. The character of this figure is quickly transformed into something lighter, almost dance-like, when it is presented in C major a few moments later. Schubert's development technique is often simply to repeat themes in different keys so that we may enjoy how they sound transformed by different tone colors. With a simple modulation from minor to major or with an unexpected harmonic shift, Schubert creates lovely gradations of light and dark, creating a stab of gloom in sunlight, or a flash of joy in sadness. The sonata has a tight scheme that owes much to Beethoven with its short rhythmic figures. The development is economical and includes a section in which the opening theme is stated in the left hand as the right hand creates a shimmer of harmony above it. There are also several dramatic pauses during this movement which give some surcease from the relentlessly driving rhythms.

The second movement, in 3/8 meter, is a lyrical set of five variations on a theme in C major. The first two variations gradually pick up speed, as eighth notes become 16ths and the 16ths become 32nds, but the third variation is a *Minore* in C minor

which returns to a slower motion with the addition of dotted rhythms. Schubert then introduces a variation in A-flat major, which explores 32nd sextuplets. After modulating back to C major, the sextuplets become triplets that create a gently pulsating variant of the theme and lead us to a short coda in the same rhythm.

A nervously darting scherzo is next, with syncopated accents and sudden dynamic changes from soft to loud: more Beethoven-like touches. The brief trio introduces a lovely, rocking motion and some surprising modulations, before the opening section is reprised.

The Rondo finale has as its recurring theme an obsessive perpetual motion figure in the right hand, which only suggests a melody within its contours rather than stating one. The contrasting sections are similarly austere, with the exception of the brief foray into A major, when the mood softens and the right hand plays a singing melody in octaves. The sonata ends with a coda in which a breathless *accelerando* rushes to an uncompromising conclusion—and no last-minute major chord comes as a reprieve from A minor's grim resolve.

Sonata in D major, op. 53, D. 850 (1825)

The D major Sonata is often known as the "Gasteiner" since it was composed during a stay in the spa town of Bad Gastein in the summer of 1825. This time was an uncommonly happy and productive one for Schubert, since he was also enjoying a respite from the bad health that plagued him throughout most of his adulthood. Since late May, Schubert had been traveling in the countryside with his friend, the baritone Johann Michael Vogl (who probably paid most of the expenses), and they arrived in Gastein on August 10. During this visit Schubert also began work on the C Major "Great" Symphony, D. 944.

Joyous and rambunctious, the first movement seems to exult in its own virtuosity. The sonata was written for Schubert's friend Karl Maria Böcklet, an excellent pianist. The ringing chords of the opening lead to brilliant scale passages that chase each other up and down the keyboard, in parallel and contrary motion.

The second theme slows to a graceful two-note repeated figure, creating a more hesitant step, but it has scarcely established itself before it is interrupted with *fortissimo* broken chords. Schubert is profligate with his themes throughout, and the overall impression is of impatience, energy and enthusiasm.

The second movement begins as an oasis of serenity. Essentially a song without words in five parts, the phrases are long and lyrical, the themes are worked out in a leisurely way, and there are frequent fermatas where the motion simply comes to a halt. There are outbursts in *fortissimo* here as well, but gentleness triumphs when bluster is spent. At over thirteen minutes, it is the longest movement of the sonata, but Schubert's spacious, lengthy phrases and shifting harmonies create a timeless, dream-like world in which there is no hurry to reach the end.

The scherzo returns to the vigor of the first movement, starting with *fortissimo* chords and sharp accents. The hemiola, a rhythmic displacement of the apparent downbeat which makes 3/4 time sound temporarily like 2/4, is liberally used throughout. The contrasting middle section offers a relief from dotted rhythms and returns to a more placid motion—quarter notes gliding through different keys and moods in dynamics ranging from *piano* to *fortissimo*.

The final movement, a rondo, begins with a simple, child-like song, with a skipping melody line in dotted rhythms and an *ostinato* accompaniment like the ticking of a clock. The contrasting sections between the returns of the rondo theme delight in virtuosity. A songful interlude in G Major is interrupted by a brusque Turkish march in G minor, where every other beat is accented. The extensive coda begins a little slower and the ticking clock seems to slowly wind down before it comes to a stop. After so much bravura, the sonata ends with a gentle sigh.

Pianist DIANE WALSH regularly performs solo recitals, chamber music and concertos worldwide. In September 2007, Ms. Walsh joined the cast of *33 Variations*, a new play by Moisés Kaufman, in its debut production at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. The play deals with Beethoven's last years and his writing of the *Diabelli Variations*, which Ms. Walsh performed on stage throughout the play. The play has also been produced at the La Jolla Playhouse, and her CD of Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* and the Sonata Op. 78 is available on the Jonathan Digital Recordings label.

Ms. Walsh has given recitals at the 92 Street Y, the Metropolitan Museum, Merkin Concert Hall and the Miller Theatre in New York City, the Kennedy Center in Washington, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, Wigmore Hall in London, the Concertgebouw's Kleine Zaal in Amsterdam, Philharmonic Hall in Leningrad, Dvorak Hall in Prague, the Mozarteum in Salzburg and in other major cities in the United States, Canada, Venezuela, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Russia and the Netherlands.

Her concerto engagements include the Bartok Concerto No. 3 with the Austin Symphony Orchestra, the Strauss *Burleske* with the Syracuse and Delaware symphony orchestras, the Berg *Kammerkonzert* with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra in New York City and Mozart Concerto No. 24 with David Zinman at the Skaneateles Festival. She has appeared with the radio symphonies of Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Berlin, the San Francisco Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony and the St. Louis Symphony, toured with the Orpheus and the St. Luke's orchestras and soloed with orchestras in Brazil, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Russia.

In demand as a chamber musician, she has performed at many festivals including Marlboro, Santa Fe, Bard, Appalachian Summer, Music From Salem, Eastern Shore, the International Musician's Seminar in Cornwall, and Strings in the Mountains. Ms. Walsh has been a guest artist with the Fine Arts, Brentano, Mendelssohn and Lydian string quartets, and she is a member of the quintet La Fenice, comprised of piano quartet plus oboe.

From 1999 to 2004 Ms. Walsh was Artistic Director of the Skaneateles Festival, held annually during August in upstate New York. During her tenure she presented world-renowned performers; designed and performed in innovative chamber music and chamber orchestra programs; increased the number of open rehearsals, children's

concerts and master classes; and co-created and performed in theatrical events such as "An Evening with Bill Irwin" and "The Love Letters of Robert and Clara," set to music by the Schumanns.

Her many awards include the top prizes at the Munich ARD International Piano Competition and the Salzburg International Mozart Competition. She won the Concert Artists Guild International Competition and the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, and was a prizewinner in the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition and also won that competition's chamber music award. Ms. Walsh also won prizes in the J. S. Bach International Competition in Washington D.C., the William Kapell International Competition in Maryland and the Busoni International Competition in Italy. Her most recent award was a grant from the John Anson Kittredge Foundation.

Ms. Walsh has made thirteen recordings for Bridge, Nonesuch, Koch, Newport, Sony, Stereophile, CRI and other labels, and she has begun recording the Schubert piano sonatas for Jonathan Digital Recordings. Ms. Walsh is a Steinway Artist.

For more information please visit: www.dianewalsh.com

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IV. Sonate

per Pianoforte allein





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