Thursday, March 20, 2014, at 8:00
Friday, March 21, 2014, at 1:30
Saturday, March 22, 2014, at 8:00

Riccardo Muti Conductor
Mitsuko Uchida Piano

Schumann
Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54
Allegro affettuoso
Intermezzo: Andantino grazioso—
Allegro vivace
  MITSUKO UCHIDA

INTERMESSION

Schubert
Symphony No. 9 in C Major, D. 944 (Great)
Andante—Allegro, ma non troppo
Andante con moto
Scherzo: Allegro vivace
Finale: Allegro vivace

These concerts are generously sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Dietrich M. Gross.
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This program is partially supported by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.
Robert Schumann
Born June 8, 1810, Zwickau, Saxony, Germany.
Died July 29, 1856, Endenich, near Bonn, Germany.

Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54

When, in 1828, at the age of eighteen, Robert Schumann began his piano studies with Friedrich Wieck, Wieck’s daughter Clara was just nine and already a prodigy. Perhaps she peeked in on her father’s lessons as Robert played Hummel’s A minor concerto, his first assignment. Eighteen years later, Robert Schumann would unveil his own A minor piano concerto, played by his young bride, the same Clara, now grown up and a major talent. We wouldn’t know from this effortless and exuberant music that their wedding in September 1840 met with her father’s fierce disapproval, or that Schumann had been struggling to write a concerto for nearly twenty years.

As early as 1827, Schumann’s diary mentions the “beginnings of a piano concerto in F minor.” That piece was completed in 1830 in a version for piano alone and published as his op. 1, the Abegg Variations (named for the young woman who held Robert’s affections before Clara). There’s evidence of work on another piano concerto, in D minor, the year before his marriage to Clara.

Then, secure in the strength of his love, following the extraordinary outpouring of song in the months surrounding his wedding, Schumann dashed off a fantasy in A minor for piano and orchestra—a one-movement work written in little more than a week. Clara played through the piece at a reading rehearsal in the Leipzig Gewandhaus in August 1841. (She gave birth to their first child, Marie, barely two weeks later, establishing the balance of career and family she would maintain for many years.)

The first year of his marriage was a remarkably productive period for Schumann—within a matter of weeks he wrote his first two symphonies, began other orchestral works, and turned his attention to opera and then chamber music, while the fantasy sat on a shelf, unpublished, for some time. In the summer of 1845, Schumann composed a rondo-finale and a middle movement to go with the fantasy to complete the piece we now know as his Piano Concerto in A minor. Clara gave the first performance of the concerto at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on New Year’s Day, 1846.

This A minor concerto owes a debt to the concertos by Moscheles and Hummel rather than to the Viennese models of Mozart and Beethoven. Schumann calls

Comments by Phillip Huscher

COMPOSED
1841 (first movement)
1845 (movements 2 and 3)

FIRST PERFORMANCE
January 1, 1846; Leipzig, Germany.
With Clara Schumann as soloist

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES
May 3, 1893, Music Hall at the World’s Columbian Exposition. Ignace Paderewski as soloist, Theodore Thomas conducting
April 22 & 23, 1898, Auditorium Theatre. Laura Sanford as soloist, Theodore Thomas conducting

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES
April 19, 20 & 21, 2007, Orchestra Hall. Hélène Grimaud as soloist, Andrey Boreyko conducting
July 18, 2013, Ravinia Festival. Jorge Federico Osorio as soloist, James Conlon conducting

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME
31 minutes

CSO RECORDINGS
1959. Byron Janis as soloist, Fritz Reiner conducting. RCA
1960. Van Cliburn as soloist, Fritz Reiner conducting. RCA
1967. Artur Rubinstein as soloist, Carlo Maria Giulini conducting. RCA

INSTRUMENTATION
solo piano, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings
it “something between symphony, concerto, and grand sonata.” It’s not any of those, but an extensive work for piano solo with an indispensable orchestral commentary. Schumann ignores the powerful drama and delicate balance of orchestra and piano favored by Mozart and Beethoven—his orchestration is conveniently transparent, allowing the spotlight to fall on the piano in the opening measures and never shift thereafter. The concerto reflects the ebullient, unforced lyricism that marks Schumann’s work at its best. It is, in Donald Tovey’s admiring opinion, “recklessly pretty.”

Although it relies on sonata form, the first movement was written as a fantasy, not as the opening of a concerto, and so it doesn’t feature the double exposition (one for orchestra alone, another in which the solo joins) common to early nineteenth-century concertos. It opens with a flamboyant piano flourish that establishes the prominence of the piano solo and continues with a plaintive four-note descending motif that will tie all three movements together. Although this is essentially the same motif often associated with longing and farewell in Schumann’s other music from this period, here it finds a home in one of the sunniest, most untroubled works ever written in a minor key.

The texture is a tapestry of brilliant, endless filigree in the piano part woven with the strong strands of melody which periodically emerge in other instruments. After the first orchestral outburst, the piano ventures into the unexpected key of A-flat to meditate at length on the first motif, now as expansive and eloquent as a Chopin nocturne (Schumann had already done an outright Chopin imitation in one section of Carnaval). After a fairly standard recapitulation, the piano gathers momentum and plays on, right through music designed for orchestra alone, into a grand, written-out cadenza. Finally, orchestra and piano march off together with a snappy version of the main theme, which retreats into the distance, though the piano lingers to provide the final cadence.

The second movement begins with awkward exchanges between piano and orchestra—the halting, careful conversation of recent acquaintances. A lovely, swinging theme that appears in the cello brings the movement to life. The conversation starts up again, but is interrupted by ghostly reminders of the concerto’s opening four-note motif, and then, without pause, by the full force of the finale’s rondo theme.

The finale has nearly a thousand measures of music, but it flies by as one coherent, nearly breathless statement. In addition to the boldly assertive rondo theme itself, Schumann tosses out a number of felicitous tunes, some, like his most characteristic melodies, rhythmically playful enough to discourage a tapping foot. After a final orchestral reprise of the rondo theme, the piano launches an extensive coda, which seems quite reluctant to bring such exuberance to an end.
Franz Schubert
Born January 31, 1797, Himmelpfortgrund, northwest of Vienna, Austria.
Died November 19, 1828, Vienna, Austria.

Symphony No. 9 in C Major, D. 944 (Great)

When Franz Schubert died at the age of thirty-one, the legal inventory of his property listed three cloth dress coats, three frock coats, ten pairs of trousers, nine waistcoats, one hat, five pairs of shoes, two pairs of boots, four shirts, nine neckerchiefs and pocket handkerchiefs, thirteen pairs of socks, one sheet, two blankets, one mattress, one featherbed cover, and one counterpane [bedspread]. “Apart from some old music besides,” the report concluded, “no belongings of the deceased are to be found.”

Some old music, as it turned out, referred to a few used music books and not to his manuscripts. Those were with his dear friend Franz von Schober, who later entrusted them to Schubert’s brother Ferdinand. No one, it appears, quite understood their value. In late 1829, Ferdinand sold countless songs, piano works, and chamber music to Diabelli & Co.—who took its time publishing them—leaving the symphonies, operas, and masses to sit untouched on his shelves at home. Finally, in 1835, he enlisted the help of Robert Schumann, then editor of the prestigious Neue Zeitschrift für Musik. The paper ran a list of “Franz Schubert’s larger posthumous works” available for sale. There was little response.

On New Year’s Day 1837, Robert Schumann found himself in Vienna and thought to go to the Währing Cemetery to visit the graves of Beethoven and Schubert, whose stones were separated by only two others. On his way home, he remembered that Ferdinand still lived in Vienna and decided to pay him a visit. Here is Schumann’s own famous account:

He [Ferdinand] knew of me because of that veneration for his brother which I have so often publicly expressed; told me and showed me many things. . . . Finally, he allowed me to see those treasured compositions of Schubert’s which he still possesses. The sight of this hoard of riches thrilled me with joy; where to begin, where to end! Among other things, he drew my attention to the scores of several symphonies, many of which have never as yet been heard, but were shelved as too heavy and turgid.

There, among the piles, lay a heavy volume of 130 pages, dated March 1828 at the top of the first sheet. The manuscript, including the date and a number of corrections, is entirely in Schubert’s hand, which often appears to have been flying as fast as his pen could go. The work, a symphony in C, Schubert’s last and greatest, had never been performed.

Robert Schumann was a thoughtful, perceptive man, and an unusually astute judge of music—he was among the very first to appreciate Schubert’s instrumental writing—but it’s difficult to know if even he, at first, understood the significance of his discovery. His well-known written account comes years later, after the symphony’s first

**COMPOSED**
1825–1828

**FIRST PERFORMANCE**
March 21, 1839; Leipzig, Germany. With Felix Mendelssohn conducting

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**
December 18 & 19, 1891, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting

**MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES**
February 9, 10 & 11, 2012, Orchestra Hall. Riccardo Muti conducting
February 19, 2012; Copley Symphony Hall in San Diego, California. Riccardo Muti conducting

**INSTRUMENTATION**
two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings

**APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME**
50 minutes

**CSO RECORDINGS**
1940. Frederick Stock conducting. Columbia
1977. Carlo Maria Giulini conducting. Deutsche Grammophon
performances, but on that first day of 1837, in Ferdinand’s study in a Viennese suburb, he must have been simply dumbstruck.

He knew a work of genius when he saw one, however, and he quickly sent it off to the director of the Gewandhaus concerts in Leipzig, where Mendelssohn conducted the first performance on March 21, 1839. There, in Schumann’s words, it “was heard, understood, heard again, and joyously admired by almost everyone.” The facts argue that it was hardly “joyously admired,” and that perhaps it was understood only by Schumann and Mendelssohn. In his boundless enthusiasm, Schumann fails to mention that it was extensively cut for the performance, but he is surely right in wondering how long it “might have lain buried in dust and darkness” if it weren’t for his efforts.

Still, it was slow to conquer. When just the first two movements were programmed in Vienna later that year, an aria from Lucia di Lammermoor was wedged between them to soften the blow of so much serious music. Performances planned for Paris and London in the early 1840s were canceled after irate orchestra members refused to submit to its difficulties. The symphony reached London in 1856, but in odd installments: the first three movements were played one week and movements two through four the next.

Eventually, though, Schumann’s verdict reigned, and he was recognized not only for his fortuitous discovery, but for his sharp-sighted assessment. Schumann spoke, famously, of the symphony’s “heavenly length,” the very quality many contemporary listeners found trying, trusting only Beethoven to stretch their patience. Schumann had an answer for that, too, insisting that Schubert “never proposed to continue Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, but, an indefatigable artist, he continually drew from his own creative resources . . . .” Like Beethoven, but in his own quite individual way, Schubert was forging ahead into music’s dark unknown. Schumann demands our sympathies:

All must recognize that it reveals to us something more than beautiful song, mere joy and sorrow, such as music has always expressed in a hundred ways; it leads us into regions which—to our best recollection—we had never before explored.

The passage of time has helped audiences embrace both Schumann’s enthusiasm and the extensiveness of Schubert’s concept. Time and research also have put the work in its proper slot among Schubert’s 998 compositions—the final count of Otto Erich Deutsch, whose indispensable catalog (1950) assigns a D number to each work. And we now know something that even Deutsch didn’t realize: this is the supposedly lost symphony of 1825 (which Deutsch assigns number 849), sketched at Gmunden on a summer outing. Later, when Schubert wrote out the full score in fair copy, he dated the manuscript March 1828. To that, later generations added a subtitle, “Great” (to distinguish it from the shorter sixth symphony, also in C major), and Deutsch a number, 944.

As for the music, many earlier writers, including Schumann and Donald Tovey, have written eloquently and at considerable—if not heavenly—length of this symphony’s greatness. Today, the music more easily speaks for itself. Schubert’s broad canvas is no longer thought oversized, and his peerless, ineffable way with a melody can carry the new listener through many difficulties. (Schumann is particularly reassuring in this regard: “the composer has mastered his tale, and . . . in time, its connections will all become clear.”)

The first movement begins with an Andante of such weight and nobility that it’s inadequately described as an introduction. That bold—yet quiet—opening horn call has a marked influence on many of the allegro themes to come, and then returns, at the movement’s end, loudly proclaiming its success. The entire Allegro reveals a sweeping rhythmic vitality unparalleled in Schubert’s work.

The slow movement sings of tragedy, which later raised its voice in Schubert’s Winterreise song cycle and surfaces again and again in the music of his last years. Seldom has Schubert’s fondness for shifting from the major to the minor mode carried such weight; here each hopeful thought is ultimately contradicted, gently but decisively. There’s a sublime moment when the horn, as if from the distance, quietly calls everything into question with the repeated tolling of a single note. And then later, Schubert, like Gretchen in one of his most famous songs, builds
from sometime around 1811 until his death seventeen years later, Franz Schubert began at least thirteen symphonies. This season, Riccardo Muti and the CSO will play the eight that have come down to us in performable condition, including one famous symphony, known as no. 8, that is itself unfinished. The numbering of Schubert’s symphonies has long presented quandaries. Although Schubert sketched Symphony no. 7 in full, he never orchestrated the score, and it is therefore unplayable (except as orchestrated by others). As a result, some scholars have proposed renumbering symphonies nos. 8 and 9 and as nos. 7 and 8, respectively. (The suggestion has not caught on; the CSO sticks to the original numbering.) A final symphony, which exists only in sketches and was left incomplete at the composer’s death, has been reconstructed by other hands and published as no. 10. Here is the rundown of all of Schubert’s symphonic attempts that survive, with the standard catalog numbers assigned by Otto Erich Deutsch in 1951. —P.H.

| Symphony, D major. First movement only. | 71811 | D. 2b |
| Symphony No. 1. D major | Completed by October 1813 | D. 82 |
| Symphony No. 2. B-flat major | December 1814–March 1815 | D. 125 |
| Symphony No. 3. D major | May–July 1815 | D. 200 |
| Symphony No. 4. C minor. (Tragic) | Completed by April 1816 | D. 417 |
| Symphony No. 5. B-flat major | September–October 1816 | D. 485 |
| Symphony No. 6. C major. [Sometimes known as the Little C major] | October 1817–February 1818 | D. 589 |
| Symphony. D major. Two movements in piano sketch | May 1818 | D. 615 |
| Symphony. D major. Sketches | After 1820 | D. 708a |
| Symphony No. 7. E major. Sketched in score; not orchestrated | August 1821 | D. 729 |
| Symphony No. 8. B minor. (Unfinished) | October 1822 | D. 759 |
| Symphony No. 9. C major. (Great) | 1825–1828 | D. 944 |
| Symphony. D major. [Sometimes known as no. 10]. Sketches | mid-1828 | D. 936a |

Phillip Huscher is the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

inexorably to a climax so wrenching that everything stops before sputtering back to life.

The scherzo and its lovely trio midsection, with their wealth of dance tunes, remind us that Schubert would gladly improvise dance music for others, while he, with his lousy eyesight and unfortunate height (barely five feet) sat safely at the piano all night.

Schubert launches his finale with the kind of energetic, fearless music that appears to charge onward with only an occasional push from the composer. A second theme, accompanied by eighty-eight consecutive measures of nonstop triplet eighth notes, only increases the momentum. Later, in the beginning of the development section, two clarinets play a theme that plainly echoes the big tune in the finale of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Schubert had attended the eagerly awaited premiere of Beethoven’s new symphony in Vienna in 1824—realizing that night that the ailing Beethoven was so deaf that he could not hear the audience’s thunderous applause. Within the year, Schubert would begin this C major symphony, one of the few works in the repertoire worthy of standing beside Beethoven’s landmark. —P.H.