



SCHUBERT

DDD

8.557189

Piano Sonatas Nos. 5, 7a, 11 and 12 Gottlieb Wallisch, Piano



Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Piano Sonatas (Fragments)

Tragedy and failure is suggested by the idea of 'fragment' in music and particularly in the case of Schubert. In addition to popular works, such as the *Symphony in B minor, D.759, Unfinished*, the uncompleted stage oratorio *Lazarus, D.689*, or the *String Quartet in C minor, D.703*, there are a large number of fragmentary piano sonatas. Most of these, of which four are here included, come from the period between 1817 and 1823, Schubert's so-called years of crisis. Much of what Schubert tackled at this time may be reckoned among his most daring and strange works and remained fragmentary, serving, as it were, as experiments in composition. Schubert wanted to prepare the way, through the intermediate stages of string quartet and piano sonatas, for the grand symphony. These sonata fragments, therefore, take on a particular value in Schubert's creative life, not least because of their relatively high number, with twelve unfinished sonatas against eleven completed now surviving. They document the composer's struggle over the formal pattern of an already strongly traditional form, the sonata. Often models, Haydn, Mozart, Hummel, Carl Maria von Weber and above all Beethoven, are clearly perceptible in these works, yet at the same time Schubert's personal style is already strongly marked. The use of keys with a higher number of sharps or flats (D flat major, D.567; B major, D.575; A flat major, D.557), which indicate a strongly emotional expressive content, is an essential characteristic of the sonatas from this period. Generally two types of fragment may be distinguished, fragments of sonata expositions on the one hand, which break off in the development or, at the latest, with the start of the recapitulation, and on the other hand cycle fragments where independent movements were not completed. The piano sonata fragments allow a profound examination of Schubert's inner compositional procedures, yet do not answer the ever present question

as to why Schubert broke off at this or that point in the work and did not take it up again. Is it the feeling that the thematic material is pushed to its limits or that the demands of the form could not be correctly met, or is it simply the inner pressure to change to a new, supposedly more exciting or more rewarding task? A definitive answer is not always possible through thorough analysis. In the end, therefore, the music itself must speak, music that in these cases always brings with it a touch of the puzzle and mystery.

Leading pianists and Schubert scholars have attempted to complete the surviving fragments. For the present recording, however, it was decided to remain true exclusively to Schubert's original text and to work without the completions of others, thus to underline also the fragmentary impression of these pieces. In two places, however, movements are completed through analogy with parallel passages. In the *Sonata in D flat major, D.567*, for the last missing page of the finale it was possible to draw from the later E flat major version of this work; in the *Sonata in F minor, D.625/505*, the missing harmonisation in the finale (bars 201 to 270) was completed by analogy with the similar passage at the beginning of the movement.

With the *Sonata in A flat major, D.557*, composed in May 1817, we find a probable cycle fragment by Schubert. In spite of the completeness of all three surviving movements, this work presents a puzzle in regard to the grouping of keys. The first movement in A flat major and the second in the dominant key of E flat major follow the conventional sonata structure, but the third movement is again in E flat major. Since this movement has the evident character of a finale, the question arises as to whether Schubert intended to finish the work in E flat and not in A flat, or whether a fourth movement is missing or has been lost. This question has not been definitely answered by modern research so that the sonata is still reckoned among sonata fragments.

The simple piano writing of this sonata often recalls Haydn and Mozart and the E flat minor central section of the second movement suggests the example of Johann Sebastian Bach in its rhythmic strictness. The opening theme of the third movement presents an interesting parallel to the last movement of the *Sonata in A major, D.664*, written two years later. In this short work Schubert shows altogether his cheerful, happy, yet very classically influenced side.

With the *Sonata in D flat major, D.567*, written in June 1817, Schubert engaged with particular intensity. It similarly survives as a cycle fragment, lacking the last page of the third movement of the autograph manuscript. Schubert's friend Anselm Hüttenbrenner writes in his memoirs of this sonata: it 'was written with such difficulty that he [Schubert] could not play it without encouragement. ... He ... sent it to a foreign publisher; but he had it back with the indication that they would not risk publishing such a terribly difficult composition ...'. This objection induced Schubert a year later to transpose the work into the easier key of E flat major and extend it by the addition of a third movement Minuet and Trio. In this four-movement form it was published in Vienna in 1829 as Op.122 (D.568). The original version in D flat major is counted among the most ambitious and tricky of Schubert's sonatas. The C sharp minor middle movement points in its strictness to the expressive world of Beethoven, while in the outer movements extended lyrical themes of romantic almost Biedermeier serenity predominate.

Beethoven's mighty shadow is evident most clearly of all in the *Sonata in C major, D.613/612*, and the *Sonata in F minor, D.625/505*, of 1818. The association with this great model occurs in these works with the short quotation in the former in bars 13 to 19 of the first movement of the *Waldstein Sonata* and in the latter in the texture and technique suggesting the first movement of the *Appassionata*, with the strict adoption of the key scheme. As in the *Appassionata* Schubert follows the key progression F minor to D flat major (the slow movement) and F minor and adds (eventually, in place

of the Adagio) a Scherzo in E major.

The *Sonata in C major, D.613*, is a cycle fragment. The work consists of two unfinished movements, of which the second, without tempo indication, is of particular interest. It must here be a planned final movement, which suggests, with its lilting 6/8 metre an Allegretto tempo. The clearly virtuoso and pianistically effectively conceived piano writing here feels very strongly influenced by Carl Maria von Weber. On the basis of research into the paper and the manuscript it seems that this fragment comes from the same time as the *Adagio in E major, D.612*, considered as a slow movement, which is harmonically and thematically directly related with the principal movement.

Franz Schubert worked on his *Sonata in F minor, D.625/505*, in September 1818 in Zseliz (Hungary), where he spent the summer months of 1818 and 1824 as music teacher to the daughters of Count Esterházy. In particular the first movement of this sonata shows, with the influence of Beethoven, Schubert's attempts to find a new path. In the exposition he no longer contrasts two themes, but derives one from the other, thus the greatest part of the exposition turns into a kind of development with breathtaking modulations and the unrelentingly recurrent trill motif (almost an anticipation of the demonic use of the trill in Schubert's last *Sonata in B flat major, D.960*). The movement breaks off at the beginning of the recapitulation. The *Scherzo in E major*, and the *Adagio in D flat major* published earlier in a separate form as *D.505* and in the light of modern research regarded as belonging to the *Sonata in F minor*, are both complete. The dramatic and, for Schubert, unusually virtuoso final movement brings two strongly contrasted themes together. This goes astonishingly far beyond the style of its time and places this movement in affinity with a work of Chopin or Liszt.

Gottlieb Wallisch

English version by Keith Anderson

Gottlieb Wallisch

Born in 1978 in Vienna into a family of musicians, Gottlieb Wallisch was admitted at the age of six to the Vienna University of Music and Drama, where he studied with Heinz Medjimorec. After graduating with honours from this university he continued his studies with Pascal Devoyon at the University of Arts in Berlin. He received additional important artistic support from Oleg Maisenberg and Dmitrij Bashkurov. In 1995 at the age of sixteen he won the first prize in the prestigious international piano competition the Stravinsky Award in the United States, where he also received three special awards, the Joseph Haydn Prize, the Igor Stravinsky Prize and the Grand Prix Ivo Pogorelich. His most recent successes include becoming the youngest finalist of the 1999 Queen Elisabeth International Piano Competition in Belgium. Gottlieb Wallisch appears frequently in many of Europe's major concert halls, including the Wigmore Hall and the Queen Elizabeth Hall London, the Tonhalle Zürich, the Musikhalle Hamburg, the Cologne Philharmonie and the Vienna Musikverein, presenting solo recitals as well as appearing as soloist with leading international orchestras and conductors. He has undertaken concert tours to Japan, Hong Kong, the Middle East, Switzerland, Germany, Hungary, Great Britain, and the United States.

Most of Schubert's twelve fragmentary piano sonatas, of which four are included on this recording, come from the period between 1817 and 1823, Schubert's so-called years of crisis. They are among his most daring and puzzling works surviving, as it were, as experiments in composition, pushing thematic material to its limits within the traditional sonata form, and as a preparation for his symphonies. Often intensely emotional in character, they anticipate the expressive world of Beethoven, Liszt and Chopin.

**Franz
SCHUBERT**
(1797-1828)

	Sonata No. 5 in A flat major, D.557	11:32
1	Allegro moderato	3:40
2	Andante	3:31
3	Allegro	4:21
	Sonata No. 7a in D flat major, D.567 (incomplete)	21:48
4	Allegro moderato	8:49
5	Andante molto	5:20
6	Allegretto	7:40
	Sonata No. 11 in C major, D.613/612 (fragment)	15:04
7	Moderato	5:54
8	Adagio (D.612)	3:49
9	(Allegretto)	5:21
	Sonata No. 12 in F minor, D.625/505 (fragment)	20:45
10	Allegro	6:40
11	Scherzo: Allegretto	4:36
12	Adagio (D.505)	3:35
13	Allegro	5:54

Gottlieb Wallisch, Piano

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