

Wednesday August 1, 7:30pm
Holy Cross Church
Lifting Our Voices: The Founders Concert

Program Notes

Franz Schubert (1791-1828)

Schubert emerged on the musical scene at a unique time in history. Positioned just as the Classical era was coming to a close, Schubert's ability to use music to evoke emotion in the listener was instrumental in the transition to the Romantic era. Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) said the following of Schubert's musical abilities: "Truly, the spark of divine genius resides in this Schubert!"

Equally important to Schubert's impact on the advancement of music is an understanding of where his musical influence came from. Scholars believe Schubert's greatest musical influences were Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) and Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), two prominent composers of the Classical era. Composers of the early Classical era were still largely influenced by the structure and form of Baroque music. However, there was also an effort to create a simpler and lighter texture. Baroque music was known for its dense and complex contrapuntal texture, most notably recognized in Baroque fugues where two or more independent melodies are played simultaneously. Classical composers sought to shift the focus to a cleaner, more homophonic texture in which melodic lines move together to create harmony. Song-like melodies were the result of this shift, and are a classic feature of composers like Mozart, Haydn, and Schubert.

Of all the Classical composers, Schubert is perhaps the most well-known for his use of song-like melodies. Composing over 600 Lieder (songs), Schubert captures the emotions and beauty of music through a single vocal line accompanied by harmony in the piano. While harmony was important in Baroque music, Schubert creates a clearer distinction between soloist and accompaniment, and is known for his dramatic and often unexpected harmonic changes. *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus* and *Ellens Dritter Gesang* offer a small sampling of Schubert's skill to captivate the listener as he pairs melody and harmony together.

Much like Baroque composers, Schubert also composed multiple sacred works to be used as part of church services. Having a strong background in the church himself, Schubert continued the tradition of setting sacred texts from the church's liturgy to music. Schubert's *Mass in G* uses the traditional text of the Roman Catholic Mass. Despite the historical roots of the text, Schubert's own musical style is undeniable as he conveys passion and emotion through the music, connecting the listener directly to the message.

~ Laura Schipper