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SCHUBERT: SYMPHONY No. 8, “UNFINISHED”

IN B MINOR, D759

GRAND ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE PARIS

CONDUCTED BY SELMAR MEYROWITZ

1 1st mvt. - Allegro moderato (10:49)

2 2nd mvt. - Andante (12:46)

Recorded in Paris in 1934, issued as Pathé 78s PAT 98-100

Restoration and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, October 2008

Cover artwork based on a painting of Franz Schubert

Total duration: 23:35 © 2008 Pristine Audio.

SAVL Pristine Audio, Le Bourg, 24610 St. Méard de Gurçon, France - Tel +33 (0)5 53 82 18 57 - Internet: www.pristineclassical.com

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MEYROWITZ, GRAND ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE PARIS

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MEYROWITZ, GRAND ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE PARIS

Franz Schubert's **Symphony No. 8 in B minor**, commonly known as the *Unfinished* (German: *Unvollendete*), was started in 1822 but left with only two movements complete even though Schubert would live for another six years. A scherzo, nearly completed in piano score but with only two pages orchestrated, also survives. It has long been theorized that Schubert may have sketched a finale which instead became the big B minor entr'acte from his incidental music to *Rosamunde*, but all the evidence for this is circumstantial. One possible reason for Schubert's leaving the symphony incomplete is the predominance of the same meter (three-in-a-bar). The first movement is in 3/4, the second in 3/8 and the third (an incomplete scherzo) also in 3/4. Three movements in a row in exactly the same meter do not occur in any of the symphonies, sonatas or chamber works of the great Viennese composers.

Although the two completed movements of the symphony were written in 1822, Schubert only made them public in 1823 when he gave them to Anselm Hüttenbrenner, in his role representative of the Graz Music Society, which had given Schubert an honorary diploma. The movements were not performed until 17 December 1865, when they were conducted in Vienna by Johann Herbeck, who had persuaded Hüttenbrenner to show him the score and who added the last movement of Schubert's *Third Symphony* as the finale.

Sometimes this work is referred to as *Symphony No. 7* (for example in the *New Schubert Edition*), since the other work sometimes referred to as Schubert's 7th was also left incomplete, but in a different way.

After Herbeck's discovery of the two completed movements of this symphony, some music historians and scholars toiled to "prove" the composition was complete in this form, and indeed, in its two-movement form it has proved to be one of Schubert's most cherished compositions. The fact that classical decorum was unlikely to accept that a symphony could end in a different key from its beginning, and the even more undeniable fact that Schubert had begun a third movement (of which the score he gave to Hüttenbrenner included the first page) seems to disprove the thesis.

In 1928, the anniversary of Schubert's death, the Columbia Graphophone Company held a world-wide competition to complete the symphony. Probably about 100 completions were submitted, but also a much larger number of original works. The pianist Frank Merrick won the 'English Zone' of competition and his scherzo and finale were later performed and recorded, but are now largely forgotten.

Only some of the completions –Merrick's is not one of them –make use of Schubert's sketched scherzo. Orchestrations of the scherzo only (the trio of which had to be completed) were made by Geoffrey Bush in 1944 and the conductor Denis Vaughan in about 1960.

More recently, the English musicologists Gerald Abraham and Brian Newbould have also offered completions of the whole symphony, using Schubert's scherzo and the entr'acte from his incidental music for the play *Rosamunde*. This movement had long been suspected by some musicologists to be the finale for this symphony. (In fact, it was played as a finale at the symphony's British premiere on 6 April 1867.) Both works have B minor as their fundamental key, they have identical instrumentation, the entr'acte is in sonata-form (as are all Schubert's symphonic finales) and they share a very similar mood. If the entr'acte indeed started life as the finale of this symphony, then Schubert evidently discarded it (probably at that stage unorchestrated) from the symphony and used it instead in the play, presumably only orchestrating it for this purpose and perhaps making compositional changes.

NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA - FULL NOTES ON THIS RECORDING CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM