



MEET THE COMPOSER: Franz Schubert

Age Range:	Elementary, Middle School, High School
Introduction:	Composers write music, just like authors write books. In the Class Notes “Meet the Composer” series, we will learn a little bit about the achievements, backstory, and influences of a variety of composers. Get ready to learn about these influential composers and listen to some of their music.
Total Video Time:	11:48
Total Lesson Time:	Approximately 20-25 minutes

BACKGROUND on Franz Schubert

Franz Schubert was born in 1797 in Vienna, Austria. He lived a relatively short life, dying in 1828 at the age of 31. But during his lifetime, he wrote over 1500 compositions! Many of them were pieces called “lieder” (pronounced “LEE-der”). Lieder are songs for voice, usually accompanied by piano. Schubert was a part of a circle friends who would host gatherings called “Schubertiads” where they would sing and play music together. Schubert’s music wasn’t widely known during his lifetime and he often struggled financially. After his death, his music became much more famous.

MUSIC of Franz Schubert

1. Franz Schubert was an excellent pianist and wrote a lot of music for the piano, including a series of pieces called *impromptus*. An impromptu is a free-form piece, usually for solo piano, that is supposed to sound a bit like an improvisation or something created on the spot. Even though they are intended to sound spontaneous and spur-of-the-moment, they are fully notated and often quite difficult to play. Watch and listen to Schubert’s Impromptu No. 2 in E-flat Major, D. 899.

[Impromptu No. 2 in E-flat Major, D. 899](#). Composed 1827. Video approx. 5 minutes.

2. When he was young, Franz Schubert played in a string quartet with two of his brothers and his father. Perhaps this experience inspired him to start composing string quartets. His most famous quartet was based on a poem called “Death and the Maiden.” Listen and watch part of the Death and the Maiden String Quartet.

[String Quartet No. 14, “Death and the Maiden”: III. Scherzo - Allegro Molto](#). Composed 1824. Video approx. 4 minutes.

3. During Schubert’s lifetime, there was a very popular form of music called a *lied* (pronounced LEED.) Lied simply means “song” or “art song” and the plural form of lied is *lieder*. A lied is usually composed for a solo singer accompanied by a pianist. Many consider Franz Schubert to be the most famous lieder composer, and he certainly composed a lot of them (over 600!). Here is one of his lieder, *Nacht und Träume*, which translates to “Night and Dreams.”

[Nacht und Träume](#). Composed 1825. Video approx. 3 minutes.



MEET THE COMPOSER:

Franz Schubert, cont.

CREATE, CONNECT, & RESPOND to Schubert's music

1. Franz Schubert wrote hundreds of *lieder*, or songs. The words to these songs were almost always poems. Many of Schubert's friends were poets. They would attend his gatherings called "Schubertiads" and he would use their poetry for the texts of his songs. Think more about the connection between music and poetry in the Class Notes lesson [Music & Literacy: Poetry](#).
2. Making music with friends and family was very important to Schubert. Often, he made music with others in small groups- not large enough to have a conductor. When small groups of musicians make music together, they need to practice *ensemble skills*. Learn more about how to work together to play music with others in the Class Notes lesson [What are ENSEMBLE SKILLS?](#)

Franz Schubert

FAST FACTS

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