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SCHUBERT

Piano Sonata No. 21
in B flat major

Gustav Piekut, Piano

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Piano Sonata No. 21 in B flat major, D. 960 (1828)

Franz Schubert was born in Vienna in 1797, the son of a school-master, whose path it seemed he might follow as an assistant teacher. He enjoyed a sound musical training as a cathedral chorister and when his voice broke in 1812 rejected the offered scholarship and further general education in favour of a career that allowed him more time for music. In 1814 he embarked on a course as a primary school teacher and the following year joined his father, although he showed no great aptitude for his new profession, which he was to practise intermittently, as need arose, for a year or so. The greater part of the remaining years of his life were devoted to music and to the company of his friends. By the time of his death in 1828 some of his music had been published and there was increasing interest in his compositions. Nevertheless, he never held any official position in the musical establishment in Vienna and much of what he wrote was intended for the entertainment of his own circle, which included both professional and amateur musicians, poets and painters.

The death of Beethoven in 1827 seems to have suggested to Schubert the possibility that he might become his musical successor. This ambition, whether overt or not, found some immediate expression in the three piano sonatas of 1828, completed in September, some six weeks before his own death. Schubert proposed a dedication to Hummel, a pupil of Mozart, leading pianist and successful composer, whom he had met in 1827. When the sonatas were finally published, posthumously, the dedication by the publisher was to Robert Schumann, who did much to bring the music of Schubert to public notice in the second quarter of the 19th century. Schubert played all three sonatas on 27 September at a party at the house of Dr Ignaz Menz.

The last of the 1828 sonatas, the *Sonata in B flat major, D. 960*, opens in a manner characteristic of many of Schubert's songs and its gentle first theme dominates the extended movement. The slow movement, moving from C sharp minor to A major and to a final C sharp major has about it a beautiful serenity and is followed by a delicately graceful *Scherzo* in B flat major, framing a solemn *Trio* in the tonic minor key. The rondo finale, *Allegro ma non troppo*, starts in harmonic ambiguity, suggesting the influence of Beethoven's substituted final movement for his Opus 130 string quartet, and exemplifying the quality of heavenly length so often cited by writers on Schubert.

Keith Anderson

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Gustav Piekut



Photo: Julia Eva Severinsen

The young Danish pianist Gustav Piekut has recorded internationally acclaimed albums, including *Towards the Flame* (works by Scriabin and Langgaard, Naxos 8.574312), which was nominated for the International Classical Music Awards 2022. Recent highlights include soloist performances with the Copenhagen Philharmonic, Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, Magdeburgische Philharmonie, Slovak State Philharmonic Košice and the Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester. Piekut is a laureate of international piano competitions such as the Aarhus International Piano Competition and the Kissinger KlavierOlymp. In Denmark, Piekut has received several awards, including the Artist Prize of the Danish Music Critics' Association, the Danish Radio P2 Talent Prize, the Wilhelm Hansen Foundation Honorary Stipend, the Carl Nielsen and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen Talent Prize, the Léonie Sonning Talent Prize and the Gladsaxe Music Award. He is an alumnus of the German Academic Scholarship Foundation. Gustav Piekut is generously supported by the Augustinus Foundation.

www.gustavpiekut.com



Photo: Agnete Schlichtkrull

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AUGUSTINUS FONDEN



Schubert's final year was marked by growing public acclaim, but also by the gradual deterioration of his health, so that any idea of him becoming Beethoven's musical successor was to be short-lived. Schubert's final three piano sonatas of 1828 were completed only weeks before his death, and the last of these, the *Sonata in B flat major* with its 'heavenly length', stands at the summit of Schubert's works for piano, bringing together the lyrical and monumental characteristics that are most cherished in his music.

Franz
SCHUBERT
(1797–1828)

Piano Sonata No. 21
in B flat major, D. 960 (1828)

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|----------|--|--------------|
| 1 | I. Molto moderato | 20:44 |
| 2 | II. Andante sostenuto | 9:24 |
| 3 | III. Scherzo:
Allegro vivace con delicatezza – Trio | 4:11 |
| 4 | IV. Allegro ma non troppo – Presto | 8:35 |

Gustav Piekut, Piano

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