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by BERT VAN DER WOU

## **FRANZ SCHUBERT**

Symphony No. 2 D. 125 / Symphony No. 4 D. 417

The Complete Symphonies Vol. 1

**Residentie Orkest The Hague**

**Jan Willem de Vriend** conductor



SUPER AUDIO CD

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## FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797 - 1828)

### Symphony No. 2 D. 125

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| [1] I. Largo – Allegro vivace            | 10:41 |
| [2] II. Andante                          | 7:55  |
| [3] III. Menuetto. Allegro vivace – Trio | 3:01  |
| [4] IV. Presto                           | 5:48  |

### Symphony No. 4 D. 417 'Tragic'

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| [5] I. Adagio molto – Allegro vivace     | 9:40 |
| [6] II. Andante                          | 8:47 |
| [7] III. Menuetto. Allegro vivace – Trio | 3:20 |
| [8] IV. Allegro                          | 7:29 |

total time 56:51

Schubert composed his first five symphonies while still a teenager, but they represent just one facet of his prodigious fluency. At this time some of his musical ideas bear a family resemblance to certain themes from Mozart, Haydn or Beethoven, but already his own musical character is evident. He began his Second Symphony in December 1814 and had finished it by 24<sup>th</sup> March the following year. At the end of the previous year he had completed a five-year period as a choir scholar at the Stadtkonvikt (Imperial Seminary) in Vienna and had then entered his father's school as a teacher of the youngest pupils – work he disdained as drudgery. At that time in Vienna, from autumn of 1814 to June 1815, the Congress of Vienna was assembled to resolve momentous issues arising from the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars, and thereby create a long-term peace plan for Europe.

In common with five of Schubert's other symphonies, No 2 in B flat opens with a slow introduction. Here one feels the influence of the opening to Mozart's 39<sup>th</sup> Symphony (1788), while the following *Allegro* begins with a theme reminiscent of Beethoven's Prometheus Overture (1801), yet only Schubert could have written this music. His obvious models in these relatively early works, such as this symphony, are insignificant in the context of his precocious and rapid creative development. In this surprisingly long exposition of the opening movement, the terrific nervous energy generated by the *moto perpetuo* quavers (- absent from very few bars) is relieved by the lyricism of the second theme. With remarkable originality, Schubert also employs three key-areas instead of the traditional two.

The second movement is the only example of theme-and-variations form in Schubert's symphonies, its genial character providing relaxation after the rhythmic energy of the first movement. The theme gives rise to five elegant variations of uncomplicated character, the theme remaining recognisable, while the accompaniment is resourcefully varied. Variation 4 - suddenly stern in C minor - is the only *forte* passage in this otherwise gentle movement. In Variation 5 the triplet rhythm is carried over from the previous variation to create a new little violin counter-melody.

A robust minuet in C minor follows, of scherzo-like character and punctuated by some fiery accents. The lightly scored E flat major trio includes some imitative writing for oboe and clarinet and neat contributions from the horns. Rhythmic obsession is a quality most readily associated with Beethoven, but Schubert also fully understood the powerful potential of such repetition. His use of rhythmic insistence is not as raw and elemental as Beethoven's, but often it is no less relentless. In the finale of this symphony Schubert bases his entire development section on the initial crotchet-two-quavers rhythm of the first theme. Indeed, this rhythm permeates much of the movement as a whole, but its overall character is good-natured - the effect more playful than oppressive. The delightful second theme is pure Schubert, but the occasional abrupt contrast between extreme dynamics (*pianissimo* - *fortissimo*) inevitably brings to mind Haydn or Beethoven. The date of the premiere has not been clearly established, but it may well have received a private performance in Vienna soon after its composition.

In less than a year, between his Third and Fourth Symphonies, Schubert composed about two hundred works, including string quartets, piano sonatas, nearly one hundred and fifty songs and several church works. He completed the Fourth Symphony in about 3-4 weeks during April 1816. At that time, soon to give up his teaching, he was devoting an increasing amount of time to composing.

We should not read too much into the Fourth Symphony's "Tragic" appendage, added by Schubert as an afterthought. It may be merely an example of the flippant comments which he wrote on some of his youthful scores, but nevertheless the symphony has more gravitas than its predecessors. Schubert also includes a second pair of horns to enrich the texture. Actually this is the only piece of non-programmatic music to which he gave a descriptive title. Such works as Death and the Maiden (Quartet) and the Trout (Quintet) were subsequently given these convenient names (not by Schubert) merely because their variation movements are based on material from those songs. The opening *Adagio molto*, powerfully concentrated and full of foreboding, leads to an *Allegro vivace* of considerable emotional intensity, albeit contained within Classical restraint. Its agitated first theme is reminiscent of the opening movement of Beethoven's C Minor String Quartet, Opus 18 No 4, but otherwise here Schubert is indebted to no-one. As in the Second Symphony, his fondness for creating tension through rhythmic obsessiveness is noticeable. Warmly expressive, the second subject - like the first - has repeated quavers in the background, quietly sustaining momentum. After a development entirely devoted to the first subject, the recapitulation is unconventional in its use of

three principal key-areas. Finally Schubert shifts to C major, in which key the movement ends exuberantly.

The *Andante* has a principal melody (marked *dolce*) of song-like character. If Schubert had seriously intended a “tragic” symphony, this *Andante* would have been the most likely movement in which to explore emotional depths. However, the mood here is merely tinged with nostalgia – a quality so painfully familiar from Schubert’s mature music, but already present in this teenage work. The lyrical flow is twice interrupted by an urgent minor-key episode. Here the first violins and cellos engage in assertive dialogue and Schubert continues with some typically poetic modulations. In the final reprise of the opening section Schubert subtly relaxes the repeated-note pattern from groups of four to triplets in the strings and the movement ends with a long, tender *diminuendo*.

Though labelled *Menuetto*, according to convention, the third movement is a stern, rugged scherzo beginning *fortissimo*, with tremendous rhythmic bite and a harmonic freedom which allows brief modulations into remote areas. In complete contrast, the Trio is fresh and innocent, its theme on oboe and clarinet a characteristic example of Schubert’s inexhaustible melodic gift.

A four-bar rising phrase on cellos and bassoons introduces a finale of wonderful rhythmic buoyancy, its momentum again maintained by the accompanying repeated quavers. The second subject is a lyrical dialogue of short-winded, “sighing” phrases between first violins and woodwind. Here the accompaniment

comprises more quavers – not repeated notes this time but a more melodic, feathery accompaniment on second violins and violas. Dramatic and wide-ranging, the development section culminates in a return to the opening four-bar phrase, heralding a recapitulation which affirms bright, optimistic C major. While it is believed that most of Schubert’s early symphonies may have been premiered in private salons in Vienna, the Fourth Symphony had to wait until November 1849 - a performance in Leipzig.

Schubert’s most popular symphonies are obviously the Unfinished, the Fifth and the Ninth, but the others as a result are quite rarely played. This is cause for regret because, as always, it is so valuable to trace a composer’s development. In any case, these two symphonies are such fine works, full of character, abundant in melody, harmonic unpredictability and rhythmic vitality.

Philip Borg-Wheeler



**Jan Willem de Vriend** conductor

In 2015 Jan Willem de Vriend was appointed as principal conductor of Residentie Orkest The Hague and principal guest conductor of the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya. From 2017 he is also principal guest conductor of the Orchestre national de Lille.

Between 1982 and 2015 De Vriend was artistic director and violinist of the Combattimento Consort Amsterdam, established by himself. This ensemble excelled in known but especially unknown masterpieces of the 17th and 18th century belonging to the forefront of Dutch classical music. It achieved a huge success abroad as well; starting with their own series in the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, it toured around the world.

Also to be mentioned are the opera productions the ensemble accomplished, based on works by Monteverdi, Handel, Telemann, Bach, Gassmann and Mozart among others. With these operas, directed by the much-acclaimed Eva Buchmann, the ensemble toured through Europe and America.

A great number of CDs, DVDs and tv-recordings exist to document this very productive and intense period. De Vriend continues his career as full-time conductor and as charismatic promotor of classical music. With the Residentie Orkest he has recorded i.a. 'Ein deutsches Requiem' by Brahms and he will record all Schubert symphonies as well as Mendelssohns concertos for two pianos.

From 2006 up to 2017 Jan Willem de Vriend was chief conductor of the Orkest van het Oosten in Enschede, formerly known as the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra. Right at the start of his appointment in 2006 he attracted attention with a striking performance of Mahler's first symphony, in the first, so-called 'Hamburger version'. The rave reception ('Absolutely a must' – *The Gramophone*) resulted in invitations by the Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest as well as many orchestras abroad.

As chief conductor in Enschede his lifelong fascination for and experience with opera was bearing fruit. In 2013 and 2014 the orchestra was invited to Sankt Moritz/Basel to perform respectively the *Don Giovanni* and *La Gazetta* by Rossini, both with stage directions by Eva Buchmann. In 2015 *Don Giovanni* was successfully performed six times in the Netherlands.

From 2008 up to 2013 Jan Willem de Vriend worked as a guest conductor at the philharmonie zuidnederland. Besides he conducted the Konzerthaus Orchester Berlin, NDR Orchester, Philharmonie Stuttgart, WDR Orchester, in Hong Kong, Luxemburg, Barcelona and the Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest. He conducted operas in Swetzingen, Luzern, Straatsburg and Barcelona. For the near future concerts and recordings are scheduled, with the Orkest van het Oosten, Residentie Orkest, Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest, Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya, Orchestre national de Lille and the Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest.

In 2012 Jan Willem de Vriend won the prestigious 'Radio 4 Prize' for his indefatigable promotion of classical music.

## **Residentie Orkest The Hague**

Residentie Orkest The Hague proves that even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, symphonic music can still be meaningful to large and diverse audiences. Its reputation as one of the finest orchestras in Europe makes it an appropriate figurehead for The Hague as a cosmopolitan city of justice, peace, and culture. The orchestra performs concert series in the Zuiderstrandtheater in Scheveningen and in addition performs at venues such as Concertgebouw Amsterdam, TivoliVredenburg Utrecht and De Doelen in Rotterdam. Special crossover and innovative productions are also provided at The Hague's prominent pop venue Paard van Troje throughout the season. The Residentie Orkest performs regularly at various other major concert halls abroad. Tours have brought the orchestra to New York, Boston, Chicago, London and Vienna amongst others and the orchestra also performed in countries like Japan, China, Germany, France and South America. There are also many prolific collaborations with a wide range of partners, including the Dutch National Theatre, Gemeentemuseum and the Dutch National Opera. Recent seasons have seen a much acclaimed production of Messiaen's rarely performed opera *Saint François d'Assise*, Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* and Puccini's *La Bohème*.

### **A rich history**

Since its first concert in 1904, the Residentie Orkest has developed into one of the prominent symphony orchestras of The Netherlands. Founded by Dr Henri Viotta, who was also its first principal conductor, it quickly attracted composers like Richard Strauss, Igor Stravinsky, Max Reger, Maurice Ravel, Paul Hindemith

and Vincent d'Indy. Guest conductors included Arturo Toscanini, Bruno Walter, Leonard Bernstein and Hans Knappertsbusch.

After World War II, Willem van Otterloo was appointed as chief conductor. He led the orchestra from 1949 to 1973 and built a strong reputation by combining high-quality performances with adventurous programming. Van Otterloo was succeeded by Jean Martinon, Ferdinand Leitner, Hans Vonk, Evgenii Svetlanov, Jaap van Zweden and Neeme Järvi. The orchestra has built up a rich discography with labels such as BIS, Chandos, Challenge and DGG.

### **Chief conductor**

Starting season 2018/2019 Nicholas Collon is chief conductor and artistic advisor of the Residentie Orkest. Richard Egarr will join the orchestra as principal guest conductor in 2019. Until the summer of 2019 Jan Willem de Vriend will act as principal conductor.





**First violin**

Wouter Vossen  
Ilya Warenberg  
Naomi Bach  
Valentina Bernardone  
Yuki Hayakashi  
Agnes Houtsmuller  
Momoko Noguchi  
Jan Paul Tavenier  
Ronald Touw  
Pieter Verschuijl  
\* Floortje Gerritsen  
\* Anne-Marie Volten

**Second violin**

Janet Krause  
Faïna Makhtina  
Justyna Briefjes  
Yeeun Ha  
Barbara Krimmel  
Ben Legebeke  
Alexandra Mashina  
Wiesje Nuiver  
Cato Went  
\* David Pablo Bellido Herrero

**Viola**

Timur Yakubov  
Jacomine Punt  
Maira Bette  
Guus Ghijzen  
Sevilya Hendrickx  
Elisabeth Runge  
Tanja Trede  
Iteke Wijbenga

**Cello**

Gideon den Herder  
Caecilia van Hoof  
Mileva Fialova  
Justa de Jong  
Miriam Kirby  
Tom van Lent

**Double bass**

Frank Dolman  
Astrid Schrijner  
Jos Tieman  
Jasper Tjallingii

**Flute**

Martine van der Loo  
Claire Chabrier

**Oboe**

Pauline Oostenrijk  
Theo Peeters

**Clarinet**

Hans Colbers  
Jasper Grijpink

**Bassoon**

Dorian Cooke  
Erik Reinders

\* Substitute

**French Horn**

René Pagen  
Elizabeth Chell  
Mariëlle van Pruijssen  
Mirjam Steinmann

**Trumpet**

Robert-Jan Hoffman  
\* Geerten Rooze

**Timpani**

Chris Leenders

This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic & Musikelectronic Geithain monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



[www.northstarconsult.nl](http://www.northstarconsult.nl)

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Recording assistant: Martijn van der Wolf

A&R Challenge Classics: Anne de Jong

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