

Charles Munch Born: September 26, 1891 - Strasbourg, Alsace, France

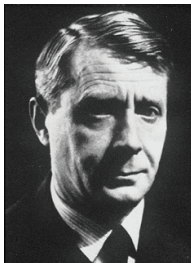
Died: November 6, 1968 - Richmond, Virginia, USA

The eminent Alsatian-born French conductor, Charles Munch (originally, Münch), was the son of the Alsatian organist and choral conductor Ernst Münch (1859-1928). His elder brother was the choir-master and professor of music, Fritz Münch. Charles studied violin at the Strasbourg Conservatory and with Lucien Capet in Paris. At the outbreak of World War I (1914), he enlisted in the German army; made a sergeant of artillery, he was gassed at Peronne and wounded at Verdun; after the end of the war (1918) and his return to Alsace-Lorraine (1919), he became a naturalised French citizen.

Having received further violin training from Flesch in Berlin, Charles Munch pursued a career as a soloist; was also professor of violin at the Leipzig Conservatory and concert-master of the Gewandhaus Orchestra there. In November 1932, he made his professional conducting debut in Paris with the Straram Orchestra. He studied conducting with Szendrei in Paris from 1933 to 1940. He quickly rose to prominence; was conductor of Paris's Orchestra de la Société Philharmonique from 1935 to 1938, and in 1936 became a professor at the École Normale de Musique. In 1938 he became music director of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, remaining in that post during the years of the German occupation during World War II; refusing to collaborate with the Nazis, he gave his support to the Resistance, being awarded the Légion d'honneur in 1945.

Charles Munch made his USA debut as a guest conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in December 1946; a trans-continental tour of the USA with the French National Radio Orchestra followed in 1948. In 1949 he was appointed music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which he and Monteux took on its first European tour in 1952; they took it again to Europe in 1956, also touring in the Soviet Union, making it the first USA orchestra to do so. After retiring from his Boston post in 1962, he made appearances as a guest conductor; also helped to launch the Orchestre de Paris in 1967.

Charles Munch acquired an outstanding reputation as an interpreter of the French repertoire, his performances being marked by spontaneity, colour, and elegance. French music of the 20th century also occupied a prominent place on his programs; he brought out new works by Roussel, Milhaud, Arthur Honegger, and others. He wrote Je suis chef d'orchestre (1954).



Schubert

Symphony No. 9 in C major

Charles Munch
Boston Symphony Orchestra



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

DSD256

DSD

Direct Stream Digital

Mastered in DSD256

Facts about this Recording

Recorded by RCA 1958

Producer: Richard Mohr. Engineer: Lewis Layton

Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape



The Symphony No. 9 in C major, D. 944, known as the Great (published in 1840 as “Symphony No. 7 in C Major”, listed as No. 8 in the *Neue Schubert-Ausgabe*), is the final symphony completed by Franz Schubert. Originally called The Great C major to distinguish it from his Symphony No. 6, the Little C major, the subtitle is now usually taken as a reference to the symphony's majesty. Unusually long for a symphony of its time, a typical performance of The Great takes around 55 minutes, though it can also be played in as little as 45 minutes by employing a faster tempo and not repeating sections as indicated in the score.

For a long time, the symphony was believed to be a work of Schubert's last year, 1828. It was true that, in the last months of his life, he did start drafting a symphony – but this was the work in D major now accepted as Symphony No. 10, which has been realized for performance by Brian Newbould.[4] In fact, we now know that the 'Great' was largely composed in sketch in the summer of 1825: that, indeed it was the work to which Schubert was referring in a letter of March 1824 when he said he was preparing himself to write 'a grand symphony'. By the spring or summer of 1826 it was completely scored, and in October, Schubert, who was quite unable to pay for a performance, sent it to the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* with a dedication. In response they made him a small payment, arranged for the copying of the orchestral parts, and at some point in the latter half of 1827 gave the work an unofficial play-through (the exact date and the conductor are unknown) – though it was considered too long and difficult for the amateur orchestra of the conservatory.

A recent hypothesis suggests that the symphony may have received its first performance on 12 March 1829 in a *Concert spirituel* at the *Landständischer Saal* in Vienna.[6] The evidence for this hypothesis is slender, however, and it contradicts contemporary sources which prove that Schubert's Symphony No. 6 (also in C major) was performed at this instance. In 1836 Schubert's brother Ferdinand attempted to perform the final movement alone, yet there is no proof that it was actually played in public.

In 1838, ten years after Schubert's death, Robert Schumann visited Vienna and was shown the manuscript of the symphony at the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* by Ferdinand Schubert. He took a copy that Ferdinand had given him back to Leipzig, where the entire work was performed publicly for the first time by Felix Mendelssohn at the Leipzig *Gewandhaus* on 21 March 1839. Schumann celebrated the event in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* with an ecstatic article in which, in a phrase destined to become famous, he hailed the symphony for its 'heavenly length'.

The symphony, however, was found to be very difficult for orchestras to play because of its extremely lengthy woodwind and string parts. When taking the symphony to Paris in 1842 and London in 1844, Mendelssohn found orchestras completely unwilling to play the symphony. When it was first performed in London in 1856 under August Manns, the violinists collapsed in laughter during the second subject of the finale.

Schubert

Symphony No. 9 in C major

Charles Munch

Boston Symphony Orchestra

1. Andante - Allegro ma non troppo
2. Andante con moto
3. Scherzo. Allegro vivace - Trio
4. Allegro vivace

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