

Born in Lwów, Poland in 1923, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski made his pianistic debut at age 11 on Polish radio, and in 1936 played and conducted Beethoven's Third Concerto at the Lwów Musical Association. He studied conducting, composition, musicology, and philosophy in Lwów, and concluded his graduate studies in Kraków in 1946. Skrowaczewski won the Szymanowski Composition Prize in 1947, which enabled him to travel to Paris for study with Boulanger and Kletzki from 1947-1949. His directorship of the Wrocław, Katowice, and Kraków orchestras from 1946-1956 led to the directorship of the Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra from 1956-1959. In 1958, Skrowaczewski made his American debut in Cleveland, and his New York debut in 1960, the latter of which had a great success. That same year, he left Poland and eventually became director of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra until 1979. After this, he concentrated more on composing, producing a substantial quantity of symphonies and instrumental and film music, but still found time to be the principal conductor of the Hallé Orchestra from 1984-1991 and the music director of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra from 1987-1988. By his 90th birthday, Skrowaczewski held emeritus or laureate titles with several orchestras, and had undertaken part of the Wrocław Philharmonic's project to record all of Lutoslawski's orchestral music. Skrowaczewski's conducting style was likened to that of Szell's, with an emphasis on careful preparation and precise playing. Although Skrowaczewski seldom utilized his position as a conductor to promote and program his compositions, some of them have gained traction, particularly his Concerto for Orchestra, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1999. Skrowaczewski died in February 2017 in Minneapolis at the age of 93.



Symphony No. 9 in C Major, byname Great C Major, symphony and last major orchestral work by Austrian composer Franz Schubert. It premiered on March 21, 1839, more than a decade after its composer's death.

Schubert began his Symphony No. 9 in the summer of 1825 and continued to work on it over the next two years. In 1828 Vienna's Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Society of Friends of Music) agreed to give the premiere, but the orchestra struggled with the length and technical complexity of the new piece and ultimately refused to perform it. In its place Schubert offered a shorter work in the same key, his Symphony No. 6 (Little C Major), which had not yet been heard publicly. He died nearly a month before that work's premiere on December 14, 1828.

The unperformed Symphony No. 9 might have vanished if not for the intervention of Robert Schumann. At the time better known as a music journalist than as a composer, Schumann traveled in 1838 to Vienna, where he met with Schubert's brother Ferdinand, who showed him the scores of several unperformed works. Schumann persuaded Ferdinand that the music, in particular Symphony No. 9, would be better-off in Leipzig, where his friend Felix Mendelssohn was championing new compositions. Mendelssohn agreed to take on the symphony, and it was performed the following year, albeit in an abridged version.

Symphony No. 9 reveals the deep influence of Beethoven on Schubert. The elder master had lived in Schubert's native Vienna for all of the younger composer's life, and Schubert revered but never dared to meet him. Not only is Schubert's symphony nearly as long as Beethoven's own Symphony No. 9, but it also draws upon Beethoven's compositional approaches. Its forms and compositional structures are much as Beethoven would have crafted them.

Beethoven himself had learned those ideas in large part from the works of Joseph Haydn and Mozart, but he gave them broader and freer expression. Schubert follows Beethoven's approach more than that of the earlier masters.

The first movement opens bravely with a solo horn call that gradually develops into a more-spacious melody that reappears in the full orchestra. Quicker tempi bring with them a galloping motif that allows the music to charge forward dramatically, often with contrasting melodies overlying that fundamental rhythm. Melodies stated early in the movement reappear after development of fragments of those melodies, as a Beethovenian sonata form would demand.

For the second movement, the solo oboe begins with a gentle marchlike theme, soon boldly restated by the strings. Throughout this movement, assertive strings and brass are set against more-wistful woodwinds for diversity of colour, much as Beethoven does in the second movement of his Symphony No. 5.

The third movement again evokes Beethoven with a boisterous scherzo, its opening theme of determined brass and low strings reappearing at the movement's closing, the middle ones devoted to a more-flowing Ländler-like melody. The decided contrasts are again reminiscent of Beethoven's approach in the third movements of his own symphonies.

For the final movement, Schubert begins with a fanfarelike call from the brass that leads into a heroic sonata-form structure of swirling energy for the full orchestra. In the last movement the music is even more effusive than that of the first movement, allowing the symphony to storm gloriously into its final bars.

Schubert Symphony No. 9 In C Major "The Great"

Stanislaw Skrowazewski

Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra

1. Andante 13:07
 2. Andante 12:58
 3. Allegro 8:41
 4. Allegro 10:37
- Total Time: 45:23**

Recorded by Mercury Records 1962
Engineer – Robert Eberenz, Robert Fine Mastered By – George Piros
Producer – Wilma Cozart



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admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
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