

KEYBOARD KIDS COMPANION

Created by teachers. *Approved by kids!*

Helen Smith Tarchalski



MEET THE COMPOSER *Franz Peter Schubert*

BORN: January 31, 1797

BIRTHPLACE: Austria

DIED: November 19, 1828

SOME FAVORITE COMPOSITIONS *by Schubert*

[*Gretchen am Spinnrade*, D.118](#)

[Impromptu Op. 90, No. 4](#)

[Piano Sonata in B-flat, D.960, First movement](#)

[Symphony No. 8 “Unfinished”](#)

[*Marche Militaire* Op. 51, No. 1 arranged for eight hands](#)

[*Ave Maria*](#)

Click on the links above to watch the YouTube videos.

Franz Peter Schubert was born near Vienna, Austria, where he spent most of his life. Franz was the twelfth of fourteen children, but only five lived to grow up. He had one sister, Maria Theresa, and three brothers—Ignaz, Karl, and Ferdinand. Franz was short, chubby, had curly hair, and wore glasses. He was very shy.

Franz learned to play several instruments (violin, viola, piano, and organ) and he sang very well. His first music teachers were his father and his brothers. He was an excellent student in all of his schoolwork. When he was ten, Franz was accepted at a school that trained boys for the Court Chapel Choir (now known as the Vienna Boys’ Choir). He began composing and wrote a song that impressed the school’s director, Antonio Salieri, and Salieri began to teach him. Salieri and the school’s professor of harmony called young Schubert a genius!

Franz’s father was a schoolteacher, and he wanted Franz to become a schoolteacher as well. But Franz wasn’t happy. He taught school by day and composed by night. He loved composing and worked so hard that, before he was twenty years old, he wrote more than 100 songs and many other compositions. He finally gave up school teaching all together to focus on music. For a short time, he was the music teacher for the royal Esterházy family in Hungary.

His family often performed together during musical evenings at home, and Franz wrote many compositions for these gatherings. When he grew up, Schubert and his friends continued the tradition. These meetings became well known around Vienna as *Schubertiaden*. Schubert’s circle of friends from these meetings raised the money to publish his first set of songs.

Franz’s friends reported that he composed with lightning speed; Schubert was one of the fastest composers in musical history. Franz wrote many kinds of music, but he is probably most famous for composing *art songs*, or *lieder*, of which he wrote more than 600! Some of the most popular *lieder* were written by Schubert.

Franz Schubert was one of the first composers in the Romantic period, and his music is often performed today. His music is filled with original ideas for long, beautiful melodies and rich harmonies. But Schubert’s music was not always popular. Publishers were afraid to take a chance on a young unknown composer; his music had strange ideas for his time. And, he was one of the first great composers in history who was not a professional performer or conductor, so he had to rely on others to present his music in public. Many of his important compositions were not published until after his lifetime.

Schubert was not a strong businessman. He sold the rights to some of his best works, and *other* people made the money. Sadly, even though a musical genius, Franz Schubert was often poor.

Franz Schubert’s musical hero was Ludwig van Beethoven. Schubert carried a torch in Beethoven’s funeral procession, one year before his own death at the age of thirty-one. At Schubert’s request, he was buried near the grave of his hero. Although Franz Schubert died at a very young age, he left behind hundreds of the world’s favorite compositions.

SCHERZO - *A Musical Joke*

Q. WHAT IS THE FAVORITE PARTY GAME FOR COMPOSERS?

A. "HAYDN" SEEK!

TECHNIQUE CHECK-UP

The way we sit at the piano is very important. Good piano posture = fewer mistakes, better access to the whole keyboard, good sound, healthier body

Attention to good piano posture includes:

- Distance from keyboard so that elbows, slightly bent, can move freely in front of you
- Leaning slightly forward
- Feet on floor if you can reach
- Shoulders down and relaxed
- Wrists and arms relaxed, hand slightly round, fingertips firm

You be the teacher: Check out these photographs. Tell your teacher what advice you can offer to help guide these students toward piano perfect posture!



BIRTHDAYS

December

9	Joaquin Turina (1882)	Spanish composer
16	Ludwig van Beethoven (1770)	German composer
30	Dmitri Kabalevsky (1904)	Russian composer & conductor

January

6	Alexander Scriabin (1872)	Russian composer
7	Francis Poulenc (1899)	French composer & pianist
27	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756)	Austrian composer

February

8	John Williams (1932)	American composer & conductor
20	Carl Czerny (1791)	Austrian pianist & composer
23	George Frideric Handel (1685)	German-born English composer

PUZZLE

Franz Schubert



ACROSS

3. His music is known for long, beautiful _____
5. Lived most of his life around this city
6. Some of the most popular _____ ever written, he wrote more than 600

DOWN

1. Schubert's musical hero
2. Like his musical hero, Schubert helped start the _____ period in music
4. Teacher and school director who called him a genius

