March 14, 2026

7:30 pm

"Classical Magic"

2026 RICHARD RECORD RISING STARS CONCERTO COMPETITION WINNERS

– Celebrating 27 Years –

Symphony No. 2, D. 125, in B-flat Major
Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

I.	Largo — Allegro vivace
II.	Andante
III.	Menuetto: Allegro vivace — Trio
IV.	Presto

SECOND PLACE WINNER

FIRST PLACE WINNER

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 in C Major, Op. 61
Robert Schumann (1810 – 1856)

I.	Sostenuto assai – Allegro ma non troppo
II.	Scherzo: Allegro vivace
III.	Adagio espressivo
IV.	Allegro molto vivace

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2026 RICHARD RECORD RISING STARS CONCERTO COMPETITION WINNERS
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Symphony No. 2, D. 125, in B-flat Major
Franz Schubert (b. Vienna, Austria, January 31, 1797; d. Vienna, Austria, November 19, 1828)

    I.   **Largo — Allegro vivace**
    II.   **Andante**
    III.   **Menuetto: Allegro vivace — Trio**
    IV.   **Presto**

This work is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings. It lasts about 30 minutes.

Franz Schubert lived a short, but full, life, all under the shadow of Beethoven, whose work he emulated. "He had a solid reputation, though it was primarily as a composer of songs," writes Harold C. Schonberg in his book *The Lives of the Great Composers – Third Edition.* "His mission was to create music. He wrote an enormous amount of music – he was an incredibly fast writer. His compositions are highly original."

"He was the twelfth of fourteen children, of whom only five survived. Schubert showed uncommon gifts for music from an early age. His father gave him his first violin lessons, and his elder brother gave him piano lessons, but Schubert soon exceeded their abilities," continues Schonberg.

In 1808, at the age of eleven, he entered the Stadtkonvikt school, where he learned the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. "He did well in all his studies; he was a good pianist and violinist and, at the age of eleven, already a prolific composer," writes Schonberg. "Soon thereafter, he made a big enough impression to attract the attention of composer Antonio Salieri (Mozart's contemporary) and became his composition student."

Symphony No. 2 was written in 1815; "it is bouncing and tuneful," adds Schonberg. Yet it was not performed publicly but may - at most - have received a performance from a student orchestra.

What to Listen For

First movement
The opening movement begins with a slow introduction alternating between forceful chords from the winds,

brass, and timpani, with winding, chromatic lines from the strings. The initial theme of the *Allegro vivace* is based on the corresponding first theme of Ludwig van Beethoven's *Overture to The Creatures of Prometheus*.

Second movement
The second movement is a theme with five variations in E-flat Major, Schubert's only set of symphonic variations. Although there is some variation in the melody, the primary focus of the variations is on instrumentation and tone color. The first variation features violins and winds. The second variation passes the theme between the low strings and the woodwinds. The third variation is again violins and winds. The fourth variation features some acceleration with the use of triplet-sixteenth notes. The fifth variation maintains the triplet-sixteenths, but they move into the background with the melody returning close to its original form as a kind of recapitulation. A coda concludes the movement.

Third movement
The Menuetto is mainly scored for the full orchestra and is powerful. The contrasting trio section is more thinly scored for winds, violins, and pizzicato bass. The melody of the Trio is a variation of the theme used in the second movement, forming a link between the inner two movements.

Fourth movement
The finale is fast! This Presto vivace provides a suitable closure to the symphony, with galloping melodies occasionally overcome by sudden, intense drama.

Franz Schubert

SECOND PLACE WINNER

FIRST PLACE WINNER

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 in C Major, Op. 61
Robert Schumann (b. Zwickau, Germany, June 8, 1810; Bonn, Germany, July 29, 1856)

    I.   **Sostenuto assai – Allegro ma non troppo**
   II.   **Scherzo: Allegro vivace**
 III.   **Adagio espressivo**
 IV.   **Allegro molto vivace**

This symphony is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings. The work lasts 38 minutes.

"Robert Schumann was introspective, idealistic, closely allied with the literary aspects of the age, an innovator, a critic and a great composer," writes Harold C. Schonberg in his book *The Lives of the Great Composers – Third Edition*. "Mood, color, and allusions were important to him. He accomplished a great deal in the forty-six years of his life."

Schumann was a self-taught composer. He was born in Saxony, and his father was a bookseller. Not surprising, the young boy loved to read and grew up surrounded with good literature; there is no other composer who had such a fusion of sound with literary ideas. He even wrote poetry and fiction and started to compose music at the age of seven. He had learned to play the piano and had a talent for improvisation.

Later, his mother sent him to law school, yet he was drawn to a career in music. At age 18, he found a piano teacher in Leipzig named Friedrich Wieck with whom he took his first serious musical instruction. Ultimately, his symphonies "are among the most inspired creations of the nineteenth century," writes Schonberg.

However, Schumann acknowledged that he found orchestration a difficult art to master, and many analysts have criticized his orchestral writing. Conductors including Gustav Mahler (Music Director of the New York Philharmonic from 1909 to 1911) and George Szell (Musical Director and Conductor of The Cleveland Orchestra from 1946 until 1970) made changes to the instrumentation before conducting his orchestral music. This symphony is structurally the most classical of his four symphonies and is influenced by Beethoven and Schubert.

"Schumann was living in Dresden when he composed this work. He and his wife, Clara, also a fine pianist, created a piano arrangement of the symphony during that time," writes Nancy B. Reich in her book *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman-Revised Edition.*

Symphony No. 2 was first performed on November 5, 1846, at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig under the direction of composer and conductor Felix Mendelssohn. The work ultimately came to be admired in the nineteenth century for its perceived metaphysical content, but the symphony's popularity waned in the twentieth century owing to its unusual structure. Yet, according to Michael Steinberg in his book *A Listener's Guide to The Symphony,* the autograph manuscript of this work earned well over $2 million at a Sotheby auction in 1994, a record to date for a manuscript of a single musical work.

What to Listen For

First movement
The first movement begins with a slow brass chorale, elements of which recur through the piece. It becomes dramatic and turbulent. It is characterized by sharp rhythm and by the masterly transformation of the material of the Introduction.

Second movement
The second movement is a Scherzo with two Trios, whose main portion strongly emphasizes a rapid and playful resolution. The second Trio employs a motif in the context of flowing eighth notes reminiscent of the Baroque era.

Third movement
This is a Sonata movement with the character of an elegy, its middle section strongly contrapuntal in texture. It is one of "heart-stopping beauty," adds Steinberg.

Fourth movement
The finale is in a very freely treated sonata form, its second theme related to the opening theme of the third movement. "It is in every way extraordinary conception in its expression and structure," continues Steinberg. Later in the movement, a new theme appears which has, as its sources of inspiration, the last song from Beethoven's cycle "An die ferne Geliebte," and Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" (from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony). The coda of the Finale recalls the material from the Introduction, thereby thematically spanning the entire work.

Robert Schumann