

## Franz Schubert (1797–1828) Fantasie in C ‘Wanderer-Fantasie’, D. 760 (1822)

**I — Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo**

**II — Adagio**

**III — Presto**

**IV — Allegro**

Composed in four sections, played without break, the Fantasie in C one of Schubert’s most formidable works for the piano. Composed when Schubert was at the age of twenty-five, roughly the time where he was first diagnosed with syphilis, the disease which would kill him six years later. Schubert dedicated this piece to Carl Emanuel Liebenberg von Zsittin, hoping for some remuneration for the dedication. Ironically, Zsittin was an amateur musician, and what resulted was Schubert’s most technically challenging piece for the piano. Schubert himself was not entirely capable of the demands set by this piece. He once famously attempted a performance, which was abandoned midway; Schubert threw his arms in the air and exclaimed in his frustration, ‘*Das Zeug soll der Teufel spielen!*’, (‘The devil should play this stuff!’).

The entire fantasy is based on one short rhythmic motive presented in the first bar, from which all other main themes are developed. Simply, a long note followed by two shorter notes. The concept of thematic transformation was relatively new by this time, and was later used to great mastery by Franz Liszt, particularly in his Sonata in b minor.

The name ‘Wanderer-Fantasie’ comes from that the second section draws its thematic material from a lied named ‘*Der Wanderer*’, written by Schubert six years earlier. Schubert extracted the second verse of the song and places it largely unaltered as the theme of the second movement, which is effectively a set of theme and variations upon this theme. The text of the extracted verse by Georg Philipp Schmidt von Lübeck is as follows:

<i>Die Sonne dünkt mich hier so kalt,</i>	The sun seems so cold to me here,
<i>Die Blüte welk, das Leben alt,</i>	The blossom faded, the life old,
<i>Und was sie reden, leerer Schall;</i>	And what they say has an empty sound;
<i>Ich bin ein Fremdling überall.</i>	I am a stranger everywhere.

The first section begins with what is similar to an orchestral tutti, the full orchestra presenting the theme in full symphonic style in C major. The three-note motif is masterfully transformed and is subjected to Schubert’s hallmark melodic and harmonic techniques.

The second section begins with the song extract, which uses the three note motif, now much slower and in c-sharp minor. Each successive variation following this theme uses gradually shorter note values. Although the slowest section of the four, marked *Adagio*, the music soon becomes some of the most furious in the entire piece.

The third section is in the style of a scherzo in a jaunty Viennese style in A-flat major, with accompanying trio section. The original three note motif is still present, but now the rhythm is slightly altered. An agitated progression builds up to a series of virtuoso arpeggios to conclude the section.

The final section begins with a fugato and is a virtuoso spectacle throughout. The fantasy resolves triumphantly in the home key of C major.