

# HAYDN'S LONDON SYMPHONY



CLASSICAL SERIES

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, AT 7 PM | FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, AT 8 PM

## NASHVILLE SYMPHONY

GIANCARLO GUERRERO, *conductor*

### FRANZ SCHUBERT

#### **Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, D. 759, "Unfinished"**

Allegro moderato

Andante con moto

### FRANK MARTIN

#### **Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments and Timpani**

Allegro

Adagietto: Misterioso ed elegante

Allegro vivace

*Érik Gratton, flute*

*Titus Underwood, oboe*

*James Zimmermann, clarinet*

*Julia Harguindey, bassoon*

*Leslie Norton, horn*

*Jeffrey Bailey, trumpet*

*Paul Jenkins, trombone*

*Joshua Hickman, timpani*

— INTERMISSION —

### FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

#### **Symphony No. 104 in D Major, "London"**

Adagio – Allegro

Andante

Menuet: Allegro

Spiritoso

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*This concert will last approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes.*

# TONIGHT'S CONCERT | AT A GLANCE



## FRANZ SCHUBERT

Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, D. 759, "Unfinished"

- Unlike Mozart's, Mahler's and Bruckner's well-known unfinished works, which were left incomplete as a result of the composers' deaths, Schubert's symphony was composed six years before he died.
- Over the years, many have speculated as to why Schubert ceased work on the piece after completing just two movements. Some biographers note that the composer contracted syphilis just a few months after writing them, and that returning to the Symphony may have been too psychologically painful.
- The Symphony is in the key of B minor — which Beethoven once described in his sketchbooks as a "black key."



## FRANK MARTIN

Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments and Timpani

- One of the leading Swiss composers of the last century, Martin first began composing at age 8. The son of a Calvinist minister, he was originally pushed by his parents to pursue university studies in the sciences, but ultimately embarked on a career in music – without conservatory training – shortly after World War I.
- Being a self-taught composer allowed Martin to explore a wide variety of musical styles and techniques, and he was profoundly influenced by the French and German traditions exemplified in the work of composers like Ravel and Debussy. He was also particularly attracted to folk music and non-Western rhythmic systems.
- The composer's use of a reduced orchestra allows Martin to showcase and highlight the soloists, with flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet and trombone all taking the spotlight.



## FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Symphony No. 104 in D Major, "London"

- Haydn is often referred to as the "Father of the Symphony," with more than 100 such works to his name. He was also an associate and mentor of Mozart's and a teacher to Beethoven, further solidifying his place in music history.
- In the 1790s, Haydn spent two different stints in London, during which time he composed a dozen symphonies. These are collectively referred to as his "London" symphonies, with the last of those, No. 104, also known by the nickname "London."
- Haydn premiered his Symphony No. 104 at the King's Theatre in London and, according to musicologist A. Peter Brown, likely provided accompaniment on either the fortepiano or harpsichord. Brown goes on to note that the "London" symphonies "...were among the first works to reach canonical status. They not only served as a standard against which every other symphony was measured, but also broke the demand for new works."



## FRANZ SCHUBERT

Born on January 31, 1797, in Liechtental, a suburb of Vienna; died on November 19, 1828, in Vienna

*Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, D. 759, “Unfinished”*

**Composed:** 1822

**First performance:** December 17, 1865, in Vienna, with Johann von Herbeck conducting

**First Nashville Symphony performance:**

February 22, 1949, with Music Director William Strickland

**Estimated length:** 25 minutes

Unfinished works tend to have a special aura precisely because of their imperfect state. Perhaps the most powerful example is that of Mozart’s Requiem, its incompleteness enhanced by the fact that the composer was prevented by death from finishing a work that addresses the topic of death itself. Bruckner’s Ninth and Mahler’s Tenth are monumental representatives of the unfinished “genre,” so to speak — works similarly cut off by their respective composer’s deaths. But Schubert’s Symphony No. 9 in B Minor exists in a category all its own. The posthumous nickname “Unfinished” may hint at the Romantic touch of ruins, of untimely death stalking the creative spirit, but in fact the composer lived on for six highly productive years after writing its two movements, producing one masterpiece after another.

So why did Schubert stop after completing two movements? Or did he even stop? Sketches for a scherzo third movement exist, and possibly even for a finale, yet Schubert may have decided deliberately not to continue with the project and recycled some of the music planned for the rest into other pieces. If so, why would he do so after writing two perfectly complete movements? Perhaps he simply couldn’t figure out how to proceed with a structure weighty enough to counterbalance the perfection of those two movements. Some biographers have suggested that the illness Schubert experienced just a few months after writing them —

a result of contracting syphilis — was so devastating that he found returning to this Symphony too psychologically painful (through a kind of guilt by association).

In any case, the “Unfinished” Symphony shows Schubert at his most ambitious and anticipates the epic scale of his final effort in the genre, the “Great” C Major Symphony. As a teenager, he had expressed doubts about Beethoven’s “eccentric” symphonic style and took Mozart and Haydn as models for his earlier symphonies. But Schubert eventually came to appreciate the significance of Beethoven’s achievement, and he hoped to emulate this with a “great symphony” of his own, as he wrote in 1824 (the year Beethoven’s Ninth had its premiere in Vienna). Already some years before this, Schubert had begun to show a more ambitious approach in his instrumental compositions, and the “Unfinished” stands as an interim work on his way toward the Beethovenian model he had in mind for his final symphony.

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The Symphony begins in the shadowy gloom of B minor — a tonality Beethoven once described in his sketchbooks as a “black key.” (It’s also the key Tchaikovsky would choose for his final symphony, the *Pathétique*.) A mysterious opening figure, played almost inaudibly by basses and cellos, sounds from an abyss. The apparently resigned air of this theme, which will come back in haunting transformations, turns out to be just one of its many guises. It sets up a remarkably uneasy sense of expectation, which Schubert then prolongs by giving us accompaniment before melody. Violins spin out a restless figure above pizzicato accompaniment — all of which is itself accompaniment for a melancholy theme sung by oboes and clarinets.

A magical “carryover” note from bassoons and horns (an idea perhaps suggested by the analogous spot in Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony) links to the second theme. Schubert follows the same pattern as the start: accompaniment first, and then the overlay of theme, which happens to be one of the most famous of symphonic tunes. Cellos sing it quietly at first, then offer sighing echoes to the violins’ rendition. The sheer beauty of Schubert’s melody, however, is deceptive and Siren-like. He

reveals its more aggressive side as the exposition unfolds, while the hesitant syncopations of the accompaniment later return as a destabilizing force. The full brunt of the tragedy is yet to be experienced. Roiling climaxes in the development and coda convey a frightening volatility, and the end returns to the grim, inescapable pathos of the opening motif.

To follow such exhaustively stirring music must have seemed daunting, but Schubert's Andante con moto (in E major) presents a persuasive counterweight. A descending-scale figure establishes an accompaniment to the serenely prayerful melody from which it derives. Another theme is then commenced by the clarinet. At the Symphony's posthumous premiere in 1865, the critic Eduard

Hanslick described Schubert's "melodic stream" as so lucid that "one can see every pebble on the bottom."

In contrast to the almost monolithic darkness of the first movement, the Andante is unexpectedly mercurial, giving vent to passionate outbursts that disturb the calm waters of melody. These traces of darker, more ambivalent moods add depth to Schubert's lyricism. There have been several attempts to "complete" the "Unfinished," but Schubert's pair of movements by themselves make for a uniquely satisfying torso.

*The score calls for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings*



## FRANK MARTIN

Born on September 15, 1890, in Geneva, Switzerland; died on November 21, 1974, in Naarden, The Netherlands

**Composed:** March-August 1949

**First performance:** October 25, 1949, in Bern, Switzerland, with Luc Balmer conducting

**First Nashville Symphony performance:**

These are the orchestra's first performances.

**Estimated length:** 20 minutes

### Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments and Timpani

**G**eneva, the stronghold of Protestant Reformation leader John Calvin, was the birthplace of Frank Martin, who became one of the leading Swiss composers of the last century. His own father was a Calvinist minister, and his ancestors were Huguenots, French Protestants who had fled persecution and found tolerance in this city on Switzerland's western border. Martin at first dutifully obeyed his parents' wish for him to pursue university studies in the sciences, though he had already started composing when he was 8. But he nevertheless plunged wholeheartedly into a life of music, without conservatory training, after World War I.

Being essentially self-taught as a composer seems to have whet Martin's appetite to explore a wide stylistic spectrum in the decades that led up to such mature compositions as this Concerto. Initially, he was involved with a movement led by countryman Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, who developed a theory of education with a revolutionary focus on

the kinesthetics and rhythm of musical experience. Martin himself became a teacher and briefly served as president of the Swiss Musicians' Union.

Absorbing profound influences from both the German and the French traditions, Martin gained important exposure to the sound worlds of Debussy and Ravel through the work of the Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet. Folk music and non-Western rhythmic systems also attracted his interest. In the 1930s, Martin went through a phase of adapting Schoenberg's 12-tone system to his own tastes, eventually developing a signature style by his early 50s and gaining international recognition relatively late in his long career. In 1946 Martin resettled in the Netherlands, his home for the remainder of his life.

The 1940s produced several pivotal works besides the Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments, including his "secular oratorio" *Le vin herbé* ("The Drugged Wine," a treatment of the Tristan legend), the *Petite symphonie concertante* and the Passion



*“Whatever the movements of the soul, the spirit, the sensibility that are manifested in one’s work,” Martin said, “one’s art inevitably bears the sign of...this liberation, this sublimation that evokes in us a finished form, and that is, I think, what is called ‘beauty.’”*

oratorio *Golgotha*. Martin gravitated toward sacred choral music and religiously tinged instrumental works during his final years.

Eight years before his death, the composer expressed his vision of what it means to create music: “Whatever the movements of the soul, the spirit, the sensibility that are manifested in one’s work, and whether the state is one of anguish or even despair, one’s art inevitably bears the sign of...this liberation, this sublimation that evokes in us a finished form, and that is, I think, what is called ‘beauty.’”

In works such as the Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments, Martin’s abiding admiration for J.S. Bach coexists comfortably with traces of the Neoclassical Stravinsky and a harmonic sensibility informed by the advances made by Schoenberg and his followers. “While Martin proved adept at moving between such stylistic extremes,” notes the Swiss musicologist Bernhard Billeter, “his music always retained a recognizable sound.”

Still another dimension that shows Martin’s personal voice is the sheer sonority of the Concerto: the way he uses the unique sounds produced by instruments to craft their interactions and to structure a piece. In his earlier *Petite symphonie concertante*, for example, Martin juxtaposes bowed string instruments with harp and keyboards.

Regarding the Concerto for Seven Winds, which was written in response to a commission from the Bern Music Society (the score’s dedicatee), Martin stated that his intention was “to display the musical qualities of the various soloists in the wind and brass groups, as well as their virtuosity. I have not spared them technical difficulty — so they can show off. But I also tried to make the most of the characters of sonority and expression of the seven instruments, which differ so greatly in their manner of producing sound and in their mechanism.” In this sense, the Concerto provides an opportunity for the Nashville Symphony winds and timpani, all of whom are given important soloist roles, to demonstrate their remarkable musicianship.

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

**M**artin’s use of a reduced orchestra allows him to highlight the instrumentalists as soloists, but it also represents a self-imposed limitation that brings to mind the Neoclassical Stravinsky, who similarly found such restraints to be a creative spur. The classification “wind instruments” in the title refers to both woodwinds (flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon) and brass (horn, trumpet and trombone), all of which are accorded soloist roles in the piece, which is cast in a standard three-movement format.

In fact, the opening minutes move among each of these, starting with solos (separated by brief ensemble utterances) for the oboe and then clarinet, then to a trio combination of horn, trumpet and trombone, and on to flute juxtaposed with the bassoon. Martin develops an angular thematic idea that has an especially animated rhythmic character. “Each musical element is connected with one soloist, and they make up a conversation in which each speaks his [or her] own language,” writes the composer.

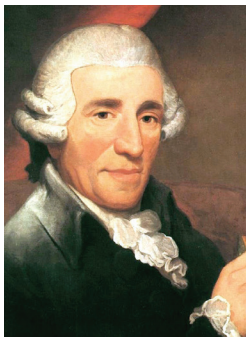
Martin’s music here also contains echoes of Baroque practice (heard through a Modernist filter), as does the slow middle movement, Adagietto: *Misterioso ed elegante*. A repeating accompaniment figure in the strings in a steady 2/4 pulse undergirds the shifting lyrical mood, which Martin describes as alternately “elegant and serene” and “somber or violent.” One especially remarkable example of how the different instruments speak in unique idioms can be heard in the changing quality of the melody given first to the bassoon high in its register, which recurs at the end of the movement in the middle of the trombone’s register.

A greater amount of collective action characterizes the lively finale, which also makes room for a timpani solo. At this point, notes Martin, “the rhythm now changes, and far away a march is heard, which gradually becomes louder until it seizes the whole orchestra. At the

height of its development, the melody played by the bassoon and trombone in the second movement bursts in. Then the rhythm changes again, returning imperceptibly to the 3/4 of the start and, after a chase of the flute and clarinet and then of the other

high instruments, the piece ends with a new theme of popular character in a brilliant *accelerando*.”

*The Concerto is scored for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, timpani, 2 percussionists and strings.*



## FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Born on March 31, 1732,  
in Rohrau, Lower Austria;  
died on May 31, 1809,  
in Vienna

**Composed:** 1795

**First performance:** May 4, 1795, at the King's Theatre in London

**First Nashville Symphony performance:**  
January 14, 1947, with Music Director  
William Strickland

**Estimated length:** 29 minutes

### Symphony No. 104 in D major, “London”

Haydn spent a large part of his career in a rural corner of Hungary as an employee of the Esterházy, a noble family of immense wealth and influence. Prince Paul Anton, the Esterházy patriarch who hired Haydn in 1761, fortunately possessed an exceptional love of music. After an early period of freelancing — a path that both Mozart and Beethoven would follow — Haydn benefited from the security that was essential to his temperament. His duties at this stage included directing all instrumental, stage and secular vocal music, as well as responsibility for the permanent staff of musicians. He even had to monitor problems with their instruments.

When Paul Anton died in 1762, his brother, Nikolaus, took over leadership of the remotely located estate and proved to be even more passionate about music. Haydn's remarkable efforts from this period, when he produced about 25 symphonies, reflect the creative enthusiasm he must have felt as the result of his valued position. Haydn by no means “invented” the genre, but he did elevate the symphony far beyond the status of music for entertainment.

Having the Esterházy's small house orchestra at his disposal was the equivalent of being able to direct his own laboratory. “There was no one near to confuse me, so I was forced to become original,” as the composer later stated. Such originality involved the use of “extremes,” observes David Hurwitz in his survey of Haydn: extremes “of dynamics...of tempo, but also in terms of formal

variety and actual content...[V]arious popular and sophisticated elements mingle freely in practically each and every work to a degree that would not be seen in music again until nearly a century after Haydn's death, when Mahler once again redefined the parameters of what sort of materials classical music could absorb.”

Haydn's audience eventually expanded from the elite Esterházy court to an international base of fans — including enthusiastic followers in Paris and London. The result was that this man from humble peasant origins won the adulation of music lovers across Europe, at the same time acquiring independent wealth. In 1791, Haydn set out on the first of two major residencies in London that enhanced his fame and fortune even more. He had been engaged to serve as what we would now call “composer-in-residence” in London through arrangements by the German-born concert promoter and violin virtuoso Johann Peter Salomon.

Haydn was now approaching his 60s, his imagination spurred on by the spirited reception from the sophisticated London public — marking a dramatic contrast to the decades of isolation that marked his lifestyle while serving the Esterházy. Both London trips (1791-92 and 1794-95) produced a dozen fresh symphonies, all of them composed for audiences in the cosmopolitan capital where the German-born Handel had spent the bulk of his career earlier in the century. The irrepressible innovation and vitality of these works make them

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outstanding examples of renewed creative flowering late in an artist's career.

The two sets of six symphonies each comprise what are collectively known as Haydn's "London" symphonies, while the last of these — the final symphony he composed — is also known by the nickname "London." Incidentally, many works in his large catalogue of symphonies (including No. 104) carry nicknames that stem from his fans or publishers. In a sense, they indicate the popularity of his music.

Haydn composed his final symphony while living in London and presented the premiere at the King's Theatre with an orchestra quite larger than the one he had worked with under the Esterházy. According to the musicologist A. Peter Brown, Haydn likely "presided at the fortepiano or harpsichord," contributing continuo accompaniment, and led the orchestra together with Salomon in the concertmaster position. Brown adds that the "London" symphonies "were among the first works to reach canonical status. They not only served as a standard against which every other symphony was measured, but also broke the demand for new works; the special attributes of a symphony could be savored many times. Symphonies now achieved an identity from their passages of orchestral brilliance, their unexpected gestures, their beautiful melodies and their sublime effects."

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

**E**leven of the 12 "London" symphonies begin with a slow introduction. In the case of No. 104, Haydn writes an especially portentous introduction in D minor, built from the elemental motif of the two most important notes of this key, D and A. This music foreshadows the mysterious cosmic soundscape that begins Beethoven's Ninth (also in D minor) and that left a profound mark

on Bruckner and Mahler.

The tension of this slow introduction finds powerful release in the shift to fast tempo and D major for the Allegro, whose folk-like theme is subjected to Haydn's signature invention to sustain an ebullient, far-reaching first movement. For example, he doesn't even need to present a contrasting second theme: slight alterations make the first one serve that function. The further, intense development of isolated portions of the theme suggest a symbol for the restless change of life itself. Haydn's music shows the power of art to give this variability — so chaotic when experienced in daily life — a sense of purpose and structure.

The Andante, featuring beautiful scoring for the woodwinds, ventures into deeper emotional territory than might be expected from the opening measures. Here, and throughout the "London" Symphony, Haydn reveals the inexhaustible richness of his material through subtle variations. The third movement, for example, contains another characteristic Haydn trait: his subversive humor, as evidenced in the sudden break and pause in the music after the entire orchestra plays a trilling passage that suggests laughter.

As the culmination of his brilliant career as a symphonist — though great music was still to come from Haydn's pen — he caps the Symphony with a substantial finale. Like the opening movement's theme, the theme here suggests a folk tune; its resemblance to a London peddler tune of the time might account for the Symphony's nickname. This, too, for all its surface simplicity, gets an in-depth workout that includes further surprises before Haydn takes his final bow in the genre with which his name is forever associated.

*The score calls for double flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, timpani and strings.*

—Thomas May is the Nashville Symphony's program annotator.