

ARTEMIS

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



Sunday, April 26th | 3:00pm
Trinity Episcopal Church
Highland Park



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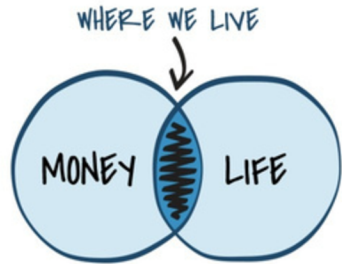


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WELCOME

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our final concert of the season; and what a terrific one it has been! This season we performed with world-touring forte-pianist Daniel Adam Maltz, premiered a work by Trinity's own Suzy Born, commissioned a song by Ari Fisher, performed with celebrated mezzo-soprano Melina Jaharis, and ran a very successful Matching Gift Drive to get our first endowment up and running.

As the founder of Artemis Chamber Orchestra, it is such a privilege and honor to accept all this generous support from our community on ACO's behalf. Thank you for helping us achieve so much since our first concert in 2021!

Today's performance will be quite different from our usual, as I will not conduct the group. A competent leader is one who knows when to step back and let others take the reins; that is what Schubert's Octet calls for. With only eight players, all the musicians can sit in one row and see each other. Conductors came into being when ensembles grew to the point where not all musicians could see each other, leading to timing issues. When the group is small enough, a conductor is superfluous.

The outstanding Artemis Chamber Orchestra musicians playing today prepared the octet together in the true chamber style, independent of a singular leader. I am very excited to enjoy their artistry from the audience today!

Yours,
Diana Economou
Music Director





Schubert Octet

Sunday, April 26, 2026

3:00pm

Trinity Episcopal Church

Highland Park, IL

Diana Economou, *Music Director*

Zachary Good, *Clarinet*

Edin Agamenoni, *Bassoon*

Emma Sepmeier, *Horn*

Jinty McTavish, *Violin I, Concertmaster*

Brent Taghap, *Violin II, Principal*

Erin Rafferty, *Viola, Principal*

Herine Coetzee Koschak, *Cello, Principal*

Tina Battaglia, *Bass*

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Octet in F Major, D 803

I. *Adagio – Allegro*

II. *Adagio*

III. *Scherzo*

IV. *Andante*

V. *Menuetto*

VI. *Andante molto – Allegro*

PROGRAM NOTES

Octet in F, D. 803

Schubert lived during what is now called the Biedermeier period of Vienna's history. This period saw a rise in the middle class to positions of power and influence previously belonging to the aristocracy, hence the name "Biedermeier" (the German word *bieder* translates into 'plain', while *Maier* is a common bourgeois surname).



English musicologist Alex Hyatt King said in a symposium on Schubert, "Biedermeier' was psychologically founded on a simplification of classical forms, a retreat from romantic pathos, and a devotion to sentimental lyricism. It lacked all symbolism, it was unimaginative, it knew not vague searchings, but clung solidly to the actual present, and above all to middle class respectability."

While Schubert does not fit the mold of a Biedermeier composer, as his music often deals with the heavy topics of death, suffering, and thwarted love, and has a tendency to the extreme emotions, the carefree nature of the era was not wholly foreign to him. There are many examples in his oeuvre of lightheartedness, cheerfulness, and lyricism, including in today's selection.

However, the octet was written during a trying time in Schubert's life; one to two years prior, he contracted syphilis. In the early months of 1824 he emerged from the secondary stage of the illness and entered the latent phase, which sees a decrease in the highly uncomfortable symptoms of the early stages. At this time he wrote to his brother, "Do not think that I am not well or cheerful, just the contrary. True, it is no longer that happy time when every object seems to us to be surrounded by a youthful glory, but a period of fateful recognition of a miserable reality, which I endeavor to beautify as far as possible by my imagination, thank God." Here is a man whose hopes in life have been shattered and yet continues to trod on.

Though in a miserable state, he made plans for a slew of chamber music which would “pave the way toward a grand symphony.” From now until his death in 1828, he wrote three string quartets, a string quintet, the octet, and two piano trios, all masterworks of the chamber repertoire.

The opportunity for this octet came with a commission from Count Ferdinand Troyer, a clarinettist and member of Archduke Rudolph, Crown Prince of Austria’s musical establishment. He stipulated that the piece should be modelled on Beethoven’s septet of 1800, and Schubert delivered. He used the same instrumentation, though added the second violin, and the same movement structure, even using the minuet dance, though it was at this point quite out of style.

To be so explicitly compared to Beethoven must have been both exhilarating and nerve-wracking for Schubert. He had a headstrong confidence that he could reach a high level of composition, and had been working hard to further his career to reach Beethoven’s status in Vienna’s musical society. To be approached with such a commission must have given him the beginnings of a sense of arrival in his career.

The octet is the most orchestral of his late chamber works, with a complete string section and the foundations of the wind section: clarinet, bassoon, and horn. While the surface of the piece is quite cheerful, “taking a hedonistic delight in manipulating rhythms [and] timing harmonic events,” according to Schubert biographer Brian Newbould, it contains abrupt changes in emotional affect, typical of his mature music. A joyful moment can quickly become dark and sorrowful, and vice-versa.

A quintessential example of this in the octet comes in the second movement. Christopher Gibbs in *The Life of Schubert*, perfectly describes the moment; the “meditative serenity of the second movement attains the lyrical sublimity of Schubert at the very height of his powers, but upon this beauty intrudes one of his most terrifying outbursts of pain, even brutality.” Though, “as is typical throughout Schubert’s writings and music, sorrow and sadness eventually turn to joy and optimism.”

These oscillations in his music may provide a crucial insight into Schubert's psychological make-up. Schubert once wrote, "For long years I felt torn between the greatest grief and the greatest love... Whenever I attempted to sing of love, it turned to pain. And again, when I tried to sing of pain, it turned to love. Thus were love and pain divided in me."

This duality is not only an expressive hallmark but also a structural one in the octet. The work unfolds across six movements, a scale more often associated with divertimenti or symphonies than chamber music, allowing Schubert to explore a wide emotional and formal landscape. The opening of the first movement establishes a grand, symphonic breadth, with a slow introduction hinting at drama before yielding to a buoyant and expansive *Allegro*. Yet even here, moments of harmonic shading and unexpected turns remind listeners that this brightness is not entirely secure.

The third movement *Scherzo* bursts forth with rhythmic vitality, its propulsive energy contrasting with a more relaxed *Trio* that offers pastoral warmth. The fourth movement variations demonstrate Schubert's ingenuity in transforming a simple theme into a spectrum of textures and characters, from playful to introspective. Particularly striking is his use of instrumental color, pairing winds and strings in ever-changing combinations that heighten the sense of dialogue within the ensemble. The *Minuet* and *Finale* bring the work to a spirited close, though even in these lighter movements, shadows briefly pass over the music.

Ultimately, the Octet stands as a testament to Schubert's ability to reconcile opposing forces: intimacy and grandeur, joy and despair, simplicity and profundity. In doing so, it not only fulfills his ambition to "pave the way toward a grand symphony," but also affirms his unique voice within the chamber tradition.



– Program note by Diana Economou



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ABOUT ACO

Music is capable of affecting its listeners in profound ways. Perhaps more than any other art, music is able to enter our souls directly and alter us for the better. Live music brings people together to share in a momentary but beautiful and unique communal experience, something sorely needed these days.

Artemis Chamber Orchestra was formed to provide this experience to the people of the North Shore. We seek to perform masterworks of the orchestral chamber music repertoire at the highest level to provide our audience with the experience of beautiful music, something which not only engages and inspires us, but transforms lives.

There is a surprising absence of chamber music in our community. By staying local and accessible to our audience, hiring from the abundance of highly qualified local musicians, and commissioning local composers, we are actively working to grow the classical music scene in the North Shore.

Additionally, ACO holds Partner Concerts with Title I schools to provide outstanding musical experiences to students who otherwise would not have the opportunity to play with and hear professional orchestras.

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Zachary Good

Bassoon

Edin Agamenoni

Horn

Emma Sepmeier

Violin I

Jinty McTavish, *Concertmaster*

Violin II

Brent Taghap, *Principal*

Viola

Erin Rafferty, *Principal*

Cello

Herine Coetzee Koschak,
Principal

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MUSIC DIRECTOR, FOUNDER



Diana Economou is a conductor from Chicago's north suburbs whose passion and talent for music has led her to perform around the world including in the Chicago Symphony Center, the Sydney Opera House, and in Sofia, Bulgaria. She's trained with leading conductors such as Markand Thakar, Larry Racheff, Gary Lewis, and Donald Schleicher and has conducted professional orchestras such as the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra and the Bulgarian New Symphony Orchestra. In 2019 Diana founded Artemis Chamber Orchestra and proudly

serves as music director. After obtaining two music education degrees from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, she now works as a passionate and beloved orchestra teacher in Mount Prospect, Illinois.

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We are particularly proud to support the Artemis Chamber Orchestra and its mission of providing professional musical experiences to students.



"Playing next to a professional made me realize what I could be one day if I stuck with my instrument, and that gave me hope that I would get better and continue to develop my talents."