

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Sonata
in A Minor

"Per Arpeggione"
(1824)

arranged for Viola and piano

Piano Part

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Franz Schubert

Sonata in A Minor "Per Arpeggione"

The "Guitarre d'amour" was invented in 1821 by Johann Georg Stauffer (1778-1853). About the size of a 'cello, this instrument had a fretted fingerboard and six strings, tuned the same as the guitar (E A D G B E). It later became known as the "Arpeggione," because of its facility with guitar-like arpeggiations.

Due to a number of technical problems, the Arpeggione never became popular, and suffered a rapid obsolescence. Its guitar-shaped body made it awkward to hold, and it was difficult to play loudly on a single string because of the low curvature imposed by its many strings. In fact, the sonata presented here is probably the only significant work written specifically for this unusual instrument.

Schubert wrote this piece in 1824, and the care taken to suit the music to the instrument is quite apparent. It can be noted that rarely are dynamics stronger than "p" indicated, especially in fast passages. He made good use of the instrument's arpeggiating abilities, and wrote the music to show off the arpeggione's extensive range.

The fact that the music has outlived the instrument by some two centuries is a tribute to Schubert's genius for memorable melodies. It is sometimes used as a showpiece by exceptional 'cello players, as only the most capable virtuosos can reach the impossibly high places. Even on viola the higher ranges are difficult, and the lower registers (below open C) are of course impossible.

Nonetheless, the piece lends itself ideally to the tonality of the viola. In this arrangement, I have relied heavily on the assistance of Jean-Pierre Coulon. The low ranges had to be re-octavised to fall within the range of the viola. For the high parts, I have opted to re-octavise a few passages to make the piece more accessible to amateur and semi-professional players. The octave on the A string was taken as the practical limit.

Regarding bowings - Schubert's bowings for the arpeggione are of course of limited use, but do give an idea of the phrasing. Since I am not myself a violist, I have deferred to the bowings offered in the edition by Paul Doktor. Still, the player is encouraged to take these with a grain of salt, and to work out for him- or herself bowings and phrasing that are appropriate to one's individual style and capacities. Similarly, the dynamics indications are best taken as suggested starting points. As implied earlier, had the piece been written for other bowed instruments, it would have probably had a lot more mf, f, and ff markings.

Tempo indications in the original are sketchy, and in several places ambiguous. The markings shown (and reflected in the demo midi file) are my own interpretation, largely influenced by a wonderful midi created by John Cowles.

A note on the passage starting at bar 330, and similar passages later in the piece. The recommended way to play this is to double-stop the C and G strings, playing the A on the G-string as a "drone." This gives an interesting "fiddle" effect and is easier than negotiating the shifts if the section is played on adjacent strings in 3rd position.

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Fred Nachbaur, January 1999

Sonata "Per Arpeggione" in A Minor

Allegro moderato

Franz Schubert (1824)

Piano - right

Piano - left

p

cresc. *decresc.*

cresc. *decresc.*

cresc. *decresc.* *(p)*

cresc.

decresc. *pp* *cresc.* *fp* *decresc.* *cresc.*

pp *cresc.*

(mf) *pp* *f*

A

32

fz *fz* *p* *cresc.* *decresc.* *decresc.*

38

decresc. *pp* *ritard.* *(a tempo)*

42

decresc. *decresc.* *decresc.* *decresc.*

46

cresc. *p* *cresc.* *f* *decresc.* *p*

51

cresc. *decresc.* *pp* *decresc.*

55

cresc. **B** *f* *decresc.*

59

p *cresc.* *f* *decresc.* *p*

64 *cresc. decresc.*

69 *cresc. decresc.* *f fz p fz*

75 *(poco rit.)* *p cresc. f p*

82 *cresc.* 3 3 3 3

88 *(a tempo)* *pp* *D*

93 *(poco rit.)* *cresc. f cresc.*

97 *fz p pp cresc.*

103 *(a tempo)*

E *mf* *pp*

107

cresc. (poco a poco)

110

f *cresc.*

114

f *cresc.* *ff* *ffz*

119 *(ritard.)*

pp *fp*

126 *a tempo*

F *p*

132

cresc. *decresc.* *pp* *cresc.* *fp decresc.*

138

G *p*

142

pp

146

cresc. *f* *decresc.* *pp* (ritard.)

151

H *f* *decresc.* *cresc.* *decresc.* *p*

156

(poco accel.) *decresc.* *pp* *pp* (a tempo)

160

G

163

cresc. *p* *cresc.* *p*

167

cresc. *decresc.* *p*

172

p

175

p **J** *f*

179

p *cresc.* *f* *decresc.* *mf* *decresc.* *p*

184

cresc. *decresc.* *fp* *decresc.*

188

cresc. *decresc.* **K** *p* (rit.)

193

pp *dim.*

200

dim. *f* *p* *decresc*

206

Adagio (mm=60)

ff *legato* *pp*

213

cresc. *decresc.*

220

cresc. *decresc.* *pp* *pp* *cresc.*

227

mf *decresc.* *p* *cresc.*

234

f *decresc.* *p* *cresc.* *decresc.*

240

pp *cresc.* *fp*

245

decresc. cresc. decresc. p cresc.

251

decresc. fz p cresc. decresc.

256

N p decresc.

264

pp

271

pp

279

Allegretto (mm=105)

p

288

cresc. pp (2nd time louder)

296

cresc. decresc. cresc. decresc.

305

cresc. decresc. p decresc.

314

cresc. decresc. p

323

pp cresc. fz P

(Allargando)

331

p

339

decresc. pp cresc. mf

347

p cresc. decresc. pp

cresc.

356

Q p

This system contains measures 356 through 363. The music is in a minor key and features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand. A box labeled 'Q' with a 'p' dynamic marking is placed above the right-hand staff in measure 359.

364

poco rit *Allegro*
pp fz mf p

This system contains measures 364 through 372. It begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. In measure 368, the tempo changes to *poco rit* (rhythmically), and in measure 370, it changes to *Allegro*. Dynamics include *fz* (forzando) in measure 368, *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measure 370, and *p* (piano) in measure 372.

373

decresc.

This system contains measures 373 through 379. The music continues with a decrescendo, indicated by the *decresc.* marking in measure 379.

380

pp p

This system contains measures 380 through 387. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) in measure 380 and *p* (piano) in measure 383.

388

pp

This system contains measures 388 through 396. The music features a piano (*pp*) dynamic throughout.

397

(molto rit mm=85) *(poco accel.)*

This system contains measures 397 through 406. It begins with a *(molto rit mm=85)* (very ritardando, metronome marking 85) tempo change in measure 397, followed by a *(poco accel.)* (poco accelerando) tempo change in measure 403.

407

(poco rit.)

This system contains measures 407 through 414. It begins with a *(poco rit.)* (poco ritardando) tempo change in measure 407. The system concludes with a double bar line.

415 *(Allegretto)*
p

424
cresc. *pp* *cresc.*

433
decresc. *cresc.* *decresc.*

442
cresc. *decresc.* *p* *decresc.*

451
cresc. *decresc.* *p* *pp*

460 *meno mosso*
cresc. *fz* **S** *p*

469
pp *cresc. decresc.* *cresc. decresc.*

478

cresc. decresc. p

487

cresc. f decresc. p

a tempo (allegro)

T

495

p

(2)

502

cresc. f p cresc. decresc.

511

pp cresc. f decresc. pp

522

p cresc. decresc. p

(poco rit.) (allargando)

U

530

cresc. decresc. cresc.

539

544

549 *(a tempo)*

557

565

573

581

589

X ritard.
mp

597

decresc.

pp

p

604

pp

613

(meno mosso)

623

a tempo

Y

631

cresc.

decresc.

640

pp

cresc.

decresc.

p

cresc.

648

decresc. mf cresc. decresc.

This system contains measures 648 through 656. The music is in a key with two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes. Dynamic markings include *decresc.*, *mf*, *cresc.*, and *decresc.*.

657

Z p cresc. decresc.

This system contains measures 657 through 664. The right hand has a more active melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The left hand continues with quarter notes. A boxed 'Z' is present above the first measure of the right hand. Dynamic markings include *p*, *cresc.*, and *decresc.*.

665

p decresc. pp

This system contains measures 665 through 673. The right hand features a complex texture with sixteenth-note runs and chords. The left hand has a simpler accompaniment of quarter notes. Dynamic markings include *p*, *decresc.*, and *pp*.

674

decresc. ff p

This system contains measures 674 through 681. The right hand has a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The left hand has a steady accompaniment of quarter notes. Dynamic markings include *decresc.*, *ff*, and *p*.