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Schubert's Unfinished Symphony

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Abstract

Scholars have often wondered why Schubert's *Unfinished* Symphony has remained unfinished. To give a basis on the symphony in general, I begin with a brief analysis on the form of the piece. The form of the first movement reveals several features, which recent scholarship (*Elements of Sonata Theory* by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy) has referred to as non-normative or "deformations". These unusual features include the first movement's untraditional modulation patterns, and the second movement's lack of a development section. Drawing on the existing literature (Gerald Abraham in *The Music of Schubert* and the analysis of Schauffler in his same book; Maynard Solomon's article Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony in the journal *19th-Century Music*) as well as on the composer's biography (Oxford Music Online, the writings of Robert Haven Schauffler's *Franz Schubert, the Ariel of Music*, and through Schubert's letters edited by Otto Erich Deutsch) I contextualize Schubert's use of sonata form using sonata form analysis and hermeneutic interpretation to draw insights on the "deformations" and the symphony's unfinished nature.