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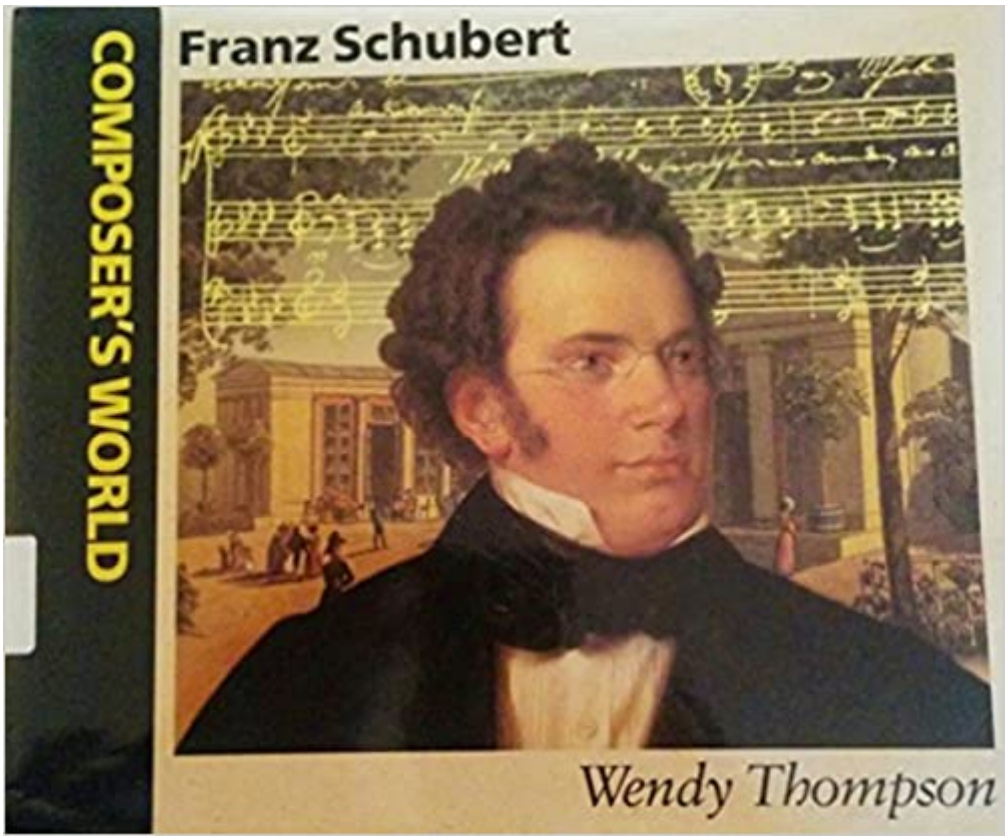

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Synopsis

Among the torch-bearers in the funeral pocession of Ludwig van Beethoven was a small, stocky young man of thirty, with curly dark hair and spectacles. For Franz Schubert, carrying the torch was simply an act of private and public homage; but we can now see that it had a far deeper significance. The torch of Beethoven's genius had been passed on to Schubert - the last great Viennese composer of the late 18th century. This illustrated biography of Schubert's brief, but astonishing, career is set against the colourful background of Metternich's Vienna. Music extracts include some of his most memorable melodies, among them the "Unfinished Symphony", "Rosamunde", the C Major Quintet and songs such as "Heindenroslein". --This text refers to an alternate Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Another entry (see below) in the ``Composer's World'' series, introduced in 1990 with books on Beethoven and Mozart. These two also combine a generous number of archival illustrations--portraits, cityscapes, typical period scenes, etc.--with fairly detailed narratives that outline the composers' lives, emphasizing events especially related to their music. Schubert's personal life is more insistent than many: a leading member of a group given to wild parties and late hours, his ``lifestyle, especially his unpunctuality and inability to keep appointments, was not really suited to a proper job''; he died, at 31, of syphilis. Though the human being suggested by such careful descriptions never comes to life here, Thompson does give an intelligent introduction to the

music, explaining how it was unique and how it fit into the cultural times; he also does a good job of evoking Schubert's daily life. Ten easily played excerpts, arranged for the piano, are included--a splendid way of giving a taste of Schubert's music; unfortunately, there is little comment on the arrangements (is this the piano accompaniment for ``The Hedgerose,'' or the melody in a simplified setting?), and two are totally unidentified. Still, a handsome book and a fine introduction to Schubert and his work. Brief glossary; list of works. (Biography. 10+) -- Copyright Ã Â©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

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