

# **SSUSA NEWSLETTER**

## **SCHUBERT SOCIETY OF THE USA**

**Vol. 4, No. 1, 2006**

Dear Members and Friends,

I am happy to report an announcement from our sister society, the American Schubert Institute in Boston, concerning the official founding of the American Schubert Quartet whose inaugural recital was on November 6, 2005 (see Performances). The ASI has undertaken the support and promotion of this new ensemble whose presence in Schubert chamber music we most heartily welcome. Congratulations to American Schubert Institute founder and president Henny Bordwin for her tireless commitment to her beloved Schubert over the past two decades and for her unstinting support and encouragement of musicians and performers.

I am pleased to publish another Schubert conference report, this by Frances Mitchell and sent to us by Cameron Gardner who directed the conference, which was a collaborative effort by the Cardiff School of Music, Cardiff University, and The Schubert Institute (UK). We thank the SIUK for permission to reprint the report.

George Gopen's article in our last newsletter "The Phantom Narrator Revealed: Performing the Final Song of Schubert's *Winterreise*," received many laudatory responses from readers. I urge members and readers to submit articles of up to 3,000 words maximum to the newsletter. This word count is about six newsletter pages. A reminder: the contents of our publications are copyrighted by the Schubert Society of the USA.

Note that member, Lisa Hooper, kindly sent us a copy of her MM thesis on Schubert. I'd be pleased to receive copies of theses, dissertations, books, and articles on Schubert from our members and readers. It helps to build a fine reference library, especially useful to answer queries from visitors to our web site.

For some thoughts on Mozart in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, read Michael Lorenz's essay "Behind the Wunder: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and His Relevance Today" in *Austria Culture*, January-February 2006, the online magazine of the Austrian Cultural Forum-New York at <[www.acfny.org/](http://www.acfny.org/)> However, if you are lonely for Schubert during this great Mozart 250<sup>th</sup> birthday year and feel the need to see a brilliant caricature of the marvelous Schwammerl, go to <[www.nybooks.com/gallery/462](http://www.nybooks.com/gallery/462)> where you can view David Levine's brilliant 1977 pen and ink rendering of Schubert under a mass of curly hair.

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## ADVISORY BOARD NEWS

**ANGELA LEAR** announced her latest release on Libra Records of the seventh volume in her Chopin CD series. For more information, see <[www.angelalear.co.uk/](http://www.angelalear.co.uk/)>.

**RUTH SLENCZYNSKA** was on the November 4, 2005 program of the Kosciuszko Foundation's four-evening cycle of "Chopin, George Sand and Their Circle," hosted by pianist and lecturer David Dubal. Mme Slenczynska played the Presto movement ("Motu perpetuo") from Carl Maria von Weber's Piano Sonata No. 1 in C, Op. 24, to an appreciative audience who perhaps knew of the artist's recent retirement from the concert stage. In the past, Mme Slenczynska has served as a juror for the Kosciuszko Foundation's annual Chopin Piano Competition.

**DEBORAH STEIN** was the keynote speaker at DePauw University's symposium on "The Interaction of Poetry and Music," February 18, 2006. The symposium was held in conjunction with Music of the 21st Century, an annual festival celebrating contemporary composers. A book of essays she edited, *Engaging Music: Essays in Music Analysis*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2005.

**SUSAN YOUENS's** book *Heine and the Lied: The Early Years* will be published in 2006 by Cambridge University Press.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

**LISA HOOPER** sent us a copy of her MM thesis (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2005): "Schubert's Rellstab-Heine Settings of 1828: Narrative Approaches to Analysis." She is music librarian with the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra. See her article in this issue "Under the Influence: Schubert and Public Expectation."

**STERLING LAMBERT** has joined the faculty of St. Mary's College of Maryland as Assistant Professor of Musicology and Theory. His 2000 dissertation at Yale University was on Schubert's multiple settings of poetry, which he is presently revising and expanding into book form.

**LARRY TODD** presented "Echoes of the St. Matthew Passion in the Music of Mendelssohn" at *Crosscurrents: Explorations in the History and Theory of Music*, Yale University, New Haven, December 9-10, 2005.

## NEWS ITEMS

The first complete English translation of the report of the 1863 exhumations of the skulls of Beethoven and Schubert appeared in the Summer/Winter 2005 issue of *The Beethoven Journal*, (vol. 20, nos. 1 and 2, pages 47-55) published by the **American Beethoven Society**. The report, one of a number of articles in the journal on the history and provenance of Beethoven's skull fragments, provides the medical forensic details of the skull and skeletal remains. A chart (page 50) details the measurements of the leg and arm bones of the two composers. It appears that they were both small in stature with Schubert being the shorter of the two, a detail known from the days when Schubert's height was recorded in a physical examination for his military service registration (he was never inducted into the Habsburg's army). The report is also a fascinating glimpse into the care and reverence the Viennese had for their great music masters. Also in this issue is the first English translation of an 1886 article comparing the skulls of the two composers. Beethoven's skull fragments and associated documents are on long-term loan to the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies at San José State University for DNA testing and comparison with the results from the tests of Beethoven's hair. To date, no such relics of Schubert are known to exist other than those that were reburied with Beethoven's in Vienna's Währing Cemetery after the first examination.

Unlike Beethoven's skull which was subjected to autopsy immediately after his death, Schubert's skull was still intact. There was a later 1888 exhumation and examination of Beethoven's remains with another reburial along with Schubert's remains into a final adjoining resting place. SSUSA Member **MICHAEL LORENZ** provided documentation as cited in the notes about Schubert's half-brother, and added more information to the interested public from his researches on the early owners, the latter in recent online discussions of the American Musicological Society. The American Beethoven Society will publish part two of the history of Beethoven's skull fragments as soon as the current round of scientific testing has been completed. See: <[www.sjsu.edu/depts/beethoven](http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/beethoven)> and click on "Lock of Beethoven's hair." On December 6, 2005 – two days after this editor received *The Beethoven Journal* - across the USA viewers of PBS's "The News Hour With Jim Lehrer" saw a segment titled "Detective Story: What Killed Beethoven" with research scientist William Walsh who has been working closely with the ABS on the Beethoven relics. The interview can be found at: <[www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment/july-dec05/beethoven\\_12-06.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment/july-dec05/beethoven_12-06.html)>.

Following up our mentions in earlier newsletters of **Eric Van Tassel**, a dedicated Schubertian who died in November 2004, we note that Tess Knighton, editor of *Early Music*, wrote in February that an homage to Eric would appear in a forthcoming issue. That homage by Richard Abram, "Eric Van Tassel (1939-2004)," appeared in *Early Music*, May 2005, vol. 33, no. 2, 362-363. We also found Goldberg Magazine's online site with "In Memoriam: Eric Van Tassel," by Javier Rozas and Clifford Bartlett, dated December 12, 2005, at <[www.goldbergweb.com/en/news/unitedstates/2004/12/31000.php](http://www.goldbergweb.com/en/news/unitedstates/2004/12/31000.php)>.

**Michael Beckerman** shared with us news of his continuing research on the Jewish-Czech composer Gideon Klein (1919-1945), who died at age 25 in the Fürstengrube camp in Silesia. Trained at the Prague Conservatory and Charles University, Klein continued composing during his earlier internment at Terezin where he also played piano with a chamber trio of Jewish musicians. According to Beckerman, research to this point indicates that the most often performed piece of chamber music in Terezin was the Schubert String Trio in B-flat Major (D471) with Klein as the pianist. Beckerman's March 16 paper "Gideon Klein's Terezin Trio OR Shooting the Wild Goose" reviews his research on Klein at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center's Colloquium Series.

## **PERFORMANCES**

In his November 6, 2005 account (*The New York Times*) of German baritone **Matthias Goerne**'s recent Lieder recital, Matthew Gurewitsch's review bore the delicious title *Why Shouldn't Men Sing Romantic Drivel, Too?* Goerne opened Lincoln Center's Art of the Song series with Wagner's "Wesendonck Lieder" and broke ranks with tradition which always had a female singer (for reasons no one knows). However, both reviewer and singer noted the incredible silliness of the infatuated Wagner's setting of Mathilde Wesendonck's less than passable poetry. Here is the reviewer quoting Goerne in his seemingly utter disgust: "The worst doggerel Schubert ever set is better than the texts of Mathilde Wesendonck...."

The **American Schubert Institute** presented a recital on October 1, 2005, by some of Boston's leading performers in tribute to their friend, colleague, and teacher, the late John Daverio (1954-2003), Professor of Music at Boston University. The recital was performed at MIT's Rabb Lecture Hall and based on Daverio's last published book *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann and Brahms*, (Oxford University Press, 2002). The program was of varied works by these three composers including Schubert's Shepherd on the Rock (D965), Schumann's Piano Quintet in E flat major, and Brahms's Trio in A minor, op. 114 for clarinet, cello and piano. See also Publications and Papers.

The **American Schubert Quartet** presented "An Afternoon of Chamber Music" on November 6, 2005 at the Phillips Library Reading Room of the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. Under the auspices of the

American Schubert Institute, the program was: the String Quartet in D (D74), String Quartet in B flat, op.posth.168 (D112), and String Quartet in G, op.posth.161 (D887). The ensemble players were Lisa Crockett on violin, Jean Haig on viola, Andrew Mark on cello, and Kristina Nilsson on violin.

In his review of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim's baton, Bernard Holland ("Schubert With a Soft Whimper, Mahler With a Bang", *The New York Times*, November 7, 2005) writes: "Mr. Barenboim makes the C major Symphony big, as if it were Schubert's gift to the future. The past indeed treated it badly. ... But it has survived - its four movements like one great tragicomic triumphal march. The second movement is huge: at turns solemn and jaunty, always long; Schubert seemed reluctant to let go of its ideas, and we are glad he didn't."

Austrian tenor **Werner Ruttinger**, who calls himself *Der Felsensänger* (The Cliff Singer) is king of the mountain when he performs *Winterreise* in the open air, atop the Mönchsberg that rises up to overlook Salzburg. Because singing outdoors during the winter (obviously the only appropriate season in which to offer this song cycle) is so arduous and dangerous for the voice, Ruttinger uses a special apparatus to warm and humidify his breath. The parka-clad performance artist, backpacking a portable stereo to accompany himself, offers so idiosyncratic an interpretation in such an inhospitable concert venue that he charges 350 euros and up for a private performance *en plein air*. For the 2006 Mozart Year, the singer has added to his outdoor schedule a separate program of arias from *The Magic Flute* and other Mozartean numbers at the heftier admission cost of 540 euros. Obviously, you get Schubert at a bargain price. See: <[www.naturfestspiele.at.english/e-index.htm](http://www.naturfestspiele.at.english/e-index.htm)>.

***Eine Schubertiade – In Celebration of the Music of Mozart and Schubert*** on January 28 was a Saint Paul, (Minnesota) sold-out event under the co-sponsorship of the Germanic American Institute of Saint Paul and the Center for Austrian Studies whose home is at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. The evening's performers were Naomi Karstad, soprano; Daniel Rieppel, piano; and special guest artist from Austria, Risa Schuchter, violin. The program consisted of songs by Schubert and Mozart, Mozart's Piano Sonata in B flat, Mozart's Fantasia in C minor, and Schubert's Sonatina in G minor for piano and violin (D408). We note that Dr. Rieppel is a founder and member of the new chamber ensemble, The Schubert Trio. He will appear solo on April 6.

Not so lucky was German tenor **Christoph Prégardien** whose December 11, 2005 live performance of *Winterreise* at Alice Tully Hall was interrupted during "Der Lindenbaum" by clanking fire alarm bells – false alarms, it should be noted. The singer and pianist Dennis Helmrich gamely started the song again and got as far as the seventh song in the cycle "Auf dem Flusse" when the false alarm bells resounded once more. The artists left the stage and after a brief hiatus reappeared to an audience ovation. The performance continued to the end without interruption where "they earned the audience's admiration for their fine and intrepid artistry," wrote Anthony Tommasini ("An Intrepid Tenor Faces Un-Schubertian Obstacles," *The New York Times*, December 13, 2005).

## **PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS**

Two chapters by the late **John Daverio** -- probably his last writings to see print -- "The Piano Music I: A World of Images," and "Songs of Dawn and Dusk: Coming to Terms With the Late Music," will appear in *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Perrey (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

**Nicholas Marston's** chapter, "Schumann's Heroes: Schubert, Beethoven, Bach," will appear in *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Perrey, (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

**David Bretherton** (Merton College, University of Oxford), presented his paper "Structural Deformation in Some 'ABA' Songs by Schubert," at the Dublin International Conference on Music Analysis, University College Dublin, June 23–25, 2005.

**Peter Cahn** (Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, Frankfurt/Main), presented his paper "Schuberts Thekla-Lieder" at the International Symposium, *Schiller und die Musik*, September 24-27, 2005 in Weimar, co-

sponsored by the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt and the Institut für Musikwissenschaft Weimar-Jena. An earlier symposium, *Friedrich Schiller im Werk von Franz Schubert*, May 5-7, 2005, also in Weimar, was held under the auspices of the Institut für Musikwissenschaft Weimar-Jena and the Deutsche Schubert-Gesellschaft e.V., Duisburg.

**Rita Steblin** and **Frederick Stocken**, jointly authored “The Autobiography of Joseph Lanz, Part I,” in *The Schubertian*, October 2005, no. 49, pages 13-28. The authors present a summary introduction to the historical background of Lanz’s autobiography, with excerpts from the memoir. Lanz (1797-1873) wrote in his later years of his acquaintance with Schubert. It was Lanz who accompanied Schubert to his composition lesson with Simon Sechter – sadly both Schubert’s first and last lesson, just two weeks before his death. Lanz’s account of his own life as a composer in the same era provides a fascinating glimpse into the musical life of the Biedermeier period. Part Two of this introductory article will appear in a subsequent issue of *The Schubertian*, and a fuller scholarly account of the historical background and significance of the Lanz autobiography is being prepared for the musicological community. Dr. Steblin has published extensively on Schubert’s circle of friends. Mr. Stocken is a doctoral student in music at the University of Manchester writing his dissertation on the influence of Simon Sechter on Anton Bruckner.

**Sarah Clemmons** (Yale University) presented her paper “The Moonlight Convention in the Early Nineteenth Century,” at the 2005 meeting of the American Musicological Society. In it she discussed various “moonlight” settings by Schubert, Haydn, Bellini, Zelter, Bach, Martini, Beethoven, Rellstab, and Lenz, citing Schubert’s setting of Höltz’s *An dem Mond* (D193) as “a perfect example of ‘moonlight’.” Parenthetically, this editor vividly recalls the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s 2001 exhibition “Caspar David Friedrich: Moonwatchers” whose catalogue essay by Sabine Rewald discussed the historical fascination with the moon and how this fascination was expressed in visual art by Friedrich (1774-1840) and several of his artist contemporaries.

Yale University’s music-themed conference last December 9 and 10, *Cross-Currents: Explorations in the History and Theory of Music*, featured two Schubert papers of interest: **John Gingerich**, “Unfinished Considerations: Schubert’s B-minor Symphony in the Context of His Beethoven Project,” and **Peter H. Smith**, “Harmonic Cross-Reference and the Dialectic of Articulation and Continuity in Sonata Expositions of Schubert and Brahms.”

We note **Alexandra Lewis**, *Evocations of Water at the Piano from Schubert to Liszt and Ravel*, Ph.D. Dissertation, City University of New York, 2005.

An English-language issue of *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* called “Music in Central Europe” was published late in 2005 to celebrate 200 years of vibrant musical cultures and traditions in this part of the continent. To obtain a complimentary copy, write to: Österreichische Musikzeitschrift, Hegelgasse 13/22, A-1010, Wien, Austria.

## **CONFERENCE REPORT**

### **Schubert’s Instrumental Music: Performance, Genre, Completion**

Cardiff University, Wales  
September 10, 2005

This one-day conference was hosted by Cardiff University in collaboration with The Schubert Institute (UK), an organization which aims to promote an appreciation of Schubert’s music and develop research into his life and works. This objective is facilitated by the publication of the institute’s journal, *The Schubertian*, and by the organization of regular ‘Schubert Days.’ These take place at various locations across the country but this conference marked their first venture into Wales. Conference director, Cameron Gardner, a member of the Schubert Institute and doctoral student at Cardiff University, took inspiration from his research, “Schubert’s 1825 Piano Sonatas: Constructing Interpretation From Expressive Opposition,” and designed a day which sought to promote harmonious relationships between scholarship and performance.

The day itself was split into three sessions which, as the conference title implied, examined Schubert's music from distinct, yet related, angles. The opening session, which included two papers, concentrated on performance. Dr. Roy Howat (Royal Academy of Music) explored the challenges of Schubert's expansive structures and posed questions of musical narrative in his paper, "Reading Between the Lines of the A Major Sonata (D959)." Concentrating on the Andantino, Howat encouraged the audience to consider the operatic quality of Schubert's piano writing. Proposing that his forms are driven by feeling and not exclusively intellectual development, Howat speculated that overlooking the operatic gestures and essential melodrama built into the instrumental compositions explained the failure of traditional forms of analysis to cope with Schubert's music. Howat continued by demonstrating how the use of narrative can assist the performer in achieving momentum and color throughout lengthy and formally complex passages.

Andrew Wilson-Dickson followed this with a fascinating insight into Schubert's sound world. Taking as his cue the painting "Charade at Atzenbrugg" by Kupelwieser (1821), Wilson-Dickson used the University's Secker copy and images of early nineteenth-century fortepianos to help the audience travel back in time. Having provided a brief historical outline of the instrument's developments during Schubert's lifetime, Wilson-Dickson convincingly reasoned that Schubert made a conscious decision around 1816 to write music for the newest instruments available to him, which had an expanded octave range and the addition of knee pedals. Musical examples were used to support his claim and simultaneously allowed him to illustrate the varied tone of the instrument across the registers, a characteristic which offered the nineteenth-century keyboard composer a rich and varied palette of sound. Wilson-Dickson suggested that familiarity with the fortepiano could allow a similar effect to be achieved on modern instruments, despite the differences that exist between them.

The second session of the day, "Genre," dealt with the broader musical, cultural, and social contexts of Schubert's music. The first of the two papers, "Schubert's Totentanz: Some Thoughts on the *Quartettsatz*," was given by Professor Julian Rushton (Leeds University). In his presentation, Rushton spoke about a motive, covering a descending fourth and chromatically filled in, which he identified as the curling motive. An examination of this motive's use in other works by Schubert and compositions by Bach, Purcell, Mozart, and Walton was used to show how such investigation can allow the listener an insight into the curious mood of the first movement. Likening the movement to a slowed down tarantella, Rushton highlighted the association of the descending tetrachord to mourning and even death, with the presence of words in some of the historical examples lending additional weight to this interpretation. Although Rushton was cautious of linking biographical events in Schubert's lifetime to the music, he ably showed how a broader understanding of the music's motivic material could enrich the listener's experience of the *Quartettsatz*.

Dr. David Wyn Jones (Cardiff University) followed this with a paper entitled "Schubert's Fifth and Schubert's Fourth: An Unnecessary Anxiety of Influence." Through a detailed historical account of Schubert's Vienna, Jones considered the commonly held belief that Schubert knew Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 and was exploring a different version of C minor in his own Fourth Symphony. Jones proposed that an assumption of Schubert's familiarity with Beethoven's Fifth is unsafe and supported this claim with an investigation of the practices of Viennese concert life, the role of the Symphony, the performance history of Beethoven's Fifth and some anecdotal evidence. After compellingly presenting his case, Jones concluded by exploring some of the implications of his research, which he suggested encouraged new perspectives on Beethoven's image in Vienna and the relationship between Schubert and Beethoven; two composers bound together by place and time.

The final session of the day turned to address the issue of Schubert's unfinished works and their completion, focusing particularly on versions of the *Reliquie* Piano Sonata (D840). Professor Geoffrey Poole (Bristol University) was sadly unable to attend but an abbreviated version of his paper "Schubert's Relics" was delivered by conference director, Cameron Gardner. A number of the day's previous ideas resurfaced as Poole highlighted the orchestral sound of Schubert's sonatas and explored his expanded time sense, a feature which he suggested encourages long term listening. Poole advocated the image of Schubert as musical innovator in terms of

architecture, sonority, and energy flow, going on to discuss the personal influence this had on his own work, especially in his most explicit homage, “Schubert’s *Reliquie* for String Orchestra.”

In the concluding paper, Professor Brian Newbould (Hull University) led the audience through another journey of completion in his paper, “Capturing Lost Visions.” Newbould stressed the importance of balancing the demands of musicologist, listener, composer, and performer when completing fragmentary works, concluding that the ear must be the chief arbiter and that the thrust of invention must be driven by creative instincts. Demonstrating the practical application of his work ethic, Newbould guided the listener through some of the analytical techniques and compositional processes that aid the completion of unfinished works. Ending his paper, Newbould played an extract of his completed *Reliquie*, stating: “I shall let the music have the last word.”

This seemed an appropriate way to conclude the papers, given that the issue of music’s communicative nature was a recurring theme throughout the day. At various points, it was shown how programmatic thinking of music can aid the performer and listener without placing a fixed narrative onto Schubert’s music or arbitrarily connecting the works to biographical events. All of the papers successfully mediated between formal analysis, historical research, and subjective musical responses to reach thought-provoking conclusions about the technical and emotional aspects of Schubert’s writing. This demonstrated how close links between the various musical disciplines can provide an enriched and more complete appreciation of music, both past and present.

Those in attendance at the Schubert conference were given time to reflect these questions in the concluding concert given by Roy Howat, which included energetic performances of a selection from *Moments Musicaux* and the A major Piano Sonata (D959).

*Frances Mitchell*

**Frances Mitchell** is in the second year of a doctorate at Cardiff University. At the center of her research is a reappraisal of Eduard Hanslick’s *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*.

## NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

### **Under the Influence: Schubert and Public Expectation.**

Schubert’s reputation, both past and present, floats largely on the spectacular achievement of his songs. Yet despite the profusion and success of Schubert’s songs, he preferred to direct his attention towards other musical genres. His endeavors carried him into the instrumental realm with several piano sonatas, string trios, quartets, quintets, and symphonies. Schubert’s greatest efforts, however, focused on operatic writing, where his two-fold struggle with the genre itself and the shifting aesthetic of operatic style may have played a part in blocking any larger success for Schubert’s operas.

Schubert gave voice to his desire to break through to a larger audience through an instrumental or operatic medium in several frustrated letters to publishers and his friends. In a letter to Anselm Hüttenbrenner dated 18 May 1819, Schubert described his frustration, writing: “in spite of Vogl it is difficult to outwit such *canaille* as Weigl, Treitschke, &c. – That is why instead of my operetta they give other rot, enough to make your hair stand on end.”<sup>1</sup> The operetta of which Schubert spoke is his *Die Zwillingsbrüder*, completed in 1819. This particular operetta met with little praise and much criticism. Schubert’s later operas, including *Fierabras* and *Alfonso und Estrella*, came to a similar fate, as music critics used the opportunity to note apparent faults in the compositional style and technique,

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<sup>1</sup> Schubert to Anselm Hüttenbrenner, 19<sup>th</sup> May 1819, in *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, ed. by Otto Erich Deutsch, trans. by Eric Blom, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1947), 117.

relegating Schubert to the status of student. Even as late as 1827, librettists wishing to have their work set to music by Schubert felt little hesitation in describing in fair detail the overall musical style and form in which Schubert was to compose. One notable example may be seen in a letter to Schubert from Hofrath Friedrich Rochlitz, cited here as appendix one.

With praise pouring in for the songs and criticism raining down on Schubert's larger vocal works, the degree of instruction provided by music critics, friends, and publishers alike cannot but be remarked. Indeed, publishers alone outlined such precise indications of what they would and would not publish that Schubert had a veritable handbook outlining in what genre, style, and character he was to compose in order to succeed. Critical commentary and publishers' letters may be grouped in three obvious divisions: negative criticism, positive criticism, and neutral criticism. Further classifying these systems we may identify two over-arching categories: *how* to compose and *what* to compose. Belonging to the former category are naturally both negative criticism (which frequently describes where Schubert went 'wrong' and details what he should have written) and positive criticism (otherwise extolling Schubert's 'correct' compositional choices). Neutral criticism, dominated by publishers, falls into the latter category of what to compose.

Though his close circle of friends vociferously pronounced Schubert's mastery, music critics writing for the major Viennese papers were somewhat less inclined to make such declarations. Indeed, Schubert quite frequently found himself portrayed as a student of composition with much still to learn. The author of a review for the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* of Schubert's 1819 opera *Die Zwillingsbrüder* (publicly performed for the first time in June 1820) held little back, often holding Schubert under the weighty double mantle of Mozart and Beethoven. The unnamed author launches into his analysis of the opera by writing: "it also shows at the same time that Herr Schubert's abilities lie in the direction of tragedy rather than comedy, for which reason we urgently advise him to choose the former category, at any rate for the present."<sup>2</sup>

Much of what follows in the article is an exegesis on the aesthetics of operatic composition, the essence of which Schubert failed to accurately capture. The article severely reprimands Schubert, suggesting that "it is a blot on the work that the sentiments of simple country folk are interpreted much too seriously, not to say heavy-handedly, for a comic subject. *Medium tenuere beati*. Little as one is inclined to countenance heroes who sing polonaises and who weep in bravura passages, one can no more allow the passions to be tragically conceived in a light operetta."<sup>3</sup> Following a brief suggestion to refer to Mozart's operas for direction in musical form, our author then begins a somewhat lengthy exposition on the relationship between text, modulation, musical form, and expression:

Herr Schubert is too much wedded to details of the text, and this chases him and his hearer restlessly through modulations and allows no point of repose; he tries to express words in music instead of painting the nature of a whole speech by means of the character of a whole piece, which, as Mozart proves, is the only way of attaining to the highest aims of art and of conquering its greatest difficulties, by producing regular, rounded-off pieces and yet by making the whole call forth the required feeling. For this Herr Schubert has allowed himself to be led too far astray by his laudable endeavor to go his own way, and he has done away too drastically with the concluding formulas of musical numbers.<sup>4</sup>

Unable to resist, perhaps, the author finds it necessary to provide one more piece of advice in the form of a lesson on orchestration: "Now what often makes the unprepared and therefore hard modulations seem even more cutting is the too scattered orchestration. Let the string or wind instruments follow what figuration or what subsidiary voice-part they will, one part or another must hold the thread of the harmonies and not let it go until another takes it up, and the whole must have unity."<sup>5</sup> Apparently little inclined to give praise, the author made one commendation of Schubert's

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<sup>2</sup> Music review for *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, June 17, 1820, in *The Schubert Reader*, 136.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-137.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

work, albeit imbedded within yet another suggestion of how that particular music may have been otherwise composed: “The quartet in B flat major might have given rise to canons and other contrapuntal turns; but although it is not used in that way, it has repose and unity, and it pleased.”<sup>6</sup>

Similar criticisms of Schubert’s handling of text in *Antigone and Oedipus* resurface in another article printed in 1822. In this instance the critic reprimand’s Schubert for overstepping the proscribed roles of poet and composer:

It is to be regretted that the poet’s line, ‘The gentle breath of consolation let Oedipus’ great soul invade,’ should have been changed to the following words ... ‘the father’s soul invade’; for this means a direct injury to the metre, although the original words would not have damaged the cantilena in the least. The treatment of a text should show the same respect for a poet’s work with which we honour a composer’s creation.<sup>7</sup>

The degree to which such negative opinion of Schubert’s handling of the text affected his compositional style cannot be measured, but it does nonetheless call to mind Richard Kramer’s insightful thought on Schubert’s setting of the Heine songs:

Ready as we may be to exonerate Schubert of malicious tinkering, the telling question is whether Schubert can have held so dispassionate a view of the matter – whether this entanglement with Heine was not seen in the end as a transgression. The power of music to obliterate the subtleties of poetic language, those fine connections *between* the poems of *Heimkehr*, cannot have been lost on Schubert. The setting of poem to music – of the individual poem, isolated from its broader context – is an enterprise honored in tradition: the struggle between word and tone is the essence of which music is born, one might claim. But the setting together of poems to figure in music a narrative not explicit in the text of those poems is quite another issue. It is tempting to locate the failure of nerve precisely here, in the retraction of a cycle that would forever contradict the integrity of *Heimkehr*.<sup>8</sup>

As Kramer’s thoughts imply, then, certainly by the time the Heine songs were composed in 1828<sup>9</sup> Schubert had been sufficiently inculcated with the aesthetic boundaries between composer and poet.

Just how Schubert took such negative criticism for *Die Zwillingbrüder* is not clear, but certainly it was a bitter pill following a work that he had sustained such high hopes for. Shortly following the publication of this and other equally negative articles, a poem attributed by Otto Erich Deutsch to Schubert appeared:

“The Spirit of the World”

Leave them but in their conceit,  
Tossed on stormy brine:  
Though their boat be insecure,  
Thus they still are mine.

Thus the Sprit of the World  
Spake: let them but chase

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 137-138.

<sup>7</sup> Music review for the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, January 19, 1822, in *The Schubert Reader*, 207.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Kramer, *Distant Cycles, Schubert and the Conceiving of Song*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 140.

<sup>9</sup> Many scholars, including Kramer, John Reed, and Maurice Brown, identify January 12, 1828 as Schubert’s first introduction to the Heine songs. I believe, however, that there is sufficient evidence suggesting Schubert may have come across the Heine songs as early as the fall of 1827. As this is not the topic currently at hand, however, discussion of this rather complicated matter is reserved for a later time.

After dark and far-off goals,  
And with wrangling fill their days;

Yet no harm it be for them  
Short of truth to fall:  
Frail and human is their world,  
Godlike understand I all.<sup>10</sup>

Both bitter and comforting at once, Schubert's poem seems to speak of what by then was certainly perceived as his failed attempt at operatic composition.

The negative criticism continued, and the following year yet another particularly scathing review appears in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*:

On the other hand Herr Schubert's eight-voice chorus was recognized by the public as an accumulation of every sort of senseless, disordered and purposeless musical modulation and side-tracking. In such works a composer resembles a drayman who drives eight in-hand, and swerves now right, now left – in other words, avoids collision – then turns back, and goes on with the same game without ever getting along the road.<sup>11</sup>

The review again condemns a larger vocal work by Schubert for failing to meet the aesthetic expectations of his audience. Though the 'instructions' are not as explicit as those cited above, from this article Schubert may have been expected to learn that in larger, more complex works, his habit of frequent modulation was not welcomed by the listening public.

It cannot help but be noted as well how the tone of criticism relates to musical genre. The criticisms cited above, and the many that remain not cited, are of the negative variety when they refer to Schubert's larger vocal works. In each instance, if the piece is not outright rejected, as it was by Josef Karl Rosenbaum when he wrote of *Die Zwillingsbrüder* that it "has nothing to recommend it,"<sup>12</sup> the piece's social failure was accompanied by suggestions on how to correct the composition's faults. Yet for the smaller works, including works for piano two-hand and particularly songs, critics had nothing but praise. While on the one hand Schubert was criticized for heeding the text too closely, frequent use of modulation, and for extending the limits of musical form (in a word for an overly-innovative style of composition), he was on the other-hand lauded for his ability to capture the essence of poetic meaning in his songs through the very methods of innovation that won disdain in his larger works.

This divergence becomes a common theme throughout critical reviews of Schubert's songs. Indeed, the same critic who found fault in Schubert's innovative use of modulation and form in the eight-voice chorus accompanied the statement with praise for Schubert's "Erlkönig", writing "the music shows much imagination. Several successful passages were justly acclaimed by the public."<sup>13</sup> Again, in 1822, these same methods of innovation were received with high praise:

Not often has a composer had so large a share of the gift for making the poet's fancy so profoundly impressive for the receptive listener's heart. This is shown with especial felicity by Goethe's song for Margaret at the spinning wheel, where the vivid imitation of the sound of a spinning wheel makes a most characteristic background in a Rembrandtesque chiaroscuro for the description of the profoundest depths of a woman's being, lost now in gloomy visions of the present and the future, now in sweetly melancholy recollections of the past.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "The Spirit of the World" by Franz Schubert, September 1820, in *The Schubert Reader*, 151.

<sup>11</sup> Music review in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, March 21, 1821, in *The Schubert Reader*, 166.

<sup>12</sup> Josef Karl Rosenbaum, diary entry of June 14, 1820, in *The Schubert Reader*, 135.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>14</sup> Music review for the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, January 19, 1822, in *The Schubert Reader*, 206.

How can such laudatory praise be reconciled with the earlier comment: “Herr Schubert is too much wedded to details of the text, ... he tries to express words in music instead of painting the nature of a whole speech by means of the character of a whole piece....”?<sup>15</sup> Such reconciliation may be difficult to reason, but certainly Schubert’s music reveals the contradictory nature of Biedermeier aesthetics.

While showing a clear dislike for Schubert’s larger works, his audiences nonetheless expressed approval of and a hunger for Schubert’s smaller, ‘less complex’ works. The call for smaller vocal works began as early as 1820 in the press, and found its reciprocal voice in requests for music made by publishers from 1826 to the end of Schubert’s life four years later. In August 1826, Probst submitted a request to Schubert for some compositions, feeling himself obliged to write:

Only I must candidly confess to you, that your often genial, but at the same time occasionally eccentric efforts, are not as yet sufficiently and universally understood by our public. In the selection, therefore, and delivery of your manuscript works, pray be good enough to take great care. Some carefully selected Lieder, some pianoforte works for two and four hands, not too difficult, and written in an understandable fashion, would, I think, answer your purpose and my wishes. When once the ice is broken, all will go well and easily; at the outset we must, to some extent, humour the public.<sup>16</sup>

‘Not too difficult’ was a phrase Schubert read repeatedly in the letters from his publishers. In February of 1828 Probst continued again in his request for uncomplicated music, this time writing: “have the goodness, therefore, when you have finished something successfully – song, romance, vocal concerted piece; I care not what it be, as long as it be not too difficult of comprehension, without compromising in any way your individuality of style – to let me have them; send me also some pieces for four hands in the same genre.”<sup>17</sup>

Probst was not alone in making such request for ‘simple’ music. In June of 1828 Brüggemann requested submissions from Schubert, adding that “[he] must remark once more that the whole scope of the undertaking makes it advisable that your contributions be made up of pleasing music, and such as will be within easy grasp of an ordinary performer.”<sup>18</sup> Brüggemann wrote to Schubert again in August, feeling it necessary to comment once more “to remove every possible misunderstanding, I beg to remark, that the longest contributions must not contain more than two sheets, and that I can only accept of unaccompanied pieces for two hands.”<sup>19</sup> In October, 1828, Schubert received a letter from Schott, informing him that his Impromptus “were sent back to us; and we were given to understand that as ‘Kleinigkeiten’ these works were too difficult, and would find no sale in France [...] The pianoforte piece (Op. 101) we did not think too highly assessed; but its uselessness, as far as a sale in France is concerned, was very annoying to us.”<sup>20</sup> Schott continued to request further occasional pieces, with the added warning that Schubert was to send the pieces only “if it be less difficult and still have plenty of brilliancy.”<sup>21</sup>

Accompanied by these request for ‘understandable’ music, Schubert found himself being directed in which genre he was to compose. A letter from Breitkopf and Härtel in 1826 suggested that Schubert should “send us one or two pieces for the pianoforte, either solo pieces or for four hands.”<sup>22</sup> Schott made a similar request in February 1828, asking Schubert to send “pianoforte works or vocal pieces, either solo or concerted, with or without piano

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<sup>15</sup> Music review for the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, June 17, 1820, in *The Schubert Reader*, 136-137.

<sup>16</sup> Probst to Schubert, August 26, 1826, in *The Life of Franz Schubert*, vol. 2, by Heinrich Kreissle von Hellborn, (London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1869), 73-74.

<sup>17</sup> Probst to Schubert, February 9, 1828, in *The Life of Franz Schubert*, vol. 2, 108.

<sup>18</sup> Brüggemann to Schubert, June 21, 1828 in *The Life of Franz Schubert*, vol. 2, 116-117.

<sup>19</sup> Brüggemann to Schubert, August 10, 1828, in *The Life of Franz Schubert*, vol. 2, 117.

<sup>20</sup> Schott to Schubert, October 30, 1828, in *The Life of Franz Schubert*, vol. 2, 130.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>22</sup> Brietkopf and Härtel to Schubert, September 7, 1826 in *The Life of Franz Schubert*, vol. 2, 75.

accompaniment...”<sup>23</sup> Probst again writes “I hope, however, that you will comply with my request to send, at your earliest convenience, some choice morceaux in the way of songs, or pianoforte pieces à quatre mains.”<sup>24</sup>

Schubert’s publishers also informed him of the type of work the public, and they, did *not* want. Included in Probst’s letter asking for ‘a choice morceaux’ was this revelatory quip on the purpose of trios: “for a trio at best is but an article which keeps up the credit of the firm, and we very seldom make any profit out of it.”<sup>25</sup> Phrased in a less open manner, Schubert received a similar letter from Schott only a few days later:

The Trio is probably a work on a large scale, and as we have only a short time since published several trios, we must defer to some later opportunity, for ordinary prudential reasons, dealing with this kind of composition: we do not think that the publication of your Trio now would advance your interests.<sup>26</sup>

And so it continues, Schubert frequently being told by his audience and limited by his publishers in what he should write and what he could actually publish.

Some, none the least of which myself, may like to perceive Schubert as the unwitting and innocent victim of social currents and greedy publishers, but that would take the romanticization of the Schubert persona too far. Schubert certainly remained aware of a composer’s relationship with the listening audience, and, as much of a bohemian as Schubert came to be known, he nonetheless found it necessary to apply to social formulae to find the means if not to pay the rent, then at the very least to buy the next round at the local tavern. By 1825 Schubert understood the importance of providing immediate appeal to his audiences and in a letter to his father Schubert wrote:

The Walter Scott songs made such an excessively good impression on her [Countess Weissenwolf] that she even let it be guessed that the dedication of them would be anything but disagreeable to her. But I intend to use a very different procedure with the publication of these songs from the usual one, which yields so very little, since they bear the celebrated name of Scott at their head and may in that way arouse greater curiosity, and might also make me better known in England by the addition of the English words.<sup>27</sup>

By ‘the usual,’ it may be supposed that Schubert meant by dedication. Schubert was in many ways correct in attempting to play on the appeal of curiosity rather than that of the dedicatee’s title and rank.

Though much of Schubert’s limited writings have been lost, there is yet one more instance in which Schubert displayed his propensity for using social expectations to his advantage. On November 2, 1821, Schubert wrote to Josef von Spaun:

Dear Friend,

Your letter gave me much pleasure, and I hope that you continue keeping well. – But now I must tell you that my dedications have done their work: that is to say, the Patriarch has forked out 12 ducats and, through Vogl’s intervention, Fries 20, which is a very good thing for me.

Will you be good enough, therefore, to close you correspondence with the Patriarch by a message of thanks suited both to him and to me?<sup>28</sup>

That Schubert was willing to rely on dedications for the sole purpose of earning money is apparent, but also latent in this letter is an undercurrent of disdain for such proceedings and those who participate. Though Schubert was often held accountable by his friends for not following socially acceptable procedures to publicize his works, Schubert

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<sup>23</sup> Schott to Schubert, in *The Life of Franz Schubert*, vol. 2, 109.

<sup>24</sup> Probst to Schubert, April 15, 1828, in *The Life of Franz Schubert*, vol. 2, 120.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-121.

<sup>26</sup> Schott to Schubert, April 28, 1828, *The Life of Franz Schubert*, vol. 2, 120.

<sup>27</sup> Schubert to his father and stepmother, July 25, 1825, in *The Schubert Reader*, 435.

<sup>28</sup> Schubert to Josef von Spaun, November 2, 1821, in *The Schubert Reader*, 193-194.

nonetheless showed himself capable of such acts when he found it necessary. The reciprocal deduction from such forethought described by Schubert in these letters, however, also demonstrates Schubert's full awareness of what his listening (and paying) audience wanted to hear, namely music to tickle the ear, so to speak, rather than music to tickle the mind.

The phrase 'what other marvels could Schubert have created if only his life had not ended so prematurely' may be heard quite often. What is not heard and perhaps should be sounded out more carefully is the phrase 'what other marvels could Schubert have created if not for the limits imposed by his audience and publishers.' As a student, Schubert studied counterpoint with Salieri, who provided Schubert with at least two letters certifying his contrapuntal mastery. What, then, could have driven Schubert to once again seek lessons in counterpoint years later? The reasons are of course innumerable; on the one hand it could have been the drive of a composer towards perceived compositional improvement, on the other, this sudden interest in counterpoint lessons may have been a response to the many negative articles calling foul to Schubert's use of form and supporting the monument of Mozart as the one master of form. Schubert's continuous struggle to compose publicly successful large works brings to mind the lines from his own poem, "let them but chase / After dark and far-off goals, / And with wrangling fill their days." Though it becomes yet another unanswered question about Schubert, it can be ascertained that limits were imposed by the listening public and publishers alike that undoubtedly influenced how and what Schubert composed, the extent of such influence remains to be fully explored.

*Lisa Hooper*

## **Appendix One**

Letter to Schubert from Hofrath Friedrich Rochlitz, January 15, 1827.<sup>29</sup>

Respected Sir, - You now the high esteem and regard I feel for you and your works. Herr Haslinger has told you how grateful I am for your settings of my three songs, and how I wish that you should illustrate, by your lovely music, some larger work of mine. I am told you are not disinclined to do so. Permit me, then, to approach the subject at once. The poem I have in my mind's eye is 'Der erste Ton.' You will find it in the fifth volume of my collected works. Haslinger has them. And here I will give you my ideas of what would be appropriate music: only pray do not suppose that I wish to write down a sort of prescription (I have no right to do so), only take what I say merely as a hint for your consideration, and after you have considered it, do of course as you feel disposed, whether or not you happen to agree with me entirely, partially, or not at all. Overture: a short sharp chord, ff., to begin with, and then, possibly, a long sustained passage for clarinet [sic] or horn, with pauses. Then, opening calmly and gradually, clothed in music becoming gloomier as it proceeds, and more intricate in character, treated harmonically rather than melodiously – a sort of chaos, which only by degrees develops and becomes brighter. Whether the overture should conclude thus, or an Allegro follow, I cannot determine. If you choose the latter, only let it have meaning, with plenty of power and brilliancy; and yet I would have the weak finale taken out of the first movement. Next, let there be unaccompanied declamation as far as the words 'Wirken gegeben.' At this point let the orchestra come in with soft and long-drawn-out chords, and the dialogue, with only short musical interludes to fill in the pauses, be retained up to the word 'Erdenreich.' Here, a long and gloomy musical interlude; a shorter and gentler one after the word 'Gott;' the following movement, until 'selbst gefällt,' without any music; the 'Nun schweigen,' until 'bis sol lich sein,' little more than accompanying chords, with brief musical interludes; then a more prolonged entr'acte, after which, with the words 'Nun schliesst,' the music begins to wax louder and more animated in character. After the words 'Wiederhall sie nach,' the instruments should be in full swing, and thus prepare an introduction for the great, brilliant, and majestic chorus, 'Drum Preis Dir,' which can be made as long and effective as the composer pleases; the last lines, however, should, as the wind-up of the whole work, be of gentle and mild character, without any change of time or key. Now if the music be treated by so intellectual a master and deep thinker as yourself, and the declamation be given to such a man as your Anschütz, I promise myself a great result, and such as every connoisseur or ordinary hearer must honour and approve of. Still, I repeat again, all this is merely my raw scheme;

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<sup>29</sup> Hellborn, *The Life of Franz Schubert*, vol. 2, 97-99.

the choice and determination are with you. For the rest, I rejoice in being brought into closer associations with you, and that I have the opportunity of refreshing my mind by exchanging ideas with you. Should the work be accomplished, and I obtain it, my next care will be to secure as perfect a performance as possible. With all esteem and devotion, I am, &c.,

Rochlitz

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