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ENGLISH

Sung texts and translation

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FRANZ SCHUBERT  
(1797–1828)  

SCHUBERT IN 1817–1818

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EDITH MATHIS soprano  
GRAHAM JOHNSON piano
MOST OF THE DISCS ISSUED SO FAR in this series have programmes built around a theme, but some have been planned to show the chronology of the composer’s life and achievements. Volume 12, for example, features songs from 1811 to 1814; four discs (Volumes 7, 10, 20 and 22) concentrate on the huge and varied output of 1815; Volumes 17, 23 and 32 highlight the achievements of 1816. As the series progresses and draws to its close, each of the creative periods in Schubert’s life will be covered by a disc—in some cases a collaborative Schubertiad—which will depart from the idea of a thematic recital and return to the more conventional side of the programme builder’s art—a chronological corrective, perhaps, to the more wide-ranging and eclectic discs built around ideas, poets or themes. These two approaches to looking at (and listening to) the composer’s output are best taken in tandem.

1816 had been a watershed year, a period of change and conclusions. Towards its end Schubert seems to have accepted that his relationship with Therese Grob was over. He also stopped taking composition lessons with Antonio Salieri in December and gave up school-teaching himself (once and for all, he no doubt thought, but he was forced to return to the grindstone before long.) His move out of the parental home into the house of his friend Franz von Schober at the end of 1816 was a clear declaration of independence. These events are chronicled in more length and detail in the essay accompanying Volume 17. We now take up the thread of the story with a disc which features songs composed between January 1817 and December 1818, two of the most important years in the composer’s life, the first astonishingly productive, the next much less so. It would not be too much to say that this period represents the dawning of a new age in the Schubertian calendar, the progress from adolescence to maturity.

In terms of sheer numbers of songs the productivity of Schubert’s later years cannot compare with the earlier. No fewer than four discs are given over to 1815 (a year about which we have very little real biographical information) whereas well documented periods in the composer’s life are represented by a single disc in our series. It is also important to remember that the thematic recitals released earlier in the Schubert Edition have already made use of many of the great songs of the period. In order to obtain an accurate idea of the achievements of these years, the songs on this disc are to be considered side by side with others issued earlier in the series, not to mention the symphonic, operatic and chamber music which lies outside the scope of these recitals. The following list of the settings of 1817 will make clear the wide range of the composer’s literary interests in a year packed with musical activity of every kind. The number in superscript after a song denotes the volume in the Schubert Edition in which it may be found. As in the work-list of The New Grove, Lieder are here listed in the chronology of the Deutsch catalogue although, as every Schubert scholar knows, much new information has come to light since Deutsch’s time. Following the confusion of a revised Mozart Köchel catalogue, musicologists have preferred not to assign new numbers to works, even if their dating is substantially different from Deutsch’s original thoughts. This means that in some cases the chronological order of the music (so far as we are able to establish it) is different from that suggested in the official catalogue.
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This list provides a fascinating cross-section of the composer’s literary tastes as a young man. Goethe and Schiller, the Castor and Pollux of German literature, have seven settings each. Although this is no match for the wild enthusiasm of 1815 and 1816 when the composer seems to have been swept off his feet by their poems (and we in turn are swept off our feet by his response) some of the most important of the songs (Ganymed, Auf dem See, Gruppe aus dem Tartarus) were written in this year. There are four songs of Claudius, each one a gem, which all date from February, and show how Schubert would tarry with a poet in a concentrated burst of activity once he had alighted on something which chimed with his mood—in this case a revisiting of already familiar territory as well as a valediction. In the same month Schubert took his farewell of the poetry of Ossian, a young man’s enthusiasm if ever there was one: Die Nacht is one of his last words in the realm of the ballad, and a magnificent testament to the composer’s hard-won Ossianic prowess. There are two settings of three other classic writers of an earlier age—Salis-Seewis, Matthiisson and Schubart, each of them a favourite of earlier years and each graced by the composer with a final affectionate visit. An Italian setting of Goldoni (the enchanting La pastorella) is the composer’s only other bow to the eighteenth century. The predominant concerns of 1817, as far as Schubert was concerned, were the present and the future—and that meant glorying in the musical and literary world of Vienna where almost all his friends were aspiring artists of one kind or another. From time to time Schubert set the words of Austrian writers of dubious literary credentials whose work he had come across in local almanacs: songs by Platner, Leon, Széchenyi and Werner (the charismatic canon of St Stephen’s, Vienna) belong in this category. Settings by friends dear to Schubert were generally more inspired: poems by Anton Ottenwalt and Josef von Spaun were given enduring musical life in 1817. This respect for the creative efforts of his fellows was one of the reasons why the composer managed to gather around him a devoted following; he saw himself as an artistic primus inter pares rather than as an isolated Wunderkind, and this had ensured his popularity since his schooldays. Both of these songs (Der Knabe in der Wiege and Der Jüngling und der Tod) are one-off collaborations, created with audible affection and no doubt proudly received by the poets who little imagined that the scribblings of an hour would be their only passport to immortality. Franz von Schober (who was Schubert’s host for part of the year) was a more special friend and a more fluent poet, and it is not surprising that 1817 boasts three of the twelve Schober settings, one of them on this disc, An die Musik, universally accepted as the composer’s theme song, emblematic of Schubert’s attitude to his own art.

All of these collaborations with various local Viennese poets were put in the shade by Schubert’s enthusiasm in 1817 for the poetry of Johann Mayrhofer. There are no fewer than twenty Mayrhofer settings from this year; and there is no doubt that Schubert placed this poet in an entirely different category from that of his other young friends who dabbled in literature. This preference showed not only a respect and personal affection for the older poet, but the same sort of innate literary taste which would encourage Debussy and Poulenc to latch on respectively to Mallarmé and Apollinaire as prophets of a new age. Mayrhofer was a poet (Schlegel was another) who was a harbinger of the new Romanticism—the word which would lead music away from the paths of Beethoven and into excitingly uncharted territory. Schubert had met Mayrhofer as early as 1814, but in 1817 the friendship deepened considerably. We can hear this not only in the number of the poet’s texts which were set to music but more specifically in the composer’s new-found interest in the world of the classics and classical mythology. Mayrhofer wrote a number of poems which attempted to reinterpret classical themes in the light of his own tortured experience, but it is also certain that he turned the composer’s attention to poems by Goethe and Schiller preoccupied with the same themes. ‘Here is a real poet, with something new to teach me’, Schubert seems to be saying, and it is only relatively recently that song enthusiasts, long inclined wrongly to belittle Mayrhofer as a bungling neurotic, have come to agree with the composer’s judgement.

Another major step forward in 1817 was the advent of Johann Michael Vogl into the composer’s circle. In the absence of a good relationship with his father, Schubert seems to have responded well throughout his life to older men who decided to take the composer under their wing. Both Spaun and Mayrhofer (respectively nine and ten years older than Schubert) cast themselves in the role of protector and mentor; but earning the admiration of the singer Vogl, older than the composer,
was a real turning point for Schubert. Since his student days he had admired Vogl at a distance in the Gluck operas. The vogue for Italian opera in Vienna (Schubert’s two overtures ‘in the Italian style’ date from this year, and were performed in 1818) meant that Vogl was at something of a loose end at the very time that Schubert needed an enthusiastic advocate for his songs—he could not after all continue to sing them himself in a thin *voix de compositeur*. Vogl was also exceptionally well read in the classics (and English) and in terms of his general cultivation and musical authority conformed to present-day ideas of what a Lieder singer should be. It is little wonder perhaps that it was his destiny to fashion the pattern of this unknown calling as he learned to adapt the cut of his vocal cloth to a brand-new medium.

Like many a superannuated star of the opera house, Vogl was a formidable grandee; he was also suspicious of association with so-called wonderful new talents. The first meeting between composer and singer (engineered by Spaun and Schober) was probably in March 1817. The singer haughtily sight-read through the first songs which came to hand (the first of which was Mayrhofer’s *Augenlied*, followed by Goethe’s *Ganimed* among others) and pronounced them ‘nicht übel’—the most patronising way possible of saying ‘quite nice’. The more he thought about it, however, the more convinced he became that Schubert was something special. Although he continued to underestimate the composer’s personal qualities, he was soon in awe of his genius. According to Mayrhofer’s recollections, Vogl ‘not only took care of Schubert materially, but in truth furthered him also spiritually and artistically’; he may be regarded as ‘his second father’. Vogl ascribed the gap between the intellectual and musical distinction he (incorrectly) perceived in Schubert to the fact that the young man composed in a trance-like state, as if unaware of what he was doing. In the manner of an accompanist humouring a diva, Schubert seems to have put up with this outrageous misconception the better to manage Vogl; one is reminded of how Claudius in Robert Graves’s novel about the Roman emperor ensures his survival by allowing people to think him a simpleton. Being patronised by Vogl was a small price to pay for having a charismatic interpreter. The classical interests of Mayrhofer were at one with those of Vogl; as a result composer and poet seem to have worked hard together to create Protean incarnations, in songs of re-interpreted myth, for the man who was once Vienna’s finest Orestes in Gluck’s *Iphigenia*. Despite the advent of other singers, younger of voice and more natural in demeanour, Vogl with his magisterial ‘foppishness’ (the criticism of some contemporaries) seems to have remained Schubert’s favourite singer. Although he had an essentially kindly nature, he remained a resolute snob, and a perpetual prey to parody from the younger men in the Schubert circle. Nevertheless, as the years went on, he was to play a continuing and vitally important part in the composer’s day-to-day life.

Of the other achievements of 1817 mention must be made of a series of six Piano Sonatas written between March and August, the Sonata (or *Duo*) in A for violin and piano, and the Symphony No 6 in C which was begun in October. Other important events of the year were to do with a change in the circumstances of Schubert’s father. He was promoted to be head of a school in the Rossau suburb, which meant that the whole family moved from the house in the Säulengasse where the composer had written so much wonderful music. (The building today houses the Schubert Garage, its courtyard full of old cars waiting to be serviced.) At the beginning of 1817 Schubert was lodging at Franz von Schober’s apartment (it was there that he met Vogl for the first time). A crisis in the Schober family necessitated that Schubert should vacate these rooms and return to his father’s house—something which was almost certainly awkward and constricting after the freedom (and greater luxury) of the Schober lifestyle. The most comical entry for 1817 in the *Documentary Biography* is a letter to the publishers Breitkopf und Härtel from one Franz Schubert, ‘Royal Church Composer’ of Dresden. Schubert is a very common name (there are very many Franz Schuberts in the present-day Viennese phone-book). This namesake had been sent, in error, the returned manuscript of *Erlkönig*. Schubert of Dresden denounced this unsolicited mail as ‘trash’ and was outraged that someone had the temerity to misuse his name in this cheeky manner.
This creative pattern differs strikingly from the fevered song work of 1817—although even that represented a large decrease in output since 1816. We might have the impression that Schubert is ‘winding down’ as a song composer and that he was turning his attention to opera, but the fact is that no opera was composed in 1818, and that it is a year of comparatively slim pickings in every medium. Of course there was some very great music composed; on the evidence of some of the pieces it is evident that Schubert was becoming a more concentrated artist than ever before. For example, he sets only one Mayrhofer text in 1818, but *Einsamkeit* is an enormous cantata and an attempt to create something new in song, a definite move towards the concept of a connected cycle of songs in the manner of Beethoven’s *An die ferne Geliebte*. Schubert wrote that it was ‘the best thing I have done’, referring perhaps to the work’s structural format. 1818 is the year of the poet Schreiber; all four of the settings date from that year, including the miraculous *An den Mond in einer Herbstnacht* which is the composer’s earliest experiment in rondo form in song. Settings of the poet Schlegel towards the end of the year show the composer moving into a period where a probable connection between Friedrich Schlegel (resident in Vienna) and members of the Schubert circle was to stimulate the composer in new and challenging ways; he began to be interested in the philosophy of romanticism, and the ambitious and innovative songs of 1819 and 1820 reflect this. Volume 27 will be devoted to Schubert’s settings of the Schlegel brothers.

The smaller number of songs in this year might also suggest that Schubert was determined not to be typecast merely as a composer of songs. He was extremely ambitious in every form of music and worked hard in the early months of the year to complete the C major Symphony, No 6. It is possible that at this time he was asked to help out as a teacher at his father’s new school in the Rossau, and that he made an unwelcome return to teaching. This too may have played its part in restricting his output. There was the excitement of seeing his first song in print (*Erlafsee*, in an almanac) and of hearing one of his ‘Italian style’ overtures performed at the Theater an der Wien, but his application to join the Philharmonic Society as a practising member was unsuccessful. At the end of the year he was overjoyed to receive a commission to compose an opera, *Die Zwillingebrüder*, for the Kärntntherthor Theatre. This was to be designed as a vehicle for Vogl’s return to the stage in a double starring role. It seems that both composer and singer were temporarily side-tracked into believing that their work together in Lieder was to be gloriously up-staged by ‘more important’ work in opera. A number of disappointments was in store for both of them in this regard.

In January 1818 the composer had set a quartet for SATB, *Die Geselligkeit* D609, with words by Johann Karl Unger, a professor of history and father of the famous mezzo Karoline. Unger was close friends with Prince Karl Esterházy who had a summer palace in Zseliz in Hungary and he effected an introduction (which amounted to a recommendation) between Schubert and this important noble family. Esterházy had two daughters, Countess Marie (b1802) and Countess Karoline (b1808), and the composer was duly appointed to be a music tutor for the little girls during the summer. Here was a chance to earn a little money and what better excuse than a summons from the nobility to leave the drudgery of teaching? In effect

### The songs of 1818

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Month</th>
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<tr>
<td>D607</td>
<td>Evangelium Johannis²¹ (Bible) 1818</td>
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<td>D611</td>
<td>Auf der Riesenkoppe³ (Körner) March</td>
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<td>An den Mond in einer Herbstnacht⁸ (Schreiber) April</td>
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<td>Grablied für die Mutter²¹ (Unknown) June</td>
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<td>D628</td>
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<tr>
<td>D632</td>
<td>Vom Mitleiden Maria²¹ (Schlegel) December</td>
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this meant a six-month stint away from his beloved home city. Schubert travelled to Zseliz sometime in May and only returned on 21 November with the rest of the Esterházy family. The *Documentary Biography* is rich in some of the very best letters that Schubert wrote ‘from exile’ to his family and friends. Although he missed Viennese life and members of his circle more keenly with each succeeding week, he enjoyed life in Hungary. ‘I am obliged to rely wholly on myself’, he wrote in September, not without a certain pride; a month earlier: ‘I live and compose like a god.’ While in Zseliz he composed the *Deutsches Requiem* (a work which he wrote for his brother Ferdinand to pass off as his own), as well as a series of piano duets no doubt written for the young countesses. The letters home are sometimes richly comic and show the strength of the composer’s relationships with his older brothers Ignaz and Ferdinand. Life ‘below stairs’ (and we must not forget that Schubert was billeted with the servants) seems to have been full of the lively intrigue and day-to-day scandal which is ever the staple diet of communities cut off from the big city, and dependent for entertainment on home-grown fun. In 1818 the countesses were perhaps too young for the composer’s romantic attentions (he was later to fall in love with Karoline) but a deliberately ambiguous letter to Schober and other friends (8 September) suggests that the very pretty chambermaid was often his companion (‘das Stubenmädchen sehr hübsch und oft meine Gesellschafterin’). It is quite possible that in Zseliz, far from his parents’ eyes, he discovered physical love with a woman for the first time, and this might have been one of those rare times in the composer’s life when the composition of music was upstaged by other equally pressing considerations.

Although Schubert met the baritone Karl von Schönstein (his exact contemporary who was later to play a large part in the performing history of *Die schöne Müllerin*) in Zseliz, the absence of a group of singers and poets at the summer castle certainly played a part in reducing the number of songs written in this period. As one scans the list above, one realises that for half of the year the composer was denied access to books. He no longer had the freedom of his friends’ libraries. It is likely that he had the Mayrhofer poem *Einsamkeit* in autograph, and that he had taken the volume of Schreiber poems with him to Zseliz (the singing exercises written for the young countesses were wordless). For six months it seems that he simply lacked the daily contact with literature coming out of other people’s pockets and into his own (the glorious German tradition of the *Taschenbuch* held sway amongst those who could not afford fine bindings) which had always inspired him to song. There is no better illustration than this of the huge part that city life, and city amenities, played in the composer’s inspiration. Schubert returned to Vienna starved of literature and intellectual companionship. He immediately took up residence with the poet Mayrhofer (no more Rossau schoolhouse for him!) and plunged into the Schlegel translations of Petrarch which were probably shown to him as soon as he had walked through Mayrhofer’s door. Petrarch and Schlegel were really poets to sink your teeth into. The 1818 sabbatical was over, and these settings were to lead to yet another new and adventurous phase in his composing life.

Graham Johnson © 1994
SCHLAFLED "SCHLUMMERLIED"  
D527. January 1817; published by Sauer und Leidesdorf in Vienna in October 1823 as Op 24 No 2  
reprinted by Diabelli (and later Peters) as Schlummerlied

Es mahnt der Wald, es ruft der Strom: The woods exhort, the river cries out:  
'Du liebes Bübchen, zu uns komm!' 'Sweet boy, come to us!'  
Der Knabe kommt, und staunend weilt, The boy approaches, marvels and tarries,  
Und ist von jedem Schmerz geheilt. and is healed of all pain.

Aus Büschen flötet Wachtelschlag, The quail's song echoes from the bushes,  
Mit ihren Farben spielt der Tag, the day makes play with shimmering colours;  
Auf Blümchen rot, auf Blümchen blau on flowers red and blue  
Erglänzt des Himmels feuchter Tau. the moist dew of heaven glistens.

Ins frische Gras legt er sich hin, He lies down in the cool grass  
Lässt über sich die Wolken ziehn; and lets the clouds drift above him;  
An seine Mutter angeschmiegt, nestling close to his mother  
Hat ihn der Traumgott eingewiegt. be is lulled to sleep by the god of dreams.

JOHANN MAYRHOFER (1787–1836)

This is one of the most enchanting of the Mayrhofer songs, and justly celebrated. The dark side of the poet’s muse, given to introspection and depression, pessimism and self-doubt, seems banished for a few magical moments. Nevertheless there is more to this song than meets the ear. Most of the commentators hear it as a lullaby pure and simple, but the music with its octave leaps on ‘Es mahnt’ and ‘Es ruft’ exhorts and lures: Nature is cast as a Lorelei, a seductive force, as well as a healing and restful one. As is often the case with the Mayrhofer songs which are contemporary with Schubert’s flirtation with the Italian operatic muse, there is a sinuous vocal line with melisma and a trace of decoration which suggests homage to bel canto. Beneath the singer’s creamy legato we hear the accompaniment of a pastoral ensemble as the piano’s gently detached chords simulate the tonguing of flutes, oboes and bassoons.

Everything in the shape of the opening phrases—a cradling alternation of chords, largely between tonic and dominant, octave leaps in the vocal line in which the singer stands tiptoe in her eyes, as it were—suggests smiling invitation. For the third and fourth lines of the strophe the harmonies become more complex as the boy is welcomed into Flora’s embrace; his discoveries are mapped out by a daisy-chain of supporting dominant harmonies (A-B flat-C). The phrase ascends to the pivot of ‘von jedem Schmerz’ and then melts into a languid fall. As a result we can almost see him approach the marvels of Nature on tiptoe (mezzo staccato triplets in the right hand), tarry in growing fascination, and then give in to their blandishments. The idea of being healed of pain by nature anticipates the poetry of Justinus Kerner set by Schumann in his Op 35. At this point we remember how the aged minstrel in Mayrhofer’s Nachtstück is wooed to his final rest by birdsong and the rustling trees. Mayrhofer has a darker side, and interpreters have sometimes wondered whether this ‘Bübchen’ has also fallen asleep for ever in the arms of Mother Earth.

It seems unlikely that music of this charm could represent an elegy, however disguised by Mayrhofer’s layers of ambiguous meaning. But it is possible that the song is a type of miniature Liebestod inspired by Goethe’s Ganymed. Mayrhofer’s ‘liebes Bübchen’ (a diminutive which in this context seems suggestive of a shepherd boy or classical cherub) is attracted and enchanted by God-in-Nature in the same way as Ganymede is enveloped by the morning radiance. Schlaflied (composed only a few months before Ganymed) also seems to be a an early morning piece with shimmering colours and dew. In both songs the gentle movement of nature is depicted as a grave dance, alla breve, in which every movement and invitation seems to suggest
the workings of a subtle seducer. Flowers and grass play their part in both songs, and Mayrhofer’s quail warbles (how beautifully the mezzo staccato writing for the piano’s left hand depicts this!) in the place of Goethe’s nightingale. ‘Die Mutter’ (Mother Earth presumably) stands in for Goethe’s ‘all-liebender Vater’. There is also an echo of another, much later, song. The opening of the third strophe (‘Ins frische Gras legt er sich hin’) is reminiscent of ‘ich ruhe still im hohen grünen Gras’ in Brahms’s *Feldeinsamkeit*. In both cases the boy’s gaze drifts heavenward up into the clouds above, as if they were transported to another realm, and in both songs the words ‘Wolken ziehn’ occur. Brahms also casts his song in a spacious and hypnotic F major, a pavane of grave beauty, with chords also marked mezzo staccato. To my ears his setting seems consciously to acknowledge a debt to Schubert.

2 SEHNSUCHT
D516. 1817 (?); published by Cappi und Diabelli in Vienna in May 1822 as Op 8 No 2

Der Lerche wolkenwaehre Lieder
Erschmettern zu des Winters Flucht,
Die Erde hult in Samt die Glieder,
Und Blüten bilden rote Frucht.
Nur du, o sturbmwebegte Seele,
Nur du bist bluentlos, in dich gehkehr,
Und wirst in goldner Frührhingshelle
Von tiefer Sehnsucht aufgekehr.
Nie wird, was du verlangst, entkeimen
Dem Boden, Idealen fremd;
Der trozig deinen schönsten Träumen
Die rohe Kraft entgegenstemmt.
Du ringst dich matt mit seiner Härte,
Vom Wunsche heftiger entbrannt:
Mit Kranichen ein strebender Gefährte,
Zu wandern in ein milder Land.

JOHANN MAYRHOFER (1787–1836)

This song of spring—one of the finest of the Mayrhofer settings, and yet one of the least performed—seems much influenced by the Italian style, at least in the beginning. It is as if the composer can imagine the birds longing for warmer climes ‘wo die Zitronen blüh’ and disporting themselves in the musical style of the land to which they aspire. The left hand accompaniment reminds us another song of longing to escape to pastures new, *Drang in der Ferne*; similar long leaps between the bass notes on the beat and the accompanying vamp suggest the dance of life and the relentless drive of natural forces beyond one’s control. The right-hand melody plunges and dips as if in flight, and the vocal line follows suit with a similar display of aerobic exuberance. Trills in the piano part add to an impression of a pleasantly showy song, yet not a particularly Schubertian one, despite the grace of the melody built around chords of the tonic and dominant seventh. This is what Einstein means when he writes that the song begins in an ‘almost pedantic and superficial style.’ However, the modulation into the Neapolitan richness of A flat on the mention of the word ‘Samt’ (velvet) is a nice touch, as is the way in which the vocal line flowers in tendrils before our ears on ‘Blüten bilden rote Frucht.’

The second verse is another matter; in fact each strophe in this four-verse song has a different atmosphere appropriate to the words. Without warning A flat major yields to E major on ‘Nur du, o sturbmwebegte Seele’ and there is a stentorian, even
haranguing tone which seems to look the listener accusingly in the eye as if the accusation of his barrenness was being made in court. Such disparities among the moods of the four sections probably explain why most of the commentators find a certain lack of conviction in this setting, although Einstein, who was an expert on the Italian madrigal, considers the contrast between the unselfconscious awakening of nature in the first verse and the private tragedy of the individual of the second to be ‘in the manner of Petrarch.’ He is reminded of Monteverdi’s setting of that poet in the five-part madrigal *Zefiro torna* which ‘paints the same contrast’. John Reed points out that the declamatory nature of the Schober setting *Todesmusik* here comes to mind. In complete contrast to the comfortable setting of ‘Blüten bilden rote Frucht’ which we heard a few moments earlier, and where singer and pianist are happily entwined, the voice on ‘du bist blütenlos’ sits perilous and lonely, high on the stave, while the piano plays sulkily triplets far away in a deeper register.

The third verse is in the manner of *Der Unglückliche* (cf the passage in that song beginning ‘Versenken dich in deines Kummers Tiefen’), a work in which a wall of persistently repeated triplets also make their point with finger-jabbing urgency, as if they represent an edict of fate which the outcast finds impossible to reverse or avoid. Another song in which this same triplet motif is to be heard is the celebrated *Der Wanderer* which was composed six months earlier at the most. The ‘rohe Kraft’ (raw strength) of the philistine prompts sforzato chords—one of the very rare occasions, it seems to me, when Schubert actually wants a harsh or ugly sound from the piano. The poet is trapped in a living hell (in this one verse, the atmosphere is claustrophobic as if the voice is unable to find a way out of the chromatic maze) and one is reminded of similar bursts of rough sound in *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus*, a song also from 1817.

For the fourth verse an exit is found as unexpected as it is unheralded and unannounced. After flying frantically in every direction to find its way out of a building, it is as if the bird suddenly finds a chink through which it flies free into the aether. This is the effect of a sudden change to G major at the double bar; on one side of this lies prison, on the other, freedom. What is extraordinary is the way in which Schubert somehow makes it clear that this is not really happening, but sheer fantasy, a projection of the soul allowing only the imagination to fly with the cranes. The vocal line suddenly finds itself in smooth flight and is suddenly re-united with its piano mate which joins it in ecstatic convoy, shadowing it in lovingly chiming thirds and sixths. The three bars of postlude are as pithy a picture as we could possibly have of the lark (or the crane) ascending. Dissatisfaction with politics alone seldom produce words of such heartache. This is one of those poems in which it is hard not to imagine that the poet is making a veiled statement about the loneliness and lack of flowering in his own sexuality. The question remains open as to whether Schubert himself is solely empathetic to, and fascinated by, a friend’s viewpoint or also speaking for his own feelings.

There is a fascinating sketch for this song printed in the *Neue Schubert Ausgabe* (Vol 1B p290). This shows the composer’s way of working on a song of this sort and makes clear that the vocal line was composed before any of the accompaniment’s details. Two bars of right-hand introduction (later discarded) use a figuration that is similar to *Der Schäfer und der Reiter*. The accompaniment as we know it is a result of later thought and was obviously only written once the vocal line had been completed.

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### DIE LIEBE

D522. January 1817; first published in 1895 in series 20 of the Gesamtausgabe, Leipzig

*Wo weht der Liebe hoher Geist?*
*Er weht in Blum’ und Baum,*
*Im weiten Erdenraum,*
*Er weht, wo sich die Knospen spalten*  
Und wo die Blümlein sich entfalten.

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### LOVE

Where does love’s noble spirit breathe?  
*It breathes in flower and tree,*  
in the wide world  
it breathes wherever the buds burst open  
and the flowers unfold.
This utterly charming little song deserves to be better known. The opening phrase in the vocal line puts us in mind of *Alles um Liebe*, another song in 3/4, where the question is ‘Was ist es, das die Seele fühlt?’ The answer is, hardly surprisingly, that the soul feels Love. In *Die Liebe* too the question of where love resides is purely rhetorical, an intimate game between lovers played half in earnest self-examination and half in teasing jest. The music tells us that despite all the other distant sightings in the poem, love’s noble spirit is alive and well and lives right here, between you and me. One can imagine the girl singing this to her lover as his mind wanders from the higher thought embodied by the text to the lower thought her body inspires. For the sake of appearances and decorum this is a love song turned philosophical and it is couched in the manner of a lecture, slightly four-square and earnest.

It is this whiff of the eighteenth century and an avoidance of the modulation and harmonic experiment dear to Schubert which suggests the robust song style of Beethoven. The introduction to this song has something of the keyboard sonata about it—two descending figures, each of them moving with a tiny flourish from the home key of G major to the dominant seventh. From this type of seemingly innocuous figuration Beethoven would build castles in the air; Schubert’s mind was almost certainly on his greatest living contemporary, for John Reed detects Beethoven’s influence on the Schubert piano sonatas written in 1817. This type of prelude brings to mind other Schubert songs, particularly the Baumberg settings (*Der Morgenkuss* and *Abendständchen*—*An Lina* for example). The last two lines of each strophe seem awkwardly set until one realises that Schubert has created, with some ingenuity, a hemiola: the last eight bars of the piece (in 3/4) might easily be re-barred as twelve bars in 2/4, or four in 3/2. This gives a jaunty, even slightly quirky, edge to the word-setting—an angularity which again brings Beethoven to mind.

We do not know where Schubert found the poem of *Die Liebe*. It could have been published in a periodical, but it is not impossible that the composer had some personal contact with the poet through Mayrhofer and his circle.
**DIE FORELLE**

D550. c1817; first published in December 1820 as a supplement to the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* and then by A Diabelli & Co in Vienna in January 1825, designated Op 32 in 1827

**THE TROUT**

In a limpid brook
the capricious trout
in joyous haste
darted by like an arrow.

I stood on the bank
in blissful peace, watching
the lively fish swim
in the clear brook.

An angler with his rod
stood on the bank
cold-bloodedly watching
the fish’s contortions.

As long as the water
is clear, I thought,
he won’t catch the trout
with his rod.

But at length the thief
grew impatient. Cunningly
be made the brook cloudy,
and in an instant
his rod quivered,
and the fish struggled on it.

And I, my blood boiling.
looked on at the cheated creature.

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In einem Bächlein helle
Da schoss in froher Eil’
Die launische Forelle
Vorüber wie ein Pfeil.
Ich stand an dem Gestade
Und sah in süßer Ruh’
Des muntern Fischleins Bade
Im klaren Bächlein zu.
Ein Fischer mit der Rute
Wohl an dem Ufer stand,
Und sah’s mit kaltem Blute,
Wie sich das Fischlein wand.
So lang dem Wasser Helle,
So dacht’ ich, nicht gebricht,
So fängt er die Forelle
Mit seiner Angel nicht.
Doch endlich ward dem Diebe
Die Zeit zu lang. Er macht
Das Bächlein tückisch trübe,
Und eh ich es gedacht,
So zuckte seine Rute,
Das Fischlein zappelt dran,
Und ich mit regem Blute
Sah die Betrogane an.

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CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH DANIEL SCHUBART (1739–1791)

This is perhaps the most celebrated of all Schubert’s Lieder and although there are well-known and much loved songs which are more profound and more moving it is easy to understand its pride of place in a list of Schubertian hits. There is a freshness, a zest, an innocence about this music which has hooked its listeners since the song was composed. It has the memorability of a folksong, a type of melodic inevitability which only the great tunesmiths can achieve; the piano writing (by no means easy to play) adds a dash of sophistication and a touch of virtuosity. Schubert in the guise of open-hearted country lad has always been especially irresistible, particularly to those who like their composer sunny and uncomplicated, and this song (despite its flirtation with the animal rights lobby) neither offends or challenges those who might be perplexed by the composer’s darker side.

It is just possible that someone else might have thought of the idea of the rippling arpeggio which accompanies the beginning of the vocal line (at ‘In einem Bächlein helle’) and which depicts the flight of an arrow or the merry upward movement of the fish through an octave and a half’s stretch of water. It is inconceivable, however, that what follows could have been thought of by anyone other than Schubert. At ‘ich stand an dem Gestade’ the pattern changes: instead of a sextuplet built around the chords of D flat and A flat7, the composer devises a little rush of notes, an ornamentation of the main motif, which
contains at its centre a tiny chromatic figure of three linked semitones. The trout is brought to life at a stroke; all of a sudden we can see (or rather hear) its collision with the smooth surface of the stream. The darting movement of the fish causes the water (hitherto represented by a simple arpeggio) to break up into a hint of spume and spray. Like the refraction of light this has chromatic implications. The arpeggio is caught up on the lines of the stave; and, as it breaks and spreads beneath the pianist's fingers, the glint of adjacent semitones add a head of sparkle to the stream of music. There is something about the sheer cheekiness of this motif which conveys utter delight—the joy in being free and full of energy. In conjunction with the marvellous tune it energises us and sets the foot tapping and the eyes dancing, as if we are at one with that trout in the sheer pleasure of being alive.

By the time we know the outcome of the story we might add, as so often with Schubert, “Enjoy it while you can, it might not last long”.

The vocal line is in Schubert’s best tradition of saluting the wonders of nature. There is something about the movement of even quavers in 2/4 which the composer identifies with the innate perfection of flora and fauna. Examples of this are the openings of *Heidenröslein*, and of the Schlegel settings *Der Schmetterling* and *Der Knabe* where butterfly and bird are given voice in measured quavers in the same carefree folksong mode. The shape of the vocal line is also remarkably similar to that of *Erinnerung: Die Erscheinung*, a Kosegarten song from 1815 which is also set at the water’s edge. *Die Forelle* is in modified strophic form which adds a dash of dramatic variety to the charm of the whole. Muddied waters are just as much grist to Schubert’s mill as sparkling ones and the dirty work afoot at ‘Er macht das Bächlein tückisch trübe’ is splendidly described by triplets in the dark middle register of the piano supported by an alternation of chords too close to each other for comfort or clarity. The astonishment and suspense of the onlooker is brilliantly displayed in a passage (at ‘und eh’ ich es gedacht’) which slips into recitative without our even noticing the change; the tricks of Schubert the magician are becoming ever more subtle in 1817. Note the splendid effect of the piano’s staccato chords underneath the consonant of ‘z’ in ‘zuckte seine Rute’; we can almost see the quick wrist action as the fishing-rod jerks its prey out of the water. The last convulsive movements of the fish are wonderfully painted by the vocal line at ‘das Fischlein zappelt dran’ with its repeat of ‘das Fischlein’ as if the trout’s fate hangs in the balance before it is brought ashore. This is the only moment in the song’s accompaniment when we hear a chain of sixteen ordinary semiquavers; pulled out of its element, and thrashing around on dry land, the trout can no longer command graceful sextuplets. The anger of the last verse can be rendered rueful or furious according to sympathies. Schubert was obviously less than a compleat angler. The postlude, which seems to recede and die away as if the observer were walking on, is almost as delicious as the meal which now awaits the fisherman. Unlike Schlechta’s *Fischerweise* which warns men against scheming girls, Schubart’s original intention with this poem was to warn girls against masculine wiles. The composer chose not to set the last verse of the poem which pointed this moral. This leaves the song firmly in the realm of nature where it seems a sad necessity that one species should prey on another.

There are five versions of this song, none of them significantly different from the others apart from the questions of introduction (or lack of it) and length of postlude. The piece was so popular that the composer was obliged to write it out often. On one famous occasion in February 1818 he sprinkled ink on the finished manuscript (the third version, written out for Josef Hüttenbrenner) rather than sand. The first edition of 1825 used the fourth version which is without introduction, but there is a final manuscript copy which the composer wrote out in 1821 with four bars of introduction. This is the only authentic version of the prelude, although here we have chosen to perform the time-honoured version of the introduction (with the addition of an extra bar at the beginning) published first by Diabelli and printed in the Peters Edition.

The song was given a new lease of life in 1819 when Schubert used it as the theme for variations in the fourth movement of the so-called ‘Trout Quintet’ D667 for piano, two violins, cello and double bass. In doing so he seems to be acknowledging how well known the song had become and repeating it ‘by popular demand’.
**NUR WER DIE LIEBE KENNT**

„Impromptu“

D513a. 1817 (?); first published in a performing edition by Reinhard van Hoorickx in 1974

Nur wer die Liebe kennt

Versteht das Sehnen,

An dem Geliebten ewig fest zu hangen,

Und Lebensmut aus seinem Aug’ zu trinken,

Der kennt das schmerzlich selige Verlangen,

Dahin zu schmelzen in ein Meer von Tränen,

Und aufgelöst in Liebe zu versinken!

**ONLY THOSE WHO KNOW LOVE**

‘Impromptu’

Only those who know love

understand the longing

forever to bold fast to the lover,

and to drink life’s courage from his eyes.

They know the blissful pain of longing

to dissolve into an ocean of tears

and sink, exhausted, in love!

ZACHARIAS WERNER (1768–1823)

This fragment consists of a partial setting of a thirteen-line poem entitled *Impromptu: in Tharants Ruinen geschrieben*. If one’s German geography is not a strong point the title ‘written in Tharant’s ruins’ might summon up classical allusions, but the poet was probably referring to the ruins of the old castle which stood in the small town of Tharandt, a suburb of Dresden south-west of the city.

It is quite obvious that Werner has modelled his poem on Goethe’s celebrated lyric, Mignon’s *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*. Such imitations and parodies were seldom meant to mock or satirise the original; rather were they written in homage as the sincerest form of flattery. That the imitation is a sentimental effusion and a pale copy of the original is perhaps why this song remained a fragment: the composer crossed it out before completing it.

The key of the setting is A flat and it is worth noticing that Schubert’s first setting of the six he made of Mignon’s lyric (*Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* D310) is also in this key with a similar rhythm and comparable vocal line. A feature of the song is a continuing shift between A flat major and minor (the by-play between these two tonalities was to reach its apotheosis much later in *Auf dem Wasser zu singen* and the piano Impromptu Op 90 No 4). There are touches of Schubertian inspiration: at ‘Lebensmuth’ romantic triplets cease in favour of stronger quavers, and the idea of melting (at ‘dahin zu schmelzen in ein Meer’) is illustrated with a descending chromatic phrase. The melismatic vocal flourish on ‘Liebe zu versinken’ suggests the Italianate influence quite commonly found in Schubert’s music of 1817 (a good example of this is *La pastorella* written in this year), but in John Reed’s opinion the dating of the song is ‘highly conjectural.’

The entire vocal line of this fragment is genuine Schubert, but only the first twelve bars of the accompaniment (up to and including the words ‘Der kennt das’) are authentic. From ‘schmerzlich selige Verlangen’ until the end of the fragment the accompaniment (including the postlude) has been provided by Reinhard Van Hoorickx.

**DER FLUG DER ZEIT**

D515. 1817 (?); published by Cappi und Diabelli in Vienna in November 1821 as Op 7 No 2

Es floh die Zeit im Wirbelfluge

Und trug des Lebens Plan mit sich.

Wohl stürmisch war es auf dem Zuge,

Beschwerlich oft und widerlich.

So ging es fort durch alle Zonen,

Durch Kinderjahre, durch Jugendglück,

Durch Täler, wo die Freuden wohnen,

Die sinnend sucht der Sehnsucht Blick.

**THE FLIGHT OF TIME**

Time flew past like a whirlwind,

and bore with it the plan of life.

It was stormy on the journey;

often arduous and unpleasant.

Thus it went through each age,

through childhood years and youthful happiness;

through valleys wherein joys dwell,

sought by longing’s reflective gaze.
Schubert, master of water music, sees the passing of time (in this song at least) as water under the bridge. This much is clear in his casting this setting in the form of a quick barcarolle—a prelude to the inspired use of the same rhythm in Auf dem Wasser zu singen which is also ultimately about the nature of time on the move. The softly bouncing rhythm of Der Flug der Zeit is perhaps a trifle too gentle for the force and drama of the first part of Széchényi’s words, but it is well suited to the sweetness of friendship’s power lauded at the end. It is interesting that the definitive Schubert song about the passage of time, the very different An Schwager Kronos, was also cast in 6/8 rhythm. There was something about compound time used in this way which seems to have suggested to the composer inexorable pre-ordained movement—the swing of the pendulum, the tick of the clock, as well as the movement of sure-footed horses whipped into a gallop by Time, the old coachman.

The song is in two strophes with the same music serving as introduction and postlude. At first hearing one thinks of this as more or less a strophic song, but the modifications, though tiny, are numerous. The main melody is built around an arpeggio in the home key. At the start of each verse we hear more or less the same music, except for a typically Schubertian inflection which changes major to minor the second time round. For Fischer-Dieskau these switches of key express ‘the paradoxical nature of all experience’. So much for the first two lines of each verse. The next two lines move from A major into C major for the first verse (at ‘Wohl stürmisch war es’) and into F major for the second (at ‘und endlich da die raschen Flügel’). This last modulation allows the bass line to slip a semitone down and achieve the most magical change of key in the piece: as F falls to E in the left hand, a perfectly placed second inversion of the home key slips in at ‘in süsser Ruh …’

Apart from these felicities the effect of the song is unpretentiously simple, too simple perhaps. It is easy perhaps to see why it has not received a particularly good press from the commentators; it seems under-energised and not quite at home with the poem. There seems to be a mis-match between the sweeping scale of what the poet is describing and the modest scale of the song. It would be some years before Schubert would write another barcarolle (Das Fischermädchen from Schwanengesang) with a similar introduction which seems at first to be similarly unadventurous, rooted as it is in the tonic key, and with a melody which suggests folksong. This Heine setting (where the composer used many of the same melodic and harmonic tools as in Der Flug der Zeit) has enchanted thousands of listeners. Eleven years’ experience and a greater poem made all the difference in the world.
Deeply, silently I feel within me:
The flame of ardent desire consumes my innermost being.
Deeply, silently I feel it within me.

ANONYMOUS

This haunting little song is completely overlooked by commentators and programme makers; even the name of its poet is shrouded in mystery. Yet it is a superb example of how Schubert can write something memorable and touching without seeming to try. There is an enormous sense of anguished longing and aspiring for release in this music, but how the composer achieves this is almost beyond analysis. Nevertheless he lavished so much care over strophic songs in his formative years that it is clear that such mastery of distillation and concision was something hard won rather than taken for granted as a gift from the gods.

There is a distinct resonance here of other later (and better known) songs about death, and presentiment of release from earth’s cares. The most famous of these is Der Tod und das Mädchen which was composed in the following month; Trost shares that great work’s bitter-sweet majesty, all the more remarkable for being evoked within the space of a few bars in duple time. Schwanengesang also comes to mind—not the great cycle from 1828, but the 1822 Senn setting which achieves the same utterly Schubertian mix of elegiac departure and exaltation. In all three songs the dactylic death motif—a rhythm of a long note (whether crotchet or minim) followed by two of half its length—plays a part to a greater or lesser extent. In a song like Trost, with its ambivalence between the major key and its relative minor, Schubert is on territory of which he was a special master—the smile through the tears and the sense of profound consolation at the darkest times. The postlude with its gentle decoration on the penultimate crotchet is like the pouring of balm on a wound—the kindly embrace of death the deliverer perhaps.

**THE FADED LINDEN TREE**

D514. 1817 (?); published by Cappi und Diabelli in Vienna in November 1821 as Op 7 No 1

Will you abide by what you pledged to me when time has made my hair white?
Since you went away over the mountains reunions are not easy.
Change is the child of time with which parting threatens us; and what the future offers us is a paler gleam of life.
See, the linden tree is still blooming as you leave here today; you will find it again though the west wind steals its blossoms.
Then it will stand alone, people will pass by, indifferent, scarcely noticing it. Only the gardener will remain true, since he loves the tree for itself.

**DIE ABGEBLÜHTE LINDE**

Wirst du halten, was du schwurst,
Wenn mir die Zeit die Locken bleicht?
Wie du über Berge fuhrst,
Eilt das Wiedersehn nicht leicht.
Änderung ist das Kind der Zeit,
Womit Trennung uns bedroht,
Und was die Zukunft beut,
Ist ein bläser’s Lebensrot.
Sieh, die Linde blühet noch,
Als du heute von ihr gehst:
Wirst sie wieder finden, doch
Ihre Blüten stiehlt der West.
Einsam steht sie dann, vorbei
Geht man kalt, bemerkt sie kaum.
Nur der Gärtner bleibt ihr treu,
Denn er liebt in ihr den Baum.

LUDWIG VON SZÉCHÉNYI (1781–1855)
The accompaniment for the whole of this song evokes operatic orchestration. The opening bar of the recitativo stromentato, for example, suggests strings, and the answering phrase in the next bar a reply from the woodwinds. The voice part is marked ‘Recit’ at the outset, something which Schubert was less inclined to do as he got older; he preferred to integrate recitative and aria without a sense of formal division. After the words ‘wenn mir die Zeit die Locken bleicht’ there is a ravishing falling sequence of phrases in the accompaniment (written out for all the world like a short score of an orchestral interlude) where each bar seems to represent a different age of man with sharps sinking to naturals and then to flats as if colour were being drained from the hair, and youthful vitality from the body. This sense of receding energy also does splendid service as an introduction to ‘Wie du über Berge führst’; the same music might also be thought to describe, in advance, the friend’s departure over the mountains as we lose sight of him with each step of the harmony. The recitative has begun in A minor and wends its way, via a beautifully ornamented cadence full of sighs and longing, towards G major. This is the dominant of the key of the extended section which now follows.

There is a great deal about this C major effusion (including the same opening notes of the vocal line) which recalls another aria in the same key, Liebe schwärmt auf allen Wegen. This is actually an orchestrated aria from a Schubert opera, and once again we are made aware that the writing of this piece suggests a piano reduction of a full score. In both cases the vocal line is interrupted by an echoing orchestral interlude or interjection; in the case of Die abgeblühte Linde the piano writing suggests cello solos as miniature interjections. It is interesting too that the theme of both works is ‘Treue’ or constancy, perhaps the reason the composer has chosen C major, unsullied by chromatic complications, to paint this sterling quality. No matter where the piece wanders, it returns to this key. Mention of the future on ‘Und was die Zukunft beugt’ in the second verse takes us into the exotic reaches of B flat minor as if we are being led into uncertainty, not to mention temptation, but mention of the lime tree at the beginning of the third verse (‘Sieh, die Linde blühet noch’) returns us to the security of C major. Unusual phrase lengths are a feature here (4 bars + 3 bars in the opening cantilena) as well as quasi-operatic melismas and in one instance a trill on ‘die’—a strange word to have inspired this exuberance; even the vocal line seems to have been thought in instrumental terms at this point. The sequence of modulations at ‘doch Ihre Blüten stiehlt der West’ suggests cunning and trickery as if Time was stealing a march on its ageing victims. The descending bass-line chromatics of ‘Einsam steht sie dann’ droop and wither most effectively as the accompaniment, with the right hand’s group of quavers off the beat, suggests a mood molto patetico and again operatic. Mention of the true and trusty gardener (the second line of the fourth verse) prompts one of Schubert’s magical changes from A minor into A major. From then on all is rapturous operatic fantasy as these two remaining lines of text provide all the words necessary for a further seven lines of music. Repetition of this kind is highly unusual in Schubert’s songs; the composer treats the poem as a libretto and the singer has her work cut out to make her rapturous repetitions sound convincing. Various tricks of the trade (including extending the word ‘Nur’ as it is sung over shifting harmonies which triumphantly return us to C major for good and all) reinforce the feeling that this song’s place in the canon stands between Lied and aria. The piece closes undramatically in a mood of quiet rapture, murmuring its delight in love and constancy. The poem enshrines a touching thought about the enduring nature of love and friendship which must have appealed to the composer. The only poem which he himself penned, and then set to music (Abschied from the summer of 1817) is also about a leave-taking between friends. Is it possible that Schober’s departure from Vienna in the summer of that year also occasioned this setting?

John Reed questions that this song and its Op 7 sibling, Der Flug der Zeit, were composed in 1817. He prefers to think of them as written in 1821 and offers arguments about when and how the composer might have encountered the poet. And yet I find it hard to believe that the two Széchényi songs belong to a year which numbers Geheimes and the first Suleika among its achievements. There is something about these two works which, for all their beauties, remains experimental. The operatic nature of Die abgeblühte Linde suggests that either the mature composer was pandering to the tastes of the work’s dedicatee (none other than the noble poet) or that as a younger man he was still very taken with the Italian style and interested, as a musical gardener, in how he could cross-breed it with the Lied.
Das Lied vom Reifen

D532. February 1817; first published in 1895 in series 20 of the Gesamtausgabe, Leipzig

Seht meine lieben Bäume an,
Wie sie so herrlich stehn,
Auf allen Zweigen angetan
Mit Reifen wunderschön!

Von unten an bis oben naus
Auf allen Zweigelein
Häng’s weiss und zierlich, zart und kraus,
Und kann nicht schöner sein.

Und alle Bäume rund umher,
Und alle weit und breit,
Stehn da, geschmückt mit gleicher Ehr’,
In gleicher Herrlichkeit.

Viel schön, viel schön ist unser Wald!
Dort Nebel überall,
Hier eine weisse Baumgestalt
Im vollen Sonnenstrahl –

Wir sehns das an und denken noch
Einfältiglich dabei:
Woher der Reif und wie er doch
Zu Stande kommen sei?

Lichthell, still, edel, rein und frei,
Und über alles fein!
O aller Menschen Seele sei
So lichthell und so rein!

MATTHIAS CLAUDIUS (1740–1815)

The Song of the Frost

Look how splendid
my beloved trees are,
adorned on every branch
with beautiful frost!

From top to bottom
it hangs on every twig,
white and delicate, fragile and crisp.
Nothing could be lovelier.

And all the trees around,
far and wide,
stand arrayed in like dignity
and splendour.

Our woods are so lovely;
yonder all is veiled in mist;
here a white tree
is outlined in full sunlight.

We look upon this scene
and naively reflect:
whence this frost?
How could it have got here?

Shining, silent, noble, pure, and free,
and exquisite beyond all else!
May the souls of all mankind
be as shining and as pure!

This is perhaps as near as Schubert ever came to writing a Christmas carol—and that in February! Countless song programmes devised for the festive season would be richer for this little song, half forgotten and not pressed into service because it failed to find a place in the Peters Edition. The tune seems to call for community singing, although the surprisingly tricky accompaniment, a sinuous line of semiquavers beneath the more straightforward vocal line, calls for more than a village-hall accompanist. At the postlude the chromatic weaving of the music recalls the style of Weber’s piano writing.

The last five bars of this song were written on the reverse of Der Tod und das Mädchen, the most famous of the Claudius songs written at this time. This famous manuscript was cut up into pieces, so that various autograph hunters could have a piece of the relic. Das Lied vom Reifen was thus desecrated alongside its more famous sibling. For this reason it has never been very clear what the composer wanted at the end of the song. We perform here the four bars of postlude to be found in the Gesamtausgabe as well as adding another bar at the end which is to be found in the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. Strictly speaking, the song is no longer a fragment. John Reed states that it is clear from Schubert’s autograph that he meant only three verses to be sung. The poem is an enchanting one, however, and as fifteen verses are printed in the Gesamtausgabe we have chosen a further three.
AN EINE QUELLE
D530. February 1817; published by A Diabelli & Co in Vienna in 1829 as Op Posth 109 No 3
Du kleine grünhwachse Quelle,
An der ich Daphne jüngst gesehn!
Dein Wasser war so still und helle!
Und Daphnes Bild darin so schön!
O wenn sie sich noch mal am Ufer sehen lässt,
So halte du ihr schönes Bild doch fest;
Ich schleiche heimlich dann mit nassen Augen hin,
Dem Bild meine Not zu klagen;
Denn, wenn ich bei ihr selber bin,
Dann, ach dann kann ich ihr nichts sagen.

MATTHIAS CLAUDIUS (1740–1815)

Names like Chloë, Thyrsis, Doris and Daphne evoke an earlier age of song composition. The Lieder of Haydn are full of such pastoral characters and he wrote a trio, Daphnens einziger Fehler, in which the girl’s innocence in love is cited as her only fault. Schubert’s own Daphne am Bach from 1816 is written in a classical style, and so, in part at least, is An eine Quelle where another Daphne is the heroine. It is as if the composer has only to hear such a name for him to take up his pen in eighteenth-century manner. Of course there is often an arch artificiality about this type of poem (although Claudius, as ever, is remarkably fresh and direct) which needs to be framed by music of a formal and old-fashioned kind.

Schubert’s achievement in this music is to marry a Mozartian elegance with moments of real romantic sensibility. These two styles alternate here with great charm. For example the first three lines of the poem are set with courtly dotted rhythm and a euphonious success of parallel sixths, but the words ‘und Daphne’s Bild darin’ plunge us into a watery world of romantic longing: repetition of the words makes a heartfelt sequence, the accompaniment’s answering triplets making the point that a musical echo is an ideal analogue for the nymph’s reflection. The setting of ‘so schön’ is masterly: Schubert takes these two words out of their metrical place in the line and turns them into a spontaneous exclamation. ‘O wenn sie sich noch mal am Ufer sehen lässt’ returns us to the jaunty and good-humoured world of the dotted rhythms of Beethoven’s Minuet in G. Eric Sams sees in this phrase the prototype of the timid violinist’s tune in No XI of Wolf’s Italienisches Liederbuch. On the other hand the furtive rising chromaticism of ‘Ich schleiche heimlich’ which suggests the excitement of ungentle voyeurism (for it is not only the face of the bathing Daphne which the river will reflect) could be found in no song of the galant age. We then return to the music of an earlier convention; when he is face to face with Daphne he can only speak in the stilted language of formality. Thus purity and refinement stands side by side with passion and lust in this song, just as the male protagonist veers between idealism and earthiness, and the composer stands on a bridge beneath which flow the convergent streams of classicism and romanticism.

The introduction was taken directly from the postlude and published posthumously by Diabelli. Although it may seem to be a liberty for the publisher to have done this (and Diabelli is responsible for some horrors) it was common practice for songs without a printed introduction to have one improvised by the accompanist—almost certainly including Schubert himself. It is possible that he would have used the postlude in this manner, or perhaps improvised another which, like the music improvised for the pleasure (and dancing) of his friends, evaporated and vanished into the night.
AN DIE MUSIK
D547. March 1817; published by Thaddäus Weigl in Vienna in 1827 as Op 88 No 4

Du holde Kunst, in wieviel grauen Stunden,
Wo mich des Lebens wilder Kreis umstrickt,
Hast du mein Herz zu warmer Lieb entzunden,
Hast mich in eine bessre Welt entrückt!
Oft hat ein Seufzer, deiner Harf entflossen,
Ein süser, heiliger Akkord von dir
Den Himmel bessrer Zeiten mir erschlossen,
Du holde Kunst, ich danke dir dafür!

FRANZ VON SCHÖBER (1798–1882)

If Die Forelle is a Schubertian hit, this song has become the composer’s very theme song—and few have argued against its use as such. Only Einstein suggests that another Schober setting, *Trost im Liede*, comes closer to defining the composer’s attitude to his song-writing art. While seeing Einstein’s point, there is no denying that Schubert has worked a miracle and engineered a triumph of pure feeling using only the most modest of musical means. The poem (which bears a striking resemblance to a stanza in Schulze’s *Die bezauberte Rose*) is not strikingly original, however beloved and familiar its words have become. In the absence of a narrative or a range of poetic imagery to encourage harmonic exploration, the setting is conventional in every way (it is even strophic) save for its greatness. Sincerity and heartfelt devotion seem to emanate from every note, and also a type of exaltation which enable us to glimpse for a moment the transfigured state, remarked on by his contemporaries, in which Schubert wrote his music. It is a paradox that a song which has long been taken to be an unforced and intimate portrait of Viennese Gemütlichkeit should also be one of the most daunting songs to sing and play because of the profundity and simplicity of its message. The music has the force of the still, small voice which can hush the world.

In reality the song is a dialogue between the voice and the pianist’s left hand, the quasi-cello bass line of the music. The right hand is the true accompanist and mediator in this heavenly conversation; it pulsates in a way which is crucial to the mood of the song although the listener may only be subliminally aware of its magic. Except in the postlude to each verse, these chords have no special thematic significance, but the piano needs to repeat notes in order to sustain a harmonic background, and the accompanist has to find a means of allowing these chords to ‘happen’ without appearing to strike each one individually—something which would break the music into a succession of pedantic downbeats. Underneath what should be a gliding stream of harmony, the left hand sings its heart out, warming the voice into action. The setting of ‘Du holde Kunst’, with a touching downward leap of a sixth between the second and the third word, suggests obeisance and reverence. Reference to the bleak hours and life’s tumultuous round remain in the bottom part of the stave, earthbound, and difficult in tessitura for many sopranos and tenors. After ‘wilder Kreis umstrickt’ an eloquent little falling chromatic motif in the left hand (a single bar) is a prelude to the magic which will lift the spirits (and the vocal line) into higher regions. At this point a generous and eloquent four-bar phrase takes wing (‘hast du mein Herz zu warmer Lieb entzunden’), this time without the dallying on long low notes which has characterised earlier phrases. It is as if the whole song has caught fire and is aglow with the warmth of music itself. The next phrase (‘Hast mich in eine bessre Welt entrückt’) directs its glance heavenward; there is scarcely a phrase in all Schubert more descriptive of longing and aspiration as the inexorably rising bass line shoulders the melody aloft. This phrase ends in the relative minor as if to show us that there is no pleasure without its cost in pain, a paradox, sweetly bitter and bitter-sweet, which lies at the heart of so much of Schubert’s music. The repeat of these words returns us to earth in two succeeding downward leaps, each of a sixth, and as the voice comes to the ends of its line we find ourselves back in D major. The message
seems to be that a bit of heaven has been brought down to these realms, and that the lower regions of our dreary planet have been transfigured by Music’s beauty. The piano postlude mirrors this descent in a succession of sequences of chords built around apoggiaturas which lean and sigh, tugging on the sleeve and pulling the heartstrings. A simple yet heart-stopping excursion into the subdominant subtly emphasises that this hymn of praise is also a type of prayer. The second strophe introduces the idea of the harp which probably inspired the piano’s gentle right hand strumming.

As in all Schubert’s really great strophic songs the vocal line is suitable for both verses; note for example how the interval of a sixth which has bowed down to Music on ‘holder Kunst’ is also deeply eloquent and descriptive of the sigh of ‘ein Seufzer’. The final words of thanks at the end of the song (‘du holde Kunst, ich danke dir’) can be unbearably moving. This song was the last encore sung by Lotte Lehmann at her farewell recital at New York’s Town Hall in 1951. After a lifetime of service to music she was too choked by tears to sing these final lines, the accompanist finishing the song for her. Schubert was also attempting to give voice to the almost inexpressible. To write music about music is the hardest thing of all, and in the wordless gratitude of the postlude, this most literary of composers retreats into that realm of art where words simply cannot carry the depth of his feeling. ‘Such a song’ writes Richard Capell, ‘wins for the author a tenderness that is more than admiration from the coming and going generations.’

**DER SCHÄFER UND DER REITER**

D517. April 1817; published by Cappi und Diabelli in Vienna in December 1822 as Op 13 No 1

Ein Schäfer sass im Grünen,
Sein Liebchen süß im Arm;
Durch Buchenwipfel schienen
Der Sonne Strahlen warm.

Sie kosten froh und heiter
Von Liebeständelei.
Da ritt bewehrt ein Reiter
Den Glücklichen vorbei.

„Sitz ab und suche Kühle,“
Rief ihm der Schäfer zu.
„Des Mittags nahe Schwüle
Gebietet stille Ruh.“

„Noch lacht im Morgenglanze
So Strauch als Blume hier,
Und Liebchen pflückt zum Kranze
Die schönsten Blüten dir.“

Da sprach der finstre Reiter:
„Nie hält mich Wald und Flur;
Mich treibt mein Schicksal weiter,
Und ach, mein ernster Schwur.

„Ich gab mein junges Leben
Dahin um schnöden Sold.
Glück kann ich nicht erstreben
Nur höchstens Ruhm und Gold.

**THE SHEPHERD AND THE HORSEMAN**

A shepherd sat amid the greenery,
His sweetheart in his arms;
Through the tops of the beech trees
Shone the sun’s warm rays.

Joyfully, blithely,
They dallied and caressed.
Then a horseman, armed,
Rode by the happy pair.

‘Dismount and come to the cool shade,’
The shepherd called to him.
‘The sultry midday heat approaches
And bids us rest quietly.

‘Here bush and flower
Still smile in the radiant morning,
And my sweetheart will pick the loveliest flowers
To make you a garland.’

Then the gloomy rider spoke:
‘Woods and meadows can never keep me:
My fate drives me onwards,
And, ah, my solemn vow.

‘I gave up my young life
For vile money.
I can never aspire to happiness;
At best only to gold and glory.’
“Drum schnell, mein Ross, und trabe
Vorbei wo Blumen blühn,
Einst lohnt wohl Ruh’ im Grabe
Des Kämpfenden Bemühn.”

‘Make haste then, my steed, and trot
past the flowers in bloom.
One day the peace of the grave
may reward the warrior’s toil.’

FRIEDRICH HEINRICH KARL, FREIHERR DE LA MOTTE FOUQUÉ (1777–1843)

The contrast between town and country, low and high birth, pastoral and military, is a favourite folksong theme. The pace of life is different for those who tread outdoor paths and those who walk the corridors of power. Accordingly Schubert uses what is more or less a ballad style with a mood and a speed for the shepherd’s music, and an utterly contrasting one for the plaint of the passing knight. Benjamin Britten does something rather similar in his French folksong setting Le roi s’en va-t’en chasse where the beautiful shepherdess Nanon, despite the hectoring of hunting triplets and horn calls, refuses to become the king’s darling. She replies to his propositions in a slower tempo as if she has come from quite another world, as indeed she has.

The pianist opens the song and we find ourselves in the Arcadia of sensuous embrace (a languid left hand) and cooing doves (a trilling right). There is an ornate fussiness about the accompaniment which suggests rococo prettiness and ornamentation. The composer has taken some trouble to make this scene almost a textbook (or picture-book) illustration of the pastoral life; indeed it is so much set within a gilt frame that it seems a musical equivalent of a painting by Boucher or a Fragonard, the subject matter frivolous perhaps, but its tone as a work of art serious. The scoring of the song (if it were to be transferred to wind instruments) would call out for Damon’s flute to trill and swoon. The key is E major, the key of a number of songs in the canon which depict the pastoral idyll; these include Elysium, Erntelied and Blumenlied. It is perhaps no accident that Hugo Wolf was also to cast his shepherdess in four sharps for Die Spröde, and that the accompaniment of that song should also employ light, airy semiquavers to provide a filigree of feminine delicacy.

The picture-book approach continues for the entry of the knight (the last two lines of Verse 2) who canters up in what might be termed 6/8 triplets for children (compare the truly menacing ‘adult’ triplets of Erlkönig and An Schwager Kronos for example). This is the type of music for rocking-horse which Schumann conjures in his Aus alten Märchen winkt es, the penultimate song from Dichterliebe, which refers to fairy tales of the type conjured by de la Motte Fouqué. The music for the cavalier’s entry (in E minor) seems to have something in common with that for Der Flug der Zeit, as if the rider, pressed for time, were being propelled through life by forces outside his control. It is the shepherd who invites the intruder to tarry but Schubert cleverly makes him sing, if not exactly in the rider’s musical style, at least within the faster section which introduces him. This allows for the contrast of a return to the pastoral music (Verse 4) this time in G major, as the shepherd continues to expound the virtues of country life. As this hedonistic mood reasserts itself we can only wonder that the rider, so driven in every other way, has the patience to hear words extended into languid melismas. After this, there is no formal option but for the rest of the song (three more verses) to be given over to the rider and his rather earnest music. This is impeccable style for this type of ballad, but we somehow long to hear a reprise of the music of the shepherd who has presumably been silenced by the horror of what he hears of city life. The poem does not allow for such a recapitulation however, and the work ends on a serious, even gloomy note. Alas, we are unable to take the cavalier’s plight to heart; his capitulation to Mammon has been rendered less tragic by his proximity to the shepherd’s chocolate box and the delectable things it contains. This is another one of those musical experiments which almost work, and which seem characteristic of 1817.

This song was published in 1822 as part of the composer’s Op 13 which was dedicated to Schubert’s best and most faithful friend, Josef von Spaun. Other songs were Lob der Tränen and Mayrhofer’s Der Alpenjäger.

This is the last of four settings that Schubert made of this poet; others were the three Don Gayseros songs and Lied.
In writing the ‘Trout’ Quintet Schubert used a popular song as the basis of a piece of instrumental music. In writing this song, it is probable that he used what must have been a popular piece of dance music for piano (the third of the Deutsche D972) as an accompaniment for a song. If this is so, this is a unique instance of music preceding word in Schubert’s song output, although I have suggested that this may also have been the case in Die Macht der Liebe. Of course it is possible that the song came first and that its piano part was popular enough to find an echo on the dance floor, but it seems more likely that the poem by Kind has been made to fit the music as a type of obligato (the vocal line uncharacteristically sounds like one) which makes this song an instance of the tail wagging the dog, or in this case the wing flapping the bird. It is true that the runs of the accompaniment are written in semiquavers (rather than the quavers we find in the dance) but the first six bars of the melody of this delightful little waltz are the same in both versions. This puts us in mind of the Liebeslieder Waltzes of Brahms which were written as piano duets with an added vocal obligato. Kind’s poem is one of the most mindless that Schubert ever set (or in this case, grafted) but the repetitive nature of both the words and vocal line seem ideally suited to birdsong with its short-spanned repetitions of a small group of notes. The excursion into B flat major for the fourth and fifth lines of the poem is a winsome touch (providing relief from the insistent A major of the home key) that we do not find in the dance.

There is something dangerously near to kitsch about the sheer cosiness and sweetness of this song, with its arch inference that life in the nest mirrors the best family values of the Biedermeier period. The same may be said for Brahms’s Das Mädchen spricht (also in A major) which explores more or less the same theme with swallows as opposed to linnets. There is a good deal of genre painting of the period which has the same over-pretified quality. One could not have denied Schubert the chance to aim for popularity from time to time, however, and his placing of this song as the third of the Op 20 group (the others were the
much more serious *Sei mir gegrüsst and Frühlingsgläube*) seems a judicious piece of public relations. This was the first of the composer’s song-sets to be published by the house of Sauer and Leidesdorf and they no doubt wanted a hit. And the poet was, after all, the famous librettist of Weber’s *Der Freischütz*.

**SCHWEIZERLIED**  

*I sat on the mountainside*  
*watching the birds;*  
*they sang, they hopped,*  
*they built their nests.*

**SWISS SONG**

*I stood in a garden,*  
*watching the bees;*  
*they hummed, they buzzed,*  
*they built their cells.*

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**Uf'm Bergli Bin i g'sässe,**  
**Ha de Vögle Zu g'schaut;**  
**Hänt g'sunge, Hänt g'sprungne,**  
**Hänt's Näsli G'baut.**

**Im a Garte Bin i g'stande,**  
**Ha de Imbl Zu g'schaut;**  
**Hänt g'brummet, Hänt g'summet,**  
**Hänt Zelli G'baut.**

**Uf d'Wiese Bin i g'ange,**  
**Lugt' i Summer Vögle a;**  
**Hänt g'soge, Hänt g'floge,**  
**Gar zu schön hänt's G'tan.**

**Und da kummt au Der Hansel,**  
**Und da zeig i Em froh,**  
**Wie's sie's mache, Und mer lachet,**  
**Und machet's Au so.**

**JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE (1749–1832)**

This song is a real little charmer, although Edith Mathis informs me that Goethe’s attempts at Swiss German, the so-called *Schwytzertütsch*, are not as accurate as they might be. Here is a German entering into Swiss territory at his peril. Any visitor to Switzerland knows how different the German language is in that country.

Fox Strangways, the well-known British translator of the Schubert songs into English, chose to put this song into Devon dialect. Shakespearian echoes of comic characters with Mummerset accents come to mind, and this hearty bonhomie is appropriate for the way that the composer has set the poem. Schubert’s Viennese Ländler and waltzes are generally more gracious and less rustic than this, but music from the sophisticated big city is bound to different from that of the ‘provinces’—the German-speaking equivalent of Mummerset. In *Schweizerlied* we hear suggestions of cowbells and clog dancing, yodels and thigh-slapping in mid-dance (on the strong second beat of the bar)—in other words all the clichés of this type of character piece. The composer seems to have had as much fun with it as the poet had in writing it. Schubert being Schubert, the tune is marvellously infectious and although it may have been Goethe’s intention to have fun at the expense of the Swiss, the end result is an affectionate salute to neighbours across the mountains. As with his Italian evocations, the composer seems to be no less in love with a style because it makes him smile. Despite the simplicity of the piano writing, it is amazing that in the spacing of the chords and in the intervals of the vocal line, Schubert creates a page of vocal music unlike any other in his output; it is a vivid thumbnail sketch, executed in a flash by the hand of a master. Unlike Goethe, the composer never had the opportunity to visit Switzerland, and the song pre-dates by eight years his own mountain holiday in Upper Austria where he might have heard folk music similar to this.
LIEBHABER IN ALLEN GESTALTEN


Ich wollt' ich wär' ein Fisch,
So hurtig und frisch;
Und kämst Du zu angeln,
Ich würde nicht mangeln.

ICH wollt' ich wär' ein Fisch,
So hurtig und frisch.

Ich wollt' ich wäre Gold!
Dir immer im Sold;
Und tästst Du was kaufen,
Käm' ich gelaufen.

Ich wollt' ich wäre Gold!
Dir immer im Sold.

Wär' ich gut wie ein Schaf!
Wie der Löwe so brav;
Hätt' Augen wie's Lüchschen,
Und Listen wie's Füchschen.

Wär' ich gut wie ein Schaf!
Wie der Löwe so brav;
Doch bin ich wie ich bin,
Und nimm mich nur hin!

WILLST beisere besitzen,
So lass Dir sie schnitzen.
Ich bin nun wie ich bin;
So nimm mich nur hin!

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE (1749–1832)

This ‘catalogue of disguises’ (as Capell calls it) is one of the more famous of Schubert’s comic songs, and a favourite encore of many a soprano. Both peasants and princes have long (and even recently) wished to be reincarnated into something which would bring them closer to the intimate charms of their beloveds; the idea goes back to the myth of Proteus and the Ovidian concept of metamorphosis. It is typical of Goethe that he should effortlessly marry classical learning with the style of a cheeky and earthy folksong. However masculine these words might be, it is unusual to hear this song sung by a man. It has become a part of the soprano repertoire (Elisabeth Schumann and Irmgard Seefried sang it often) to the extent that Fischer-Dieskau chose not to include it in his giant Schubert project of the 1970s. “I can’t get enough of you,” the poem seems to say, “and I will go to any lengths to get more”; the music fairly bubbles and twinkles with goodwill and happiness and turns the somewhat predatory nature of the words into something harmlessly gentle. Perhaps male singers are embarrassed by a whimsical coquetry in the turn of musical phrase which suggests femininity. Staccato notes in the left hand and flirtatious interplay between voice and piano (the echoing phrases at the end of each strophe) add to an impression of a teasing game of hide and seek. There are nine verses printed in the Gesamtausgabe (only three in Peters) which gives the singer a wide range of incarnations from which to choose. No self-respecting German-speaking woman would now sing Goethe’s second verse (‘Ich wollt’ ich wär ein Pferd’,
‘I wish I were a horse’), but English-speaking singers can innocently sing the verse unaware that these days ‘Pferd’
is deprecating slang for an ugly woman. Languages, like lovers’ shapes, change all the time, it is true, but this is one
metamorphosis which Goethe would not have understood.

**ABSCHIED VON EINEM FREUNDE**

D578. 24 August 1817; first published by A Diabelli & Co in Vienna in 1838 in volume 29 of the Nachlass

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**FAREWELL TO A FRIEND**

Lebe wohl! Du lieber Freund!
Ziehe hin in fernes Land,
Nimm der Freundschaft trauës Band —
Und bewahr’s in treuer Hand!
Lebe wohl! Du lieber Freund!

---

Go forth to a distant land;
take this cherished bond of friendship
and keep it faithfully.

---

Farewell, dear friend!
Hear in this mournful song
the yearning of my inmost heart,
muffled and anxious.

---

Farewell, dear friend!
Parting is a bitter word;
alar, it calls you from us
to the place decreed for you.

---

Farewell, dear friend!
If this song should stir your heart,
my friendly spirit shall hover close by,
touching the strings of my soul.

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This song is the only one in the canon where Schubert set his own words. It is a touching farewell to the composer’s friend Franz von Schober who was leaving Vienna. The music is heartfelt but simple, as if Schubert was embarrassed (or at least thought it inappropriate) to lavish ornate invention on his own literary efforts. *Pièce d’occasion* it certainly is and was probably penned, words and music almost simultaneously, within a few minutes, and written into his friend’s album. Schober was Schubert’s host at this time; the composer had lived in the Schober apartment for eight months but had to vacate his room there in favour of Axel, the elder brother of the family. Axel, a talented painter of flowers, was a first lieutenant in the Austrian Tenth Hussars and was due to return on military leave from France. Tragically he died before he could do so. He was already ailing when his younger brother left Vienna to fetch him, this little song ringing in his ears. It is possible that Schober had originally intended to go away for a long time (perhaps to Sweden) and that he was forced to return quickly to Vienna only by his brother’s death. If this was the case, however, and there were to be only two people in the Schober flat (Axel and Schubert), why did the composer have to move out? The prospect of a long separation from a beloved friend (which actually turned out to be relatively short) has long been held to account for the mournful tone of this song. But a number of other friends, also very dear to the composer, left Vienna from time to time without musical comment; compare the elegiac tone of this lament to the comic *Epistel* written in mock Italian style to Spaun who moved to Linz. It seems to me that the Schober family’s concern over Axel’s health must have been well known to Schubert; perhaps they feared the worst. Was this song meant to comfort and show concern, to give spiritual support for Schober’s sad and ominous journey? The third verse could have applied equally well to the prospect of Schober’s sad parting from his brother, and the ‘Bestimmungsort’ (the decreed place) may refer to the town where Axel lay ill, as well as the grave which parts all friends, and brothers.
The doubling of the vocal line by the piano in much of this song seems to show solidarity: ‘Whither thou goest, I will go.’ The modulation into the relative major on ‘lieber Freund’ is as tender as an embrace. Schubert was devoted to his own brothers, and if this song was written taking Axel’s illness into account, tactful empathy is to be found everywhere. John Reed finds echoes of Vor meiner Wiege here (it is in the same key of B minor). That song was about mother and child, and the key is one which the composer often chooses when writing of emotional ties of great intimacy (Grablied für die Mutter is also in B minor.) Here we get a sense of family, and realise that Schubert considered himself an honorary part of the Schober family too; he had certainly been treated as such. The whole seems to be a companion piece to, and mirror image of, An die Musik in terms of its chronology, its key (B minor is the relative minor of the D major of An die Musik) and simply because the two things that were really sacred to Schubert were music and friendship, both containing much mingled happiness and sadness and relationships both major and minor. And of course the enigmatic figure of Franz von Schober hovers behind both pieces, tantalisingly silent about his friendship with the composer after Schubert’s death, and perhaps closer to the composer than any other member of the circle. What these two men from such different backgrounds and with such different temperaments saw in each other remains one of the unsolved Schubertian mysteries. The composer was steadfastly loyal to Schober when the poet-dilettante’s behaviour seemed to have deserved less. The music with Schoberian connections, whether settings of his poems or pieces linked with him such as this, always strikes a note of very special affection.

Erlafsee
D586. September 1817; first published by Anton Doll in Vienna in February 1818 in a supplement to Mahlerisches Taschenbuch and by Cappi und Diabelli in Vienna in 1822 as Op 8 No 3

Mir ist so wohl, so weh’
Am stillen Erlafsee.
Heilig Schweigen
In Fichtenzweigen.
Regungslos
Der blaue Schoss,
Nur der Wolken Schatten flieh’n
Übern dunklen Spiegel hin,
Frische Winde
Kräuseln linde
Das Gewässer
Und der Sonne
Güld’ne Krone
Flimmert blässer.
Mir ist so wohl, so weh’
Am stillen Erlafsee.

Johann Mayrhofer (1787–1836)

Lake Erlaf

I am so happy, and yet so sad,
by the calm waters of Lake Erlaf.

A solemn silence
amid the pine-branches;
motionless
the blue depths.
Only the clouds’ shadows flit
across the dark surface.

Cool breezes
gently ruffle
the water,
and the sun’s
golden corona
grows paler.

I am so happy, and yet so sad,
by the calm waters of Lake Erlaf.

Much has always been made of Mayrhofer’s influence on Schubert, and the poet’s role in shaping the composer’s literary and artistic tastes. But when it came to setting poetry Schubert was always of a highly independent cast of mind. He resisted numerous suggestions that he should put various poems to music, and on occasion (this song is one) he selected only the bits of the poem which suited him. He was so often selective that we must believe that when Schubert did undertake the setting of a long and seemingly intractable poem (Mayrhofer’s Uraniens Flucht comes to mind) he actually wanted to do it—each note
(and word) was meant. There are thirty-six lines to this poem and Schubert chooses to set only fourteen (verses 1 and 3), repeating the first two lines to make an ABCA structure where A and B together make up the first section and C is a contrasting movement at a faster tempo. There is another Mayrhofer setting, Schubert’s first (Am See), which begins with a lake-side description and grows into extended musings on a historical episode; here the composer seems to have determined not to write another such ballad. He prunes the poem (more mercilessly than he seems to have cut his operatic libretti) in order to make an aria.

The Erlaf is a tributary of the Danube in Lower Austria, and Lake Erlaf is situated on the northern border of Steiermark. Mayrhofer’s poem uses this locale for a highly fanciful appearance of a fairy-like image ‘from the land of the shepherds.’ This ‘Wunderfrau’ is momentarily upset by the mini-storm at ‘Frische Winde’ (the second of the two verses set by Schubert) but the poet comforts her. Mayrhofer’s last verse seems to have been influenced by Goethe’s Der Musensohn (it ends with a similar rhetorical question) which suggests that this visitation is perhaps the poet’s muse and inspiration. This part of the poem was all rather too obscure to encourage musical setting and, in any case, mention of a sawmill on the Erlaf river at the end of the fifth verse grates on the idyllic watery mood of the whole. What Schubert liked best about the poem (apart from the contrast of ‘wohl’ and ‘weh’ which was at the heart of his musical response to so much poetry) seems to have been the architectural possibilities of contrasting a cantilena for the glassy surface of the lake with a cabaletta with a puff of wind behind it. The tune is enchanting with its drop of octaves and sixths (the same interval which helps give the vocal line of An die Musik its expressive power) which here suggests languid and pensive relaxation at the side of the lake. The differences between ‘wohl’ and ‘weh’ (‘happy’ and ‘sad’) are not emphasised in the harmony the first time round; for the last repeat of the words Schubert allows himself to flatten the D on ‘so weh’ in order to paint sadness. The accompaniment glides underneath the tune like currents of meandering thought. At ‘Heilig Schweigen in Fichtenzweigen’ the majesty of the pine trees prompts a noble and decorative melody, and the accompaniment at ‘regungslos’ (two quavers followed by a rest) is a familiar analogue for stillness or suspense. At ‘nur die Wolken Schatten fliehn’ the flitting clouds, and the dark mirror of the lake which reflects them, are represented by a dialogue in quasi-canon between voice and piano. On the words ‘dunkeln Spiegel’ the semiquavers of singer and pianist move in mirror-image contrary motion. The melismas of this song, as well as the accompaniment in triplets, imply the Italian style throughout. This characteristic is even more pronounced in the middle section (marked ‘Geschwinder’, faster) in which the composer seems to have been so delighted to find this congenial tune that he repeats words at will in order to keep the melody going. This repetition does not make a great deal of sense on ‘das Gewässer’, but it is especially appropriate on ‘flimmert bläser’ where falling sequences serve well to paint the sun’s waning powers. The last time these words occur they set up a haunting modulation back into F major for the recapitulation of ‘Mir ist so wohl und weh.’ It is entirely to do with Schubert’s cutting of the poem that mention of the paling sun should lead so naturally back into the musings on the ups and downs of life that Lake Erlaf has inspired. The tiny two-bar postlude with its highly ornamented cadence carries through into the accompaniment the bel canto characteristics found in the vocal line.

This song has the distinction of being the first by Schubert to be printed, albeit only as a supplement to an almanac. The red-letter day for the composer was the 6 February 1818, and the book was Franz Sartori’s Mahlerisches Taschenbuch (Pictorial Pocket-Book). The music was accompanied by a copper engraving of the Erlafsee.
**LIED EINES KINDES**
D596. November 1817; first published in 1895 in series 20 of the Gesamtausgabe, Leipzig

fragment, completed by Reinhard van Hoorickx

Lauter Freude fühl’ ich,                  I feel nothing but joy,
Lauter Liebe hör’ ich,                   I hear nothing but love,
Ich so überrücklich                    I am such a lucky child,
Fröhlich spielend Kind.                playing happily.
Dort der gute Vater,                   There my good father,
Hier die liebe Mutter               here my dear mother;
Rund herum wir Kinder.             and around them we children
Froh und fröhlich sind!             are glad and merry!

**A CHILD’S SONG**

This jaunty little song fragment is an idealisation of happy family life; it has a real Biedermeier quality to it. Fortunately the child is far too impish and roguish for the picture to be sickly sweet. The accompaniment stays in the treble clef for both staves (as if the bass clef is reserved for grown-ups and broken voices) with a range as short as the child itself. The 6/8 time signature and the air of innocent modesty are reminiscent of Mozart’s Sehnsucht nach dem Frühlinge K596, the tune of which figures in the final movement of Mozart’s last piano concerto, also in B flat. A curious feature is the cheekily perverse use of accents on the third note of the accompanying triplets. This gives an impression of a game where the lop-sided child saunters along the road, one foot on the pavement, the other off. The first twenty-four bars are genuine Schubert, the last four are by Reinhard Van Hoorickx.

**EVANGELIUM JOHANNES**
D607. Spring 1818; vocal line with figured bass first published in 1902 in Heuberger’s Franz Schubert realized and privately printed by Reinhard van Hoorickx

In der Zeit sprach der Herr Jesus zu den
Scharen der Juden: Mein Fleisch ist wahrhaftig
eine Speis, mein Blut ist wahrhaftig ein Trank!
Wer mein Fleisch isst und trinket mein Blut,
der bleibt in mir und ich in ihm.
Wie mich gesandt der lebendige Vater,
und ich lebe um des Vaters Willen:
also wer mich isset, wird auch leben
um meinetwillen. Dieses ist das Brot
das vom Himmel kommen ist. Nicht wie eure
Väter haben Himmelbrot gegessen,
und sind gestorben. Wer von diesem Brot isst,
der wird leben in Ewigkeit.

**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST JOHN**

In those days the Lord Jesus spoke to the multitude
of Jews: ‘For my flesh is meat indeed,
and my blood is drink indeed.
He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,
dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me,
and I live by the Father;
so be that eateth me, even he shall live
by me. This is that bread
which came down from heaven; not as
your fathers did eat manna,
and are dead; be that eateth of this bread
shall live for ever.’

JOHANN GEORG JACOBI (1740–1814) from John 6: 53–58

THE AUTHORIZED VERSION
Twenty-six years after Schubert’s death, his friend Anselm Hüttenbrenner wrote a short memoir which contained the following passage:

I once asked Schubert whether he did not also want to try setting prose to music and chose, for this purpose, the text from St John, Chapter VI verse 59 . . . He solved this problem wonderfully in 24 bars which I still possess as a very precious souvenir of him. He chose for it the solemn key of E major and the verse for a soprano voice with figured bass accompaniment.

For some reason Hüttenbrenner’s autograph copy of the work contains only the last 24 of the piece’s 57 bars. If we are to believe him (his reminiscences are often self-serving), Hüttenbrenner’s suggestion called into being one of the strangest of the Schubert songs, if song it may be called. It is as if only poetry is able to bring forth melody in the composer’s mind. Prose, on the other hand, moves him to a type of arioso, half recitative with an occasional outbreak of melody. The accompaniment suggests the organ, and the harmonic language sometimes evokes church music of the past (John Reed suggests the work might have been used liturgically). At other times it looks forward to the future and is prophetic of the word-setting technique of Wagner, governed as that is by the flexibility of speech. The overall effect is rather timeless, which is perhaps appropriate for the words of Christ. If anything the sense of freedom of this accompanied recitative reminds us of Schubert’s most pioneering religious work the oratorio Lazarus D689, composed in 1820. The story of Lazarus was also taken from St John’s Gospel. Deutsch states that the text is based on Luther’s translation of the Bible, but John Reed avers that it is unlikely that this work was Schubert’s source in Catholic Vienna. Reinhard Van Hoorickx has discovered that the complete text, including the introductory sentence, is contained in the Gospel pericope for the Mass for the Feast of Corpus Christi.

**LOB DER TRÄNEN**
D711. 1818; published by Cappi und Diabelli in Vienna in December 1822 as Op 13 No 2

Laue Lüfte,
Blumendüfte,
Alle Lenz- und Jugendlust;
Frischer Lippen
Küsse nippen,
Sanft gewiegt an zarter Brust;
Dann der Trauben
Nektar rauben,
Reihentanz und Spiel und Scherz:
Was die Sinnen
Nur gewinnen:
Ach, erfüllt es je das Herz?

**IN PRAISE OF TEARS**

Warm breezes,
fragrant flowers,
all the pleasures of spring and youth;
sipping kisses
from fresh lips,
lulled gently on a tender breast;
then stealing nectar
from the grapes;
dancing, games and banter:
what the senses alone
can obtain:
ab, does it ever satisfy the heart?
Wenn die feuchten Augen leuchten
Von der Wehmut lindem Tau,
Drin gespiegelt,
Sich dem Blick die Himmelsau.
Wie erquicklich
Augenblicklich
Löscht es jede wilde Glut!
Wie vom Regen
Blumen pflegen,
Hebet sich der matte Mut.

AUGUST WILHELM VON SCHLEGEL (1767–1845)

This lilting, waltz-like setting has such a delightful melody that it was once a great favourite with audiences. This much is proved by the fact that Max Friedländer selected it to be in the first volume of the Peters Edition, a series which more or less published Schubert’s output in the order of its popularity, the songs becoming more recherché with each successive volume. It is interesting that of all the songs in this volume, Lob der Tränen is now perhaps the least performed, its Italianate prettiness less tempting to the performer of today who prefers the composer in a less generalised word-setting mood. The song as a whole is rather a mis-match between the weight of the poetic content and the ingratiating tune, the shape of which was suggested by the poet’s double rhymes. The fact that it is also an unmodified strophic song shows that the composer has no wish to take on board that the poem’s message deepens with each strophe. By the time we hear of Prometheus’s painful creation of mankind in these lilting tones we can only smile at the incongruity. Perhaps this conflict of tears and smiles in poetic and musical imagery was intentional, in which case the composer was showing a most sophisticated irony in deliberately going against, rather than with, the poet’s drift. It is more likely that Schubert had not yet got the measure of the achievement of the brothers Schlegel.

He was soon to do so in his settings of August’s translations of Petrarch at the end of the year, and in the settings from Friedrich’s Abendröthe in 1819 and 1820. This encounter with the Schlegel circle was to lead his musical language away from the carefree aria style into bold new realms of formal and harmonic exploration. Despite the fact that the song teeters on the edge of sentimentality, it has numerous touches of mastery: the ambivalence between G minor and D major of the introduction; the eruption into dancing triplets at ‘Reihetanz’; the glorious way in which the final (repeated) line of each strophe takes rapturous flight. We adore melodic writing as natural and graceful as this, despite the fact that the music seems ideally fashioned only for the first two strophes.

For the dating of this song we rely on something written in haste by Schubert at the bottom of the manuscript: ‘Spaun! Don’t forget Gahy and Rondo’. This refers to a piano duet written in January 1818. As the composer was away in Zseliz for the summer months, it is likely that this song was composed sometime early in the year. It is sometimes ascribed to 1821 because that is when Schubert made a fair copy for the publisher. When the song was published in 1822 it was dedicated to Spaun who it seems had liked the piece so much that the composer let him keep the manuscript.
The key of B minor alone points to music of the deepest emotion, a companion piece to the much later *Vor meiner Wiege* which is about a dying mother. Because the composer lost his own mother at the age of 15 it is tempting to see the song as autobiographical. At least one scholar has postulated that the words are by the composer himself, and bearing in mind that he had written words for *Abschied* ten months before, it is not impossible that he was once more moved to write his own verses for setting. Whether or not this is the case, there is still the question as to why he should choose to write a song of this kind for himself, more than six years after his mother’s death. According to the memoirs of Josef Ludwig von Streinsberg (a friend of Spaun who was connected with the composer since his schooldays) Schubert wrote this song on the death of his mother who died in 1818. As he possessed the manuscript, there seems little reason to doubt this assertion. The presence of the son (Streinsberg) at the graveside is written into the poem and perhaps Schubert customized the poem accordingly. However the literary style seems just a little high-flown (Philomele!) to be composer-grown and it is probably more likely that another aspiring literary friend contributed the words. In any event, the composer had been through the pain of bereavement himself, and the song is no less remarkable (on the contrary) if it was written in empathy for a friend’s loss.

The melodic line is very reminiscent of that of the Höltÿ setting *Winterlied*17 from 1816, a melodic idea summoned up by Schubert less because of the weather conditions at the funeral than by the coldness of death and the grave where nothing grows—‘Keine Blumen blühn’. The solemnity and pain of the famous last setting of Mignon’s *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* also comes to mind. Underneath ‘bleich und stumm’ we have the same two quavers followed by a rest to describe paleness and silence as were used in *Erlafsee* to illustrate the still depths of the lake. Father and son stand at the graveside united in their grief by parallel sixths. A note of resentment against fate is heard at the recitative-like outburst of ‘Schnell, schnell mit ihr verschwand’. The transformation into B major just before the angel’s call is a typically Schubertian touch perhaps, but even by his own exalted standards, the little consolatory postlude, so simple yet so expressive, is ravishingly beautiful.
The enchanting little song was written in Zseliz in Hungary where Schubert spent the summer of 1818 as music master to the two young Esterházy countesses. He seems to have taken the volume of Schreiber poetry with him to Hungary, and it is highly likely that the poem, with its emphasis on the language of flowers, was pleasing to the romantic adolescent sensibilities of the composer’s two charges—particularly the thirteen-year-old Karoline, the elder of the two, who was a singer and was later said to be Schubert’s beloved.

The introduction with its suggestion of two balancing questions within a musical sequence (“She loves me; she loves me not”) is prophetic of the opening of Der Neugierige from Die schöne Müllerin, a song where it is briefly in the miller’s boy mind to consult the flowers about his chances in love. Like that masterpiece this song is in 2/4 with a similar summery charm and a similar somewhat Italianate cantilena. Just as the miller boy settles on the brook as his messenger, this wooer allows the symbolic meaning of flowers to declare his love. Schubert must have thought this the appropriate language, unaffected and gently chromatic, in which to address nature. The little four-bar interlude (staccato quavers as if petals were being separated) is particularly delightful. At first mention of rose, myrtle and marigold the music is paragraphed and modulated in turn as the singer turns to address each group of flowers on his stroll through the garden, or as he composes in his mind the bouquet which will tell his beloved everything in a hidden code of love. Something about the tentative nature of the vocal line oscillating between adjacent semiquavers suggests discretion and secrecy. Perhaps that is why the vocal line of another song about secret love (Heimliches Lieben, in the same key as the first edition of Der Blumenbrief) is brought to mind.
This is a song from Schubert's stay in Zseliz. Of all the songs from this period this must surely be the most elaborately ornate and suggestive of operatic style. It is possible of course that some of the decorations derive from the baritone Vogl who was inclined to ornament Schubert songs in the manner of eighteenth-century arias; some of these additions could have become part of the printed song if Diabelli used one of the singer's copies as a basis for the first edition. If this were so, it seems likely that the idea of giving the venerable singer the role of Blondel goes back to the popularity in Vienna of Grétry's opera Richard Coeur de Lion (or Richard Löwenherz as it was known in translation.) Blondel, the king's minstrel whose song is heard by the imprisoned monarch from outside the castle walls, is a major character in the work. There were no fewer than 45 performances of the opera at the Theater an der Wien between 1810 and 1822. Was Schubert at one of these?

Why Schubert should have composed this song at Zseliz when Vogl was far away in Vienna is a moot point. There are, after all, two strands to the poem; one is a connection with Richard the Lion-Heart's troubadour and the other with the serenade's recipient, Mary. In the absence of a context for the poem (the author is unknown despite the fact that the verses were once ascribed to Grillparzer) it is by no means clear whether this is the Virgin Mary, or merely a sweetheart whom Blondel elevates to Madonna status in the courtly love tradition. The hero of Normans Gesang after all also has a sweetheart named Mary. It is true that a number of other songs of the period have a Marian connection (Das Marienbild and Vom Mitleiden Mariä). One could conjecture that this aspect of the Catholic faith was especially dear to the Esterházy family, or indeed the young countesses, and that Schubert was either drawn into the same enthusiasm despite his religious doubts (which were expressed in a letter from Zseliz to his brother Ignaz) or chose this text in order to please his Hungarian hosts.

Even the opening five-bar introduction suggests the grand manner of an operatic prelude, the flute playing its part in setting the scene with a sequence of upward arpeggios. The portrait of night with which the song starts looks forward to the heavy triplets and weary vocal line of the opening of Der Unglückliche. The sunset of happiness is marvellously implied by a long and ominous descending bass line (under 'des Glückes Sonne mir entweicht'). Mention of a fair star shining afar makes for a change into the tonic major where the song remains. Mention of a 'fiery, joyous lustre' seems to merit this extravagant response...
in the cascading vocal line; it is as if the star is radiating sparks of whirring light. If these are indeed Vogl’s additions, they are incomparably better than those we know from other songs. The second verse is a modified reworking of the first verse, but this time in the major key. It also seems natural that ‘Zauberbild’ should prompt further magical melismas. Is this style, so different from other Schubert songs, an attempt to evoke the manner in which a twelfth-century minstrel would sing? Is the colorature here a Schubertian equivalent of troping and hocketing? In any case, Blondel zu Marien remains something of an enigma.

**VOM MITLEIDEN MARIÄ**

D632. December 1818; first published by A Diabelli & Co in Vienna in 1831 in volume 10 of the *Nachlass*

Als bei dem Kreuz Maria stand,  
Weh über Weh ihr Herz empfand  
Und Schmerzen über Schmerzen;  
Das ganze Leiden Christi stand  
Gedruckt in ihrem Herzen.  
Sie ihren Sohn muss bleich und tot,  
Und überall von Wunden rot,  
Am Kreuze leiden sehen.  
Gedenk, wie dieser bitt’re Tod  
Zu Herzen ihr musst’ gehen.

FRIEDRICH VON SCHLEGEL (1772–1829)

**MARY’S SUFFERING**

As Mary stood by the cross  
she felt woe upon woe in her heart,  
and sorrow upon sorrow;  
all Christ’s suffering  
was impressed upon her heart.

She had to watch her son  
suffer on the cross, deathly pale,  
his whole body red with wounds;  
ponder how this bitter death  
must have gone to her heart.

On Christ’s head many sharp thorns pierced  
through bone and brain,  
through eyes, ears and brow;  
the thorns broke the son’s head and brain,  
and the mother’s heart.


This is another of those Schubert songs with a sense of historical style which borders on pastiche, as much of a stylisation as the previous song on this disc, but inhabiting a different world of expression. The composer was reasonably well acquainted with what we now term ‘early music’; a letter written to him by his brother Ferdinand tells us that Schubert played Bach fugues. He was easily able to write in a variety of ‘old’ styles (the Bachian Agnus Dei of the first Mass D105 for example) and certain song texts also prompted this response. Here, the austere three-part texture and the restless chromaticism suggest Passion music of another age. Schubert would have perhaps known the Gellert and Cramer settings of C P E Bach and it is the style of those religious odes for voice and piano which this setting brings to mind. Schubert’s study of three-part counterpoint with Salieri stood him in good stead for a type of writing where the voice and each hand of the pianist form a trinity of intertwined equality.

We do not know for certain whether Schubert met Friedrich Schlegel, who had lived in Vienna since 1809, but it seems probable that from the end of 1818 the composer was drawn into his circle via Franz von Bruchmann. That Schubert went through a phase of great enthusiasm for Schlegel’s poetry in the following two years suggests something of a personal connection. Schlegel was a Roman Catholic convert whose viewpoint on religion was very different from that, for example, of Schubert’s father. The oppressive link between Church and State seems to have been at the root of the composer’s distaste for organised religion, but in Schlegel the composer found a poet whose religious feelings were deployed in an astonishingly wide
and liberal philosophical context. Schlegel’s words here encourage a moving musical response to the human tragedy of the crucifixion and a mother’s grief. The self-imposed hieratic austerity of the ‘old’ music still allows for the inner glow of Schubertian compassion.

Recorded on 21–23 October 1992
Recording Engineer TONY FAULKNER
Recording Producer MARTIN COMPTON
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