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Various volumes in the Hyperion Schubert Edition have dealt with these five years in the composer’s life in greater detail than this short overview will permit. There is an essay about the years 1817/18 in Volume 21 where Edith Mathis sings lieder from that period. Similarly, the period 1819/20 is covered by Volume 29 (Marjana Lipovšek and Nathan Berg) and 1821/22 by Volume 28 (John Mark Ainsley and Maarten Koningsberger). For the earlier periods of the composer’s life, Volumes 12 and 33 are devoted to the period 1810 to 1814; Volumes 7, 10, 20 and 22 to 1815; Volumes 17, 23 and 32 to 1816. Volume 26 is given over to the songs of the year 1826. There will be surveys of the period 1823-1825 in Volume 35, 1827 in Volume 36, and finally 1828 in Volume 37. In this way the booklets, taken together and not in the order of their issue, offer a commentary on the composer’s whole creative life.

1815 and 1816 were by far Schubert’s most prolific years in terms of the number of songs he composed. Following this period of brilliant adolescence, we begin with 1817 when the composer met his first (and by many accounts, greatest) contemporary interpreter, Johann Michael Vogl, and won him to his cause. Schubert was on the threshold of manhood, but still young and highly impressionable, and we traverse many lieder landscapes to greet the maturity and mastery of a man of 24, the Schubert of the ‘symphonic’ songs of 1821, the young composer now famous in Vienna, published, and certain of an important opera commission. These were the final years of the composer’s struggle to achieve independence from his father (and freedom from the duties of the schoolroom); they include his richest engagement with songs of classical mythology, and his closest association with the poet Mayrhofer, as well as his work on a number of poets whose influence is very much part of his middle years (Schreiber, the Schlegel brothers, Novalis, Silbert). In 1821 there is a return to a new Goethe, the recent poet of the West-Östlicher Divan, and Schubert’s penultimate engagement with the elusive lyrics of Wilhelm Meister. Through all this period we note the intellectual and emotional influence of the composer’s closest friend, Franz von Schober.

The following summations of each year’s activity are meant to give the listener some idea of the context, biographical and musical, in which the works to be heard on this disc were composed. A selective list of song titles (available elsewhere in the Schubert Edition) is printed in italics; a number in superscript refers to the volume in the Edition in which the song may be found. Songs which appear on this disc (Volume 34) appear in bold type.

**1817**

Schubert’s first meeting with Johann Michael Vogl. Schubert leaves the school house and moves in with Franz Schober until August when Schober has to leave Vienna [Abschied von einem Freunde (Schubert) D57821]. He is forced to return to the parental home. Deepening friendship with Johann Mayrhofer. Josef Hüttenbrenner becomes a self-appointed Schubert publicist.
'It is arguable that an anthology of great songs from 1817 would better represent Schubert’s versatile lyrical genius than any other year of his life.' (John Reed)

Lieder: 69 songs, including eighteen to texts of Mayrhofer including Der Alpenjäger D524, Wie Ulfru fischt D525², Fahrt zum Hades D526², Memnon D541¹⁴, Der Schiffer D536², Atys D585, Erlafsee D586¹²¹.

Frohsinn (Castelli) D520, Der Tod und das Mädchen (Claudius) D531¹¹, Die Nacht (Macpherson/Ossian/Harold) D534⁶, Der Jüngling und der Tod (Spaun) D545³, An die Musik (Schober) D547²¹, Die Forelle (Schubart) D550²¹, Die Einsiedelei (Salis-Seewis) D563.

Auf dem See (Goethe) D543¹⁹, Ganymed (Goethe), D544⁵, ²⁴, Liebhaber in allen Gestalten (Goethe) D558²¹, Gruppe aus dem Tartarus (Schiller) D583¹⁴, Der Kampf (Schiller) D594.

Partsons include: La pastorella al prato (Goldoni) D513, Das Grab (Salis-Seewis) D569, Das Dörfchen (Bürger) D598.

Other works: piano sonatas, all composed between March and August (A minor D537, A flat D557, E minor D566, D flat D567, E flat D568, B major D575.) The Sonata in A for violin and piano (‘Duo’) D574. Symphony No 6 in C major D589 begun in October; Overtures in D and C ‘in the Italian Style’ D590 and D591, November 1817.

1818

The Schubert family move to the Rossau where the composer was probably temporarily constrained to return to teaching. Erlafsee (see 1817) was published as a supplement to the Mahlerisches Taschenbuch – the first Schubert song to appear in print in any form. The first Overture in the Italian Style is the first work of Schubert to achieve public performance. Summer residency in Zseliz (Hungary) as music-master to the daughters of Count Esterházy. Not only songs and singing exercises but also piano duets are written for the family. On his return from Hungary in October, Schubert moves in with the poet Mayrhofer whom he had known since 1814. He is commissioned by the Kärntnertor Theatre (through the good offices of Vogl) to write the opera Die Zwillingsbrüder which would eventually be produced in 1820.

Of all the years in Schubert’s working life this was the least productive in terms of number of works. It was a turning-point in the composer’s life, the period when he seems to have spent a lot of time agonising about his future, refusing to return to the schoolhouse to fulfil his father’s wishes.

Lieder: 15 songs including Auf der Riesenkoppe (Körner) D611⁴, An den Mond in einer Herbstnacht (Schreiber) D614⁸.
During the summer in Zseliz: Einsamkeit (Mayrhofer) D620\textsuperscript{29}, Das Abendrot (Schreiber) D627, Sing-Übungen D619.


Other works: Rondo in D for four hands, D608, Sonata in B flat for four hands D617, Deutsches Requiem (Schmid) in G minor D621, Piano Sonata in F minor D625.

\textbf{1819}

During the whole of this year Schubert shares Mayrhofer’s tiny apartment in the Wipplingerstrasse. The cramped conditions of a very small room meant that there was probably an arrangement whereby the composer worked during the mornings (when Mayrhofer was at the censor’s office) and absented himself in the afternoons permitting the poet to write during these hours. The first Schubert song to be performed in public is Schäfers Klagelied (Goethe) D121\textsuperscript{1, 24} at the ‘Roman Emperor’ Inn on 28 February. The composer is much occupied with the score for Die Zwillingsbrüder for which he is paid 180 florins by the Court Theatre. In early July (and until mid-September) Schubert goes on holiday with Johann Michael Vogl in Steyr, a town in Upper Austria where he will return in two subsequent summers (1823 and 1825). The singer’s birthday is celebrated with a special cantata in his honour.

Lieder: 24 songs and one fragment including: settings of Friedrich von Schlegel: Der Schmetterling D633\textsuperscript{27} and four other songs (Das Mädchen D652\textsuperscript{27}, Die Berge D634\textsuperscript{27}, Die Gebüsche D646\textsuperscript{27} and Der Wanderer D649\textsuperscript{27}) from the Abendröte cycle.

\textbf{Abend} (Tieck) D645 fragment, Abendbilder (Silbert) D650\textsuperscript{29}, Hymne I, II, III & IV (Novalis) D659, 660. 661, 662\textsuperscript{29}.

Mayrhofer settings: Beim Winde D669\textsuperscript{19}, Die Sternennächte D670\textsuperscript{19}, Trost D671\textsuperscript{29}, Nachtstück D672\textsuperscript{4, 11}.

Goethe settings: Die Liebende schreibt D673\textsuperscript{29}, Prometheus D674.

\textbf{Die Götter Griechenlands} (Schiller) D677\textsuperscript{14}.

Partsongs: Kantate zum Geburtstag des Sängers Johann Michael Vogl (Stadler) D666

Other works: Die Zwillingsbrüder – Singspiel in one act (D647), Piano Sonata in A D664 (if not 1825), Quintet in A major D667 (Forellenquintett), Salve Regina in A D676, Mass in A flat D678. Work on the opera fragment Adrast D137 with a text by Mayrhofer.
1820

One of the biggest undertakings of the year is the oratorio Lazarus which is begun in January. This work ranks as one of Schubert’s most experimental scores where he seems to anticipate the thematic practices of Wagner. The composer is arrested (with Bruchmann and other members of the circle) during a police raid on the rooms of Johann Senn. He is released, but Senn is imprisoned and committed to trial, the result of which was an order restricting him to his native Tyrol. The opera Die Zwillingsbrüder is produced at the Kärntnertor Theatre in June and runs for six performances. In August the ‘Zauberspiel’ Die Zauberharfe receives eight performances. In terms of theatrical success this is the (rather muted) high point of Schubert’s life; he would never have another opera played in a theatre during his lifetime. The composer spends his first sojourn at Atzenbrugg castle just outside Vienna (see cover illustration, dating from this year); this was to be a summer gathering point for the Schubertians for the next few years. The success of a public performance of Erlkönig (Goethe) D138 in December leads to a plan to publish Schubert songs privately. Schubert decides to live on his own at the end of the year, leaving Mayrhofer with whom he had shared a small room for some two years – the longest period that he was ever to occupy a single address in Vienna, apart from his parental home.

Lieder: 20 songs and a fragment including settings of Friedrich von Schlegel from Abendröte: Die Sterne D684, Abendröte D690, Die Vögel D691, Der Knabe D692, Der Fluss D693, Der Schiffer D694, all in Volume 27.


Settings of Mayrhofer: Über allen Zauber Liebe (fragment) D682, Der entsühnte Orest D699, Freiwilliges Versinken D700, Der zürnenden Diana D707, all in Volume 14 apart from the fragment on this disc.


Other works: Lazarus – ‘Szenisches Oratorium’ (Niemeyer) D689, Die Zauberharfe (Hofmann), a magic play with music in 3 acts, D644.

1821

At the beginning of the year Schubert applies for a post as a repetiteur at the Kärntnertor Theatre, a job which does not suit him (he coaches the soprano Karoline Unger; see note in connection with Die Geselligkeit on this disc). At the end of January there is a big musical party at Schober’s which may have been the first ever Schubertiad as such. A concert at the Kärntnertor Theatre where Erlkönig is sung by Vogl
(not accompanied by the composer) makes Schubert an overnight success with the Viennese public in a way that he had never before experienced. *Erlkönig* is published by Cappi and Diabelli as Opus 1 in April. *Das Dörfchen* (on this disc) also enjoys a large public success. Once again the summer is spent in Atzenbrugg, and in the autumn the composer goes with Schober to St. Pölten, Lower Austria, to work intensively on the opera *Alfonso und Estrella*. The composer has an overture (in E minor) included in a Philharmonic Society concert in November. With his hopes high for the success of his large opera, and with many ‘firsts’ to look back on in 1821, we may judge this to be the period when Schubert felt that he was at last on the ‘right track’.

Disappointment was to follow at the beginning of 1822 (concerning the fate of the opera), and tragedy was to strike, changing the composer’s life forever, at the end of that year.

Lieder: 10 (possibly 11) songs, and 2 fragments including *Die gefangenen Sänger* (August von Schlegel) D712, *Der Unglückliche* (Pichler) D713\(^\text{15}\).

Settings of Goethe: *Versunken* D715\(^\text{24}\), *Grenzen der Menschheit* D716, *Geheimes* D719\(^\text{24}\), *Suleika I* D720\(^\text{19}\), *Mignon* (‘Heiss mich nicht reden’) first setting D726\(^\text{24}\), *Mignon* (‘So lasst mich scheinen’), second setting D727\(^\text{11}\).

The date of *Suleika II* D717\(^\text{19}\) is uncertain (perhaps 1824).

Another song of uncertain date is *Wandrers Nachtlied II* D768. It could have been written as early as 1821 which, after all, is a year rich in Goethe settings, but it is usually placed at the end of 1822 with Schubert’s final batch of Goethe songs. Even if it is an 1822 song (or even later) it makes an appropriate end to this disc, bringing the list of Goethe songs recorded in the Hyperion Schubert Edition to a close.

Partsong: *Im Gegenwärtigen Vergangenens* (Goethe) D710\(^\text{28}\). Other works: *Gesang der Geister über den Wassern* (Goethe) for male voice octet and strings D714, two supplementary numbers for Hérold’s opera *Das Zauberglöckchen* D723 and *Alfonso und Estrella* (Schober) opera in three acts D732.
Johann Mayrhofer (1787-1836)

1 DER ALPENJÄGER
THE ALPINE HUNTSMAN

Third version, D524. January 1817; published in 1850 as part of Book 45 of the Nachlass sung by Christopher Maltman

Auf hohem Bergesrücken, High on the mountain ridge
Wo frischer alles grünt, Where everything is greener and fresher,
Ins Land hinab zu blicken, The huntsman delights
Das nebelleicht zerrinnt — In gazing down at the landscape
Erfreut den Alpenjäger. Veiled in mist.
Je steiler und je schräger The more steeply the paths
Die Pfade sich verwinden, Wind upwards,
Je mehr Gefahr aus Schlünden, The more dangerous the precipices,
So freier schlägt die Brust. The more freely his heart beats,

Er ist der fernen Lieben, The more fondly he thinks
Die ihm daheim geblieben, Of his distant beloved
Sich seliger bewusst. Who remains at home.
Und ist er nun am Ziele And when he reaches his goal
So drängt sich in der Stille A sweet image fills his mind
Ein süsses Bild ihm vor; In the stillness;
Der Sonne goldne Strahlen, The sun’s golden beams
Sie weben und sie malen, Weave and paint a portrait of her
Die er im Tal erkor. Whom he has chosen in the valley.

This huntsman is not to be confused with a song of the same title to a Schiller text recorded in Volume 1. It is a deceptively jolly piece with which to begin a year of serious composition (the song is dated January 1817). This type of genre poem had long been popular and had been employed by the greatest poets. Pastoral excursions (as in the Goethe songs Schäfers Klagelied1, 24 and Jägers Abendlied24) evoke an eighteenth-century nostalgia for freedom from the rigours of city life; working-class characters of every conceivable occupation and trade are assigned lyrics which, at their Shakespearean best, can be both touching and wise. The fact that the Mayrhofer poem is in the narrative third person renders it less personal than some of Goethe’s best work in this manner. Perhaps this is why Capell was not convinced: he avers that the Alpine huntsman is ‘the merry Swiss peasant of German chromolithography’. Even if this is so, who would not relish having such a colourful item in one’s collection? What Capell dismissed in 1928 as a commonplace piece of nineteenth-century kitsch (the chromolithograph, not the song) now strikes us as a picturesque souvenir of a happier and more innocent age. And it is surely Schubert’s genius that among the thousands of hearty ditties and quasi-folksongs composed around similar themes by long-forgotten composers, it is his music which endures. The opening chords are strummed in carefree manner, but they strike no false notes. If Capell finds the song ridiculous, he admits that ‘no one else would have done so irresponsible a thing half as well.’
From the muggy depths of the Viennese hothouse such an open-air life must have seemed attractive, for a moment or two at least. Certainly we feel that Mayrhofer is dreaming of a world where everything is straightforward and manly (often a preoccupation, Hemingway-like, of an inner struggle against what is perceived as unmanly – the overwhelmingly masculine poem *Der Schiffer*\(^2\) is another example of this). The subtext goes something like this: rather than the perils facing me in my own life, give me perilous mountain precipices any day; give me the emotional security of a stable relationship of picture-book normality and sweetness; give me, in short, an uncomplicated life. The repeated entreaty ‘Give me’ actually occurs in a long Mayrhofer poem which Schubert was to set in 1818 – *Einsamkeit*\(^{29}\); there the poet plaintively constructs an extended shopping-list of the type of solitary, contemplative existence that he would like to live, far from the intriguing – in both senses – life of the big city.

Whether or not the Schubertians, and the composer in particular, were made for the outdoor life is another matter. The poem is prophetic of the exile of the poet Johann Senn, intimate of the Schubert circle who was unfortunate enough to be singled out and punished for his political views. In 1820 Senn was ordered back to his native Tyrol where one of his few freedoms was to contemplate life from as many mountain ridges as he pleased. It was as if he were bound to a rock like the unfortunate Prometheus. This punishment which removed him from his circle of friends, and the artistic interchange which nourishes all writers, effectively extinguished his creative abilities. When Mayrhofer wrote this poem this cruel turn of events lay in the future; but in 1817 it is clear that the huntsman’s life embodies his fantasies of physical and mental freedom – impossible dreams for the freethinker who worked as a censor for the police state. It is true that this yodelling hero may fall from a great height and break his neck (this, incidentally, was to be Mayrhofer’s choice of suicide) but at least he was surrounded by the beauties of nature; daily traversing the minefields of political chicanery must have seemed no less dangerous, and considerably less healthy.

Schubert chooses a \(\frac{6}{8}\) rhythm suitable for pastoral songs. As if influenced by thoughts of mountain air, the marking is ‘Frisch’; this is counterbalanced with the moderating ‘doch nicht zu schnell’ as if to remind us that this is no elfin song – a strapping body and muscular thighs are contained within these *Lederhosen*. The opening aria is simple in a manner that only Schubert can carry off. He can deliberately restrict harmonic variety without impoverishing his character; rather the reverse. The music is largely grounded in tonics and dominants, and it is no doubt this ‘oom pah pah’ aspect of the music to which Capell objected; but this in-built banality seems entirely suitable to paint a man whose eyes traverse vast vistas, but whose imagination is limited. As with Shakespeare’s stout-hearted working characters, we salute his solidity of spirit rather than his brain-power. Luckily, Schubert is easily able to differentiate between simplicity and stupidity, between lack of sophistication and philistinism: the man has a good and faithful heart. The contour of the vocal line moving up and down the stave, and occasionally plunging the octave, suggests the physical movements of a sure-footed climber, and these intervals also tell us that he can yodel into the next valley when necessary. The
accompaniment employs the thirds and sixths typical of horn music. An echo is also built into the music: after ‘ins Land hinab zu blicken’ the descending F major arpeggio on that last word is mirrored a beat later by the piano, and the rollicking sixths (which begin after ‘das nebelleicht zerrinnt’) bounce back and forth between the piano’s middle and high registers as if horn fanfares were reflected back to us at different pitches. We find the same echo effect in different registers in another Mayrhofer song written in the same month – *Schlaflied D529*.

The middle section, marked ‘Ein wenig langsamer’, is in F minor. If the joy of the huntsman in his work is simple, so is his unhappiness; indeed it is almost childlike in its sense of desolation. At ‘Er ist der fernen Lieben, die ihm daheim geblieben’ everything in this music droops downwards with plaintive echoes between voice and piano that border on petulance. It is here, if anywhere, that we can detect an affectionate chuckle on the composer’s part. Despite all his bravery and bluster, when it comes to love the huntsman is a big baby. The emotional vulnerability of someone brave and impervious to danger is in itself something of a cliché.

Before ‘Und ist er nun am Ziele’ throbbing triplets are introduced into the piano; the left hand takes up the drooping motif which has already been heard in the treble register; this takes on the character of a mournful horn obbligato resonating through the mountainous terrain. It is as if the huntsman were trying to communicate with his faraway love in the time-honoured fashion of alphorn messaging.

It is then that we hear the authentic Schubertian touch: at ‘so drängt sich in der Stille’ voice and accompaniment rise to a D flat underpinned by a diminished seventh chord; at ‘ein süßes Bild’ this changes enharmonically to a C sharp as part of a A7 chord leading to a modulation into D major. This change seems to conjure a vision of sweetness and femininity before our eyes and ears, and the singer is transformed by the radiance. It is as if a beam of healing love has ennobled this rustic soul and rendered him able to communicate in a delicate and sensitive manner. He recalls choosing his girlfriend in the valley, and Schubert conjures memories of a gathering, a village dance perhaps, where they might have met. The waltz music for the three lines of poetry beginning ‘Die Sonne goldne Strahlen’ is simple enough – the harmonies are tonic, dominant and subdominant – but the higher tessitura requires something new of the singer. The song as a whole is conceived for a healthy baritone, but here a high F sharp (on ‘im Tal erkor’) has to be limned in with a head voice which requires delicacy and tact. This successfully achieved is like seeing a rugged mountaineer execute a faultless balletic pirouette.

Poets and artists can exist in a world of dreams and fantasy (indeed Mayrhofer finishes his poem with the vision of feminine love, without the reprise which the composer deemed necessary), but real men have to work, and Schubert knows this. Pull yourself together, lad, and get on with the job. The first verse of the poem is exactly recapitulated to make a satisfying whole in conventional ternary form. After having glimpsed another, more vulnerable side of the man’s character we are happy to hear his working refrain once again. It is perhaps significant that the song is dedicated to Schubert’s old friend Josef von Spaun whose longstanding
role in Schubert’s life was that of trusty and true supporter. One can somehow imagine that Spaun would have enjoyed this uncomplicated music, and that it was for this reason that the composer, when he came to publish the song in 1822, long after it was written, dedicated it to him.

The song exists in three versions of different keys. The first is in E major, and the second, even lower, in D major. The latter bass-clef version was made for Count Esterházy during Schubert’s long stay in Zseliz during 1818. When he came to publish the song Schubert chose to make a third version in F major, the one performed here. This seems to have been influenced by market considerations to do with vocal range and amateur accessibility. The other keys are lugubrious and too low for the majority of male singers. And whereas it is unlikely that many basses will be able to float a delicate high E, one has at least half a hope of finding a baritone with a soft high F sharp. As in the case of this mountaineer, dreams are sometimes reality.

Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793)

2 LA PASTORELLA AL PRATO
THE SHEPHERDESS IN THE MEADOW

First setting, D513. 1817?; first published in the Gesamtausgabe in 1891
sung by John Mark Ainsley, Jamie MacDougall, Simon Keenlyside and Michael George

La pastorella al prato
contenta se ne va
coll’agnellino a lato
cantando in libertà.
Se l’innocente amore
gradisce il suo pastore
la bella pastorella
contenta ognor sarà.

The shepherdess in the meadow
Wanders happily,
The lambs at her side,
And sings blithely.
If her innocent love
Pleases her shepherd,
The fair shepherdess
Will always be happy

After visiting the mountains we come down to earth in the meadow of the Italian shepherdess – another aspect of the pastoral tradition in music. Schubert’s second setting of this poem, an enchanting soprano aria in $6/8$ which is included in Volume 9, is much better known. It is difficult to decide whether or not this quartet, as well as the later solo song, were late fruit of Schubert’s studies with Antonio Salieri. The young composer had been accustomed to setting the poetry of Metastasio for his numerous composition exercises. But of all Goldoni’s countless lyrics (this one is from Act II, Scene 16 of Il folosofo di campagna, 1754) this is the only which engaged Schubert’s attentions. It is the last section of Lena’s aria from that work (a libretto set by Galuppi, among others) and one may wonder how the composer came across such a text without a lead from Salieri. Further evidence of a Salieri connection is the fact that one of Schubert’s fellow students, Karl Freiherr von Dobhlhoff, also set the piece as a vocal quartet which was dedicated to their revered teacher. This was part of Sei Divertimenti campestri published in 1820. Schubert’s version remained unpublished in
his lifetime and we can only conjecture that it is an 1817 work because of the second version, D528, which is dated January of that year. A further complication is that this work, marked Quartetto, shares a manuscript with the song fragment Nur wer die Liebe kennt²¹.

On stylistic grounds alone there is certainly an argument for the piece to be dated earlier than 1817. Schubert’s music is far from the sophisticated norm of the majority of his works for the medium of male quartet, TTBB. The piano writing is in flowing semiquavers – this well enough conveys the ambling and relaxed nature of the text – but it rarely shows any independence from the vocal line, and there is no sign of the illustrative pianistic detail which enlivens and illuminates the later works in this vein. The smoothness of the bel canto writing is pleasing and euphonious, but nothing new: Schubert had achieved this sort of melodic ease with Italian texts as early as 1813. Rather more individual is the delightful vocal interplay, tennis lobs of musical counterpoint, between the voices (the first tenor and first bass) at ‘cantando in libertà’, and the moment of freedom enjoyed by the lead tenor, like a tiny cadenza, with the flourish of the final ‘libertà’.

Otherwise everything is straightforward about this piece, including its unexceptional ABA form. The middle section (beginning ‘Se l’innocente amore gradisce il suo pastore’) contains an echo (or perhaps a prophecy, depending on the dates): the tiny little decorative figure of two demisemiquavers on ‘amore’ and ‘pastore’, the culmination of a line of repeated notes in the vocal line, is a link with Der Wanderer³² (at the line ‘Die Sonne dünkt mich’). The threefold repetition of ‘contenta ognor sarà’, a phrase which is initially decorated with dotted rhythms, and then with excursions to high Gs for the first tenor, passes muster as a convincing operatic cliché. The conventional modulation from dominant to tonic, souply achieved by the sliding chromatic movement of the first bass, similarly relishes an Italianate commonplace which borders on knowing parody. It is the composer’s smile behind this music which reinforces the theory that this work does indeed date from 1817; there is little here of the adolescent earnestness which we find in the composition exercises of 1813.

Ignaz Castelli (1781-1862)

3 FROHSINN

Ich bin von lockerem Schlage,
Geniess' ohne Trübsinn die Welt,
Mich drückt kein Schmerz, keine Plage,
Mein Frohsinn würzt mir die Tage;
Ihn hab’ ich zum Schild mir gewählt.

I’m a happy-go-lucky fellow,
And enjoy the world without melancholy;
No sorrow, no care worries me,
My cheerfulness adds spice to my days;
I have chosen it as my shield.
Ich grüsse froh jeden Morgen,  
    I greet each morning cheerfully,  
Der nur neue Freuden mir bringt,  
    And it brings me only new joys.  
Fehlt Geld mir, muss ich wohl borgen,  
    If I'm short of money, then I have to borrow some;  
Doch dies macht niemals mir Sorgen,  
    But this never worries me,  
    Since my every request is always granted.  
Weil stets jeder Wunsch mir gelingt.

Bei Mädchen gerne gesehen,  
    Though girls like to see it,  
    Quält Eifersucht niemals mein Herz;  
    Jealousy never plagues my heart;  
    Schmollt eine, lass ich sie stehen,  
    If a girl sulks, I walk off and leave her;  
    Vor Liebesgram zu vergehen,  
    To die of the pangs of love  
    Das wäre ein bitterer Scherz.

This song is described by John Reed as ‘not much more than an attractive trifle’. It bears a considerable resemblance to the third version of *Der Alpenjäger*; it is not only in the same key and rhythm, but the sentiments may well belong to a man of similar ilk, a soldier or a devil-may-care adventurer, or simply a man of the people, a homespun philosopher. With Castelli as the poet (he was identified as such only in 1969 by Dietrich Berke), the singer is bound to be a Viennese who is determined to enjoy life, refusing to get involved in the tribulations of the grand and important. The character’s single-mindedness is shown by the composer’s refusal to depart from a conventional, and well-trodden, harmonic plan. There is not an unusual modulation in sight. Only one verse exists in the almanac *Selam* (1813) where Schubert almost certainly found the poem. There are in fact eleven verses in all, but despite repeat marks in the autograph the composer seems not to have regarded this as a strophic song, simply a small and jolly exposition of Papageno-like wit and wisdom. In Volume 33, and in the preceding track, we have noticed with admiration how adept Schubert is at constructing Italianate melodies in the bel canto manner; here he shows that he is no less skilled in the construction of the German equivalent which is less smooth and unctuous, more muscular and made to accommodate explosive consonants and a different kind of emotional inflection.

There are two versions available to the performer. The old *Gesamtausgabe* prints the autograph (with authentic introduction) where the music is marked ‘Heiter’. The Peters Edition prints Diabelli’s doctored version (marked ‘Lebhaft’) with a new introduction which, as always when Diabelli attempts to improve on his betters, strikes a somehow false note as far as Schubertian style is concerned. The autograph is so plain and unadorned, however, that we decided to incorporate features of both versions, a fact that will scarcely be noticeable to even the most trained Schubertian ear.
Johann Gaudenz von Salis-Seewis (1762-1834)

**DAS GRAB**
Fourth setting, D569. June 1817; first published in the *Gesamtausgabe* in 1895
sung by The London Schubert Chorale

Das Grab ist tief und stille, Deep and silent is the grave,
Und schauderhaft sein Rand, Terrible its brink;
Es deckt mit schwarzer Hülle With its black shroud it covers

Das Lied der Nachtigallen The nightingales’ song
Tönt nicht in seinem Schooss. Does not sound in its depths.
Der Freundschaft Rosen fallen Only friendship’s roses fall

Verlassne Bräute ringen In vain forsaken brides
Umsonst die Hände wund; Wring their hands sore;
Der Waise Klagen dringen The orphan’s wailing does not reach
Nicht in der Tiefe Grund. Its lowest depths.

Schubert set this text no fewer than five times. The lyric is wrapped in a shroud of imagery: it features nightingales and friendship’s roses at the same time as forsaken brides and the wailing of orphans. And he was not the only composer to be fascinated: this poem became an extremely fashionable text of the period (the Austrian musicologist A Weinmann called it a ‘literarisch-musikalischer Bestseller’) and it appears many times in the work-lists of composers now largely forgotten. Challier’s lieder catalogue of 1885 lists solo settings by J Dont, G Flugel, F Heine, F Kuhlau, F Methfessel, C F Moritz, H G Naegeli, L K Reinicke and C Wilhelm. It seems possible that Schubert was caught up in a craze for this poem, typical of a contemporary taste for choral music with a morbidly philosophical streak.

The first three settings belong to the first phase of Schubert’s engagement with the poetry of Salis-Seewis. He set the poet sixteen times between December 1815 and April 1816; most of the remaining seven settings date from the second phase (May/June 1817) when the composer returned to poems already set in the preceding year. The earliest setting of *Das Grab* (D329A, December 1815) is an unaccompanied fragment of twelve bars, a canon in four parts for mixed voices. On the other side of the same manuscript is another setting, dated 28 December 1815, for male voices. This quartet, D330, appears in Volume 22 of the Schubert Edition. A third setting for male voices and piano (D377) was written in February 1816. This C minor setting in imposing block harmonies, the first to be published (by Gotthard in 1872), appears in Volume 23. The fifth, and last, setting – D643A – discovered relatively recently in the Austrian monastery of Seitenstetten, dates from 1819. This is an unaccompanied four-part song for mixed voices in E flat major.
The male-voice quartet with piano recorded on this disc, Schubert’s fourth setting of the lyric, D569, dates from June 1817. For some reason Mandyczewski published the song as part of Series XX of the Gesamtausgabe (the solo song series) rather than in the choral series (XVI and XVII) where it belonged. This is no doubt why Fischer-Dieskau included it in his great survey of Schubert lieder in the 1970s. But Das Grab D569 is for unison chorus with piano, and achieves its full impact with these forces. The key is C sharp minor, the tempo ‘Sehr langsam’. The dark mood of the music, a majesty of utterance bordering on the lugubrious, puts one in mind of the great C sharp minor setting of the year before, Der Wanderer\(^{32}\). The piece begins in the minor key, and slides into the major towards the conclusion of each strophe. This change of tonality and mood is something of a Schubertian thumbprint. We find a similar softening and sweetening in Der Wanderer of course, but also in many other songs: for example, in Der Tod und das Mädchenn\(^{11}\) the change from D minor to D major offers resolution and reconciliation, but also suggests the vastness of the unknown vistas beyond life itself, the grandeur of nescience.

If a song as deep in every way as Das Grab is capable of having high points, these are the elongated cadences, cavernous in their musical effect, on the second to third full bars on the word ‘stille’, and once again at the end of the strophe on ‘ein unbekanntes Land’. The vocal part of the song remains in minims and crotchets, often in unison with the piano, a simplicity which enhances, rather than diminishes, the grandiose effect of the music. But it is the postlude which finds the composer at his most individual. Here decorative demisemiquavers follow on from double-dotted crotchets in such as way as to be prophetic of the great Mayrhofer setting Freiwilliges Versinken D700 (1820). That song, written in a manner which reinvents the grand Baroque style, as if the sun were making an entrance as Louis XIV, is worthy of the turning of the world; it depicts the setting sun in a postlude which shows Helios departing on his daily journey over the horizon, into the far distance (‘in weiter Ferne’). After these words, Schubert manages to suggest a vast, unexplored solar system in the musical space which he conjures where these dotted rhythms constitute a slow processional, a cosmic pavane. In Das Grab the equivalent phrase is ‘Ein unbekanntes Land’ at the end of the first strophe. The afterlife, if indeed there is one, is terra incognita, like the wide open space of the uncharted galaxies, and Schubert somehow musically describes it as such. Once again we marvel how this composer’s imagination responds to related ideas as if he were speaking a musical language of synonyms; his response to verbal imagery links songs from different periods without his seeming to be aware that he is quoting himself. In this ‘Schubert-speak’, music for the limitless depths of the grave was to be recycled to describe the fathomless descent of the sun in the heavenly firmament as well as its corollary, the ascent of the moon in the heavens.
Es rieselt, klar und wehend,  In the oak wood flows a stream,
Ein Quell im Eichenwald;  Clean and rippling.
Da wähle ich einsam gehend,  Wandering alone, I choose there
Mir meinen Aufenthalt.  My resting place.
Mir dienet zur Kapelle  A grotto, cool and fragrant.
Ein Gröttchen, duftig, frisch;  Serves as my chapel.
Zu meiner Klausnerzelle  Entwined bushes
Verschlungenes Gebüs.  Are my hermit’s cell.

Wie sich das Herz erweitert  How the heart is elated
Im engen, dichten Wald!  In the thick, dense forest!
Den öden Trübsinn heitert  Gloomy melancholy is soon cheered
Der traute Schatten bald.  By its friendly shade.
Kein überleg’ner Späher  Here no disdainful eye
Erforscht hier meine Spur;  Spies on my steps;
Hier bin ich frei und näher  Here I am free, and closer
Der Einfalt und Natur.  To simplicity and to nature.

O blieb’ ich von den Ketten  Would that I were free from the fetters
Des Weltgewirres frei!  Of the world’s tumult!
Könnt ich zu dir mich retten,  Would that I could find salvation in you,
Du traute Siedelei!  Beloved hermitage!
Froh, dass ich dem Gebrause  Glad to escape the din
Des Menschenschwarms entwich,  Of the swarming throng,
Baut’ ich hier eine Klaus  I should build here a retreat
Für Liebchen und für mich.  For my love and me.

This is a gentle little song dating from the same period as the setting of Das Grab on the previous track. It was during this period in 1817 that Schubert revisited some of the Salis-Seewis texts which had been set, not always to his satisfaction, the year before. It is not certain when the first solo setting of Die Einsiedelei (D393, sung in Volume 17 of the Schubert Edition by Lucia Popp) was composed; it probably dates from the first phase of Schubert’s engagement with the poetry of Salis-Seewis, thus March 1816, or a few months before. That work, with its merry and extrovert cascading introduction in descending triplets, is a charming water-song, but the drawback is that water only features in the poem’s opening lines. A year later Schubert probably realised that this setting was rather too bubbly for the mood of the poem as a whole.
The setting recorded here is also simple (actually, rather simpler than D393). It is also more serious in tone, though far from earnest. It is clear that the poet rejoices in his solitary life and is happy to remain on his own; but the overall feeling is rather more contemplative and subdued than a chipper declaration of independence might suggest. The first setting is in a clear and sparkling A major, but here there is an ambivalence of tonality: the opening bar of music (‘Es rieselt, klar und’) is in A minor and we reach the home key of C major only at the second full bar, on ‘wehend’. The whole song is written for a string quartet texture where the first violin takes the vocal line, the second the piano’s right hand, and the cello the left-hand bass. At the heart of the music, buried within the crotchets and quavers of melody and harmony, there is a line, in gentle and sinuous semiquavers, which might have been written for a viola. This is the gentle stream which signifies more than water music; here we have the purling flow of the inner life, and the happy contentment which results from an existence given over to nature. If this song is a distant relative of Das Wandern, the opening of Die schöne Müllerin (the same $2/4$ key signature, the same strophic simplicity, the same idealisation of beauties of the countryside) it is one where the vigour of youth has given way to a more mature taste for homespun philosophy, far from the stress of the big city and urban life.

A fetching and unusual feature of the oscillating vocal line is to be heard at ‘Mir dienet zur Kapelle’ where two flattened sixths (D flats within the key of F major, the subdominant of the home key of C) replace the Ds which would have been the unexceptional notes expected in this context. This touch of flattened harmony is heard again at ‘Zu meiner Klausnerzelle’. The peace of the wide, open countryside is depicted in a much later work in similar terms, this time complicated by irony, bitterness and anger, but still stemming from the same perception of rural peace as a type of lassitude: in Einsamkeit, the twelfth song of Winterreise, we hear these eloquent flattened sixths again, this time on ‘Ach, dass die Luft so ruhig’. These blue notes, like a disabling sirocco, sap purpose and energy in Winterreise, to the distress of the traveller; but the hermit of Die Einsiedelei enjoys their calming, and slightly soporific, nature. The postlude with a right-hand upper melody which is rather more marked than the rest of the song, is also delightful, although the tessitura, the muted middle of the keyboard, is hardly one which encourages celebration. Here we find the same low-key cheerfulness, the result of a soul at peace with itself, which characterises the rest of the song. Like a number of the songs of 1816/17, and like so much else in Schubert’s life and music, the unspoken theme seems to be ‘moderation in all things’.

It is curious that the first setting of this text (D337 for unaccompanied male-voice quartet) should have a connection with Atys, the next song on this disc. Indeed the choral work begins with two-and-a-half bars of music which are identical to the introduction to Atys. Whether Schubert meant to quote Die Einsiedelei in beginning Atys is open to question. It may have been that the mood of longing for peace and a retreat from life’s pain in both poems prompted a similar musical response with some unintentional borrowing.
The legend of Attis, a Phrygian youth whose cult was linked to the worship of the fertility goddess Cybele, is one of the strangest of the Greek myths. Grandson of the river-god Sangarios, he was famed for his beauty; loved by Cybele, he was unable to respond to her advances. Most of the versions of the myth have it that
Attis was in love with the wood nymph Sagaritis; in a jealous rage Cybele killed her, and Attis went mad with grief and castrated himself. He died at the foot of a pine tree where his blood made violets grow. In certain versions of the legend Attis is changed into a pine. This eastern cult became more important during the Roman epoch, and it was at its height during the reign of Claudius. Devotees of Cybele worshipped Attis almost on a par with the goddess, and the priests of Cybele castrated themselves and feigned madness as part of their rites.

We do not know how and where Mayrhofer came upon this story; there were various contemporary books in German which dealt with classical mythology. One of the most important of these was *Götterlehre oder mythologische Dichtungen der Alten* by Karl Philipp Moritz (Vienna and Prague, 1801) where the myth is told through the perspective of Roman legend, and is subtly different from the Greek version. In Moritz, the story of Attis is discussed directly after that of Ganymed (where Goethe’s poem is quoted in full). We read that ‘Atys’ (Mayrhofer also spells it thus) left his home country and hastened, voluntarily, to the Phrygian woods in order to dedicate himself to the service of Cybele. For violating a vow of chastity he was punished by madness and self-inflicted castration (‘Entmannung’). Moritz tells his readers that in a beautiful poem from the ancient world, Attis, temporarily having regained his sanity, dreams of returning to his homeland over the sea. The goddess reappears with her lion-born chariot, and the youth becomes mad again. He serves the goddess for the rest of his days, Moritz says, ‘in weibischer Weichlichkeit’ – a phrase describing effeminate unmanliness which makes the author’s distaste for such a condition quite clear.

‘The beautiful poem from the ancient world’ is the Attis poem of Catullus (*Carmina* LXIII). It seems likely that Mayrhofer was able to by-pass such books as the guide by Moritz, and read this work in a German translation (for example, J X Mayr 1786, Leipzig and Vienna) or even the original Latin. Indeed all of this poet’s work inspired by mythology seems to owe something to Catullus’s practice of re-dramatising a myth from a new and imaginative angle. It is unlikely, for example, that Mayrhofer would have written *Lied eines Schiffern an die Dioskuren* without knowing the Catullus poem (*Carmina* IV) about the old sailor home from the sea, and dedicated to the worship of Castor and Pollux. In Catullus, as in Mayrhofer, Attis’s love for Sagaritis plays no part in the scenario; instead the Roman poet concentrates on Attis’s unmanly enslavement to the cult of Cybele, and a brief moment when the youth desires to escape from its thrall. The whole poem is told from
the viewpoint of a man trapped in the body of a ‘notha mulier’ – an ersatz woman, a being neither male nor female, caught in a similar limbo to those effeminate souls thought to be women trapped in male bodies. ‘Ego mulier, ego adolescens, ego ephebus, ego puer’ Attis says – ‘a woman I, a young man, an ephebe, a child’. Relieved of his madness for a short while, he longs to return to his homeland where, he says, he was once the flower of the gymnasium – ‘ego gymnasi fui flos’ and admired by all. Now he is condemned to live a life of shame, ‘life-long a female slave’ as Catullus puts it in Guy Lee’s translation. This moment of regret (‘Now what I have done appals me; I am sorry for it now’) ceases when the furious goddess unleashes her lion, Ferox, to ensure that Attis returns to a state of madness, and a life in her service.

Like Catullus, Mayrhofer ignores why and when the youth was castrated in the first place. What seems important to the Austrian poet is that within the arcane framework of classical references understood by those who looked to Greek history and mythology for a justification of their existence, Attis was the effeminate archetype, unmanned not by his own choosing, but as a result of the hand of the unreasonable gods. His condition is innate, and his sorrow and grief are undeserved and unjust. The first part of the Mayrhofer poem concentrates on the youth’s unassuaged longing to return to the safety and normality of his homeland. This is followed by a flashback which recounts how he begged to enter the goddess’s service in the first place. Mayrhofer’s third verse describes Attis’s life as ‘bleak and barren’, no doubt because the youth felt himself different from other people; he allowed the goddess to spirit him away to a life of decadent and orgiastic celebration (Capell, with the English good taste of 1928, calls this ‘a peculiar priesthood’). Having lived as ‘a Maenad, half me, a male unmanned’, he realises, when granted a short period of lucidity, that he yearns for the love and acceptance of his family. Attis hears the cymbals of the returning goddess, and rather than submit to a return of the madness of his former life he throws himself from the top of Dindymus, the mountain of the goddess. With the words ‘er stürzt von Höhn’, Schubert’s poet departs from the other sources: unlike Catullus, the poet makes the boy jump to his death; he dies in the way that Mayrhofer himself chose (in 1836) as his own means of suicide.

The poem is to be found in the privately printed edition of Mayrhofer’s poems (1824) but does not appear in the second edition edited by Feuchtersleben in 1843.

Perhaps the omission of a poem with uncomfortable inferences is significant. This monologue of someone caught between a rock and a hard place is the plaint of an unmanned individual who belongs nowhere. Of course, we can read into this poem the plight of the transsexual, something quite different from a mere question of sexual orientation, and this is perhaps the deeper meaning of the myth. But it is doubtful, surely, that Mayrhofer was dealing with this topic. The present-day equivalent of his implied scenario would be a someone who has run away to the big city from a safe rural community; someone who has been lured into a life of sexual abandon where a mad frenzy of drink, drugs and discos only accentuates his unhappiness. The more he becomes part of this twilight world, the more impossible it is for him to return; he is spurned by his
family and those he loves. He is the victim of both his physical and his psychological state, someone unable to reconcile his outer physical being with his spiritual centre. This theme recalls *Memnon*, another Schubert/Mayrhofer collaboration. Surely both these songs are elaborate classical metaphors for the plight of the ‘Urning’. (This term, deriving from Venus *Urania* – see the commentary on *Uranians Flucht* in Volume 14 – was coined by Karl Friedrich Ulrichs in the 1860s, long before the term ‘homosexual’ was invented; Ulrichs was the first German champion of gay rights, and the author of many tracts on the subject, one of which was entitled *Memnon*.) Attis longs for love and acceptance (this feeling lies at the heart of the beauty of the Schubert setting) but he remains eternally condemned to a life of shame.

Catullus’s viewpoint is ambiguous. He has a distaste for the hysterical plaint he puts in the mouth of Attis, but there is also pity: this could be summed up by ‘there, but for the grace of the gods, go I.’ The Roman poet ends with the envoy ‘Far from my house be all that frenzy of yours, O Queen. / Drive others to elation, drive other raving mad!’ In the morality of BC Rome, the AC-DC love of Catullus for his Juventius and for his Lesbia, were passionate without being unhinged. Cybele seems here embodied as a merciless and exacting life force, a metaphor perhaps for what we might think of today as an uncontrolled and self-destructive sex drive. The Austrian poet here finds in the classics the perfect justification for dwelling on this topic, and he too is obviously far from happy with the wilder urgings of nature. He has a horror of unbridled license, and in making Attis plunge to his death he makes the youth do something he deems honourable, even necessary. (This reminds us of ‘Shot? so quick, so clean an ending? / Oh, that was right, lad, that was brave: / Yours was not an ill for mending, / 'Twas best to take it to the grave’ by A E Housman, an expert on Catullus as it happens.) This response is typical of the more masculine homosexual’s disapproval of effeminacy, which can stem from self-loathing and fear of identification; the Attis of legend continues his life of involuntary depravity, but the nineteenth-century equivalent must commit suicide. It is clear that Mayrhofer, manly in his demeanour, was no Attis; but in the large transvestite (and perhaps transsexual) world of Mayrhofer’s Vienna, there must have been many a boy (and girl) enduring similar mental tortures, and it is of these outcasts that poet and composer sing. Like the majority of writers until relatively recent times, Mayrhofer chooses to emphasise the sadness of this *demi-monde*, and the inevitability of a tragic ending. It is interesting that another, even more substantial, work of art devoted to this myth is the opera *Atys* (1676) by Jean Baptiste Lully, a famously homosexual composer.

Little wonder, then, that this is one of Schubert’s most elusive songs. The commentators on the whole find nothing very exceptional about it: Reed states that ‘there is little attempt at dramatic immediacy’ and Capell finds the music ‘mild’ and the composer ‘untouched’. He notes the absence of ‘something exotic … some corybantic display’ (this adjective shows Capell’s classical learning – it derives from the Corybantes, wild, half-demonic beings, given to orgiastic rituals, who attended Cybele, the Asiatic earth mother). But surely Capell
knew Schubert the man better than this? The decadent trappings which could be made to tart up this story were uninteresting to this composer in comparison to the bitter-sweetness of the human dilemma facing the benighted Attis. It is as well to remember that many people have found Schubert wanting in the erotic imagery of Ganymed, particularly when it comes to comparing his setting with Hugo Wolf’s. In actual fact Schubert comes closer to the poem’s freshness and vitality, its unselfconscious sensuality, than the music written in the sexually aware hothouse of the later nineteenth century.

One can understand the shy and retiring mood of this song better if one realises that the composer must have felt great compassion (and, who knows, perhaps some fellow-feeling) for the youth rendered gentle and effeminate through castration which was as much a mental ‘given’ as a physical ‘taken away’. Indeed, Schubert’s music softens the story, and comments on it, with more tenderness than Mayrhofer has to muster. The composer had responded to the outcast Gretchen with wonderful empathy, and Attis is similarly treated with an understanding that shows extraordinary emotional maturity. This subject is honoured with music in the key of A minor, with changes into A major – a ravishing tonal ambiguity which here hauntingly conveys exotic (pace Capell) ambiguity of gender – a change of key which the composer reserves for music by which he is deeply touched (cf the A minor/A major plea for a return to the values of antiquity in Die Götter Griechenlands). Thus the lack of virility in the setting is purely deliberate. The introduction begins in unison between the hands (Reed notes a similarity to the opening of the Arpeggione sonata). The gently rocking 6/8 rhythm encompasses music that is dreamy and full of longing; the wilting modal decorations which punctuate the vocal line (a motif encompassing the rise of a sharpened Lydian fourth, D sharp in the key of A minor, to E, a semitone higher) suggest longing as well as the soft swooning of a yielding nature. There is something restless about the melodic line, as if it were straining to be complete but never manages to be so. Thus the tune for ‘über’s grüne Meer’ is the same as for ‘Ufer kam er her’ when we might have expected the melody to have developed or modulated by its sixth bar. The change to the major comes about at the end of the strophe (at ‘im rauschenden Fluge bringen’) which lifts the music to a higher plane of longing. Schubert has built into the music the aching realisation that Attis’s request to return home is never to be granted.

The melody of the second strophe is based on that of the first. Attis speaks for the first time (‘O Heimweh! Unergründlicher Schmerz’). The whole of this verse remains in the minor tonality. Once again this music seems to be a musical metaphor for something incomplete, for something straining in vain to come full circle. Schubert is aware that this meant to be the music of antiquity, so the rippling semiquaver accompaniment suggests the harp-like arpeggiations of an ancient lyre. Attis longs for the unattainable, as does the miller-boy in Am Feierabend in Die schöne Müllerin: there is much in common between these two pieces of music including the tonality, time signature, accompaniment and changes to the major key at the moment when the unattainable is mentioned and made to blossom in the vocal line (this happens at the only moment in the
cycle where the phrase ‘die schöne Müllerin’ is given voice). The fruit that ripens gloriously mentioned in this verse is obviously Attis’s beauty and his reputation (which had been much honoured and praised, hence mention of gold and purple, colours of honour and nobility) ruined by his deadly affliction.

The middle section of the song is a quasi-recitative, an arioso marked ‘Geschwind’. Here Schubert seems to have remembered the Gluckian studies of his youth, and with some justification – the appearance of a dea ex machina in verse 2 is worthy of an opera by that composer. The words ‘Ich liebe, ich rase, ich hab’ sie gesehen’ are set to a bracing and wide-ranging vocal line supported by chords punched out at the piano on the second and fourth beats of the bar. Here madness owes its depiction to the manner of the Iphigénie operas, and it must have seemed to Schubert that this was appropriate to a Grecian subject, so much had he learned to identify antiquity with Gluck’s style. At ‘ich musste flehn’ Attis begins to recount his encounter with Cybele. The chromatic wandering of this section paints the disorientation of a supernatural experience. The accompaniment shepherds the vocal line through a maze of harmonic changes – from C major to D flat major, and thence to C flat major, and a thicket of flats as far removed from the accidental-free purity of A minor as it is possible to imagine. The pleading eloquence of ‘Wirst du meine Bitte versagen?’ is repeated a semitone higher which results in a tone of almost feminine pathos. The description of the goddess’s reaction (the music is marked at a slower tempo at ‘Sie schaute mit gütigem Lächeln mich an’) is as sweet and unreal as a dream in slow motion. The music here has the silken seductiveness of the Erlking’s promises of a happy existence; a major-key simplicity marries charm and gentleness with something deeper and more ominous. A short recitative which, it is true, might have been more dramatic to please Capell and Reed, returns us to the present, and Attis’s terrified waking state; the words ‘kein Gott will sich hülfreich erzeigen’ seems passive, helpless, and frozen to the spot. A short interlude prepares the path back to the A minor of the home key.

And so for the last verse of the we return to the plaintive music of the opening as common time yields to a wafting 6/8. This is the mood which is at the heart of the poem, and Schubert’s response to it. Once again the change from A minor to A major works its magic; this time it is at the words ‘ich jenseits der Wellen’ where the raised third of the scale lifts the music into the major key, and with it all of Attis’s hopes for a return to a better life. How well this composer understood what it is to dream of what could not be! The tragedy of Mayrhofer’s closing lines could have been expanded to make something remarkably dramatic, but Schubert’s prefers to throw them away in a swift recitative as if he understands that this suicide is a decision taken in a moment of desperation; it is the moment when the beleaguered spirit, already stretched as far as it can bear, longs to end the pain. In mythological terms, a follower of Cybele would not be able to make such an easy exit, but this end is a feasible solution for the nineteenth century.

The last words of the poem, ‘waldige Stellen’, are followed by an E major chord as if in secco recitative. This is an upbeat to an A minor aria, but an aria without voice. The singer is no more, as if a vocal line suddenly struck dumb were a metaphor for castration, and an accompaniment without a soloist signals the death of the
protagonist. The piano is an ersatz singer, standing in for the real thing as much as Attis has been ‘notha mulier’. Thus we find ourselves in a state of musical limbo that is unique in Schubert’s lieder. This feeling is intensified by the fact that for eight bars, underneath this singerless aria, we are not allowed to hear a chord in root position. That this is the longest postlude in all the Schubert songs (eleven bars) shows how deeply the composer was involved in this story. The first four bars comprise the repeat of a two-bar phrase. This is the music of yearning: over those familiar rippling semiquavers a rising scale, aspiring upwards (B–C–D–E) is limned in by the little finger of the right hand – and then again for two bars – as if trying again to do something that has failed at the first attempt. The bass line is an E, and the music is built on various elaborations of E major as the dominant of A minor. We long, like Attis, to go home, for a bass note to return us to the tonic. Instead, with almost painful rapture, the music blossoms into A major with rippling chord patterns in the right hand, fuller than any we have heard so far. But still the bass is a second inversion (or 6/4 in harmonic terms), and the effect of this passage (again a two-bar cell which is repeated) is gently sensual, infinitely sad as only Schubert’s major-key music can be, and offering neither bliss, nor resolution.

Only in the last three bars of the postlude does the piano return to the tonic (A minor) with music that derives from the introduction. For the first time in the song the rippling semiquavers are to be found in the depths of the bass clef; the left hand’s descent is eloquent testimony to Attis’s fall from divine grace. We are reminded of that wonderful bar of left-hand music at the very end of Der Müller und der Bach from Die schöne Müllerin, also deep in the bass clef, which signals the suicide of the miller-boy as he slips beneath the water. As we have already noted, this is not the only link with Atys; indeed, this song, written eight years before the great cycle, is one of several earlier manifestations of the composer’s compassion for outcasts and misfits. Reed and Capell may not think it a cut above the rest, but Atys was one of the Schubert songs most loved by Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten.

Gottfried August Bürger (1747-1795)

7 DAS DÖRFCHEN
Second version, D598 (D641 in D1); December 1817; published as Op 11 No 1 in June 1822
sung by John Mark Ainsley, Jamie MacDougall, Simon Keenlyside and Michael George

Ich rühme mir
Mein Dörfchen hier,
Denn schön’re Auen
Als ringsumher
Die Blicke schauen,
Blüh’n nirgends mehr.

I take pride
In my hamlet here,
For nowhere else
Do fairer meadows bloom
Than the eye can see
All around.
Dort Ährenfelder
Und Wiesengrün,
Dem blaue Wälder
Die Grenze zieh’n,
An jener Höhe
Die Schäferei,
Und in der Nähe
Mein Sorgenfrei.

So nenn’ ich meine geliebte,
Meine kleine Einsiedelei,
Worin ich lebe
Zur Lust erweckt,
Die ein Gewebe
Von Ulm’ und Rebe
Grün überdeckt.

Dort kränzen Schlehen
Die braune Kluft,
Und Pappeln wehen
In blauer Luft.
Mit sanftem Rieseln
Auf Silberkieseln
Ein heller Bach,
Fliesst unter den Zweigen,
Die über ihn
Sich wölbend neigen,
Bald schüchtern hin.
Lässt bald im Spiegel
Den grünen Hügel,
Wo Lämmer geh’n,
Des Ufers Büschchen
Und alle Fischchen
Im Grunde seh’n.

Da gleiten Schmerlen
Und blasen Perlen,
Ihr schneller Lauf
Geht bald hernieder,
Und bald herauf
Zur Fläche wieder;

Behold the fields of corn
And the green pastures,
Bordered by blue woods.
On yonder hill
The sheep farm,
And nearby
My ‘Free from Care’.

For that is what I call
My beloved little retreat
Where I live
In joy,
And which a network
Of elms and vines
Drapes in green.

There sloes adorn
The brown crevasse,
And poplars sway
In the blue air.
A limpid brook
Steals unhurriedly
Over silver pebbles.

Now it flows beneath the branches
That arch shyly
Above it;
Now it mirrors
On its bed
The green hillside
Where lambs frisk,
The little bushes on the bank
And all the little fish.

There loach glide
And pearls bubble;
Their rapid course
Goes now down,
Now up again
To the surface.
This and another male voice quartet, *Die Nachtigall* D724, were among the great successes of Schubert's career, at least as far as success during his own lifetime was concerned. It might be argued that these two works spread the composer's name in Austria quicker than almost anything else except *Erlkönig*. They are fine pieces of music certainly, but no finer than many by this composer which were undervalued and ignored. But it is always difficult accounting for taste, and there was something about these works which was immediately attractive to *Männerchor* singers, and to the public. It is strange, but not untypical, that *Das Dörfchen* should have had to wait some four years for its first public performance on 7 March 1821 at the Kärntnertor Theatre. (It had probably been heard privately at the end of 1819.) (*Die Nachtigall* was heard at the same concert, as was *Erlkönig*, sung by Johann Michael Vogl and accompanied by Anselm Hüttenbrenner.) The singers who first sang *Das Dörfchen* (in the unaccompanied first version) were well-known as an ensemble; their skill and musicality encouraged the composer to write other beautiful (and demanding) four-part songs for these forces.

These four were a mixture of professional and semi-professional artists; two were already in their forties, and two were more or less contemporaries of Schubert's. Like the composer's parents they had all been born in the Bohemian or Moravian regions of the empire, and had come to Vienna to make their fortunes with varying success. Josef Barth (1781-1865) had been an official of the Schwarzenberg household and became a tenor in the court chapel. When *Das Dörfchen* was published, Schubert dedicated the work to him; it is clear that the quartet owed its enthusiastic reception in part to the skills of the first tenor. The second tenor was Johann Karl Umlauff (1796-1861), a singing student of Vogl. He apparently received an offer of an engagement at the Kärntnertor Theatre in 1821 but turned it down in favour of pursuing his career as a lawyer. This eventually led to financial success and his ennoblement. (He claimed to have argued with Schubert over the prosody of *Der Wanderer*, and seems to have been surprised when the composer
was unwilling to submit to suggestions for improvements.) The second bass was Wenzel Nejebse (1796-1865), who was an amateur singer but a dedicated one; he worked first in the censor’s office, and then the treasury, but he took part in a number of Schubert first performances. Nejebse was one of the subscribers to the first edition of Schwanengesang, and was a founder member of the Wiener Männergesang-Verein.

From the biographical point of view, the first bass, also something of a composer, was perhaps the most fascinating of the four. Like his younger colleague Umlauff, Josef Götz (1787-1822) also studied law, and like Barth was a member of the Schwarzenberg household. (The two drawings here of the two singers are by Princess Pauline von Schwarzenberg.) He decided to embark on an operatic career and became a well-liked Bartolo in Rossini’s Il Barbiere di Siviglia. Sadly, his career as a professional singer was very short-lived. Due to a deterioration in his health, he had to give up singing some six months after the Kärntnertor performance of Das Dörfchen. He died in early 1822 of venereal disease, Deutsch tells us. This was a sad end for a handsome young man of thirty-five, and it must have been distressing for Schubert who knew Götz quite well: the bass had given the first performance of Sehnsucht (Schiller, D636) in February 1821, and taken part in other pieces such as the lost cantata Prometheus D451 and, of course, Die Nachtigall. When Schubert discovered that he himself had syphilis at the end of 1822 or early in 1823, Götz’s demise must have been fresh in his mind, and a grisly reminder of what he might expect to be in store for him.

Another male quartet took up Das Dörfchen for a performance on 4 April 1821, a group of wind-players moonlighting as singers. The piece was by then all the rage. Then a quartet with two members of the original team, Barth and Götz, sang it another performance on 24 April; on this occasion another bass replaced Nejebse, someone who was to become almost as famous as Schubert in his own right – Johann Nepomuk Nestroy (1801-1862). Nestroy had been a younger fellow-pupil of the composer at the Imperial Konvikt. After failing in an attempt to follow the law, he made his way as a singer with considerable success, and performed in a number of the composer’s male-voice quartets as first bass. He also took part in performances of Fidelio and Meyerbeer’s Il crociato in Egitto when Schubert was in the audience. But singing was only one of Nestroy’s skills. Schubert’s was never to know him at the height of his success as a
comedian, playwright and wit; he became renowned for his sarcastic word-play and farces based on the old Viennese traditions of Volkskomödie. Nestroy became acknowledged as the greatest satirist of the age, and wrote pieces making fun of such writers as Grillparzer and Hebbel.

Some time before Das Dörfchen came to be published in June 1822, Schubert added a piano part – this is the version performed here; the first is unaccompanied and very similar (though not identical) vocally. The piano part, almost as if it were conceived for rehearsal purposes, is seldom other than a doubling of the vocal lines; the piano plays little part in the setting of musical atmosphere which depends on the shape and sweep of the melody. Like some other extended vocal quartets, this piece is in three movements. This first of these (‘Allegretto’) is an ABA construction where the generous, open-hearted tune of the opening returns at ‘So nenn’ ich meine geliebte / Meine kleine Einsiedelei’. In music of this kind, Schubert is in his element: the bright key of D major is made to resound to a melody that progresses in a rolling $\frac{3}{4}$, full of health and countrified happiness. But at the same time it is tinged with the authentic Schubertian ache (as at the suspension at ‘ringsumher die Blicke schauen’) which betokens a moment so fragile that it is inevitable that it will pass in the manner of a perfect spring day. (‘Go not happy day’ is Tennyson’s plea in similar spirit.) ‘May time never destroy you’ says Bürger at the end of the song, but time, and the Industrial Revolution, would change all this landscape irrevocably. And it is if Schubert knew and wept, even as he smiled.

The panorama described by the eighteenth-century German poet is of picture-book perfection. But Schubert writes music for the jaded city-dweller idealising country life, and his exaggeration is understandable. The music seems simple, but in the way that the sophisticated musician would wish it to be – which is not really simple at all. The line for the first tenor at ‘dem blaue Wälder die Grenze zieh’n’ slips into upper regions of the treble clef, a tessitura characteristic of this medium where a lack of soprano voice means that the first tenor must rise to the challenge of giving the piece lightness and brightness. This playful vocal line, touching at high As, is a secular version of ‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills’ (with a change: ‘from whence cometh my delight’) as the singer scans the landscape and sees the sheep-farm and his ‘Sorgenfrei’, his cottage retreat draped in vine and elm leaves. The word ‘Einsiedelei’ reminds us of the title of an earlier track on this disc, and the concept of hermitage so beloved of the poets of an earlier generation.
The second section (‘Andante con moto’) changes gear: the key signature is A major, and the time signature is $2/4$. The dotted rhythms of the first tenor seem as decorative as so many tendrils of greenery, or as flexible as so many poplars gently bending in the breeze. And now Schubert has his chance, never refused when proffered, to write water-music. First of all we see the limpid brook from the point of view of the observer: smooth and gliding thirds and sixths of the two tenors entwine with a bass line which moves at the bottom of the stave in contrary motion. This is genial play with the idea of a mirror effect (‘Lässt bald im Spiegel den grünen Hügel’) where the frisking lambs and green hillside are visible on the river-bed. This optical illusion is given a musical analogue by the distance between the parts (to this end the composer silences the first bass for twelve bars) where broad vistas of sky are separated from expanses of water, the whole effect accentuated by the reflecting stream. When we are allowed to glimpse within the water (from ‘Da gleiten Schmerlen’) the first tenor, at last free from the piano doubling his every note, begins his aquatic acrobatics, where all is flashing fin and glinting scales. The other voices are allowed to join in to an extent; the second tenor attaches himself, limpet-like, to his colleague for the hocketing ascent in thirds up the stave at ‘und bald herauf zur Fläche wieder’; the basses are also allowed their own flourish at the repeat of these words. Schubert is having such a good time, like a child gurgling with happiness as it splashes around in a paddling-pool, that these water features are presented for a second time.

The final section (‘Andante con moto’) heralds a return to the home key of D major and the tempo is a flowing two-in-a-bar. There was something of a tradition in male quartets that in this peroration mode, soulful music is banished in favour of something more rousing. Schubert makes of this a bracing exercise in canon where each singer is allowed a separate appearance, as if standing in a spotlight for a curtain call. The lead tenor goes first, unencumbered by the other singers, the piano providing an accompaniment in burbling quavers which are prophetic of the sturdy semiquavers of Das Wandern from Die schöne Müllerin. The second tenor takes his turn, followed in order down the staves by the two basses. The fourth singer has to do battle with the other three in order to be heard, but sings for only eight bars before a new tempo (‘Adagio’) marks the beginning of a four-bar coda. This is an elongated setting of the address to bliss which has opened the song’s final section – ‘O Seligkeit’ in broad and soulful fashion; there is nothing exceptional about the
dominant-seventh harmony but, once again, the tessitura of the first tenor part adds the expressive (and vocally perilous) edge to the sort of sentimental coda that became one of the clichés of the barbershop quartet.

GOTTFRIED AUGUST BÜRGER was a talented and fluent writer in the field of the narrative ballad and lyric. He was a distinguished teacher and became professor at Göttingen. But Bürger’s career was ruined by personal scandals, particularly in connection with his third marriage: the writer Elise Hahn proposed to him by means of a poem, but the ensuing relationship was catastrophic. This, and Schiller’s scathing review of Bürger’s Gedichte, was said to have contributed to the poet’s early death. Schubert was very free in his selection of lines from Bürger’s much longer poem. There are 137 of these in the original, of which the composer selected only 50 (more in the first, unaccompanied, version of the song). It is the only lyric by this poet set to music by Schubert, although other composers (Beethoven, Cornelius, Strauss and particularly Pfitzner) have found much to their purposes. Both Liszt and Duparc were drawn to his long narrative poem Lenore (1773).

Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805)

8 DER KAMPF
D594. November 1817; published in March 1829 as Op posth 110
sung by Neal Davies

1 Nein, länger werd’ ich diesen Kampf nicht kämpfen, No! I shall fight this battle no longer,
    Den Riesenkampf der Pflicht. This mighty battle of duty.
    Kannst du des Herzens Flammentrieb nicht dämpfen, If you cannot cool the fierce ardour within my heart,
        So fordre, Tugend, dieses Opfer nicht. Then, Virtue, do not demand this sacrifice.

2 Geschworen hab ich’s, ja, ich hab’s geschworen, I took a vow, yes, I took a vow
    Mich selbst zu bändigen. To master myself.
Hier ist dein Kranz, er sei auf ewig mir verloren, Here is your crown; let it be lost to me for ever.
Nimm ihn zurück und lass mich sündigen! Take it back and let me sin.

3 Zerrissen sei, was wir bedungen haben; Let us tear up the bond we have made:
    Sie liebt mich – deine Krone sei verscherzt! She loves me – your crown shall be forfeit!
    Glückselig, wer, in Wonnetrunkenheit begraben, Happy he who, drunk with ecstasy,
        So leicht wie ich den tiefen Fall verschmerzt. Takes his precipitous fall as lightly as I.

4 Sie sieht den Wurm an meiner Jugend Blume nagen She sees the worm gnawing at the flower of my youth;
    Und meinen Lenz entfloh’n; She sees the spring of my life slip by;
Bewundert still mein heldenmütiges Entsagen, She silently admires my heroic renunciation,
    Und grossmutvoll beschliesst sie meinen Lohn. And generously decides on my reward.
5 Misstraue, schöne Seele, dieser Engelgüte!
Dein Mitleid waffnet zum Verbrechen mich.
Gibt’s in des Lebens unermesslichem Gebiete,
Gibt’s einen andern schöneren Lohn – als dich?

6 Als das Verbrechen, das ich ewig fliehen wollte?
Tyrannisches Geschick!
Der einz’ge Lohn, der meine Tugend krönen sollte,
Ist meiner Tugend letzter Augenblick!

Fair soul, distrust this angelic kindness!
Your compassion armed me for my crime.
Is there in life’s vast realm
A fairer reward than you?

Than the crime which I sought to flee for ever?
Tyrannical fate!
The sole reward which was to crown my virtue
Is my virtue’s final moment.

This is a real set piece, an aria in the grand manner that might have been conceived to conclude an operatic act, written at a time when the collaborative friendship of Schubert and Mayrhofer was at its peak. We know that this work became one of the favourites of Johann Michael Vogl, the retired opera baritone who had taken up the cause of Schubert’s songs, but was it actually written for him? There is no doubt that composer and poet put their heads together to find material suitable for the singer who was the recently converted champion of Schubert’s songs, but Spaun’s memoirs state that Vogl was singing Der Kampf shortly after meeting Schubert, which would suggest the work was already in existence. There is nothing to say, however, that Schubert might not have written it with Vogl in mind before they actually met, probably in November 1817. The settings of Mayrhofer’s own classical poems were no doubt composed partly with an eye to Vogl’s classical tastes (the singer read ancient Greek, and he was a famed Orestes in the Gluck operas); at other times it is likely that Mayrhofer may have recommended suitable material from the work of the great German poets (for example the Goethe poem Prometheus). It is doubtful, however, whether Schubert needed much help when it came to selecting Schiller’s work. He had set this poet from the earliest days, and Der Kampf is to be found in this six-strophe version in the Sämmtliche Werke (Anton Doll, Vienna 1810), the source of many of the composer’s other Schiller settings.

There is an earlier version of the poem in the almanac Thalia (1786) entitled ‘Freigeisterei der Leidenschaft. Als Laura vermählt war im Jahre 1782’. The same woman inspired various other Schubert Schiller settings – the two versions of Die Entzückung an Laura — but she is not to be confused with Friedrich von Matthisson’s inamorata of the same name. The poet’s emotions run riot as he watches the beautiful Laura being wed. This is an important point in understanding this poem which is surely not about the struggle to abstain from love merely for the sake of self-control. It is clear that after working long and hard to get Laura’s attention he has at last succeeded: it seems likely that the poet will be able to consummate his relationship with her despite her marriage. But in this victory is also his defeat: in order to requite the passion she feels for him he will have to be party to an immoral act. We are expected to feel horror with him – Gadzooks and Zounds! – but we are merely reminded that despite his talent for drama, Schiller’s ivory tower of high moral ideals sometimes houses characters who are not convincingly made of flesh and blood. Nevertheless, Der
*Kampf* met some opposition from the censor’s office when it was published after the composer’s death in 1829. It is scarcely possible today to hear the lasciviousness in these words which troubled the guardian of the public morals.

The Vogl songs were not usually written in the bass clef, and they do not usually explore the lower reaches of the stave in the way of *Der Kampf*. There is another contender for the singer Schubert had in mind, Johann Karl Graf Esterházy. We know that Schubert was in contact with the family early in 1818 (thanks to another Johann Karl, the poet and dilettante composer, Unger) with a view to taking up summer employment at Zseliz as music-master to the two Esterházy princesses. The count was an able bass singer, and it is just possible that Schubert wrote *Der Kampf* the preceding November as a type of audition piece. For this theory, however, the choice of text seems rather racy: Esterházy was a religious family man, a prospective employer whom the composer had not yet met.

On the other hand, one can immediately tell that *Der Kampf* would have suited Vogl down to the ground. What makes it stiff and old-fashioned is exactly what would have appealed to the bass-baritone in his fiftieth year. It has *attitude* – it strikes a musical pose as surely as the performer struck one, or more than one, and was lambasted as a ham by some (though not all) of the members of the Schubert circle. Any lieder singer of today who was as mannered a performer as Vogl was would expect a sharp critical slap on the wrist. One can hear in this music many moods which are neatly parcelled, and skilfully varied: military determination; soulful desperation; lyrical cantilena which bends to temptation; the contrast between decisive recitative and spinning a line (Vogl was good at the latter in more than one way). Here one has the advantage of being seen as a person moral enough to insist on rectitude, but vulnerable and, yes, human enough at least to *contemplate* adultery. All of this was grist to the mill for the singer-cum-tragedian in a century when such people were expected to be larger than life; apparently Vogl rarely disappointed in this regard.

There is something slightly slavish about an artist giving an important person exactly what he wants, especially when he could have done better by following his own instincts. A few of Schubert’s other works have this stamp of ‘political’ expediency, and two of the most renowned songs were conceived for a Vogl pupil, the exacting Anna Milder-Hauptmann. *Suleikas zweiter Gesang* and *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* were both written for this singer who pronounced the first *Suleika* song too ‘beautiful’, i.e. it did not show off enough of her technical virtuosity. In this pearls-before-swine pronouncement, we hear the voice of the ambitious career-building diva, rather than of the true musician. But the composer had admired Milder since he was a boy, and he gave her the benefit of the doubt: he duly wrote pieces for her which displayed high notes and coloratura, and in the *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* we have a cantata similar to *Der Kampf*, where soulful depression and joy are counterpointed as cleverly as legato and staccato, high and low, fast and slow. And all calculated to bring the public to its feet at the end of the performance.
1. The opening is marked ‘Feurig’ (fiery), and this movement is an early Schubertian essay in symphonic song-writing, which is to say an on-going musical structure; the motifs of the accompaniment (here announced in the dotted rhythms of the opening, unison octaves which bounce up the stave, full of nervous energy) are developed in a symphonic way. This technique is noticeable in some of the greatest Schubert songs of the composer’s maturity (Suleika I, Der Zwerg, Die junge Nonne); here the manner in which the vocal line is carried forward by the energy and development of the accompaniment is prophetic of things to come. After eight stormy bars in, and around, D minor, the voice’s entry on an emphatic ‘Nein’ is a textbook beginning, in operatic manner. We are so swept up with the clever musical development of the motif that we do not notice a lack of a real tune per se. The whole thing is really a glorified recitative, as is much of the song. After ‘dieses Opfer nicht’ there is a spacious fermata on a G major chord. This sets up the ceremonial C major of the following section.

2. The second strophe is preceded by one of those manly gestural tunes which we associate with many of the Schiller settings, for this poet always brought out Schubert’s Beethovenian streak. This is music for the swearing of an oath, with solemn octave leaps, from high to low, in the vocal line. The chromatic rises beginning at ‘Hier ist dein Kranz’ echo a similar passage (also accompanied in dotted rhythms) in Gruppe aus dem Tartarus (also Schiller) composed a few months earlier. The words there deal with faces in hell distorted with pain; the implication here is that the singer is also undergoing self-inflicted torture. The vocal line continues to rise until, at the end of the strophe, there is a marvellous shift from F major to F sharp major at ‘und lass mich sündigen!’ There is something irresistibly sensual about this change of key, as if a monk had suddenly decided to abandon the contemplative life in favour of wine and roses.

3. The F sharp major chord is an obvious bridge to B major and a change to $\frac{3}{4}$. The dotted rhythm prompted by the first word ‘Zerrissen’, the violent image of tearing, is prophetic of a song from 1821: the final section of Der Unglückliche, where the words ‘Zerrissen nun sind alle süssen Bande’ prompt similar sequences (this time in B minor) of rhythmic shuddering derived from the pomposo manner of Baroque oratorio. Once again the piano writing continues in the octaves between the hands established from the beginning, a familiar Schubertian metaphor for courage and determination. As this falters, a tender six-bar interlude in sighing crotchets (as if an oboe solo) melts into an arioso section: this begins with ‘Sie liebt mich’ – a phrase which stretches to a higher note on its repetition, as if to emphasise the singer’s disbelief. The composer’s response to someone who claims to be ‘drunk with ecstasy’ is to provide a waltz, the lilt provided by the single bass note in the left hand, followed by the second and third beats phrased away in the right. This sweetness is ironic – the same type of madness and disorientation illustrated by Täuschung in Winterreise. The words depicting a fall from grace – ‘den tiefen Fall’ – are set to a downward jump of a tenth, a spectacular chance for any singer with a bass voice to show off his bottom register. The final ‘verschmerzt’ actually descends to a low E, one of the few occasions in Schubert’s lieder when this note is
required. Here, and throughout the song, we notice how Schubert seems to be allowing for one of Vogl’s main technical weaknesses: a shortness of breath. The vocal line is showered with rests which are made to work toward the overall dramatic effect. The bottom E is the last of a four-note phrase with two full crotchet rests before it; anyone who has worked with singers will know that unless one is working with someone of peerless technique, such a descent requires a full and generous preparatory breath. This passage ends in E major, and this paves the way for a change of key signature into that very tonality, and a change of tempo – Langsam.

4. And here is a melody at last! Schubert is here very ingenious in writing a bel canto tune (rather a beautiful one) where no single phrase lasts longer than two bars before a quaver rest, when the singer is able to take another breath. As always there is a literary reason for the snaking elegance of the vocal line – in this case, mention of the worm gnawing away at the flower of the singer’s youth. Here, Vogl would have been proud of his legato singing, full of Affekt and pathos, much aided by references to mention of life’s vanished springtime. This is the Italianate section of the piece, where gently gliding triplets in the accompaniment are subservient to the shaping of a moving melody. But even here, promise of a full-scale aria does not actually materialise. The triplets yield to recitative at ‘bewundert still mein heldenmütiges Entsagen’, although there is a sudden return to the tune at ‘Misstraue, schöne Seele’. This is a clever elision on the composer’s part because it disguises the beginning of the fifth strophe in a song where there are already too many divisions between the sections.

5. The mood of sinuous ruefulness lasts for one line of the strophe. Mention of military arms (‘Dein Mitleid waffnet zum Verbrechen mich’) brings those familiar dotted rhythms back – this time suggesting not so much strides and bounds as a knight on a galloping charger (cf. the accompaniment for Normanns Gesang 13). This emphasises that the singer feels that winning fair lady requires less of a faint heart and more daring. It is a nice touch that this jangling militarism disappears and melts into lyricism at the rhetorical question – ‘is there one thing [Schubert’s chooses to emphasise the word] more wonderful than you?’’. This seems a backward glance at the poet’s threatened virtue, and the word ‘einen’ (in the phrase ‘gibt’s einen andern schönen Lohn’) is highlighted with diminished-seventh chords dallying on expressive minims emphasising both the sweetness and the anguish of the dangerous primrose path.

6. The inscription ‘Recitative’ which Schubert places for the phrase ‘das ich ewig fliehen wollte’ seems superfluous. More or less the whole song has been an exercise in accompanied recitative, including the blustering, and rather hackneyed, section accompanied by rumbling bass octaves at ‘Tyrannisches Geschick!’ which is arioso at best. It is at this point that one can get irritated with a song which is imposingly packaged but somewhat lacking in substance. Once more we notice that Schubert is always at his weakest when the poet does not pull his weight with inspiring imagery. This is the type of derring-do passage that the composer revelled in when dashing off ballads like Der Taucher 2, but by 1817 he is growing out of such spear-shaking and becoming more of a musical Shakespeare. A double bar-line, and a return to the D minor of the
opening, announce the song’s coda, everything which Vogl might have relished in terms of an imposing finale. There are moments of subtlety: the jump of a fourth at ‘der einz’ge Lohn’ is mirrored, in canon style, in the piano’s bass octaves. In this dialogue between lust and conscience, the one stalking the other, the forte phrase is repeated quietly, the jump of a fourth this time initiated in the accompaniment. We might have expected a loud and decisive end to this scena, but apart from the two final loud chords, Schubert provides a get-out clause whereby the question is unresolved. Perhaps the tortured lover will do the ‘right thing’ after all, and not yield to temptation. The vacillating minims of the postlude, marked ‘pianissimo’, signify the internal struggle more eloquently than stormy tremolandi. One can imagine what that great old-fashioned actor Vogl would have made of these bars in terms of facial expression and by-play. He and Schubert were yet to give the first-ever lieder recitals, so it is hardly surprising that he had never been told anything about the etiquette of lieder-singing.

With Der Kampf we publish the last of Schubert’s 43 solo song-settings of Schiller, a poet whose Der Jüngling am Bache initiated Volume 1 of the Schubert Edition. Volume 16 was devoted exclusively to this poet, and in the booklet accompanying that CD there is extensive biographical material about Schiller, and Schubert’s relationship to his work.

Johann Karl Unger (1771-1836)

9 DIE GESELLIGKEIT (LEBENSLUST) ZEST FOR LIFE (CONVIVIALITY)
D609. January 1818; first published by Gotthard in 1872
sung by Patricia Rozario, Catherine Denley, Ian Bostridge and Michael George

Wer Lebenslust fühlet, He who feels zest for life
Der bleibt nicht allein, Will never be alone.
Allein sein ist öde Being alone is tedious,
Wer kann sich da freu’n? And who can enjoy that?
Im traulichen Kreise, To live together
Beim herzlichen Kuss, In an intimate circle
Beisammen zu leben, Amid fond kisses
Ist Seelengenuss! Is the soul’s delight.

Das lehrt uns der Tauber The turtle-dove teaches us:
Für Liebe und Lust, For love and pleasure
Er hebt sich dem Täubchen He raises his silken breast
Die seidene Brust, To his mate,
Es girret für Wonne, Who coos with happiness.
Es lehret im Kuss: Her kiss teaches us
Beisammen zu leben That to live together
Sei Herzensgenuss. Is the heart’s delight.

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Dem folget, ihr Guten,  Follow her, good friends,
Und singet nicht mehr:  And no longer sing
Die einsamkeit wäre  That solitude is not
Nicht öde, nicht leer;  Tediouis and empty.
Allein sein vergnüget  Being alone creates
Nur Sehnsucht und Schmerz,  Only longing and pain.
Beisammen zu leben  To live together
Befriedigt das Herz.  Assuages the heart.

This quartet for mixed voices is the first product of the strengthening of Schubert’s friendship with Johann Karl Unger early in 1818. Unger had been a signatory to the composer’s unsuccessful application for a post in Laibach in 1816, so it is clear that the two had known each other since then. In the meantime Schubert had met the great singer Vogl who quickly took to Schubert’s songs. Vogl was later to be the teacher of Unger’s daughter Karoline (1803-1877) who became a famous singer and also a composer, working under her married name of Sabatier. In speaking well of Schubert’s talent, Vogl may have encouraged Unger, a man-about-town who liked to have a finger in every pie, to renew contact with Schubert. In any case, early in 1818, at a time when money was a continuing problem for the composer, Unger used his connections with the Esterházy family to suggest that Schubert might be a suitable music teacher for Count Esterházy’s two young daughters. Thus came about the first (and longer) of two summer sojourns (the other was in 1824) when the composer left Vienna and took up residence in Zseliz, the Landschloss – more mansion than castle – which was the count’s summer residence in Hungary.

Unger was a many-sided man who fancied himself as a poet (his Gedichte were issued in 1797) and composer as well as being a professor at the Theresianische Ritterakademie in Vienna, a type of finishing school for young men of noble birth. It was there that Unger had made his first contact with the Count Esterházy. Unger was also a contributor to almanacs in one of which a version of this poem appeared in 1804. This fact was only discovered by Dietrich Berke as recently as 1969. Until that time the quartet was known by its old title of Lebenslust (as it was published in the old Gesamtausgabe) and the poet was unknown. The Neue Schubert Ausgabe issued the work in Volume 2a of Series III (1996) where the editorial commentary mentions the puzzling differences between the text as printed in the almanac, and the composer’s manuscript. The editors even conjecture that Schubert set the quartet from an anonymous source; but it would surely be too much of a coincidence that he should choose to set such a text at the same time as he was drawing closer to the Unger circle. Further evidence that Unger had become known to the Schubertians is the fact that in 1818, Schubert’s friend Anslem Hüttenbrenner also set an Unger poem as a vocal quartet – Der Abend.
The answer to this puzzle lies in a source which was not available to the editors of the Neue Schubert Ausgabe. This is a slim volume of manuscripts (56 pages) entitled Carl Ungers Lieder, Nachgeahmt oder von ihm selbst gedichtet und in Musick (sic) gesetzt. The book is not dated but it contains numerous simple solo song settings, many apparently by Unger himself, others where his words are made to fit arrangements of Paer, Haydn and Pleyel. In almost all cases, however, it seems that the poems are by Unger himself. The music for Die Geselligkeit, for example, is marked ‘by an unknown’ (a simple F major song in 3/4 without very great merit), but the verses are identical with the text in Schubert’s manuscript. It seems likely that this volume had been assembled much earlier than 1818 (one of the pieces refers to the Befreiungskrieg of 1813) and that it was used as Schubert’s source for Die Geselligkeit, as well as Die Nachtigall, and by Hüttenbrenner for his Der Abend.
As for the music itself, there are touches of Schubertian subtlety here and there; but the music has been made to appeal to a jollier, and lower, common denominator than much of Schubert’s work for SATB (compare the magisterial Gebet35 from 1824). The introduction is obviously authentic because it sounds so much better than the leaden musical tags that Diabelli was wont to place in front of original Schubert songs that he published in the Nachlass. The tricky little semiquaver flourish before the entry of the voices encapsulates the mood of merry high spirits which are at the heart of this poem. This is one of the composer’s Ländler-like waltzes in 6/8, and it is kept deliberately simple. There is a telling change from D major to an ominous D minor to paint the word ‘öde’ (barren) where the cosy and rollicking accompanying semiquavers change to quavers, an octave apart between the hands, which rise and fall within a two-octave range like an icy wind on a forsaken plain. This is an example of Schubert’s not infrequent visual trickery where the music not only sounds emptier and more barren as a result of the harmonies, it also looks mournful on the printed page. At ‘In traulichen Kreise, beim herzlichen Kuss’ we find the same canonic technique between the voices as we have already heard in Das Dörfchen; the composer obviously felt that this was a good way to give the important first tenor (whose music is almost always more demanding than the other three singers) a short moment to be heard on his own. The third time we hear ‘ist Seelengenuss’ it is accompanied by a gleeful ascending scale culminating in a contrary-motion A major arpeggio decorated by acciaccature.

The performance recorded here uses three of the four verses of the poem. There is more biographical information about the Ungers, father and daughter, in the commentary accompanying Die Nachtigall in Volume 28 of this series (booklet pages 31-34).

(Wordless)

10 SING-ÜBUNGEN
Accompaniment realised from the figured bass by David Roblou
sung by Patricia Rozario and Lorna Anderson

With much of Volume 33 in this series given over to the exercises that Schubert wrote for Salieri as a young student (these improving pedagogical works continued to be written right up to 1816, and possibly beyond), it is a novelty to come across the composer as a teacher in his own right. As we have already noted more than

Caroline Unger
once in these commentaries, Schubert found himself in Zseliz, Hungary, in the summer of 1818, working as music instructor to the two countesses Esterházy – Marie (1802-1837) and Caroline (1805-1851). The elder girl was thus sixteen years old, and the younger, the same Caroline whose name was later to be linked with Schubert’s in romantic terms, only thirteen at the time.

It is well known that Count Esterházy (1777-1834) was extremely interested in music; also that he was quite a gifted singer with a bass voice, and that his wife, Countess Rosine, sang alto. Quite naturally they also wanted their daughters to sing competently, and the encouragement of their talents in this direction had, in all probability, been Schubert’s responsibility from the spring of 1818 when it is likely that he visited the girls in their Stadtpalais in Vienna. (He earned a precious two Gulden an hour for his work.) One may conjecture that Schubert had asked his colleague, Johann Michael Vogl, himself a famous singing teacher, for some pointers in this regard. But one must not forget that the boys of the Hofkapelle, students at the Imperial Konvikt where Schubert received his education, had also had singing tuition, and that the composer counted himself a singer of sorts. This did not stop him from setting impossible vocal tasks in some of the early ballads, but by the middle of 1818 (and in stark contrast to the early works written before 1814) Schubert was well tuned-in to matters of vocal range and comfort.

Nevertheless, in writing these singing exercises (the plural description of something which is, in fact, one continuous piece of music) Schubert set his two charges a very difficult task. Either they struggled with this piece and found it too difficult, or the standard of singing among teenage girls was of a thoroughly professional standard, much higher than might be found today among a similar age group. It is true that singers of the epoch began their careers on the stage much earlier than is the present custom, but we do not hear of the Esterházy girls pursuing virtuoso careers (not that women of their station would have been allowed to do so), and neither do we have any documentary evidence that the Sing-Übungen became a ‘party piece’, something which surely would have happened if it had been a success with its dedicatees.

From the casting of the vocal quartet Gebet35 (which dates from Schubert’s second visit to Zseliz in 1824) we know that Marie Esterházy sang soprano, and that her sister Caroline, like her mother, was an alto. And yet, at first glance, this piece is definitely written for two sopranos of equal range. A second look brings an interesting perspective: the second part visits the same high Gs we hear from the first singer, but less often, and when they occur it is never quite in the same exposed way. Both parts visit the middle and the top of the stave (the piece is a thorough work-out for both singers), but it seems that Schubert is intending to encourage young Caroline to work on her top by making her follow, and imitate, her elder sister who had more of a natural ability in that register. The exquisite tact inherent in a piece written for sisters (who no doubt were subject to all the usual rivalries and sensitivities of siblings, whereby the younger might feel slighted by the older) is that in no way does Schubert make the younger singer feel any less challenged. As a result, however, the long flowing four-bar phrases (one relentlessly succeeding the other, and requiring great breath control), as
well as the coloratura passages, with all they require of the diaphragm, would have been too much, certainly for the younger countess. But the fact that the composer defended and encouraged Caroline in a special way, even at this age, seems undeniable.

The piece is written on three staves: two vocal staves with figured bass. And here we have a clear illustration of Schubert’s wonderful ability to write an interesting bass line, something on which all of his songs depend. (We would notice this more often if our minds and ears were not usually diverted by the felicities of the right-hand piano part, something which was usually the last to be composed.) The interchange of bass-line triplets with the twists and turns of the girls’ vocal lines is masterful, the one bouncing off the other like some demanding three-sided ball game. And the bass line is, of course, the one played by the composer himself. It is as if he were dancing with the young countesses, playing with them and leading them on; his enjoyment at this prospect, tinged with the erotic musical symbolism of such entwining interchange, is obvious. It is this which probably accounts for the piece’s length and complexity.

The plural title, ‘Singing Exercises’, is a puzzle. But this is surely linked with the question of how one may perform this wordless piece. Sometimes such exercises are sung merely to ‘la’, but we are not told anything to help us. If there is more than one exercise contained in this piece of music, it must be to do with the fact that the mastering and matching of the vowel sounds in the various registers is one of a singer’s first tasks. Accordingly, in this performance the two sopranos vary the vowels throughout the piece, changing from ‘ah’ to ‘ee’ and ‘oo’, and so on.
Incidentally, the idea of a music-master to two high-born (and rather unmusical) sisters, each trying to outdo the other, and trying to hide the fact in a barrage of arch dissembling, is brilliantly caught by E T A Hoffmann in one of his Kreisler stories. This emphasises the fact (also celebrated by Molière) that it was far from unusual for genuinely talented musicians to be enlisted to flatter the amateur aspirations of the idle rich. Schubert was lucky that his own experiences in this role seemed to have been more productive than usual.

Alois Schreiber (1761-1841)

DAS ABENDROT

D627. November 1818; published by Spina as Op posth 173 No 6 in 1867
sung by Neal Davies

Du heilig, glühend Abendrot! Sacred, glowing sunset.
Der Himmel will in Glanz zerrinnen; The sky melts into radiance.
So scheiden Märtyrer von hinnen, Thus do martyrs depart this life,
Hold lächelnd in dem Liebestod. Serenely smiling as they die for their love.

Des Aufgangs Berge still und grau,
Am Grab des Tags die hellen Gluten;
Der Schwan auf purpurroten Fluten,
Und jeder Halm im Silbertau!

Des Aufgangs Berge still und grau, At dawn the mountains are grey and silent,
Am Grab des Tags die hellen Gluten; The flames glow brightly at the day’s grave;
Der Schwan auf purpurroten Fluten, The swan glides on crimson waters
Und jeder Halm im Silbertau!

O Sonne, Gottesstrahl, du bist O sun, light of God, you are
Nie herrlicher, als im Entfliehn! Never more glorious than when you go down!
Du willst uns gern hinüberziehn,
Wo deines Glanzes Urquell ist.
You would gladly draw us with you
To the source of your radiance.

This is another product of Schubert’s first stay at Zelisz in 1818, but this broad and magisterial work is altogether more serious than the Sing-Übungen. The latter had been conceived for the Esterházy daughters, but this song was very probably written for Count Johann Karl Esterházy himself, an amateur bass who would have needed every ounce of whatever ability he had in order to sing it. We must remember that Schubert wrote the following from Zseliz: ‘Not a soul here has any true feeling for Art except (if I am not mistaken) the Countess now and then’. One fears that Esterházy might have been a pompous and vainglorious singer, not nearly as talented as he imagined. Nevertheless, he was the boss, and he must have boasted a low E among his accomplishments for the composer to have made such a feature of it. It makes us wonder whether Der Kampf (a song of a similar vocal range heard earlier on this disc) had also been intended for the count (an audition work, perhaps) some time before the composer went to Hungary for the first time. Der Kampf, however, has a text which is rather too racy for a married man of high birth and morals, a complete contrast to his distant relative Nikolaus Fürst Esterházy who was one of the most notorious libertines of the age. This branch of the Esterházy family seems to have favoured sacred themes in their home music-making (exemplified by Gebet\textsuperscript{35}, the Fouqué poem set by Schubert as a quartet during his second visit in 1824).
Schubert’s settings of Schreiber are all from 1818, and although his first setting of this poet, the beautiful *An den Mond in einer Herbstnacht*⁸, dates from April (before he went to Zseliz) it seems too good to be true that he hit on an author by chance whose religious outlook chimed with that of the Esterházy. Schubert was employed as a teacher at the count’s Vienna establishment before he went to Hungary, and he might have borrowed the Schreiber poems (which had been recently published in Germany) from this source.

*Das Abendrot* is not considered in quite the same class as *An den Mond in einer Herbstnacht*. It is indubitably a fine song but it just misses the highest accolades for the same reason as *Der Kampf*: it has the feel of a set piece where the desire to cater for, and please, a patron is a little too obvious. The result of this, as John Reed points out, is ‘a lack of any great depth of subjective feeling’. The composer’s professionalism, and his pride in being able to tailor music to the needs of the moment, particularly if this contains an element of ‘dumbing down’, obscars something that would have gone deeper had he been left to his own devices. This reminds us that, for the most part, Schubert was entirely free of toadying considerations for most of his life. It is just as well for us that he never found a long-term employer: his muse needed to float free, answerable only to his inner dictates, for the greatest masterpieces to come into being.

Nevertheless, *Das Abendrot* does not deserve its neglect (which is the result, almost certainly, of its wide vocal range) and it contains wonderful things. We are familiar with the ceremonial tone of the opening – spread E major chords, as if played on the harp of a seer. One is reminded of the majestic opening of the Kosegarten setting *Der Abend* D221⁷, and the wonderful Ossian setting *Die Nacht*⁶ shows how well the composer identified with the onset of evening as some kind of an ancient and mysterious rite. And it is true that much of Schubert’s night music contains a sense of solemn ritual. The bass voice here means that echoes of Sarastro and *Die Zauberflöte* are also never far away. The four-bar introduction sets the tone in ideal fashion. The entry of the voice signals an aria which roams generously across the stave (the song is notated in the bass clef) in the manner of an old-fashioned bel canto showpiece. The music is cleverly assembled from the elements of singing exercises – scales and arpeggios – which might have been undertaken with some pride by an amateur. The gently rocking accompaniment nurses the voice along. If the singer of this song did not have an infallible sense of rhythm (and an inclination to wallow in self-indulgent rubato) this is exactly the

![Schubert's portrait](Image)
sort of elastic figuration which could expand and contract in helpful fashion, providing the accommodating
accompanist is prepared to indulge a singer’s foibles. Of course the grandiose movement of the bass line is a
typically Schubertian achievement, as well as the change of colour at mention of the martyrs and the yearning
settings of the word ‘Liebestod’ which, in the spacious and solemn context of a bass aria of this kind, contains
more Wagnerian pre-echoes than one might have imagined. The anachronistic appearance of this word
reminds us how much Wagner’s music, while aspiring to be the music of the future, owes this sort of scène.
Indeed, if one were searching for the names of composers who might have composed the more ordinary
passages of Das Abendrot, one would think of such names as Marschner and Meyerbeer. The propensity for
the lowest vocal range brings Loewe to mind.

There is now a four-bar interlude built from the same cell (two semiquavers followed by two quavers) that has
accompanied the opening aria. A very similar figuration in exactly this rhythm, also built on stretches of a
seventh, is the basis of the accompaniment to the Mayrhofer fragment Über allen Zauber Liebe heard later
on this disc. The central section of the song (the second strophe) is in C sharp minor and in Schubert’s Der
Wanderer manner. The setting of ‘still und grau’ (a high C sharp descending to G sharp, a twelfth below) has
a built-in element of vocal show-off. Once again the accompaniment (a dotted figuration between the hands)
is kept to a minimum the better to accommodate the singer’s anticipated rhythmic vagaries, and to keep him
strictly in time. But the gliding-swan imagery of the strophe’s third line inspires the composer in a more
intense way. At ‘der Schwan auf purpurroten Fluten’ the vocal line descends the stave supported by a downy
bed of piano semiquavers, while the glinting dew (‘und jeder Halm im Silbertau’) is depicted by syncopations,
semiquaver droplets pricked out between the hands. The repeat of these words inspires music even more
wonderful. The vocal line remains dignified and spacious, containing just the right amount of regal poise for
the progress of the noble swan. Underneath this music which glides and dips horizontally, the rippling-water
effect of the spiralling arpeggios, beginning in the treble register with glinting top notes and traversing two
octaves, is as languidly luxurious as Ravel’s accompaniment for Le cygne (Histoires naturelles), a song which
describes a very similar nature-picture. In both pieces of music the piano writing, leisurely and intricate at the
same time, suggests the symmetrically patterned circles breaking on the water as the stately galleons of beak
and feather cleave the surface. There is nothing quite like this in all Schubert, and Das Abendrot deserves
attention for these six bars alone.

The song’s final section, marked ‘Feurig, doch nicht zu geschwind’, seems composed to an old-fashioned
cantata formula, although there is nothing as vulgar (or difficult) as a cabaletta on offer. We realise that the
voice for which this song is written is unable to move in dazzling fashion – fast coloratura was obviously not in
the Count’s gift. Instead, the poem’s final strophe is variously repeated to make an extended grand hymn
framed by pomposo chords and flourishes, and where the harmonies remain more or less within the orbit of I
– IV and V, the better to suggest something fundamental – the sunset as a work of nature. The phrase ‘als im
Entfliehn’ is followed by a gentle, even wistful bar, a solitary rising phrase prophetic of that extraordinary postlude to Schubert’s definitive sunset song, Freiwilliges Versinken\(^{14}\) (1820). In both cases the downward direction of the vocal line (here on the word ‘Entfliehn’) is mirrored by an ascending echo, as if all things are balanced in nature – the setting of the sun with the rising of the moon. The last two lines of the strophe, when heard for the fourth and last time, provide the text for an extraordinary twelve-bar coda. Capell finds that the musical interest dwindles at this point, but that is perhaps because he was not a pianist. The wonderful thing with this passage is the sheerly physical sensation of playing it. The bass line switches between tonic and dominant, as if shifting on a giant axis, but this is not so unusual. It is the right-hand writing that is unique in the Schubert songs: an upper pedal framed by a sumptuous bank of ninths and tenths (it is a pity if one has to cheat and play them with the help of the left hand, but the composer probably did) which, combined with the tessitura of the vocal line, seems to create an impression of immense space and grandeur. The depth of the voice and the pulsating light suggested by the piano (particularly in this unusual chord distribution) are irresistibly complementary. The words, as always with this composer, have suggested this analogue for the Creator’s radiance. This ‘Glanz’ is interpreted by Schubert as some kind of starlight, so in these solemnly throbbing chords we hear the prototype of such great songs as Die Sterne\(^{6}\) and, above all, Nachthelle\(^{26}\). Granted this page has to be well sung to make its effect (and the accompaniment, as marvellous as it is, takes a back seat with deliberate tact) but one finds oneself agreeing with Einstein, who finds in this song ‘varying degrees of lyricism, utterly exquisite, yet not superficial’. A strange hybrid then. Some of the most wonderful things about it, the shy details which Schubert provided for himself as patient accompanist, probably went unnoticed by its first singer, and have gone unnoticed since.

ALOIS SCHREIBER, born in Bühl in Baden, was destined for a life in the Church, but influenced by the works of the Enlightenment (Gessner, Uz, Claudius, Bürger, Klopstock) became very critical of conservative Catholicism. He became a teacher of aesthetics in Baden-Baden and moved on to Mainz. He at first supported the ideals of the French Revolution but from 1793 turned against left-wing politics. His revered models were Rousseau and Goethe, and in the last decade of the eighteenth century he published novellas, tales and poetic works including a volume of Gedichte. (The work published in 1817/18 which Schubert probably knew was a set of three volumes of collected poetry.) Schreiber made his greatest reputation as a writer specialising in travel books (he was an authority on the Rhineland and Baden). He eventually became a professor at Heidelberg University (where he engaged in polemical battles with the Romantics, supporting the Rationalists) before settling in Karlsruhe with the title of Hofrat. His life exemplified the typical cycle of youthful liberalism returning to conservative ideals in older age.
Schreiber was one of those poets whose work influenced Schubert for a very definite and limited period (another example is Rückert where six settings all date from 1822/23). All the settings of this poet date from 1818, a period when the composer was comparatively unprolific but when his song texts reflect a search for a philosophical centre, ranging from the pantheism of Friedrich von Schlegel and Mayrhofer’s homespun philosophy, to the Christian piety of the Schreiber texts.

Johann Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853)

**ABEND**

D645. Fragment; beginning of 1819; vocal line first published by Dietrich Berke in *Schubert-Kongress 1978*, and then in the *Neue Schubert Ausgabe* in 1996; accompaniment realised by Mark Brown; sung by Martyn Hill

Wie ist es denn, dass trüb und schwer
So alles kommt, vorüber zieht,
Und wechselnd, quälend, immer leer,
Das arme Herz in sich verglüht?

Kaum gekommen soll ich scheiden,
Kaum entglommen löschen wieder
Alle Freuden, und der Leiden
Dunkle Wolke senkt sich nieder.

Aus den Lichtern in die Nacht,
Aus den Augen, die mir tagen,
Die mein ganzes Herz durchlacht,
Bin ich wieder allen Plagen,
Dem dürren Leben zurück gegeben.

O als ich dich noch nicht gesehn,
Da durfte Sehnsucht bei mir sein,
Ein Hoffnungswind in meinen Wünschen wehn,
Die Zukunft war ein heller Schein:
Jetzt muss ich vom Erinnern kaufen,
Was ich kaum zerstreut empfand;
Wieder durch die wüsten Haufen,
Wieder durch ein unbewohntes Land,
Soll ich irre, klagend, schweifen,
Und des Glückes goldne Streifen
Auch die letzten, ach, abgewandt.

Why is it that everything seems so heavy and cheerless
As it comes and goes,
And my poor heart, restless, tormented,
Ever empty, fades away?

Scarcely have I come than I must leave;
Scarcely kindled, all joys are extinguished,
And the dark cloud
Of sorrows descends.

From those lights I am plunged into darkness,
From those eyes that shine for me,
That fill my whole heart with joy,
I am once more plunged back into torment
And a barren life.

Before I had ever seen you
I could live with longing;
The wind of hope could fan my desires,
And the future had a bright glow.
Now I must wrest from my memory
What I scarcely experienced before it was dispelled.
Again I must wander, grieving,
Through the wild crowd,
Through a deserted land,
And the last golden threads of happiness,
Alas, have turned away from me.
Noch fühl’ ich deine Hand,
Noch wie im Traume die Küsse,
Noch folgen mir die holden Blicke,
Und die Empfindung, dass ich alles misse,
Bleibt bei mir zurücke.

I still feel your your hand,
Your kisses as if in a dream;
Your sweet glances still follow me,
And the feeling that I am deprived of everything
Remains behind with me.

This fragment shares the autograph of the wonderful Friedrich von Schlegel setting, Die Gebüsche. This links the song – Schubert’s only attempt at setting the poetry of Ludwig Tieck – with that period in the composer’s life when he was interested in the poetry of the early Romantic poets, above all Schlegel and Novalis. Volume 27 of the Schubert Edition is given over to the settings of the Schlegel brothers, and the majority of the Novalis settings appear in Volume 29 which is dedicated to the works of 1819/20. As at various other times of his life, Schubert was searching for something new in his art, and this transcendental poetry seemed to be the key to a greater depth of musical expression; this is bound up with the composer’s own search for a philosophy as he attempted to make sense of life without the help of conventional religion. This longing to scale the lofty peaks of Romanticism, and the ambition to invent hitherto unheard-of musical and poetic combinations, was to be extinguished by Schubert’s illness. By 1823, with a sense of his time running out, the composer would pull in his horns and make himself concentrate on tilling a humbler patch. The grand and optimistic vistas of Romantic Weltanschauung were no longer appropriate, but the seeming banalities of the miller-boy’s experiences were to give rise to a different musical transcendence.

Tieck had attempted to establish himself in Vienna in 1808 (Schlegel did so with success) but Schubert never knew him. The poet would nevertheless have been a familiar name to anyone who was an avid reader, and some years later the works of Tieck were to feature in the ‘Lesegesellschaft’, the reading circle associated with Franz von Schober, where important works of literature were read aloud and discussed. Schubert found the poem for Abend in the Musenalmanach für das Jahr 1802 edited by August von Schlegel and Tieck. Also in this small-format volume was Friedrich von Schlegel’s cycle Abendröte from which Schubert was to set eleven songs over an extended period. At this stage of his life, having written so many single songs, it is natural that he should have been concerned to find a scheme to intensify their power in performance – like the poets who published their work in sets. He was later to publish disparate songs grouped in opus numbers where the juxtapositions were significant. But it is clear that long before Die schöne Müllerin, Schubert longed to get his act together – that is, to give the lied form a greater significance by grouping single items into something grander than the sum of their separate parts. There is a recently published theory (by Morten Solvik) that he attempted something like this as early as 1815 with his Kosegarten songs, and there is even an earlier example in the untypical and problematic Don Gayseros Songs of 1814. Certainly, Beethoven’s An die ferne Geliebte – still officially the first song-cycle – must have been a further spur to these ambitions.
There is obviously something cyclical about the Schlegel Abendröte settings (whether or not Schubert, at some stage, intended this to be a cycle has been much discussed, particularly by Richard Kramer) and even after Die schöne Müllerin (and before Winterreise) there is a sense of a hidden cycle in the Schulze settings (recorded in Volume 18). So it comes as no surprise that Dietrich Berke avers that the song Abend – or rather the sketch for the song – was a preliminary attempt on Schubert’s part to test the waters for a Tieck cycle. In the 1802 almanac, Abend is printed as the third of a group of poems entitled Der Besuch – ‘The Visit’. The other titles are Morgen, Mittag, and finally Nacht. (The idea of a day in the life of a relationship was to be set to music some sixty years later by Fauré in his Poème d’un jour.) The tense expectancy of the first two poems is counterbalanced by the desperate disappointment of Abend which, in turn, is replaced by Nacht where the lover finds his consolation in the starlit heavens as he feels at one with the cosmos. It is worth noting that in common with Schubert’s great song-cycles, the protagonist of this story does not get the girl, but finds a way out of his depression by moving closer into nature’s embrace.

Berke believes that Schubert deliberately started with the most difficult of the poems in order to see whether the idea of making a Tieck cycle was viable. Clearly it was not. And so this remains one of those Schubertian ideas that never saw the light of day. The composer made a serious attempt to compose this song – the fragment is more ‘complete’ than many. It consists of 119 bars of the vocal line (the sketch was abandoned at the point when fourteen lines of the poem remained). In addition, fragments of the piano part are also provided, although only in terms of snatches of right-hand melody (there is no indication of harmony). Only the first five words of the poem (written out as ‘Was ist es denn, dß’) were penned into the score, but these, together with the title, were enough to identify the poem and its author.

If only we could know what sort of accompaniment the composer had already planned when he wrote down this song in skeleton form. The difficult task of reconstructing one for this work was undertaken by the late Reinhard Van Hoorickx, whose work on the fragments has featured often on these discs. He admitted to difficulties with Abend however, and this song was unexpectedly rescued for this series by Mark Brown, the producer of this record and many others in the Hyperion Schubert Edition, who provided a new version of his own. Of course, the impossible challenge of writing music in Schubert’s style has defeated every pasticheur, as well as people addressing themselves to the tasks of the fragments. Definitive completions are awaited from a composer with more than a touch of Schubertian genius. In the meantime, unpretentious simplicity wins the day over complex, and inevitably inappropriate, sophistication. The purpose of this completion, as with all the others, is to enable Schubert-lovers to hear the original Schubert – in this case the entire vocal line, with a hint of what it might have sounded like in finished form.

The opening section is in G minor and in $\frac{3}{4}$. There is no tempo indication. That the piano introduction is an exact pre-echo of the vocal line is not due to a lack of inspiration on the part of the arranger – this is one of the few pieces of piano-writing which was provided by Schubert himself. At ‘Kaum gekommen’ (the
The poem’s fourth line) the music changes into the tonic major, and shifts into $\frac{2}{4}$. This section lasts sixteen bars before a return to $\frac{3}{4}$, this time in C major (‘Aus den Lichtern in die Nacht’). It is only at ‘O als ich dich noch nicht gesehen’ (Schubert cuts a strophe of Tieck’s poem along the way) that the music once again changes key signatures (to E flat major, this time with a $\frac{3}{8}$ time signature) which holds sway for the rest of the fragment, despite a number of rather remote chromatic excursions along the way. Some twenty extra bars of vocal line have been added to this arrangement to bring the poet to the end of his sentence: this means eight words after ‘Und die Empfindung’ (‘dass ich alles misse, Bleibt bei mir zurücker’) where the manuscript breaks off.

In many other fragments we wistfully imagine what Schubert would have made of the piece had he added one of his extraordinary accompaniments where the elaboration of a single pianistic motif makes sense of everything else. But the vocal line here is so busy and so complex, and so often changing direction, that it is difficult to think of the piano being able to give anything other than relatively simple support. It seems that Schubert found it tricky to find a convincing musical prosody for Tieck’s poetry. There is a sense here of being in the workshop and watching the composer try first one thing, and then another, in order to sidle up to Tieck and invest his work with a musical voice. By the end of the fragment we sense that he has lost interest in the struggle to combine the poet’s art with his own.

LUDWIG TIECK was born in Berlin where he studied philosophy and theology before moving to Jena where he encountered Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, as well as Fichte and Schelling. He knew both Schiller and Goethe. He became quickly renowned for his skills as a novelist, fabulist and writer of comedies, sometimes writing under the allegorical name of Peter Leberecht. He was one of the few great German writers of the period to visit England (in 1817) where he studied Shakespeare; both he and his daughter Dorothea were deeply involved in the preparation (with August von Schlegel) of German translations of the complete works of Shakespeare. Tieck’s most important official position was as Dramaturg at the Dresden Hoftheater. In this position he showed an interest in mounting a production of Schubert’s opera *Alfonso und Estrella*, but this came to nothing. That Tieck was aware of Schubert is attested by an article he wrote for the *Dresdner Theaterzeitung* in February 1828 where the composer’s name is bracketed with that of Conradin Kreutzer as an important Viennese composer. The small number of Tieck songs in the lieder repertory...
show that Schubert was not the only composer who found his writing almost too rich in word-music to encourage musical setting. The best-known Tieck settings, the fifteen songs of Brahms’s mighty cycle *Die schöne Magelone*, occur within a much longer prose narrative, a work where the poems are fashioned in deliberately simple ballad style to suggest medieval minstrelsy. These ‘Peter Leberecht’ poems seem more susceptible to musical setting than the works which Schubert encountered in 1819.

Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829)

**DAS MÄDCHEN**

D652. February 1819; first published in 1842 as part of Volume 40 of the *Nachlass*
sung by Marjana Lipovšek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wie so innig, möchte ich sagen,</td>
<td>I should like to say that my beloved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sich der meine mir ergibt,</td>
<td>Shows me such ardent devotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Um zu lindern meine Klagen,</td>
<td>In order to still my complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dass er nicht so innig liebt.</td>
<td>That he does not love me ardently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will ich’s sagen, so entschwebt es;</td>
<td>When I am about to tell him, the words float away;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wären Töne mir verliehen,</td>
<td>If the power of music were granted me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flöss’ es hin in Harmonien,</td>
<td>My feelings would pour out in harmonies,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denn in jenen Tönen lebt es.</td>
<td>For they live in music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nur die Nachtigall kann sagen,</td>
<td>Only the nightingale can say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wie er innig sich mir giebt,</td>
<td>What ardent devotion he shows me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Um zu lindern meine Klagen,</td>
<td>In order to still my complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dass er nicht so innig liebt.</td>
<td>That he does not love me ardently.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The previous commentary mentioned the Schlegel *Abendröte* songs in connection with Schubert’s setting of Ludwig Tieck’s *Abend*. Of these eleven Schlegel settings composed between 1819 and 1823 (presented together in Volume 27), *Die Gebüsche* and *Das Mädchen* are the earliest, and both are contemporary with the unfinished *Abend*. The re-appearance on this disc of *Das Mädchen* (sung in this case by a mezzo soprano rather than a soprano) is apposite after the unsuccessful attempt at setting Tieck; it gives listeners a chance to hear one of the *Abendröte* songs which are so typical of this phase of the composer’s life. This cycle of poetry reflects the pantheistic philosophy of the younger Friedrich von Schlegel (before his conversion to highly conservative Roman Catholicism) and was inspired by the poet’s friendship with Novalis. Schlegel’s aim is typical of his romantic Weltanschauung. At the moment of sunset, all things in nature are given voice by the poet: thus we have speaking (or singing) stars and mountains expressing their state of being, as well as smaller creations such as birds and butterflies. Human beings are included in this extraordinary line-up – a traveller (*Der Wanderer*, not the famous song of the same title) as well as a boy, and the girl of this song. In this grand chorus (the various threads of which are brought together in the song...
entitled *Abendröte*) the poet explores the unity of all things in nature, hidden to most people but apparent to those with ears to hear and hearts to understand. (The poem *Die Gebüsche* moved Robert Schumann so much that he used its last verse as the motto for his piano *Phantasie.*)

This portrait of a girl in love with a boy who does not return, or even understand, the depth of her affection, is scarcely typical of the cycle – indeed it might stand alone as a separate plaint. As wonderful as the Schlegel songs are (the bel canto serenity of *Der Fluss*, the philosophical depths of *Die Gebüsche*, the poignancy of *Der Wanderer*, the cheeky insouciance of *Die Vögel*, the wistfulness of the closing page of *Der Knabe*), it is the gentle lilt of *Das Mädchen* which haunts the memory, its sadness all the more moving because it eschews the tragic note. There is a full commentary on the song on pages 57–58 of the booklet accompanying Volume 27.

Albert Stadler (1794-1888)

**CANTATE ZUM GEBURTSTAG DES SÄNGERS MICHAEL VOGL**

Cantata for the Birthday of the Singer Johann Michael Vogl

D666. Composed for 10 August 1819; published in 1849 as Op posth 158 under the title of *Der Frühlingsmorgen* with altered text; sung by Lynne Dawson, Michael Schade and Gerald Finley

Sänger, der von Herzen singet,
Und das Wort zum Herzen bringet,
Bei den Tönen deiner Lieder
Fällt’s wie sanfter Regen nieder,
Den der Herr vom Himmel schickt,
Und die dürre Flur erquickt!

Diese Berge sah’n dich blühen,
Hier began dein Herz zu glühen,
Für die Künstlerhöhn zu schlagen,
Die der Wahrheit Krone tragen;
Der Natur hast du entwändt,
Was die Kunst noch nicht verstand,

Da saht ihr Oresten scheiden,
Jakob mit der Last der Leiden,
Saht des Arztes Hoffnung tagen.
Menschlichkeit am Wasser wagen,
Saht, wie man sich Lienen sucht,
Bräute holt aus Berges schlucht.

Sänger, you who sing from the heart
And bring your words to the heart,
The sounds of your songs
Are like gentle rainfall
Which the Lord sends from heaven
To refresh the parched fields.

These mountains saw you blossom;
Here your heart began to glow,
To beat for the heights of artistry
Which bear the crown of truth;
You have wrested from Nature
What Art has not yet understood.

There you saw Orestes depart,
And Jacob with his burden of sorrow;
You saw the dawning of the physician’s hopes,
And human kindness at the water cart;
You saw them seeking out Lina
And taking brides from mountain gorges.
In der Weihe deiner Würde
Stehst du, aller Sänger Zierde,
Auf Thaliens Tempel stufen,
Hörst un dich des Beifalls Rufen,
Doch ein Kranz, ein Sinngedicht,
Ist der Lohn des Künstlers nicht.
Wenn dich einst in greisen Tagen
Deines Lebens Mühen plagen,
Willst du nicht zur Heimat wandern?
Lass die Helden einem Andern,
Nur von Agamemnons Sohn
Trag die treue Brust davon.

Gott bewahr’ dein teures Leben,
Heiter, spiegel klar und eben,
Wie das Tönen deiner Kehle
Tief herauf aus volle Seele;
Schweigt dann einst der Sängers Wort,
Tönet doch die Seele fort.

You stand in the consecration of your merits,
Glory of all singers,
Upon the steps of Thalia’s temple;
You hear around you shouts of applause,
Yet a garland, an epigram,
Is not the artist’s reward.
If in your old age
The cares of life trouble you,
Will you not travel to your homeland?
Leave heroes to someone else;
From Agamemnon’s son
Take only the faithful heart.

May God preserve your precious life,
Happy, crystal, clear and even,
Like the sounds from your throat,
Welling from the depths of your soul;
If ever the singer’s voice falls silent,
Then his soul will still sound forth.

Schubert’s occasional music in honour of special people in his life, including dedications of works to friends and so on (one thinks of the touching little song written for the departing Schober, and the comic letter to Josef von Spaun in Linz) could be the subject of a small treatise. The composer was a man who paid his dues, and he was not slow to honour and thank those who had been good to him. The most substantial works composed specifically in honour of individuals are in cantata form, a type of musical homage reserved for father-figures. The first of these, naturally enough, was for the father himself: Franz Theodor Schubert’s name day in October 1813 was celebrated with *Zur Namensfeier meines Vater* (D80) for two tenors, bass and guitar accompaniment (with a text by Schubert himself). Next, a work which honoured Schubert’s composition teacher: the *Beitrag zur fünfzigjährigen Jubelfeier* D40732 was written in 1816 for the fiftieth anniversary of Antonio Salieri’s arrival in Vienna. Again Schubert was the poet of the occasional text. Later in the same year Schubert composed a cantata for soloists, chorus and orchestra entitled *Prometheus* (D451) with a text by Philipp Dräxler von Carin. Admittedly this was a commission (the composer’s first), but it honoured the name day of Heinrich Josef Watterroth, a professor at the University of Vienna of liberal views who was held in much esteem by the Schubertians. Sadly this work has long been lost. Still later in 1816 there was another orchestral cantata (D472) in honour of Joseph Spendou, an important man in the Austrian school system who was the patron and supporter of Schubert père, and a longstanding friend of the Schubert family.
Johann Michael Vogl was the last ‘father figure’ to be honoured with a cantata. In 1817 Schubert had won the singer’s interest in his songs. Although he was at first distant and grand, not immediately convinced of Schubert’s importance, Vogl very soon became a total devotee and spent more and more time with the composer. Continual and ever closer musical contact led to an invitation for Schubert to spend the summer of 1819 in Steyr, Upper Austria, a town some ninety miles west of Vienna. The cantata for Vogl was written during this holiday to celebrate the singer’s fifty-first birthday. (Vogl liked to return to Steyr in the summers; it was his home town, as it was, incidentally, of Johann Mayrhofer and Albert Stadler, poet of the cantata.) In introducing the composer to his circle, Vogl created an instant network of new Schubertians. Thus we hear a number of names for the first time which will continue to weave their way through the biography: the Schellmanns – Albert père et fils; Josef and Josefine Koller, father and daughter – the Namenstaglied was written for Josef in 1829, and Josefine was the dedicatee of the Piano Sonata D664, composed during the same holiday, or perhaps on a later visit in 1825; the well-to-do Silvester Paumgartner, later to be the host of Vogl and Schubert during their Steyr visits in 1823 and 1825 and the man for whom the Forellenquintett (D667) was composed. Like Graz later in Schubert’s career, Steyr became a centre of interest in the composer’s music, and a place where he felt he could return, confident of a warm and affectionate reception. It is sad that his second visit in 1823 was blighted by his illness. The 1825 holiday, the first-ever lieder tour, was the high point of Schubert’s friendship with Vogl, and Steyr was the axis of the roving itinerary. Here Schubert was able to recapture some of the happy feelings of his first visit.

Josef and Josefine Koller were the hosts on the evening of this work’s first performance, and Josefine (sometimes called Josefa) herself sang the soprano part. The middle line was taken by Bernhard Benedict, a local tenor. These two shared the extended solo passages in the cantata, and it is notable that the bass line sings only in the ensembles. This is because Schubert had fashioned this part for himself. Whether or not he sang as he accompanied is a contested point. One witness claims that this was so, but Deutsch tells us categorically that, on this occasion, Albert Stadler played the piano. The work is divided into three main movements. The first of these is in C major and begins very much in the ceremonial manner of a Mozart opera overture. Pomposo dotted chords in the bass (forte) are echoed in the treble (piano). After four bars an
elegant little solo tune emerges, as if written for clarinet; this descends, and then re-ascends the stave and leads to an interrupted cadence which in turn takes us back to C major. Conventional stuff this, but superbly crafted in impeccable classical style, which would here seem very much to the singer’s taste. These opening eight bars are repeated and now serve as accompaniment to the first two lines of text which address the singer in a manner which charmingly combines the breadth and grandeur due to a famous personage with a certain intimate affection. After this, where the sound of songs is compared to rainfall, the piano writing quickens; the glinting and plashing of these semiquavers, both hands in the treble clef (at ‘fällt’s wie sanfter Regen nieder’) could have come from a Mozart piano concerto. The idea of something being sent from heaven (‘den der Herr vom Himmel schickt’) occasions a piano trill suggestive of a small bolt of divine lightning. Various elaborations and repetitions of these first strophe words extend the movement. The word ‘erquickt’ (refresh) gives rise to a charming four-bar interlude for the piano in gently wafting quavers, as if to suggest relaxed satiation. The repeat of ‘Sänger, der von Herzen singet’ occasions a quasi-canonic imitation between the voices as if to imply a resonance echoing outward and spreading through the world.

The second movement (marked Allegretto) is in F major, and duple time changes to triple. This is the soprano solo and in gentle pastoral style, ideal for a salute to the singer’s beginnings in the homeland mountainous region of Steyr. There is just a hint of an Alpine yodel in ‘diese Berge sah’n dich blühen, hier begann dein Herz zu glühen’ (and also at the repeat of the words later in the movement). One of Vogl’s friends who was at this performance recalled many years later that the singer seemed to be especially moved at this passage. All of this music is written in an unashamedly old-fashioned manner, almost demure in its effect, although there are more romantic expressive touches (the chromatic darkening of ‘glühen’), and the majestic extended cadence of ‘der Wahrheit Krone tragen’.

When the tenor takes over (the poem’s third strophe), and as Vogl gets into his professional stride in this song-biography, the music changes from something gently reflective to something that suggests hard work and activity. This is the only rather awkward passage in the piece as melodic invention cedes to a sort of narrative arioso. A lot of information has to be imparted, and some of it needs explanation to the modern listener: ‘Da saht ihr Oresten scheiden’ refers to Vogl’s assumption of the role of Orest in Glucks’s Iphigénie en Tauride (the section is introduced by ominous pacing quavers with a left hand plunging towards the bottom of the keyboard – music appropriate for this restless and tragic character); ‘Jakob mit der Last der Leiden’ to the role of Jakob in Méhul’s Joseph: ‘Saht des Arztes Hoffnung tagen’ to the role of the regimental doctor in Adalbert Gyrowetz’s Der Augenarzt; ‘Menschlichkeit in Wasserwagen’ to the role of Micheli in Cherubini’s Deux journées (in German Der Wasserträger). ‘Saht, wie man sich Lienen sucht / Bräute holt aus Bergesschlucht’ is more obscure: Emeline (or Liene) is a character in Josef Weigl’s Die Schweizerfamilie where Vogl played the role of her suitor Jakob Friburg.
The soprano returns for the fourth strophe and, as the poem emerges from its biographical phase and begins a reflection on the singer’s fame, the accompaniment changes to suggest the celebration of something grand and sacred. It is exactly this rhythmic cell (minim + dotted quaver-semiquaver) which opens Lied eines Schiffers an die Dioskuren\textsuperscript{14}, so it is no surprise to see that there is a classical reference in this verse – Thalia was one of the Graces whose name is associated with festivity. Over this rhythm the vocal line continues in arioso mood – something between the dryness of recitative and the melodic flowering of melody. The tenor takes over for the fifth strophe with a veiled hint. Although Vogl was to retire fully only in 1822 (and an appearance in Schubert’s opera Die Zwillingsbrüder lay ahead of him) there is reference here to a new phase in life – something which must have been talked about for some time in Vienna where it was generally felt that his powers were on the wane, at least as an opera singer. Leave the heroes to someone else (although what artist wants to be told this?) says the poet. If you have to stop playing the role of Orestes (‘Agamemnons Sohn’) you will still retain his great heart. The whole of this passage was probably inserted because Vogl planned to live in Steyr at his retirement, and his friends looked forward to his return there. This was never to be; the singer unexpectedly married in 1826 and from then on his links with his former circle were considerably weakened.

The third section returns to the common time, as well as the C major, of the opening. This is a typical Schubertian peroration, often to be found in the partsongs, in that it employs a canon by way of musical envoy. This is justified in the text by the use of the phrase ‘spiegel klar’ – ‘crystal clear’ in translation, but literally ‘mirror-clear’. This music is is not just the suggestion of a canon, but the real thing – an eight-bar phrase heard first in the soprano line, then tenor, then bass. On the bass’s entry the soprano is given a charming discant as if an instrumental obligato; this emphasises the ‘heiter’, or happy and carefree, nature of the envisaged retirement. The accompaniment to this section has begun in rather solemn fashion in quavers, but these turn to more liquid right-hand triplets, and by the time all three voices are singing together we have a party atmosphere with dance-like triplets between the hands. The revels are interrupted by the inevitable spectre of mortality (‘schweigt dann einst des Sängers Wort’) which is announced by a Neapolitan shift from C to A flat major. At this point one is reminded of how lucky we are in our own century that a great singer’s art will never be lost to us, resounding on shellac, vinyl or plastic across the centuries. Schubert’s contemporaries were never to know this fact, but Stadler hits upon the idea of a resounding soul (‘tönet doch die Seele fort’). Is it not this very thing that does remain in the disembodied recorded tones we hear of the great artists no longer with us? We remember a great singer of the past not as a corporeal presence, but precisely because something belonging to that individual alone, call it a soul if you will (and it is easier for a voice to take on a spiritual quality when not allied to a visible body) remains resounding in the ether. This idea is beautifully caught by Schubert’s closing music where cleverly layered repetitions of the words conjoin (as if
gathering their expressive resources) in the final six bars. These last few bars are high in tessitura for all three
singers, and the music seems to trail off into infinity. It is as if sound waves were being gently beamed into
the unknown future – especially for us, perhaps.

When this piece was first published in 1849, Vogl was little more than a forgotten singer; his reputation as
central to the Schubert story had not yet assured his worldwide fame. Accordingly, new words to do with a
spring morning were added by the firm of Diabelli. In 1980 I had the idea to make a more appropriate
replacement. For a Songmakers’ Almanac concert for the Aldeburgh Festival in June of that year (to celebrate
the seventieth birthday of the great tenor Peter Pears – in twentieth-century song history a Vogl to Benjamin
Britten’s Schubert), I commissioned Eric Crozier, the famous librettist of various Britten operas, to write a new
text to this music. This he did with great success, tracing Pears’s career with his various operatic roles, and
speaking of his retirement and his new tasks as a teacher at the Britten-Pears school in Snape. Fortunately
the opening salutation ‘Peter’ fitted ‘Sänger’ perfectly. Crozier’s solution for the rhythms of ‘Der Natur hast
du entwandt / Was die Kunst noch nicht verstand’ was an ingenious phrase showing that Pears’s rise to fame
took place at the same time as the success of Britten’s first opera: Peter Grimes and Peter Pears shared
synonymous careers.

There is a biographical note about Albert Stadler on page 16 of the booklet accompanying Volume 3 of the

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

**PROMETHEUS**

D674. October 1819; first published in 1850 as part of Volume 47 of the Nachlass
sung by Simon Keenlyside

1. Bedecke deinen Himmel, Zeus,
Mit Wolkendunst,
Und übe, dem Knaben gleich,
Der Disteln köpft,
An Eichen dich und Bergeshöhn;
Musst mir meine Erde
Doch lassen stehn,
Und meine Hütte, die du nicht gebaut,
Und meinen Herd,
Um dessen Glut
Du mich beneidest.

Cover your heaven, Zeus,
With a gauze of cloud.
And, like a boy beheading thistles,
Practise on oak trees
And mountain peaks;
But you will have to leave
My world standing,
And my hut, which you did not build,
And my fireside,
Whose glow
You envy me.
Ich kenne nichts Ärmeres
Unter der Sonn’ als euch, Götter!
Ihr nähret kümmerlich
Von Opfersteuern
Und Gebetshauch
Eure Majestät,
Und darbiet, wären
Nicht Kinder und Bettler
Hoffnungsvolle Toren.

Da ich ein Kind war,
Nicht wusste wo aus noch ein,
Kehr’ ich mein verirrtes Auge
Zur Sonne, als wenn drüber wär’
Ein Ohr, zu hören meine Klage,
Ein Herz wie mein’s,
Sich des Bedrängten zu erbarmen.

Wer half mir
Wider der Titanen Übermut?
Wer rettete vom Tode mich,
Von Sklaverei?
Hast du nicht alles selbst vollendet,
Heilig glühend Herz?
Und glübtest jung und gut,
Betrogen, Rettungsdank
Dem Schlafenden da droben?

Ich dich ehren? Wofür?
Hast du die Schmerzen gelindert
Je des Beladenen?
Hast du die Tränen gestillet
Je des Geängsteten?
Hat nicht mich zum Manne geschmiedet
Die allmächtige Zeit
Und das ewige Schicksal,
Meine Herrn und deine?

Wähntest du etwa,
Ich sollte das Leben hassen,
In Wüsten fliehen,
Weil nicht alle
Blütenträume reiften?

I know nothing more wretched
Beneath the sun than you gods!
Meagrely you nourish
Your majesty
With offerings
And the breath of prayer,
And would starve
If children and beggars
Were not ever-hopeful fools.

When I was a child
And did not know a thing,
I turned my perplexed gaze
To the sun, as if beyond it
There were an ear to listen to my lament,
And a heart like mine
To pity the distressed.

Who helped me
Against the overweening pride of the Titans?
Who saved me from death
And from slavery?
Did you not accomplish it all yourself,
Sacred, ardent heart?
And, deceived in your youthful goodness,
Were you not fired with gratitude for your deliverance
To the sleeper up above?

I honour you? What for?
Have you ever eased the suffering
Of him who is oppressed?
Have you ever dried the tears
Of him who is troubled?
Did not almighty Time
And eternal Fate,
My masters and yours,
Forge me into a man?

Did you perhaps imagine
That I would hate life,
Flee into the wilderness,
Because not all
My blossoming dreams bore fruit?
Hier sitz' ich,forme Menschen
Nach meinem Bilde,
Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei,
Zu leiden, zu weinen,
Zu geniessen und zu freuen sich
Und dein nicht zu achten,
Wie ich!

Here I sit, forming men
In my own image,
A race that shall be like me,
That shall suffer, weep,
Enjoy and rejoice,
And ignore you,
As I do!

The myth of Prometheus (the main classical sources are Hesiod, Aeschylus, Apollodorus and Pausanias) has attracted western artists since the fourteenth century: the unfortunate Titan appears in John Gower’s Confessio amantis (c1390); he was painted by Botticelli and drawn by Parmagianino; Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, Edmund Spenser, Pierre de Ronsard and Jonathan Swift wrote about him. Gottfried August Bürger and Christoph Martin Wieland took up the subject in 1770, shortly followed by Goethe who wrote his dramatic fragment Prometheus in 1773. August von Schlegel wrote an epic poem on Prometheus in 1797, and Johann Gottfried Herder treated the subject in 1803. Beethoven wrote the ballet music for Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus in 1801, and Johann Friedrich Reichardt composed a setting of Goethe’s poem in 1809. In Byron’s work Prometheus features in Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage and elsewhere (from 1812), and Wordsworth broaches the subject in 1814. We can also easily forget that the full title of Mary Wollstonecroft Shelley’s famous novel was Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus (1817).

Schubert’s first encounter with Prometheus was writing a cantata by that name in 1816 with a text by Philipp Dräxler von Carin (D451). The manuscript of this substantial work for two soloists, chorus and orchestra was mislaid even in the composer’s lifetime, and we must now consider it entirely lost to posterity. The Goethe setting, the solo song recorded here, dates from 1819. During the early Romantic period, Prometheus continued to fascinate artists of every kind: in poetry, Percy Bysshe Shelley with his epic and idealistic Prometheus Unbound (1820), also Giacomo Leopardi (1824) and Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1833). It would only be later in the century that music caught up. The main rival of Schubert’s setting – Hugo Wolf’s – appeared in the Goethelieder of 1889. The opera, Prométhée, written by Gabriel Fauré for forces uncharacteristically vast for his tastes, was conceived for open-air performance in 1900. Alexander Scriabin’s Prométhée: Le poème du feu dates from 1908-10. Other engagements with the legend from the more recent past are found (just by way of example) in the poetry of Pablo Neruda and Robert Lowell; in the art of Henry Moore (lithographs for André Gide’s translation of Goethe’s poem) and Oskar Kokoschka (a triptych of paintings of the ‘Prometheus Saga’ in 1950); and in the music of Carl Orff (an opera, Prometheus, written in 1968) and Luigi Nono (Prometeo, 1984).

There are many versions and variants of the story. For our purposes it is enough to know that the Titan (his name means ‘forethinker’) was a champion of men against the gods. It was said (by Apollodorus) that he was the creator of the human race, fashioning men out of clay, and he taught men the arts and crafts necessary
to improve their primitive existence. After Zeus had decided to deprive mankind of fire, legend has it that Prometheus stole a spark from the gods and carried it on a slow-burning fennel stalk in order to give it to mankind. In return for this and other acts of defiance, Zeus punished him in two ways: he created the first woman, Pandora, who brought with her all the world’s evils, and he chained the Titan to a rock in the Caucasus where an eagle daily plucked out his liver which grew again each night. This ensured his perpetual agony, for each day he suffered the same fate. The release of Prometheus from his captivity came about in the following manner: on the way to his eleventh labour (fetching the golden apples of the Hesperides), Heracles shot the eagle which tormented Prometheus; in return, Prometheus advised Heracles to offer to hold up the sky for Atlas, while sending the Titan to fetch the apples on his behalf. Zeus, proud of his son Heracles’ achievements, allowed this to happen and forgot his old enmity. There are thus two definite phases to the Prometheus story (Bound and Unbound) which have been variously treated by artists, only a few of whom are mentioned above.

From the point of view of Goethe’s poem, the Titan might be named *Prometheus Defiant*. The punishment of Zeus has not yet been visited upon him, but one has the feeling that it will not be long in coming after the song’s overwhelmingly scornful conclusion. The poet sketched three scenes of an incomplete Promethean drama in 1773. The first of these is an extended conversation in blank verse between Prometheus and Mercury; then the goddess Minerva enters who, although loyal to her father Zeus, loves Prometheus and is his protector. The second scene begins on Olympus: Zeus speaks with Mercury, and then we see Prometheus in his role as creator of mankind. There is also a long exchange between Prometheus and the newly created Pandora. The third scene is set in the workshop of Prometheus and consists of nothing more than the poem that we know, which Goethe rescued from this context and placed in his *Gedichte*. This shows that Goethe had imagined Prometheus as yet unpunished, still a free man when speaking this poem, and Schubert’s setting conveys this context. On the other hand, Hugo Wolf’s monumental song, which bristles with musical thunder and lightning, the vocal line sung as if in conflict with the accompaniment, suggests a tortured Titan, raging at his malefactor while bound to the rock.

As is usually the case in Goethe’s use of mythology, the ancient tale is an allegory for concerns very much more in the present. As Nicholas Boyle puts it, the poem ‘showed an awareness and affirmation of the anti-Christian logic at the heart of the contemporary philosophical and theological reflection in Germany’. The poet’s *Sturm und Drang* denial of a personal creator-God caused considerable controversy for some time in Germany’s literary circles. Added to this was something which seemed to be arrogant celebration of the self-sufficiency of genius, a great artist’s independence of the patronage and support of others, and his right to ‘go it alone’. Goethe later softened the effect of the poem by publishing it before *Ganymed* in the *Gedichte*. This accented its mythological aspect, and the behaviour of the recklessly defiant Prometheus was counterbalanced by the shepherd-boy who was a willing worshipper, excessively eager to give himself up to
Zeus. The middle course, the sensible realisation of mankind’s limitations – not aspiring to be too close to the
gods, but not confronting them either – was demonstrated by the third of the triptych, Grenzen der
Menschheit. Hugo Wolf was to publish them together, in this order, as the three final songs of his
Goethelieder.

The poem was set by Schubert at the time when he was very much under the intellectual influence of
Mayrhofer (he had just begun to share the poet’s small apartment in the Wipplingerstrasse). There are a
number of contexts in the life of both men which seems to make the decision to have set the poem to music
especially significant. The first of these is the most obvious: the challenge to conventional religion where
Goethe’s pantheism, leaning towards Spinoza and Leibniz, would have been sympathetic to a composer who
had very recently set to music the texts of Novalis and Friedrich von Schlegel. (See the essay on Schubert and
Religion in the booklet accompanying Volume 31.) The composer’s difficult relationship with his own father is
also full of Promethean resonances. Schubert was determined to continue on his path as a full-time
composer, and Franz Theodor Schubert, a patriarch who was accustomed to being obeyed, thought his son
foolishly over-ambitious and disloyal to the family schoolteaching business. Whatever the state of the
relationship between father and son in October 1819, Schubert seems to have been through many a period
of conflict with Franz Theodor since the onset of his teens. Another consideration was the paternalistic
authoritarianism of Clemens von Metternich’s regime, a permanent source of irritation and intimidation for
Austrians of student age, as well as for Mayrhofer whose work as a book-censor was completely at odds with
his liberal private beliefs. The poem could be thought of as an artist’s gesture of defiance against the
overweening power of the state which meddled in the lives of individuals. This meant a revolt against the
authority of both Church and state, not only in terms of political belief, but also social mores. A poem by
A E Housman, for example, glowers with more than a touch of Promethean anger:

The laws of God, the laws of man,
He may keep that will and can;
Not I: let God and man decree
Laws for themselves and not for me;
And if my ways are not as theirs
Let them mind their own affair …

In this case the poet feels himself an outlaw because of his sexuality, and the unfairness and repression
associated with ‘the laws of God’. Such an issue would also lead to an identification with Prometheus’s revolt
against authority. In a country like Biedermeier Austria, the Church and the state were so entwined, and
matters of private morality so often the subject of police interference, that it seems possible that Schubert and
Mayrhofer read into Goethe’s defiant words much more than a challenge to conventional religion. In post-
revolutionary Europe the poem resounds like a battle-cry for individuality because it mocks the notion that our
Schubert is encouraged by Goethe’s free verse (the strophes are of uneven length) to find a musical form that is equally free. This reflects the Titan’s defiance of convention and hierarchical order. Not since the ballads of 1813 to 1815 has Schubert evolved something so daring in terms of form. A look at Carl Friedrich Reichardt’s setting from 1809 shows us that it must have been known to Schubert – indeed he was not above learning from it, beginning in the same key signature of two flats and writing for the same vocal range – but he was to go much further than Reichardt to depict the rage and scorn of Prometheus. This music is the paradigm of spontaneity, of feelings vented ‘on the spot’ without forethought. Accordingly, there is nothing that looks back to the past – the song thrusts relentlessly forward, each section having its own atmosphere and logic, the whole held together less by subtle planning than by an ongoing intensity which melds the disparate movements together in the white heat of the moment.

1. The song begins with storm music, a grimly triumphant fanfare-like phrase of octaves between the hands. This is a one-bar cell of strutting dotted rhythms which occurs seven times in all in the opening section. But we are never allowed to feel harmonically safe and settled. The opening bar seems to announce the key of B flat major, but the second is a series of hammered chords in A flat which lead to E flat major. Another stormy fanfare in this key (the same dotted rhythm) leads to a bar of similarly insistent D major chords which, in turn, lead to the G minor tremolo which underpins the opening recitative. Zeus’s rage is depicted in all this at the same time as being the subject of the singer’s mockery. These shifting tonal centres suggest the search for a firm foothold from which to launch an attack, the turn of the harmonic screw a metaphor for the screwing-up of courage. The singer has not uttered a note and yet we are already in the presence of a dangerously restless individual with what the Americans would term an ‘attitude problem’. When the singer begins with ‘Bedecke deinen Himmel, Zeus’ there is a snarl built into this music, anger and contempt which are seldom to be found in Schubert. The setting of the word ‘Zeus’ on the fourth beat, and tied across the bar-line, produces a syncopated casualness, the swaggering insolence of blasphemy.

After ‘Wolkendunst’ the thundering dotted-rhythm motif of the introduction returns as an interlude, as if played by trombones. Mention of Zeus beheading thistles suggests a visual musical image to Schubert as the right-hand tremolo (B flat – D) is also beheaded, cut down first to B flat – D flat, and then B flat – C. Further majestic interludes after ‘köpft’ and ‘Bergeshöhn’ punctuate the accusation that Zeus’s behaviour is merely childishly petulant; indeed, they may be taken as a parody of the god throwing his weight around to no good purpose. After this, Prometheus really gets into his stride with the venom of a biblical seer (the sentiments...
recall ‘They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat’ of Isaiah Chapter 65 or a trade-union prophet. With the phrases ‘und meine Hütte, die du nicht gebaut’ and ‘und meinem Herd, um dessen Glut du mich beneidest’ the confrontation between Prometheus and Zeus takes on the revolutionary aspect of worker against boss, of organised labour challenging Olympian capitalism. Each of the sentences in this section is pitched slightly higher than its predecessor, and adds to the feeling of almost hysterical accusation. After ‘beneidest’ we have the last appearance of the storm motive, and it is as if Prometheus has become so heated that arioso is abandoned in favour of a recitative (‘Ich kenne nichts Ärmeres unter der Sonn’, als euch, Götter!’) which is almost spluttered in its frustrated anger. In Goethe’s versification, this is actually the beginning of the second strophe, but Schubert reserves his change of mood and tempo (Etwas langsamer) for ‘Ihr nährt kümmernicht’.

2. This strange passage is full of irony and sarcasm, a very rare quality in Schubert indeed. The ‘offerings’ and the ‘breath of prayer’ mentioned here obviously encourage the composer to think of church ceremonial as he knew it. Thus the Titan’s continuing accusations and put-downs are accompanied by music in four parts that seems to have been written for organ; the creeping chromaticisms suggest extreme servility as they genuflect in an elaborate parody of the learned ‘old style’ favoured in church music. The vocal line is the descant above this four-part writing, but the exaggeratedly woebegone setting of ‘kümmernicht’, and the sarcasm built into ‘eure Majestät’ make it clear that, far from identifying with the solemnity of his accompaniment, the singer scorns it. This picture of superstitious church ceremonial is conjured in order to be debunked. There is no song in Schubert that this passage resembles more than the religious Vom Mitleiden Mariä13, also in G minor, written nine months earlier. It is no surprise with the image of the ‘Bettler’ that we also hear echoes of the beggar’s song An die Türen will ich schleichen23 sung by the Harper from Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister. Old-fashioned subservience is the theme uniting all these works.

3. A shift to D minor signals a moment of respite. Schubert knew that a break in the invective was necessary, and that he would have to réculer pour mieux sauter. The flashback to childhood – ‘Da ich ein Kind war’ – allows a moment of tenderness, and we identify more closely with Prometheus when he shows this vulnerable streak. The accompaniment here is very simple, as if it might be played by a child. The emotive accented passing notes on ‘ein Herz wie meins’ and on the final ‘erbarmen’ emphasise the human compassion of which he, unlike the uncaring Zeus, is capable.

4. At ‘Wer half mir’ we return suddenly, and without warning, to the screaming match, although Zeus here is silent – like some dismayed parent who has been bossy for years, and is unexpectedly confronted with the wrathful onslaught of his once-timid offspring. Here the past is brought up and thrown in the father’s face, the recitative requiring the singer almost to spit out the words. The harmonic basis for this, massive in its effect, as if carved out of marble, is made up of three blocks of diminished-seventh chords on G, A and then B. The questions of ‘Who helped, who saved me?’ are answered not in the god’s favour; it is thanks to his
own heart, not as he had once believed to the ‘sleeper up above’ that Prometheus owes his deliverance. In ‘wider der Titanen Übermut’ Goethe has invented a piece of background without a basis in mythology; Prometheus is himself a Titan, and only in Aeschylus do we hear of him fighting, not his siblings, but Kronos on the side of Zeus. Once again the word ‘Herz’ is set on a passing-note denoting compassion; this time (at ‘Heilig glühend Herz’) it is an F, the highest note in the song and usually the most difficult to sing. This adds to the heartrending effect of this passage where Prometheus realises that he can only look to his own resources for his salvation. After ‘Schlafenden da droben?’ the piano chords are the most grandiose in the piece. The music is left suspended on the dominant of E flat minor.

5. This is never to be resolved. In perhaps the most exciting passage of the piece (marked ‘Geschwinder’) the harangue continues on a succession of diminished sevenths pivoting at first on that hanging bass B flat. The rhythmic effect of this suggests the taunts of a physical challenge – ‘Ich dich ehren? Wofür?’ – with raised fists and jabs into the air. The diminished-seventh harmony (here associated with the selfish and disruptive god) is contrasted with the major-key wholeness and health of humanity. ‘Hast du die Schmerzen gelindert’ is written out in C flat major, but ‘Je des Beladenen?’ effects an enharmonic change to B major symptomatic of transformation and eased suffering. The next four bars are a sequence of what we have already heard, notched a semitone higher. For the repeat of ‘Ich dich ehren? Wofür?’ the diminished sevenths, rocking back and forth with a boxer’s nervous footwork, are built on a bank of B naturals. In this context, hearing the consolatory C major of ‘Hast du die Tränen gestillt / Je des Geängsteten?’ (set in the trickiest part of the voice, requiring much control in mezza voce) is like emerging from a forest bristling with accidentals to find comfort and help in a sunlit clearing. Schubert underlines Goethe’s point that Prometheus is capable of human compassion, something beyond the understanding of the jealous gods. The hammer-blow chords at the passage beginning ‘Hat nicht mich zum Manne geschmiedet’ are built on a descending sequence of chromatic harmony: left-hand octaves, starting on a B flat, stride downward in tone and semitones. This pattern repeats in the next bars beginning on B, and then C and then C sharp. These basses are harmonised with a blistering array of chords, logical but daring, in a sequence where flats change to sharps and sharps to naturals. Here we hear the very process of mankind being forged in the smithy of Creation. The sparks fly also thanks to the singer’s invective: reference to ‘die allmächtige Zeit’ and ‘das ewige Schicksal’ refer to the Greek figures Chronos and Moira, who are greater than all the gods. The meaningful elongation of the cadential ‘un deine?’ (a chord of G sharp major) reminds Zeus, with sarcastic obeisances, that he too is subject to the laws of nature.

6. Another brief moment of respite before the final onslaught, although still heavily laden with irony. We slide into G sharp minor at the beginning of the section, and somehow find ourselves in G major after only five bars. It is as if these words are whispered to Zeus with a smile of triumph on the part of the singer. They inform the god that one of his ploys has not worked. He had hoped that Prometheus would hate life on earth
and find himself unable to cope with the setbacks regularly endured by human beings. In the same way, many a disapproving parent has decided that it would be best to let the hard knocks of life bang some sense into an errant child. The tone of this music is full of taunting politeness with isolated quavers punctuating the bass line like the muffled drum of a dead-march. The honeyed sweetness of ‘Weil nicht alle / Blütenträume reiften?’ is the most richly sarcastic phrase that Schubert ever wrote. It is here that we might imagine him saying to his father: ‘Do you imagine that because I am not an instant success, because I have been disappointed with some failures, that I am going to give up my life in music?’.

7. The crowning glory of this piece is, for the first time, grounded in a solid tonality; and what could be more elemental than C major? The music is marked ‘Kräftig’ and there is something about these hammered chords, massive in their effect and grounded in diatonic harmony, a contrast to all the preceding chromaticism, which puts one in mind of Beethoven, surely the most obviously Promethean of all artists, and the one who might have been forgiven for turning on his Creator, denouncing him for the cruel trick played on his hearing. When Schubert wrote this song, the most recent work by Beethoven to be published in Vienna (mid-September 1819) was the *Hammerklavier* Sonata Op 106. That work opens with an upward leap from bass to treble, and massive chords like an imperious call to arms, hammered and then snatched away in an implacable Allegro tempo. This is followed by silence for a crotchet and a half, which makes the succeeding sequence, crashing upon the ear and leaping yet higher up the keyboard, even more dramatic. In this song we have a similar effect: Schubert uses the silence between similarly snatched and leaping chords to depict the magnificent recklessness of the Titan’s utterance. And we are reminded that for the composer this is the heart of the song because it shows Prometheus at work, sitting in his workshop and fashioning a new race of men, just as Schubert daily fashioned a new type of music. One can best be defiant not by shouting about it, but by *doing* something different. The energy field set up by this alternation of loud, leaping chords and eerie intermittent silence is immense. It is as if the stuff of which men are made is being *thrown* against the potter’s wheel, first one, then another. Time and trouble are taken to paint ‘zu leiden, zu weinen’, mournfully descending intervals on both verbs as if Prometheus were attempting to teach Zeus a new emotional vocabulary. There is a hint of shudder beneath the first ‘Wie ich!’ (suddenly *piano* in dynamic) as if Prometheus, aware of his hubris, has a premonition of his punishment. But of course there is no punishment, and that is the message of Goethe’s poem. Divine retribution is a fairytale, and we are all responsible for our own destinies. The second ‘Wie ich!’ makes this clear – a jump of a fifth from G to C which is as unambiguous and assured a cadence as one could wish for. All the chromatic doubt of the previous pages has been clarified and focused into enlightened rationalism. The piano’s two thundering C major chords set the seal on one of Schubert’s most remarkable works. We may all be made of Promethean clay, but only genius can be fired to produce a work as extraordinary and highly-coloured as this.
Johann Mayrhofer (1787-1836)

ÜBER ALLEN ZAUBER LIEBE  LOVE ABOVE ALL MAGIC
D682. Late 1820 (probably December); first published in the Gesamtausgabe in 1895; fragment, completed by Reinhard Van Hoorickx; sung by Daniel Norman

Sie hüpfte mit mir auf grünem Plan, She skipped in front of me on the green plain
Und sah die falbenden Linden an And gazed at the fading linden trees
Mit trauernden Kindesaugen; With her sad child’s eyes;
Die stillen Lauben sind entlaubt, The silent arbours are leafless,
Die Blumen hat der Herbst geraubt, Autumn has stolen the flowers,
Der Herbst will gar nichts taugen. Autumn is good for nothing.
Ach, du bist ein schönes Ding, Ah, you are a lovely thing,
Frühling! Spring!
Über allen Zauber Frühling.
Das zierliche Kind, wie’s vor mir schwebt! I see the dainty child in my mind’s eye,
Aus Lilien und Rosen zart gewebt, Delicately woven of lilies and roses,
Mit Augen gleich den Sternen; – With eyes like stars.
Blüht mir dein holdes Angesicht, When your sweet face glows before me,
Dann mag, fürwahr ich zage nicht, Then – and in truth I’m not afraid to say it –
Der Mayen sich entfernen. May can stay away.
Färbet nur des Lebens Trübe Love alone brings colour to life’s gloom,
Liebe: Love!
Über allen Zauber Liebe.

Of all the Schubert fragments this is one of the most alluring. It helps that the vast majority of the music is by Schubert himself – only four bars of music are needed to complete the setting (providing Schubert envisaged a strophic song, which seems possible, if not certain). If the composer had provided these missing bars himself, and had this song been printed in the Peters Edition, it is hard to imagine what would have prevented Über allen Zauber Liebe from being known throughout the world – not in the first rank of Schubert’s popular lieder perhaps, but treasured and hummed by connoisseurs. Knowing this music would have become the sort of benchmark by which a Schubertian’s devotion to the cause might have been measured. As it is, the song awaits inclusion in the canon to reach that happy position. It is the only Mayrhofer song to have remained an incomplete fragment, and it is the last of Schubert’s 47 Mayrhofer settings to appear in the Hyperion Schubert Edition.

The key is G major and the time signature $6/8$. The opening prelude is a lovely inspiration; the gently falling sequences of the little four-note cell are perfectly descriptive of summer memories shot through with autumn melancholy. The shape of the piano-writing on the page, bracketed in two-bar phrases, suggest the sheltering effect of fading tree branches in an arbour, gently swaying in the wind and fast losing their leaves. There is
also just enough movement in these semiquavers to suggest the movement of a young girl skipping into the poet’s vision. Everything here is of the utmost delicacy and understatement. When the girl begins to speak there is a long D pedal (beginning on ‘Die stillen Lauben sind entlaubt’) which lasts seven bars. Autumn mist is built into this music which floats, remaining suspended in the dominant, and resisting a return to the tonic. Even when it eventually does so (at ‘der Herbst will gar nichts taugen’) it is coloured by the wistfulness of F natural, the flattened seventh in G major. This seems to promise a plagal shift to C major, but there is a surprise in store: the setting of the word ‘Ach’ on a high G is supported instead by A7, also in first inversion.

Even with a switch of mood and a change of time signature to $\frac{2}{4}$ (a change of speed is not marked, but is definitely implied) the harmony remains fixed on this inversion of A7 for ‘Ach, du bist ein schönes Ding’. The music only now seems to describe the skipping (hüpfen) mentioned in the first verse. The lively dotted rhythm in each bar of the left-hand accompaniment suggests a movement both skittish and delicate. In terms of harmony the music veers between A7 (still in first inversion), the second inversion of G major, G7 and C major. Throughout the song the effect of this continued distancing from the tonic is tantalising, the perfect means to describe a search for something that has been lost, irretrievable except through memory. In this respect, and in terms of the alternation between fast and slow tempi, the song is prophetic of another G major song about spring’s past happiness – Frühlingstraum from Winterreise. The only real cadence into an uncomplicated G major is on the very last word ‘Frühling’, but this is part of the Hoorickx completion. We have no idea what different and new ideas Schubert had up his sleeve had he bothered to finish the song. It is hard to guess why he never completed it.

The second verse actually refutes the evidence of the first. Spring is not the most beautiful thing of all – May can stay away. It is love that colours everything. Thus it may be rather simplistic to aver that Schubert would have been satisfied with a strophic solution using the same music. Here, indeed, may lie the reason for the song’s abandonment. Fitting the underlay of Mayrhofer’s second verse to the music of the first is no problem (apart from the need to adopt the ‘Ach’ from the first verse that does not occur in the second) but it is always possible that Schubert had something completely different in mind for the new mood. Nevertheless it works well enough as recorded here, and the music of the first strophe does good service for some of the new imagery of the second – the delicate weave of lilies and roses, for example, seem aptly pictured by the tendrils of those falling piano sequences. Not least because of these, Über allen Zauber Liebe remains a real trouvaille, a tiny piece of lazily drifting Schubertian enchantment unlike any other, and yet achingly and convincingly authentic.
August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845)

DIE GEFANGENEN SÄNGER

D712. January 1821; first published in 1842 as part of Volume 33 of the Nachlass

sung by Matthias Goerne

Do you hear the bushes echoing
With the nightingales’ song?

See, fair May is here.

Every creature woos his sweetheart;
Every sound sweetly declares
What bliss there is in love.

Others, who live in cages,
Behind bars,
Hear the song outside;
They would dearly like to fly to their freedom,
To share in love and the joys of spring;
But, alas, force keeps them closely confined.

And now, bursting from their grief-stricken souls,
The power of their song
Wells up in their throats;
But, instead of soaring amid the swaying trees,
It rebounds from the hard stone
Of the walls.

Thus, captive in this vale of earth,
Man’s spirit hears with longing
The songs of his noble brothers;
He seeks in vain to expand this earthly life,
To embrace the serene joys of heaven.
And he calls this Poetry.

But, if he appears to dedicate its rhythms
To hymns of praise,
As from a heart intoxicated with life,
Yet do tender hearts feel
That the flower of his joy
Springs from the root of deep suffering.

This song was written some fourteen months after Prometheus and it shows a completely different side of the composer’s art. However long it took Schubert to write that explosive song, it gives the impression of having been created in a single sweep of creative energy. Die gefängenen Sänger on the other hand shows
every sign of the judicious exercise of the composer’s craft where a smaller number of ideas are thriftily
nursed, elaborated and recycled to link the five verses of a long poem into an impressive musical unity. At
first glance it might not seem to furnish the ideal material for a complex durchkomponiert song, but
Schubert took a great deal of trouble with it, and we might ask ourselves why.

Reed rightly points out that because the poem dates from 1810, Schlegel cannot have equated his caged
birds with the victims of Metternich’s secret police. August von Schlegel (unlike his brother Friedrich who
became a Viennese resident) lived in Switzerland and Germany and his poetry did not refer to local Austrian
political conditions. But one must beware of thinking Metternich’s regime the only oppressive one that has
ever been, and Schlegel (unlike his brother Friedrich) remained a lifelong liberal. Despite the poem’s use of
metaphor to describe the longing of the artist for an ideal world beyond his reach, one cannot dismiss this
poem (and the resulting song) as entirely unpolitical. In reading this poem, it is more than likely that it struck
a number of chords with Schubert at a time that he was at his most politically engaged; this is the composer
who had set Prometheus with such vehemence that he cannot have regarded it as purely a mythological
narrative. In fact Die gefängenen Sänger was painfully descriptive of a situation at home. The reference to
the singers’ (or poets’) caged confinement must surely have seemed apposite to the case of the poet Johann
Senn who had been arrested in March 1820 at an incident when the composer, subsequently also questioned
by the police, was also present. This was the one direct brush with the repressive state authorities
experienced by Schubert. He got away with a caution; he was less than a minor player in what amounted to
a small, but basically harmless, cadre of student secret-society rebelliousness. But Senn was detained for a trial
which dragged on for fourteen months before he was finally deported to the Tyrol, his career in ruins and his
prospects blighted. This means that when this song was composed in January 1821, his case was still
undecided. Senn, fearing for the verdict, was behind bars, as much a captive as the birds in Schlegel’s poem.
Of course the composer was highly involved in this incident. He had escaped punishment, but his friend had
not.

The drooping figuration, a crotchet phrased away to a quaver, and almost obsessively repeated, is prophetic
of another 1821 song accompaniment written a few months later – Geheimes. There the theme is of the
frisson experienced between two lovers which can only be expressed in meaningful glances. The courting
pair are constrained by oriental etiquette, and nevertheless manage to say much. Similarly, the birds
communicate with each other as if in code; the imprisoned birds draw sustenance from their secret
communication with their free brothers. The invention of a musical language to describe a secret language (if
we believe that birds actually can speak with each other) is what is achieved here. The vocabulary is small,
repetitive and immediately recognisable. That lilting, rocking little motto pervades the song, refusing to
develop into extended melody, and preferring to reflect the tiny, cell-like structures of birdsong. With these
unpromising beginnings Schubert performs miracles.
The first strophe is in G major (in the original, untransposed key). The outdoor nightingales sing in freedom in the May breezes. The sinuous melody in $6/8$ darts and wafts; the vocal line, when it imitates the drooping figurations of the accompaniment approximates to a cooing sound, as if doves and nightingales belonged to the same family. The aerial atmosphere is enhanced by the fact that both staves of the accompaniment are written in the treble clef. To add to a feeling of unearthly joy, the composer uses the tonic chord in root position extremely sparingly until the interlude in the song’s thirteenth bar. The rise and fall of the vocal line on ‘sieh’, es kam der holde Mai’ is delightful (even more appropriate at ‘welche Wonn’ im Lieben sei’) and the melismas on ‘holde’ and ‘Lieben’ are especially gracious. What other song, I found myself wondering, has the same happy (yet somehow disturbingly nostalgic) $6/8$ gait, a mention of birdsong, a reference to May? Hölty’s Mailied perhaps? Yes, but let us not forget this song’s most famous descendant, Frühlingstraum from Winterreise, where the same criteria also apply. And, like Frühlingstraum, this song has a dark side. In that case there is a time-shift away from the happy past (the major key) to the bitter present (the minor); in Die gefangenen Sänger the shift is of space rather than time, from the free outdoors to incarceration.

For the second verse, the same motif which has begun the song is adapted to the minor key. The prosody of ‘And’re, die im Käfig leben’ is masterly, with the quaver-rest gap after ‘And’re’ which suggests that even speaking of the plight of these poor ‘others’ has produced a lump in the throat. The setting of the passage beginning ‘Möchten in die Freiheit eilen’ right up to the expressive ‘Ach’ on a high G which drops a diminished fifth in expressive plaint, is extraordinary. Whoever has seen a bird caught within a confined space, attempting to escape and only succeeding in hitting, time after time, against the barrier that holds it captive, will understand this passage. The accompaniment is higher than at any other point in the song, as if the hands were trying to escape over the top of a keyboard fenced in by its size and without access to the outside world. There is something unbearably poignant about the fruitless mission of the piano’s airborne triplet (we hear this three-note pattern repeated no fewer than eight times with unchanging harmony) as it strives for resolution; the unsuccessful quest for the root position of the chord is the longing for release. The desolate ‘Ach’ on a diminished chord signifies failure. We have already heard the gently rolling music of the interlude; it was the postlude to the first verse, but there it was in the major, and here it is in the minor key.

The key signature of the third verse is five flats as we find ourselves, rather unexpectedly, in B flat minor for the darkest strophe of the song. The vocal line is fashioned out of the same materials, and the accompanying motifs are similar, but there are new details. The vocal line at ‘Schmetternd ihres Lieds Gewalt’ (and even more appropriately at ‘an der Steine / Hartem Bau zurücke prallt’) bounces back and forth within the range of a sixth and seventh as if sound were reflected harshly back on itself within too small a space, an acoustical effect described precisely in the text. The piano adds to this impression of harshness with semiquaver triplets in the right hand, wing-flapping oscillations in octaves. Where have we heard this in a more familiar song? In Frühlingstraum of course, where the early morning cockerel arouses the sleeper from his dreams (in bars 16,
18 and 20 of that song). The two works are united by distress: the sound of imprisoned birdsong sends shivers down the spine in much the same way as the winter traveller is awoken not only by cock-a-doodle-doo (‘Und als die Hähne krähten’), but by the harsh cawing of ravens (‘Es schrien die Raben vom Dach’). In Die gefangenen Sänger the ugly stone walls of the prison make even the most beautiful birdsong seem ugly and grating. The artist’s work cannot remain beautiful in inhumane captivity: it is brutalised by ill-treatment and lack of understanding. At the end of the verse there is a seven-bar interlude which leads the music back to G minor. The semiquaver triplets make a brief reappearance, but a succession of unadorned dotted crotchets has a calming effect on the music. For the first time in the song the bass clef makes an appearance, pulling the work’s specific gravity earthward. We have heard the ill-effects of imprisonment; now it is time for a moral to be drawn.

This is where we hear Schubert’s skill as a composer – the ability to re-use material in a way that reinforces a sense of inevitable continuity within a song of this kind. It is one thing for him to write bird music for singing throat and flapping wing. But the philosophical envoi is never a particularly easy thing to set to music, and is best avoided. When it has to be included (like here) it is best to keep it simple and unadorned. Accordingly, the fourth verse of the poem is also the shortest. It contains the moral, the key to the allegory, but Schubert sets this to music derived from earlier melodic and rhythmic patterns, gently floating along in the barcarolle rhythm which seems rather frivolous for a work with such a serious message. There are no elaborate melismas or decorations, and no repetitions of text. It is clear that man the creator has more options than the birds of nature. Inspired by the song of our fellow artists, we seek in vain to find a bit of heaven in this earthly life. The second-strophe music for the birds trying to escape (a constantly repeating circle of triplets) reappears in a lower register where the addition of bass clef harmonies illustrates mankind’s weightier destiny. And this time there is a way out. Poetry is the key which opens all doors, and Schubert introduces it in such a way that the concept seems to be created and named before our very ears. The ravishing modulation back to G major which coincides with the last syllable of ‘Poesie’ surrounds the precious word with an aura of calm and peace.

And so we have come full circle. We find ourselves back where we began, but the allegorical birds have fallen silent. The bass-clef harmonies add the full bloom of harmonic depth to a vocal line which is by now familiar in all its details. Earlier agitations are now settled in the calm of a world-view. Even if a poet’s work (or a composer’s) appears to be the result of jubilant enjoyment of life, the roots of creativity stem from deep suffering. This is a concept with which Schubert clearly identifies; the gentle swinging gait of the song is not much enlivened by the words ‘Jubelhymnen’ and ‘lebenstrunkner Brust’. The truth behind the mystery of creativity lies deeper than hearty celebration, and the minor-key colouring of ‘aus der Wurzel tiefer Schmerzen’ acknowledges this. The Schubertian duality inherent in ‘Lachen und Weinen’ is summed up by the setting of the phrase ‘Blüte seiner Lust’. The diminished seventh of ‘Blüte’ opens, like a beautiful flower,
into an unambiguous G major and the expansive melisma of ‘seiner Lust’. In the last strophe mankind is capable of recovering the joy of the nightingale’s lovesong; but in order to do so he must first expect to experience pain.

This is the last of the nine settings of August von Schlegel to appear in the Hyperion Schubert Edition. Volume 27 is given over to the songs of the Schlegel brothers where there are six August von Schlegel songs and a biographical essay on both poets. Further settings of August von Schlegel are in Volume 6 (Abendlied für die Entfernte), Volume 21 (the first of two performances of Lob der Tränen) and Volume 32 (Die verfehlte Stunde).

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<th>Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)</th>
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<td><strong>GRENZEN DER MENSCHHEIT</strong></td>
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<td>D716. March 1821; first published in 1832 as part of Volume 14 of the Nachlass sung by Neal Davies</td>
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| Wenn der uralte, | When the age-old |
| Heilige Vater | Holy Father, |
| Mit gelassener Hand | With a calm hand, |
| Aus rollenden Wolken | Scatters beneficent thunderbolts |
| Segnende Blitze | Over the earth |
| Über die Erde sä’t, | From the rolling clouds, |
| Küss’ ich den letzten | I kiss the extreme hem |
| Saum seines Kleides, | Of His garment, |
| Kindliche Schauer | With childlike awe |
| Tief in der Brust. | Deep in my heart. |
| Denn mit Göttern | For no mortal |
| Soll sich nicht messen | Shall measure himself |
| Irgend ein Mensch. | Against the gods. |
| Hebt er sich aufwärts | If he reaches upwards |
| Und berührt | And touches the stars |
| Mit dem Scheitel die Sterne, | With his head |
| Nirgends haften dann | Then his unsure feet |
| Die unsichern Sohlen, | Have no hold, |
| Und mit ihm spielen | And clouds and winds |
| Wolken und Winde. | Sport with him. |
Steht er mit festen, If he stands firm
Markigen Knochen With vigorous limbs
Auf der wohlgemachten On the solid,
Dauernden Erde; Enduring earth,
Reicht er nicht auf, He cannot even reach up
Nur mit der Eiche To compare himself
Oder der Rebe With the oak tree
Sich zu vergleichen. Or the vine.

Was unterscheidet What distinguishes gods
Götter von Menschen? From men?
Dass viele Wellen Before them many waves
Vor jenen wandeln, Roll onwards,
Ein ewiger Strom: An eternal river;
Uns hebt die Welle, But the wave lifts us up;
Verschlingt die Welle, The wave swallows us
Und wir versinken. And we sink.

Ein kleiner Ring A narrow ring
Begrenzt unser Leben, Bounds our life,
Und viele Geschlechter And generations
Reihen sich dauernd Forever succeed one another
An ihres Daseins In the infinite chain
Unendliche Kette. Of their existence.

How can a great poet like Goethe write a poem bristling with anger like Prometheus, and a few years later write Grenzen der Menschheit, a work of the greatest humility? The two works contradict each other. Prometheus and Ganymed are also complete opposites, the latter song idolising the gods with Grenzen der Menschheit offering a compromise between the two – a ‘neue Mitte’ or Third Way. Goethe could easily have said with Walt Whitman ‘Do I contradict myself? / Very well then, I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes.).’ As Richard Capell puts it: ‘Let us admire the poet who lives so intensely in all his various days, and attempting no false synthesis seized for all he was worth on the truth of this one and of that’. (There is also something rather Schubertian about this fence-sitting. We might as well question the composer’s seemingly inconsistent attitude to religion – at one moment he sets the Roman Catholic Mass, at another, songs which sympathise with pantheism). Goethe himself was always aware of a ‘creative polarity which seemed to guide his development’ (Reed). When he first sent this poem in a letter to Charlotte von Stein (on 1 May 1780) he also enclosed a drawing – a design for a pig-sty. ‘I send you the highest and the lowest’, he wrote, ‘a hymn and a pig-sty. Love binds everything together’ (‘Liebe verbindet alles’). A little earlier Goethe had written a poem, Menschengefühl, not set to music, which sums up the theme of Grenzen der Menschheit in a more humorous, certainly more pithy, way:
Ach ihr Götter! grosse Götter
In dem weiten Himmel droben!
Gäbet ihr uns auf der Erde
Festen Sinn und guten Mut
O wir liessen euch ihr Guten,
Euern weiten Himmel droben!

O ye gods, great gods
In the spacious heavens above!
If you could give us here on earth
A sense of firm purpose and good cheer,
Oh we’d gladly leave you, dear friends,
In you spacious heavens above!

In *Grenzen der Menschheit* the idea of a matey compromise between man and gods, an equable dividing of territory, is shorn of its humour. This is as grand a poetic hymn as Goethe ever wrote, and Schubert treats it with the same seriousness that Mozart reserved for *Die Zauberflöte* which features comparable trials by fire and water to be undertaken by mankind. The fact that the music is conceived for bass voice immediately signals a link with Sarastro. The four mighty strophes which precede the envoy (the marvellous lines about the ring, that age-old symbol of completion and wholeness) traverse the whole range of universal experience and aspiration. The first verse is perhaps the most remarkable – the rest of the poem flows from this initial inspiration, a marvellously imposing picture presided over by a calm and mighty figure who stands somewhere between Zeus and the Judeo-Christian God depicted in the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel (which Goethe was to see for himself seven years later). Each of the strophes is given over to one of the four elements: in the first, immortal fire; in the second, air; in the third, earth; and in the fourth, water, the most Schubertian of the four elements perhaps, although it is noticeable that the composer avoids the tempting diversions of scene-painting in favour of forging, as if chain by chain, a symphonic whole. This song was written at the same time as the two *Suleika* songs which are similarly organic conceptions. These and *Grenzen der Menschheit* could not be further in style from the continuously re-invented recitative and arioso of *Prometheus*. The composer seems to have cannily chosen the texts at the moments he was best able to handle them. In *Prometheus* there is still a trace of the youth, the earnest composer of the long early ballads, pushed to new extremes of reckless abandon; but here we find a composer who has emerged from the song experiments of 1819 and 1820 (the Schlegel and Novalis settings, as well as some of the most challenging Mayrhofer) with a command of form whereby symphonies can be songs, and songs symphonies. Of course, this concept suited only the grandest of poems. But Schubert had recently proved himself capable of managing the vast ongoing frieze of Schlegel’s *Im Walde* as if it were a single sonata movement; he was now well able to encompass the span of *Grenzen der Menschheit*.

The composer made certain important decisions when he looked at the poem on the printed page. There are five strophes; the first two are the longest (ten lines each) and the shortest is the last (six lines). Verses 3 and 4 have eight lines each. In order to arrange a recapitulation which comes full circle (true to the ‘ring’ concept of the whole conception) Schubert divides the first strophe into two sections (six and four lines respectively). This enables him to set the work effectively in six strophes where the last incorporates most of the features of the first, and some of the second – thus ABCDEA.
Like another important Goethe setting of this period, Versunken\textsuperscript{24}, the music begins far from the home key of E major. The majestic C major chord (with an upbeat B) which starts the whole work seems to denote a blank canvas, a universe not yet created (Haydn’s Creation affected every composer who followed him).

Schubert has actually borrowed this progression (a short upbeat which rises a semitone and opens out to a longer chord) from the accompaniment to the Prometheus of 1819 – the turbulent music which goes with the outburst ‘Ich dich ehren? Wofür?’ (‘I honour you? What for?’). Einstein calls this ‘the iambic motif of defiance’, and it pervades and unites the song in such a way that we forget that it is a succession of slow-motion variations on this fragment of Promethean music. Whether this is a conscious borrowing or not is uncertain, but it seems to be; ‘Why should we honour the gods?’ Prometheus asked; and this song long ruminates on the question which remains musically embedded in the answer in the most subtle manner. In the introduction, every shift of chord denotes a new contour and a filling-in of detail. The overall harmonic direction may be summed up as a progress from G major (the second full bar) to the dominant of E minor (bar 6) and thence to E major where the long-awaited G sharp which signifies the arrival of the home key (not yet in root position however) appears like a shaft of light which floods the dark landscape with colour.

Throughout this section the harmonic shifts vividly convey the ‘gelassener Hand’ of the great Creator as it moves first here, then there. There is a textbook (but highly effective) use of the subdominant (the plagal relationship always serves to illustrate a religious point) in the shift to A major after ‘heilige Vater’. Here the composer signals his awe in the divine presence, but at ‘rollenden Wolken’ the abrupt change to G sharp major (the dominant of C sharp minor) is a cosmic shift as the clouds are parted with the casual turn of an all-controlling Hand. The most tempestuous storms below are caused by the mildest of movements above; it is as if Paul Bunyan were absentmindedly creating the Grand Canyon with a trailing hoe. Accordingly the thunderbolts, seen from the gods’ point of view, are given gentle music only slightly graced with semiquavers on ‘Blitze’ and ‘Erde sä’t’. The music is also marked ‘pianissimo’, pointedly contrary to the normal musical depiction of thunder and lightning.

The change to Schubert’s favourite dactylic rhythm (long-short-short) at ‘küsse ich den letzten Saum seines Kleides’ is most effective. This is the ‘Kindliche Schauer’ experienced by the maiden in Der Tod und das Mädchen\textsuperscript{11}, and which we will later encounter in Mignon’s Heiss mich nicht reden\textsuperscript{26}. In that song, the young girl, helplessly locked into her fate, keeps a dark secret which only a god could make her reveal. Schubert usually reserves this rhythm for something cosmic (cf. Die Sterne\textsuperscript{9}) and this is no exception. The sweet gentleness and the vulnerable sense of surrender in this passage are remarkably caught in this dance-like music of the spheres.

The music to the next verse is the most active. The vocal line (which is never extremely slow anyway – the tempo marking is ‘Nicht ganz langsam’ and the time signature is alla breve) has a number of quavers, even a dotted quaver-semiquaver. This suggestion of agitation signals the crime of hubris. The progression of
semibreves before ‘Denn mit Göttern’ is ornamented by an ominous trill reminiscent of the opening of *Freiwilliges Versinken*\(^{14}\), a song about the immutable laws of nature and the movements of the sun god Helios. The accompaniment under ‘Hebt er sich aufwärts und berührt mit dem Scheitel die Sterne’ is an unambiguous use of the ‘Prometheus’ motif, describing, as it does, someone equally ill-advised and unwise. This phrase has risen in chromatic steps (beginning at ‘Hebt er sich aufwärts’) and the consequent plunging descent of the vocal line (at ‘nirgends haften dann die unsichern Sohlen’) depicts the fall from grace; the vocal line seems to lose its foothold and slip in successive sequences to ever lower regions where ‘Wolken und Winde’ will sport with the unfortunate climber. Clouds and wind are normally depicted aloft, above mankind; but here they are seen from the perspective of the even higher heavenly stars, and Schubert has imagined the drop between the two layers of existence as a vast one. Accordingly these words are set to some of the lowest notes in the piece. The nine-bar interlude, again a *Prometheus* variant, is made of crotchet upbeats, semibreves and minims; it moves the music from F major back to E major, and is a miracle of modulation where each sequence seems to encapsulate a thought or perception too profound to be expressed in human words. This music for the pondering of the gods shows Schubert equal to the challenge of describing it.

True to its meaning, the music for ‘Steht er mit festen markigen Knochen’ is more secure and grounded. The music has moved into the dominant key (B major). The vocal line aspires upwards for ‘oder der Rebe’ as if we are witnessing man’s attempt to measure himself with the vine. A simple interlude oscillating between D major and G minor chords introduces the question at the heart of the piece – what is the difference between gods and men? The ongoing melody (which throughout, in its grandeur and flexibility, is prophetic of Wagnerian word-setting in, appropriately enough, the *Ring* tetralogy) yields to the repeated notes of a phrase that sounds like a ritualistic chant, something that might be intoned by priest or shaman: ‘Was unterscheidet Götter von Menschen?’.

The answer to this conundrum is the song’s crowning glory. The waves which both lift us up, and then swallow us as we sink, are not depicted in anything like rolling water music – in this respect Hugo Wolf was a lot more graphic. It is the empty and dismal intervals of this section, empty thirds and grating fourths, which illustrate the wretchedness of man’s fate. We have already encountered intervals like these in connection with another ‘ewiger Strom’ – the river Styx in *Gruppe as dem Tartarus*\(^{14}\) (at ‘Schmerz verzerret ihr Gesicht!’). The enharmonic changes (E sharps = F naturals in the vocal line, and in the piano C sharps = D flats) at ‘verschlingt die Welle, und wir versinken’ matter only from the point of view of notation. But they show how strongly Schubert was engaged in the deepest aspects of the text. As life cedes to death, this enharmonic spelling reflects man’s altered state, the same yet not the same, and nature’s ability to absorb and recycle her own. The descents in the vocal line at ‘versinken’ may seem obvious, but they are hugely effective. The interlude closing this section is the only one where there is a direct quotation from *Prometheus* (bars 72/73 of the accompaniment) at the same pitches, but in different note values.
We wonder how it is that this sprawling song seems so much of an organic entity, despite the fact that we seem to have traversed a universe during its weighty progress. Schubert’s success lies in his flair for musical organisation and bringing the lessons he has learned in his symphonic writing to the lied. The final verse returns to the music of the opening; at the end it also uses the dactylic music which Schubert uses for the last four lines of Goethe’s first strophe. It is entirely appropriate that the elevated tone of the opening (not that the whole song has not been elevated, but the addition of subdominant harmony makes it feel even more sacred) should see this mighty song to its conclusion. In employing semibreves and minims (notes that look like rings on paper), Schubert (like Hugo Wolf when setting this poem) engages in the visual punning that we sometimes find as composers transfer their thoughts to paper almost in the manner of a draughtsman. But the song as a whole has been written as a symphonic hymn and only its great difficulty (the bass tessitura where the singer has to have a low E) has prevented it from being better known and performed with great regularity.

It is just possible that, like Das Abendrot on this disc, Grenzen der Menschheit was conceived for Count Esterházy who had a voice of this range. The music is slow-moving (which he seemed to have suited his technique) and the text is certainly lofty enough to have satisfied his tastes. It would have been also far too hard for him, however. Although it is likely that Schubert and the Esterházys kept in touch between the first visit to Zseliz (1818) and the second in 1824, there is no evidence to link the family with Grenzen der Menschheit.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

WANDERER S NIGHT SONG II
D768. December 1822?; first issued as a supplement to the Wiener Zeitschrift in June 1827; then published as Op 96 No 3 in the summer of 1828
sung by Christopher Maltman

Über allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh’,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch
Die Vöglein schweigen im Walde.
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch.

Over all the peaks
There is peace;
In all the treetops
You feel
Scarcely a breath of air;
The little birds in the forest are silent.
Wait!
Soon you too will be at rest.

This is a conjunction of the purest genius: one of the greatest poems in the world, and one of the greatest single pages of music, only fourteen bars long but perfect in every way, the ideal combination of simplicity and deep feeling. It is extremely rare that a collaboration between poet and composer is on this exalted level, a total unanimity of approach and understanding. The poem has also inspired others to do their best: Zelter’s
Ruhe (1814) is a fine song which really creates an atmosphere, and Loewe’s setting (c1817), with its pulsating crotchet accompaniment, is also satisfying; Schumann’s Nachtlied (1850), one of the songs from his last period, has long been underestimated but a fine performance weaves a spell; even Liszt set the poem (in two versions, 1848 and 1860) with what seems admirable restraint in comparison to some of his treatment of song texts. Fanny Hensel, Reger, Ives and Medtner have also been drawn to the poem. But nothing can compare to Schubert’s song, which captures the poignancy of this text like no other.

The poem dates from September 1780, some months after Goethe had penned Grenzen der Menschheit and sent it to Charlotte von Stein, together with a drawing of a pig-sty. Wandrer’s Nachtlied came into being in even more unlikely, and almost legendary, circumstances. The story of its composition is well known to most Germans from their early schooldays. The poem was first written in pencil on the wall of a small room on the upper floor of a hunting chalet on the Kilckelhahn in the Thuringian hills, Ilmenau, near Weimar. Goethe was an energetic thirty-one-year-old who had climbed up high to view the sunset. ‘Apart from the smoke rising here and there from the charcoal-kilns, the whole scene is motionless’ he wrote to Frau von Stein. Some fifty-one years later, on 27 August 1831, at the age of 82, Goethe returned to this spot. On visiting the same chalet he recognised his own handwriting, now faded on the wall, and pondered the significance of the passing of time. When Goethe himself recounted this incident to his friend, the Berlin composer Karl Friedrich Zelter (letter of 4 September 1831), his observations were dryly philosophical; he reflected on how much had happened in the intervening time, how much life had changed – in effect, how much water had passed under the bridge. But on that day, the poet had been in the company of the civil servant Johann Christian Mahr who left a much more emotional description of the incident: ‘Goethe read these lines and tears flowed down his cheeks. Very slowly he drew a snow-white handkerchief from his dark brown coat, dried his eyes and spoke in a soft, mournful tone: ‘Yes, wait! Soon you too will be at rest!’

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
This story is even more moving if we reflect that when Goethe dried his tears, Franz Schubert had already been dead for nearly three years. Goethe, in his letter to Zelter wrote of Wandrers Nachtlied as a poem ‘that you, on the pinions of music, have so sweetly and movingly drawn through the world’. Well, Zelter’s song is beautiful, but not as beautiful as the song that poor Schubert had composed in Vienna some nine years before that second visit to Ilmenau. At least it had not been among the consignments of songs sent to Goethe by Schubert, all of which were ignored. ‘If only’ is a phrase that tends to recur regularly when it comes to the relationship, or rather non-relationship, between this composer and the poet of poets. But Goethe was right about one thing: these words have resounded through the world thanks to music – not Zelter’s, but Schubert’s. And how many countless friends has the poet made who otherwise would never have heard of him (particularly in the English-speaking world) had it not been for music! That Goethe is revered in England is partly thanks to Faust, but no other single work, or body of work from the purely literary standpoint, can rival the good done for his cause by the world-wide reception of the lied. Countless listeners, first enamoured of Schubert and Wolf, have come to love German literature in its own right.

The poem was published under the title ‘Ein Gleiches’ (‘Another One’) so that it is a pendant to the first Wandrers Nachtlied – ‘Der du von dem Himmel bist’, set by Schubert in 1815 (D224, Volume 1). It is a model of concision and conceals the logic and clarity of Goethe the scientist. The massive peace of which the poem speaks comes in ordered stages and pervades the whole of Creation. First the mountain peaks (‘Gipfeln’), the mineral world on which the poet was a considerable authority. Then, in the treetops (Wipfeln) no movement can be detected; Flora is still. We ascend the ladder of Creation. Next comes the repose of Fauna as the birds fall silent (‘Die Vöglein schweigen’). And finally, at the summit, Man – nature’s greatest achievement – who will soon rest also. Everything is so ordered and logical that we can scarcely believe that the poetic effect is also overwhelming; but therein lies the power of Goethe, and here is as perfect an example of what made him great as might be found – the extraordinary balance in his nature between artist and scientist, between truth and fantasy (Dichtung und Wahrheit, if you will), between the wise judgement of Apollo (who weighs each syllable and tests the truth of each statement) and Dionysos who fills what might otherwise have been dry and learned with such a rush of sensual feeling that, time after time, lines of his poetry make the hair stand on end at the back of one’s neck (as it happens, A E Housman’s test of great poetry). This poem truly contains the completeness of Goethe, the clinical eye of observation tempered by the great-hearted compassion so much more extraordinary than a sentimental story about a snow-white handkerchief. There is unerring ability to live in the present, to celebrate what is actually happening at any given moment. At the same time there is a perception of the larger picture, both in terms of time and space (for this view from Ilmenau is a vast and glorious panorama, no matter how pithy the poem). And Goethe, for all his deafness to the greatness of Schubert (for whatever of a number of reasons), understood something
that English writers (and composers) had forgotten since the time of Shakespeare, and not yet re-learned in 1780, or even much later. This was that the greatest art of the most learned poet could also take the form of a simple lyric, truthful, unpretentious, yet serious, and open to serious musical setting.

The key is B flat major, one of Schubert’s more neutral tonalities, although one can think of another spellbinding night-scene in this key – Der Winterabend. On reflection, because the scene is beyond emotion and in a sense impersonal, one understands the choice. The introduction in solemn dactyls announces something softly significant and universal; the composer uses this rhythm for the turning of the earth and the movement of the stars, and here we immediately sense the inscrutable majesty of a defining moment in nature. The piano sound is cushioned and smooth, the spacing of the chords suggesting the solemnity of ceremonial. This is the tessitura of tenor and bass singing in close harmony, and the pitch that we might hear the mournful tone of an alphorn resounding across the valleys. (Schubert chose B flat major to depict the wide open spaces of Der Hirt auf dem Felsen.) There is a hint of a melodic shape in the introduction which pre-shadows the contour of the vocal line, and the 6 – 4/5 – 3 cadence in this first bar makes magic of an harmonic cliché. The second bar, a V – I cadence, is another commonplace somehow turned to gold. With Spartan economy Schubert later uses this figure as the accompaniment to the song’s two closing bars.

At the entry of the voice, both singer and audience are already in the grip of an atmosphere conjured from seemingly nothing. The observer is very still, the vocal line begins on a level plateau of B flats; there is a small upward inflection as his gaze takes in the sight of the peaks (at ‘Gipfeln’) until a return to B flat on the word ‘Ruh’, where Goethe has provided his own vowel-music for a word that sounds ineffably peaceful in its own right. At ‘in allen Wipfeln’ there is a jump of a fourth as the singer refocuses his gaze to the middle-distance and sees the treetops, all of them. The eye is at work, but the body is still. This tranquillity must be reflected by a seamless mezza voce legato. At ‘Wipfeln spürest du’ the introduction of a German sixth in the accompaniment adds the first note of chromatic poignancy and mystery – we are witness to a sight so mighty that a shiver runs down the spine. In the semiquaver syncopations between the hands we hear the last stirrings of nature before complete repose. At ‘kaum einen Hauch’ (supported by a diminished-seventh harmony) the concentration deepens. There is ‘scarcely’ a breath of air, but the accompaniment tells us there is still some movement in the distance. The dotted-crotchet D flat has the observer transfixed, waiting to see whether a trace of wind remains in the treetops, straining to hear the dying music of nature. The tree-rustlings have been depicted in the lower octaves of the piano, and now the birds twitter over a lighter, clearer piano texture. They are not yet silent (that moment is to come); they are in the process of falling silent, and Schubert allows himself to repeat ‘schweigen’ with a touch of affectionate vocal cantilena for their fading strain.
There is a brief moment (only a quaver) of silence for the voice after ‘im Walde’. We hear the last rustling in B flat major from the piano. Then the devastating change to G minor for ‘Warte nur’. We have arrived at nature’s total silence, something almost as eerie as a total eclipse, and the point of the whole song. Only the observer standing on the hill is not at rest. From our privileged vantage point we have viewed all the various aspects of Creation – mineral, vegetable, and animal – and we are reminded that we are no less susceptible to change and decay than they are. It is difficult to say whether what follows is meant as a warning threat or a promise of release, and Schubert pitches his music in such a way as to include both possibilities. The two settings of ‘Warte nur’ (descending phrases in dotted rhythm, first in G minor, then opening out to F7) are rather stern as if part of a warning. But in the setting of ‘balde’, and a consolatory return to the tonic chord of B flat major, we encounter something spiritual, as if the voice in its upward flight to the heady realms of mezza voce has touched the hem of the divine garment. This tiny word – ‘soon’ – a gentle horn-call where voice and piano part in contrary motion, promises ineffable peace. But it also mirrors our fear of the unknown, and our reluctance to leave all this beauty behind us. The preceding bars (from ‘Warte nur’) are now repeated, although rebarred in a subtly different way. This near-symmetry is a masterstroke; only the greatest composers are unafraid to repeat their ideas. This makes of the closing of the song a solemn ritual and a benediction where the gravitas of inevitability (‘Soon you too will rest’) sets the seal on an imperishable masterpiece.

It also sets the seal on Schubert’s settings of Goethe, a farewell. Although it is not possible to set an exact date to the song, it is likely that this was the last new Goethe poem that Schubert set. All later Goethe settings are re-workings of poems (the Mignon songs) that he had already worked on for some years. This is also the last of the many Goethe settings to appear in the Hyperion Schubert Edition. The reader is referred to Volume 24 of the series where there is a biographical sketch of the poet and a complete list of his Goethe settings.

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Front illustration: Landpartie der Schubertianer (1820)
by Leopold Kupelwieser (1796–1862)
[Schubert is the second figure from the left]
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