

Music of a lesser genre? Schubert's development and transformation of the piano duet medium

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Prelude

Schubert's gift for transforming smaller genres into greater ones is not unique to his Lieder: the formal, stylistic and aesthetic innovations in Schubert's piano duets reveal an authentic development of this genre. Schubert's four-hand piano repertoire enjoyed the same performance setting as his songs, but in reception history have not enjoyed the same level of popularity. This chapter therefore seeks to examine why the duets have been misrepresented in scholarship and criticism, and also how Schubert's contribution differed radically to that of his predecessors. Firstly, the significance of the social milieu of the early nineteenth century in cultivating the duets shall be considered as also the many negative associations accompanying this musical setting. Key issues of reception history, which have contributed to the neglect of Schubert's piano duets within Schubert scholarship, will also be addressed. Following an exploration as to why these works have been neglected within scholarship, the history of the duet genre will be considered in order to place Schubert's contribution in a broader context. Finally, Schubert's own contribution will be assessed, alongside how traditional musicological approaches to the duets have begun to be overturned.

Cultural contexts: the Viennese salon

In her discussion on Viennese salon music during the nineteenth century, Alice Hanson acknowledges how musical activity during this era moved away from the support of aristocratic patrons to the salons of the affluent middle classes.¹ These prosperous middle class families played an intrinsic role in this salon culture as they purchased pianos which in turn supported both instrument makers and music

¹ Alice Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 109. Hereafter referred to as Hanson, *Musical Life*.

publishers.² It was in this private sphere that musical performances co-existed alongside literary readings, entertainment and receptions, where the Viennese salon was the prime venue for a larger cultural phenomenon of which music was only one part. However, was the salon merely a venue for light entertainment or did this setting conceal a more profound function? Firstly, in terms of the musical output, it is important to emphasize that different musical levels existed in the bourgeois salon culture.³ A dichotomy of style also existed within Schubert's own four-hand piano works revealing how he engaged with both the entertaining and serious within this one context. In fact, Christopher Gibbs acknowledges that it can be difficult to classify Schubert both musically and functionally even within a single genre.⁴ In line with this, David Gramit recognizes how during a Schubertiade both Schubert's close friends and society at large 'shared culture through conversation and dancing, as well as through a serious interest in music.'⁵ This 'serious interest in music' included Schubert's Lieder and many of his piano duets, which were both frequently practiced musical genres at such musical gatherings.⁶ The presence of influential members

² Howard Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 5. Hereafter referred to as Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets*.

³ Hanson, *Musical Life*, p. 119.

⁴ Christopher H. Gibbs, 'Introduction: the elusive Schubert', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1–11 (p. 4).

⁵ David Gramit, "'The passion for friendship": Music, cultivation, and identity in Schubert's circle', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 56–71 (p. 65).

⁶ A pivotal article in this regard is Otto Biba's 'Schubert's Position in Viennese Musical Life', *19th Century Music*, 3/2 (1979), 106–13, which reveals Schubert's wealth of activity as a composer, being widely published and performed during his lifetime. An insightful article regarding Schubert's reception in Victorian England argues how perceptions are influenced by stereotypes based on society's ideals of what are considered masculine and feminine activities. David Gramit, 'Constructing a Victorian Schubert: Music, Biography, and Cultural

of society as well as musicians at a typical Schubertiade evening are supported by the table below.

Table 1. Schubertiade guests at the home of Josef Spaun⁷

Government Officials	
Eduard Bauernfeld	Official in the Lottery Administration; writer
Ignaz Castelli	Librarian & secretary to: the Lower Austrian County Council; writer
Anton Doblhoff	Austrian minister
Karl Enderes	Conveyancer for Ministry of Finance
Josef Gahy	Secretary of Court Chamber; pianist
Franz Grillparzer	Director of Court Chamber archives; writer
Josef Gross	Secretary to Court Exchequer
Josef Kenner	Magistry official in Linz; poet
Anton Ottenwalt	Assistant to Chamber procurator
Johann Mayerhofer	Austrian censor; poet
Martin Perfetta	Official in Court War Accountancy
Karl Schönstein	Counsellor in Ministry of Finance
Michael Rueskäfer	Examiner of excise affairs (custom official)
Josef Spaun	Official in Lottery Administration
Josef Witticzek (& wife)	Conveyancer to Privy State Chancellory
Army	
Ferdinand Mayerhofer	Lieutenant Fieldmarshal; military surveyor
Johann Senn	Teacher in military academy
Professional/self-employed	
Karl Enk	Private tutor
Ernst Feuchtersleben	Physician; poet/philosopher
Karl Pinterics	Private secretary to Prince Josef Palffy
Franz Schober	Secretary to Franz Liszt; Actor
Romeo F. Seligmann	Physician; professor of medical history
Johann Steiger von Amstein	Mining expert in Gmunden
Ferdinand Walcher	Timber dealer
Musicians	
Franz Lachner	Conductor at Kärntnerthor Theatre (beg. 1829)
Ignaz Lachner	Organist; theatre conductor
Benedict Randhartinger	Kapellmeister at Court Chapel
Franz Schubert	Composer; school teacher's assistant
Michael Vogel (& wife)	Retired opera singer

Values', *19th Century Music*, 17/1, Schubert: Music, Sexuality and Culture (1993), 65–78.

⁷ Alice Hanson: *Musical Life*, pp. 205–06.

Gramit's mention of 'Schubert's close friends and society at large' reveals a communicative element (and leads us to an additional possible meaning within these musical gatherings) which is addressed by another eminent Schubert scholar, Leon Botstein, in his article: 'Realism transformed: Franz Schubert and Vienna.'⁸ In his discussion Botstein identifies three functions of music in Vienna during Schubert's time: that music acted as a private communication for individuals; that musical gatherings, such as the Schubertiades, provided a safe means of communication in a supposedly politically neutral event; and finally that these events were an aspect of domestic living between family and close friends.⁹

The varying communicative elements, which are at the core of Botstein's theory, can be directly applied to Schubert's works from the four-hand repertoire: his proposal, for example, that music functioned as an escape from the negative aspects of Viennese political and social life tie in with the struggle between the inner and outer Schubert as has been suggested by William Kinderman in his discussion of the F minor Fantasy (D940).¹⁰ In his critique of this work, Kinderman asserts how the inner (unrealistic) self, full of optimism, is broken by the harsh realities of the external world – both aspects of the man being represented by thematic, modal and tonal contrasts.¹¹ What Botstein's argument proposes is that beneath these frivolous soirees existed meaningful musical activity amidst many codes of communication.

Although the salon was the primary forum for musical activity during Schubert's time, changes in how music functioned in society and the negative connotations of the salon resulted in the decline of the popularity of the piano duet. As music making in Vienna moved from

⁸ Leon Botstein, 'Realism Transformed: Franz Schubert and Vienna', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 15–35. Hereafter referred to as Botstein, 'Realism Transformed'.

⁹ Botstein, 'Realism Transformed', pp. 31–32.

¹⁰ William Kinderman, 'Schubert's piano music: probing the human condition', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 155–73. Hereafter referred to as Kinderman, 'Schubert's piano music.'

¹¹ Kinderman, 'Schubert's piano music', p. 171.

the salon and into the public sphere, the once popular duets gradually faded into the memories of a drawing room culture. Public concerts became more prevalent and the rise of the solo virtuoso overshadowed music for two performers at one piano. Other aspects of the drawing room culture, such as it being a venue for women – something long construed as a negative element – had a direct consequence on the reception of Schubert. The negative associations of women and the salon are discussed by Marcia Citron in her book, *Gender and the Musical Canon*.¹² Citron highlights how the reputation of female composers and musicians at the beginning of the nineteenth century, although popular at that time, were damaged because of their association with the salon.¹³ Schubert's association with the salon has, in older musicology, been viewed in a similarly negative way, which encouraged perceptions of Schubert as a composer of feminine and therefore lesser genres.¹⁴

A further aspect of the salon culture during the nineteenth century, the popularity of transcriptions, has also had negative repercussions for Schubert's four-hand repertoire. In fact, when discussing the music culture of the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century, Dahlhaus observes how piano transcriptions of chamber and symphonic music were a 'cornerstone of bourgeois music culture.'¹⁵ Although this cannot be disputed, the close connection transcriptions had with domestic musical activity has to some extent, influenced

¹² Marcia Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000). Hereafter referred to as Citron, *Gender*.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹⁴ The renowned critic, Robert Schumann, in relation to the Grand Duo, discussed Schubert as a feminine character in comparison to Beethoven in Robert Schumann, *Robert Schumann on Music and Musicians* (London: Denis Dobson 1947/reprinted 1956), pp. 116–17. Christopher H. Gibbs explores, and argues against, past perceptions of Schubert, for example, Schubert as feminine versus Beethoven as mighty in his article: "Poor Schubert": Images and legends of the composer', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 36–55. Hereafter referred to as Gibbs, 'Poor Schubert'.

¹⁵ Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth Century Music* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 42.

perceptions that four hands at one piano merely provided a utilitarian function. However, in his seminal work on Schubert and his four-hand music, Brian Newbould differentiates between the utilitarian character of so much duet music in the nineteenth century and Schubert's realisation of the 'intrinsic values of the four-hand ensemble.'¹⁶

Issues of reception history

Just as the duets faded into the memories of the drawing room culture, these works remained absent for a long time from serious consideration in Schubert scholarship and systematic musicology. The rather complex nature of Schubert's reception history has most certainly played a role in this context. The long-standing perception of Schubert as an unknown composer during his time has been overturned in recent revisionist Schubert scholarship and Gibbs states that Schubert experienced 'coexisting fame and neglect'.¹⁷ The fame mentioned by Gibbs most certainly includes the duets which, as outlined earlier, were an inherent part of the salon experience. However, the discovery of a wealth of instrumental works after Schubert's death completely overshadowed his unique development of the piano duet genre. Although some of Schubert's biggest achievements in the duet genre were published and performed after his death, they were few in number in comparison to the significant number of chamber and orchestral works discovered and published posthumously.

¹⁶ Brian Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1997), pp. 234–49 (p. 234). Hereafter referred to as Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*. Other revisionist readings which support Schubert as an innovator of the duet genre include: (a) Frank Dawes, 'Piano Duets', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, 2nd edn, 29 vols (London: Macmillan, 2001), xix, 653–55. Hereafter referred to as Dawes, 'Piano Duets'. (b) Robert Winter, 'Schubert, Franz (Peter)', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, 2nd edn, 29 vols (London: Macmillan, 2001), xxii, 655–729 (p. 684). Hereafter referred to as Winter, 'Schubert'.

¹⁷ Gibbs, 'Poor Schubert', p. 48.

Table 2. Key Schubert duets published posthumously¹⁸

Work	Year Composed	Year Published
Sonata in C, "Grand Duo" D812	1824 (June)	1838
Allegro in A minor, 'Lebensstürme' D 947	1828 (May)	1840
Fantasy in F minor D940	1828	1829

In terms of musicological reception history since the twentieth century, it is only in approximately the last thirty years that approaches to the duets have begun to change. Laurence Petran's short article (1945) again highlights how perceptions of the medium have suffered from the abundant use of arrangements of instrumental works.¹⁹ Although Petran does briefly acknowledge Mozart and Schubert's exceptional contributions to the genre (one work each)²⁰, he refers to duets in general as being in a 'lowly estate.'²¹ In a much later article, however, Frank Dawes (2001) acknowledges that some interesting contributions to the genre were made prior to Schubert, but that it was he who fully utilized the possibilities of the duet medium.²² Another recent article by Robert Winter (from the same year) makes a similar claim that Schubert's piano duets could be considered the composer's most unique works for keyboard.²³ It is, therefore, only relatively recently that these four-hand works are being viewed as a revolutionizing of a domestic genre. Consequently, such re-appraisals have encouraged further research in this area.

The social context, being so central to the duet genre, has been discussed within older musicology though frequently with negative

¹⁸ Christopher Gibbs, 'German Reception: Schubert's "journey to immortality"', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 241–53 (p. 248). Hereafter referred to as Gibbs, 'German Reception'.

¹⁹ Laurence Petran, 'Piano Duets', *Bulletin of the American Musicological Society*, 8 (1945), 10.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Mozart: Sonata in F Major K497 and Schubert: Andantino Varié in B Minor op.84 no.1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²² Frank Dawes, 'Piano Duets', pp. 653–55 (p. 654).

²³ Winter, 'Schubert', p. 684.

implications. In Arthur Hutchings (1973) discussion of the works he referred to the duets as a 'sociable branch of music [and as] some of Schubert's best light music'.²⁴ Although Hutchings remark appears complimentary on the surface it automatically indicates that these works are 'non-serious' by referring to them as his 'best light music.' Eric Sams (1976) praises Schubert's duets as being original as well as simultaneously profound and trivial, yet comments that 'much of the music was simply designed to make and keep friends [...] [and that some of the duets] bring total expressiveness within the grasp of the home music-maker'.²⁵ Although this music *was* designed to 'make and keep friends', this was only one aspect of the duets and categorizing them in this way offers a limited perspective on these works. Furthermore, the implication that Schubert had to limit himself artistically in order to produce accessible music for the domestic household automatically degrades the duets as quality works.

Schubert's achievement in combining the serious and the sociable in his duets has been recently addressed by the scholar Margaret Notley, where she focuses on duets such as the A flat Variations on an original theme (D813), composed in 1824, and the Allegro in A minor (D947), composed in 1828. Notley's argument overturns traditional beliefs regarding this aspect of Schubert's music for four-hands. In past histories Einstein placed a distinct divide between the sociable Schubert, for example in his duets, and a serious Schubert as in his late sonatas and string quartets. In response to this, Notley requests that the sociable quality should not be underrated.²⁶ In this context, she discusses the 'orchestral massiveness' of the Allegro in A minor and also its abrupt modulations which add an immense intensity to the piece.²⁷ The sociable side, Notley argues, is revealed towards the end with its entertaining brilliance. Similarities are

²⁴ Arthur Hutchings, *The Master Musicians Series: Schubert* (London, New York: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1973), pp. 152–53.

²⁵ Eric Sams, 'Schubert's Piano Duets', *The Musical Times*, 117/1596 (1976), 120–21.

²⁶ Margaret Notley, 'Schubert's social music', p.146.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.148.

highlighted between his duos and his chamber music (with piano) in terms of expressiveness with some similar pianistic textures.²⁸

The piano duet as a domestic activity

Prior to Schubert's engagement with the genre, the domestic nature of the duets has remained an influential element in our perception of these works. As early as the seventeenth century, the English composer Nicholas Carleton (c.1570–75–1630), credited with one of the earliest keyboard duets ever composed, indicated that his 'Verse for two' was to be played on one virginal or organ,²⁹ which, according to Dawes, suggests a domestic context. Despite the presence of such early works as Carleton's duet and Thomas Tomkins (1572–1640): *A Fancy for two to play*, it wasn't until the eighteenth century that music for keyboard four hands became popular. From approximately 1760 onwards this domesticity was reinforced as the keyboard duet was frequently employed as a pedagogical tool, thus ensuring its status as a 'lower' genre. In Dr Charles Burney's Preface of *Two sonatas or duets for two performers one piano-forte or harpsichord* (1777), he discusses these works in a pedagogical context referring to two students playing them in a domestic setting. A further example is Haydn's duet composition, a theme and variations for four hands entitled: 'Teacher and Student (1778)',³⁰ which reveals a very simple compositional approach where the teacher begins a melodic idea and the student merely imitates exactly.

The domestic character of the duet and the production of pedagogical works dictated the style of the duets, and an examination of the compositional approaches of eighteenth century composers proves to be an insightful tool in ascertaining the common style of the duet shared by composers at that time. The duets produced during this period were typically light entertaining works, attractive and appealing

²⁸ Here Notley argues that the "Trout" Quintet (D667), the B flat Trio (D898) and the E flat Trio (D929) use the pianistic texture of doubling a melody at the octave as is frequently practiced in both hands of the primo player of Schubert's duets.

²⁹ Dawes, 'Piano Duets', p. 653.

³⁰ Cameron McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire – Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).

Hereafter referred to as McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire*, x.

to its designated market. Such composers as Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782) and Muzio Clementi (1752–1832) were important figures in this respect.³¹ The former, also known as the London Bach, produced mainly sonatas for four hands which are generally ‘elegant, refined and controlled pieces.’³² Clementi wrote a considerable number of duets, among them seven four-hand sonatas. Some of the chief characteristics of the duet, which Schubert later developed, are found in his works of this kind: counterpoint, orchestral styles and also the expressive possibilities of the genre.³³ Due to the availability of four hands on one piano, counterpoint was frequently employed and Schubert exploited polyphony fully in his later duets.

Many of Mozart’s early duet compositions subscribed to this light and entertaining style, as was typical of the drawing room aesthetic at that time.³⁴ However, his most mature work for the piano duet, the F major sonata K.497 (1786), has been described as an ‘almost uncomfortably great piece of domestic music’³⁵ thereby pointing to its departure from established norms. Donald Tovey even admitted ‘being tempted to arrange the sonata as a string-quartet in G with two violoncellos.’³⁶ It is very likely that Schubert would have been familiar with this work, as it was both composed and published in Vienna. Schubert had studied and performed works by Mozart during his school days at the Stadtkonvikt and with the family orchestra and would have been aware of his significance as a composer. It is therefore very likely

³¹ Additional duet composers of the eighteenth century include: Muzio Clementi (1752–1832), Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837), Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826) and Carl Czerny (1791–1857).

³² *Ibid.*, xi.

³³ Marianne Stoezel, & Mary Applegate, ‘Review, A Selection of Four-Hand Duets Published between 1777 and 1857; Works for Two Pianos Published between 1778 and 1860 by Nicholas Temperley’, *Music and Letters*, 70/2 (1989), 306–08 (p. 307).

³⁴ Mozart’s duet output included six sonatas, a theme and variations, two fantasies and a fugue.

³⁵ Eric Blom, *Mozart* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd; New York: Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy, 1962), p. 273.

³⁶ Tovey, Donald, *Essays in Musical Analysis Vol.1 Symphonies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 199.

that this pivotal work had a significant impact on Schubert and alerted him to the possibilities of this genre. These possibilities are especially realised in the duets from 1824 and onwards – from Schubert’s middle to late periods – examples of which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Beethoven’s engagement with the piano duet took place early in his career and comprises merely a two-movement Sonata in D, two sets of variations and three marches. These pieces, which were intended for the middle-class market, are attractive and sometimes playful pieces, staying true to the typically light, entertaining style of the piano duet genre. His variations on a theme by Count Waldstein, for example, are incomparable to Schubert’s A flat Variations on many levels. Beethoven’s repeated use of the melody by the primo in many of the variations, undisguised, is nowhere near as sophisticated as Schubert’s development of his subject, for example in the final variation, in his A flat Variations on an original theme (D813).

What further ways then did Schubert add to this genre as it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century?

Composing his first duet at thirteen years, Schubert’s three earliest attempts at this genre were all fantasies – an early indication that the composer realised new expressive possibilities within the genre. Schubert’s time in Zseliz as a tutor for the Esterhazys in 1818 produced further duets – Four Polonaises (D599), Three Marches Heroiques (D602), Sonata in B flat (D617), Deutscher and Ländler (D618), and Eight Variations on a French song (D624) – but it was Schubert’s second stay at Zseliz in 1824 that marks a genuine elevation of the piano duet with his Grand Duo Sonata in C. (D812).³⁷ In fact Christopher Gibbs acknowledges 1824 (and here he includes the Grand Duo in his argument) as a period when ‘Schubert’s instrumental music [...] shifted from amateur to professional’.³⁸ The elevated and symphonic style of Schubert’s Grand Duo created a debate led by Schumann and Tovey,

³⁷ Duets composed in Esterhazy in 1824 include: the Grand Duo Sonata in C (D812), Eight Variations on an original theme, A flat (D813), Four Ländler (D814), Divertissement à l’hongroise (D818) and Six Grandes Marches (D819).

³⁸ Christopher Gibbs, ‘Poor Schubert’, p. 41.

regarding the accepted criteria that a domestic piece of music was expected to fulfil. Both authors struggled to consider this work as a duet on the grounds that it was outside the norms of the domestic duet style. The influence of the arguments presented by such eminent critics should not be underestimated and three attempts³⁹ were made to orchestrate the work including Joseph Joachim who orchestrated the work in 1855.⁴⁰ However, his attempt to arrange the work as a symphony required tempo changes which, ironically, proved its compositional intention as an independent piano duet. In line with this, Jeffrey Kallberg observes that the mixing of genres was a common modification of style in the early nineteenth century.⁴¹ Therefore, the orchestral style in which Schubert composed the Sonata in C may have been unorthodox for the piano duet but not untypical of what was occurring in art music across the board. Brian Newbould also points out that when it comes to style in a work, piano, quartet and orchestral styles often overlap: an orchestral style is also found in other piano duets by Schubert, an example of which is the Allegro in A minor (D947) written in the final year of his life.⁴² Furthermore, that Schubert referred to the Sonata in C as a work for piano four-hands in his correspondences from Zseliz in 1824 to his brother Ferdinand⁴³ and his friend Moritz von Schwind,⁴⁴ seemed to be ignored by any sceptics that this was an original work for piano four hands:

³⁹ Ernest G. Porter, *Schubert's Piano Works* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1980). Other attempts to orchestrate the Grand Duo were made by Antony Collins and Karl Salomon, p. 154.

⁴⁰ Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets*, p. 11.

⁴¹ Jeffrey Kallberg, 'The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin's Nocturne in G Minor', *19th Century Music*, 11/3 (1988), 238–61 (p. 245).

⁴² Brian Newbould, *Schubert, The Music and the Man*, p. 241.

⁴³ Schubert to his brother Ferdinand, (16th or 17th) to 18 July 1824, cited in, Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert A Documentary Biography*, trans by Eric Blom (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1946), pp. 362–64.

⁴⁴ Schubert to Moritz von Schwind, August 1824, cited in Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert A Documentary Biography*, trans by Eric Blom (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1946), pp. 369–70.

I have composed a grand sonata and variations for four hands, which latter are having a particularly great success here [in Zseliz]; but as I do not wholly trust the Hungarians taste, I leave it to you and the Viennese to decide.⁴⁵

This quote not only indicates the certainty that the Duo was intended as a piece for four hands but reveals these works as serious compositions by the composer.

Liszt's assertion that Schubert was the most poetic composer who ever lived can surely be applied to the beautifully expressive seventh variation of his A flat Variations (1824) which reveals a deliberately uncertain chromaticism as the music travels between F minor and C minor.⁴⁶ This variation reveals a new depth of expression for the duet and is indicative of Jim Samson's assertion that piano works at the beginning of the nineteenth century, influenced by vocal music and contemporary literature, subsequently encouraged an increasingly expressive aesthetic.⁴⁷ It was this expressive aesthetic, which was found in Schubert's later duets, that troubled Carl Dahlhaus in his discussions of genre where he asserted that genre was relegated a subordinate position in favour of aesthetic autonomy.⁴⁸ Here, Carl Dahlhaus' theory which states that after 1800 there was a transfer of emphasis away from the importance of 'genre' to the concept of an 'individual work' is surely applicable to this sonata, which was considered outside the norms of the duet style. That musical genres ceased to have a function in the early nineteenth century, as proposed by Dahlhaus,⁴⁹ has been contested by recent scholars such as Samson and Kallberg. One of the central criticisms of Dahlhaus' theory, when he asserts that function in music was 'obliterated entirely or relegated to

⁴⁵ Schubert to Moritz von Schwind, cited in Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert A Documentary Biography*, trans by Eric Blom (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1946), p. 370.

⁴⁶ Notley, 'Schubert's Social Music', p. 147.

⁴⁷ Jim Samson, *Chopin and Genre, Musical Analysis*, 8/3, (1989), 213–31 (p. 214).

⁴⁸ Carl Dahlhaus, cited in Citron, *Gender*, p. 126.

⁴⁹ In the eighteenth century Dahlhaus highlights how a genre had a specific function such as liturgy or dance, cited in Citron, *Gender*, p.126.

the backstairs of music',⁵⁰ is that his interpretation of function is too limited. To adopt Dahlhaus' view is to subscribe to the belief that genre was completely fixed and predictable which denies the possibility of it developing and expanding and also dismisses the importance of the expressive aesthetic in works of this period.

Schubert's unique compositional approaches in his duets provide further evidence that he strove to create unique and enduring works for this genre. Schubert's sudden modulations and free handling of form, which are abundant in the duets, were initially considered a compositional weakness by such musicologists as Theodor Adorno who likened Schubert's thematic structure to musical "pot-pourri."⁵¹ This criticism proved damning in consideration of Schubert's innovative handling of form. Contrary to traditional readings of Schubert's mishandling of the patterns of modulation within the framework of sonata forms, Charles Rosen was one of the first to acknowledge that the shift of a semitone is common to duets such as the final of the Six Grande Marches (D819), composed in 1824, and furthermore is the major structural principal in the Grand Duo Sonata.⁵²

Schubert's complex nature as a person (especially after being hospitalised in 1823 with syphilis and the accompanying recognition

⁵⁰ Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, trans by J. B. Robinson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 149.

⁵¹ Theodor Adorno, cited in Kinderman, 'Schubert's Piano Music', p. 155.

⁵² Charles Rosen, 'Schubert's inflections of Classical Form', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 72–98. A pivotal publication regarding piano literature, although outside the piano duet, is Charles Fisk's, *Returning cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Late Sonatas* (London: University of California Press, c.2001). Important analytical studies which are welcome revisionist literature on Schubert's handling of large-scale forms include: David Beach, 'Schubert's Experiments with Sonata Form: Formal-Tonal Design versus Underlying Structure', *Music Theory Spectrum*, 15/1 (1993), 1–18; John M. Gingerich, 'Remembrance and Consciousness in Schubert's C Major String Quartet (D 956)', *The Music Quarterly*, 84/4 (2000), 619–34; and Gordon Sly, 'Schubert's Innovations in Sonata Form: Compositional Logic and Structural Interpretations', *The Journal of Music Theory*, 45/1 (2001), 119–50.

that he was terminally ill) produced increasingly profound works in and beyond this genre. That he created three duets in 1828 is significant for the genre's status: Fantasy in F minor (D940), Allegro in A minor 'Lebensstürme' (D947), and the Rondo in A (D951). The F minor duet, for example, is a profound work that has invited serious investigation within Schubert scholarship and some scholars have identified influences of previous composers on this work.⁵³ The unanimous conclusion of these articles reveals how Schubert absorbed influences of his predecessors and recognizes the originality he brought to his own composition. In his article, 'Something Borrowed'⁵⁴, which argues that Schubert's F minor Fantasy was influenced by Mozart's F minor Fantasia duet for mechanical organ (K608), Humphreys raises a valid point of difference between the two composers' treatments of the duet when concluding his article: where Schubert treats the duet as a serious genre, Mozart's style is 'archaic' in his duet due to the constraints of the mechanical organ. Furthermore, Humphreys identifies the duet as typical of 'the highly personal poetry of [Schubert's] late style'.⁵⁵ An important revisionist article by William Kinderman discusses a deep-seated psychological symbolism in relation to the F minor Fantasy duet.⁵⁶ In this work, Kinderman identifies a striking similarity between the Fantasy and *Winterreise* with both works journeying towards the same tragic destiny. In this belief Kinderman asserts that the thematic, modal and tonal contrasts with the lyrical theme represent an 'air of unreality', which are cruelly broken by the second theme.⁵⁷

Postlude

Certainly, Schubert's duets are being acknowledged in more recent scholarship as significant works in his overall output as can be seen in the following testaments. Although the seminal work of William

⁵³ (a) David Humphreys, 'Something borrowed', *The Musical Times*, 138/1853 (1997), 19–24. Hereafter referred to as Humphreys, 'Something borrowed'. (b) Elizabeth Norman McKay, 'Schubert and Hummel: Debts and Credits', *The Musical Times*, 140/1868 (1999), 30–35.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, (a).

⁵⁵ Humphreys, 'Something borrowed', p. 24.

⁵⁶ Kinderman, 'Schubert's Piano Music', pp. 155–173.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

Kinderman and Charles Rosen has inspired a re-questioning of traditional perceptions, their focus on one or two specific works merits a more comprehensive evaluation and interpretation, both of which would reveal further insight into Schubert's contribution to this genre and perhaps even our understanding of Schubert himself. Current opinions in Schubert scholarship appear to support the view that Schubert brought an originality and profound expressive character to the duets and the evident popularity of the Grand Duo and the Fantasy in F actively encourages new perceptions of the duets – especially the later works. And so we are left asking: to what extent did other genres and/or musical practices of the early nineteenth century influence Schubert's expansive style in the duets? Is it possible for the serious and the sociable to co-exist within one musical work? Can compositional features such as the abrupt modulations also found in the Allegro in A minor 'Lebensstürme' (D947) represent a latent psychological meaning?

Gibbs defines the ever-changing perception of Schubert's works most aptly:

The history of Schubert's musical reception charts not only the changing evaluations and interpretations of his individual works, but also the broader revaluations of his overall artistic stature.⁵⁸

These words support the basic premise of this chapter as the journey of re-assessing Schubert's four-hand repertoire and simultaneously raising his stature as a serious salon composer begins. Many musicologists, when discussing Schubert, often refer to his journey, whether it be the ever-changing journey of the reception of his works or the journey that occurs within his actual musical works. Exploring Schubert's duets composed over the entire span of his life, the significance of their context, and how he developed this genre so significantly, opens up a voyage of discovery within Schubert scholarship.

⁵⁸ Gibbs, 'German reception', pp. 241–42.

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