



# **Schubert's Piano Works for Four Hands**

**Performative and Pedagogical Insights into a Selection of  
Schubert's Piano Duets**

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## **Abstract**

Franz Schubert's engagement with piano duets began at the age of thirteen and continued until his untimely death in 1828. He elevated the piano duet to a new degree of sophistication, composing extensively for the medium – 34 works. He was a pioneer in this genre and no composer has rivalled his legacy since then in terms of the quantity and quality of his piano duets. There was a point in time during which the popularity of the four-hand genre rivalled that of solo piano, though many of these works were transcriptions/arrangements. Schubert's works though were almost exclusively original piano duets. His output consists of extremely diverse genres and forms including sonatas, polonaises, marches, dances, variations, fantasies, overtures, rondos, divertissements, and a fugue. Of all his opus numbers published during his lifetime, his piano duets were second only to his Lieder in number. His artful complexity in the genre paved the path for Schumann, Brahms, and later composers to explore this area, as Schubert attracted new attention to the genre as a serious artform.

However, despite Schubert's efforts in transcending the boundaries of the piano duet, the significance of his piano duets remains largely unexplored or at least significantly unaddressed in scholarship. Why is this? This thesis will investigate contributing factors that until now, have not been given significant attention. Much of the scholarly efforts in the nineteenth and twentieth century on Schubert were centred around his Lieder – though I argue Schubert was of a pioneer in the genre of piano duets too. More recently, scholars have begun to re-examine Schubert's solo piano works, especially his 'Wanderer' Fantasy and his late piano sonatas. I posit that Schubert's cultivation of the piano duet genre was equally authentic as his solo works and ask, why have his piano duets not been held in such a high regard? A selection of Schubert's overlooked piano works are provided as case studies, providing performative and pedagogical perspectives. This research penetrates uncharted territory, as scholarship on Schubert's piano duets is minimal and a more comprehensive study is due. Consequently, this thesis will bridge gaps in the reassessment of Schubert's piano works, and it will contribute to the creation of new perspectives in Schubertian scholarship.

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## Abbreviations

Abbreviations	
<b>ABRSM</b>	Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
<b>AGA</b>	Alte Gesamtausgabe
<b>Anh.</b>	Appendices
<b>arr.</b>	Arrangement
<b>arr. by</b>	Arranged by
<b>c.</b>	Circa
<b>D.</b>	Deutsch number from the Schubert Thematic Catalogue
<b>ed.</b>	Edited by
<b>edn.</b>	Edition
<b>e.g.</b>	Example
<b>EPTA</b>	European Piano Teachers Association
<b>ff</b>	Fortissimo
<b>fff</b>	Fortississimo
<b>FP.</b>	Francis Poulenc works
<b>frag.</b>	Fragments
<b>i.e.</b>	Id est (that is)
<b>IMSLP</b>	International Music Score Library Project
<b>L.</b>	Lesure's catalogue of Debussy's works
<b>movt</b>	Movement
<b>MTNA</b>	Music Teachers National Association
<b>NA</b>	Not applicable

<b>n.d.</b>	No date
<b>No.</b>	Number
<b>NSA</b>	Neue Schubert-Ausgabe
<b>Op.</b>	Opus number
<b>org.</b>	Organ
<b>ov.</b>	Overture
<b>pf.</b>	Pianoforte
<b>pp</b>	Pianissimo
<b>ppp</b>	Pianississimo
<b>P.</b>	Primo
<b>RIAM</b>	The Royal Irish Academy of Music
<b>S</b>	Secondo
<b>S. (+ number)</b>	Searle's catalogue of Liszt works
<b>sn.</b>	For Clementi's works; senza numero d'opera
<b>trans by.</b>	Translated by
<b>WoO</b>	Work without opus number
<b>4H</b>	Four hands

## An Editorial Note to the Reader

Bar numbering follows that of the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe – which is, each section of a work begins with bar 1. For example, in Schubert’s *Kindermarsch* (D.928) and the Polonaises (D.599 and D.824) for four hands, the trio sections are labelled from bar 1. However, for the Variations in A flat Major (D.813), the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe’s numbering is different in that the bar numbers do not return to bar 1 at the commencement of each variation. For consistency in this thesis, as well as accessibility in mind, each variation is numbered commencing with bar 1.

Pitches are indicated using scientific pitch notation, also known as international pitch notation. This method specifies the pitch by denoting the note name, along with a number which identifies the pitch’s octave. E.g., C4= middle C.

For readability purposes and following general practice in Music Theory, uppercase letters refer to major keys, and lowercase letters refer to minor keys (in the appendices only). E.g., C=C major and a=a minor.

This thesis conforms to the Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA) Style Guide. However, in the most recent update to this style guide, there is a change that stipulates that the place of publication should be omitted when referencing. It is stated to omit the place of publication unless ‘necessary’ or unless the references provide ‘useful’ information.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of university presses, for which the place of publication is contained in the press’s title, this present researcher has included the place of publication as it represents important and necessary information.

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<sup>1</sup> MHRA, *Modern Humanities Research Association Style Guide: A Handbook for Authors, Editors, and Writers of Theses* (Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2024), p. 8.

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# Introduction

## I. Rationale for this Study

Philosopher and occasional composer Nietzsche, as a wedding gift, composed a four-handed work aptly titled *Monodie à deux* (Monody for Two). He commented that this piece ‘may be taken as a divining rod for a good marriage’.<sup>2</sup> Today’s reader however may more readily agree with novelist Theodor Fontane’s remark: ‘It is nonsense to believe that one might become happy by playing a sonata with four hands. Marriage is founded on other things’.<sup>3</sup> While Nietzsche’s statement now seems humorous, it reveals the significant role the piano duet played in everyday life throughout Europe. Piano duets in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century were performed in a plethora of settings with great gusto, from the homes of the nascent middle-class, to the salon and the imperial courts. Four-handed playing was a product of its time, and it mirrored the values of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century society in Vienna. The same level of engagement with this genre has not been achieved since then, though society more broadly may be exposed on occasion to duets in popular media; Tim Burton’s *Corpse Bride* (2005), *The Princess Switch* (2018), and *Maestro* (2023) all feature piano duets.

Schubert was instrumental in contributing to the elevation of piano duets, but his contribution as the main composer of this genre has been undervalued. Why is this? While many other composers composed piano duets, Schubert composed more original piano duets of the highest quality than any other major composer. He worked with an extremely diverse range of genres – which bear testimony to his comprehensive knowledge of genre conventions

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<sup>2</sup> Adrian Daub, *Four-Hand Piano Playing and Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

– while simultaneously transgressing boundaries by experimenting with genre expectations.<sup>4</sup> A glance at the dates in appendix 1 of this thesis reveals piano duets were never far from his mind, as does Byrne Bodley’s chronology of Schubert’s life.<sup>5</sup> It is a remarkable testament to his character that he brought this seemingly marginal genre to new heights, while simultaneously doing the same to other genres, such as the Lied and solo piano dances. While many of his piano duets were published during his lifetime, the association of duets with commerciality and domesticity marred the reception of his duets posthumously. To further complicate his artistic legacy, there still were many duets that remained unpublished for some time after his death (not to mention his other works). The staggered release of his publications after his death resulted in perceptions of Schubert being formed on a lack of knowledge of Schubert’s complete compositions. One is reminded on this matter of biographer Kreissle’s comment that so much of Schubert’s music is unexplored; he mentions many types of works but ironically omits naming Schubert’s keyboard works; his sonatas, his piano duets and his dances. This omission is perhaps indicative of the Zeitgeist following Schubert’s death:

Schubert in his totality is only known and appreciated by a few. There are all kinds of vocal works, cantatas, overtures, orchestral, opera, and church music, of which hitherto not a single note has ever been heard. For forty years and more have these works remained unused, in some cases mere objects of painful solicitude, as though the musician [Schubert] had written his enchanting music only for himself, and not for ourselves and our children.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, this research aims to investigate these undervalued piano duets; their conception, their reception, their liminal position within the hierarchy of genre, and their legacy. I will address

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<sup>4</sup> As Byrne Bodley notes, Schubert both juxtaposes and integrates the intellectual with the popular, with his works containing aspects such as ‘his learned style’ and ‘counterpoint’ to satisfy the intellectual, while also using popular melodies, variation and virtuosity to please the general listener: Lorraine Byrne Bodley, ‘Between Society and Solitude: Schubert’s Improvisations’ in *Schubert’s Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 30–49 (p. 46).

<sup>5</sup> Lorraine Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer* (Yale University Press, 2023), pp. 546–605.

<sup>6</sup> Heinrich Kreissle von Hellborn, *The Life of Franz Schubert*, II, trans. by Arthur Duke Coleridge (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1869), p. 255.

the reasons behind the void in scholarship and repertoire regarding his duets and delve into an analytical study of Schubert's *Four Ländler* (D.814), *Kindermarsch* (D.928), the Polonaises in D Minor (D.599 and D.824), and the Variations in A flat Major (D.813). This means Schubert's exceptional ambiguity and even mistreatment within reception history will be addressed, as well as more recent revisionist efforts into his piano works, which appear to concentrate more on solo piano music. Charles Rosen puts it aptly; the waning popularity of piano duets led Schubert's piano works for four hands to be put on the sideline – a body of works that are both 'important' and 'crucial' to understanding Schubert, and the lack of interest in this oeuvre of his works has resulted in significantly misjudging Schubert's merits.<sup>7</sup> In the New York Times, member of a well-known piano duo Cipa Dichter aptly relates piano duets to the story of the ugly duckling; 'I personally think four-hand music is the ugly duckling of chamber music'.<sup>8</sup> The positive of this story is that it transpires after time that the ugly duckling was in fact a beautiful swan after all – much alike to the growing recognition of piano for four hands, especially in relation to Schubert.

In Part 2, a selection of Schubert piano duet works is chosen strategically with the aim of bringing his lesser-known works out of obscurity and to reveal their performative potential, in a genre that was previously considered in reception history as of lesser significance – particularly during the time when the invention of recordings overshadowed the function of duets as disseminators of music. It is in this vein that in the introduction to *Schubert's Piano*, Gardner and Martin remark that despite Schubert's varied use of the piano, past scholarship on his piano works focused 'almost exclusively' on his two-hand sonatas, and other uses of the piano tended to be put on the back burner – piano duets, variations, marches, fantasies, and

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Rosen, 'Schubert and the Example of Mozart' in *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Practice, Analysis*, ed. by Brian Newbould (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 1–20 (p. 1).

<sup>8</sup> Leslie Kandell, 'The Ins and Outs of Piano Duets', *The New York Times*, 6 June 1982, p. 23 <<https://www.nytimes.com/1982/06/06/arts/the-ins-and-outs-of-piano-duets.html>> [accessed 15/11/2024].

dances included.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the inclusion of Schubert's *Four Ländler* (D.814), his *Kindermarsch* (D.928), polonaises (D.599 and D.824), and Variations in A flat Major (D.813) in this thesis adds strategically to this lacuna. Pieces of progressive difficulty were selected in order to showcase Schubert's ease at writing for the piano duet from its pedagogical roots – such as the *Kindermarsch* (D.928), written for Marie Pachler and her child Faust, or the polonaises, likely used in his tuition of the Esterházy sisters – to the muscular work of the Variations in A flat Major (D.813), which Schubert performed with one of the leading pianists in Vienna, Karl Maria von Bocklet. The inclusion and discussion of these works reveal immense possibilities for pedagogical and performance contexts of these works. For example, Schubert's *Four Ländler* (D.814) may be appropriate as sight-reading material for younger students and serve as an introduction to Schubert's music. The *Kindermarsch* (D.928) would suit as an attractive work in student recitals. Progressing from that, the polonaises may suit the more advanced student, while the Variations in A flat Major (D.813) is appropriate for the seasoned professional or the advanced student. It is in this manner that this thesis may act as an impetus for those to disseminate Schubert's piano duets in the form of lecture-recitals. Considering the growth of performance-based research in recent years, this is an area ripe for study. Neary writes a chapter on this aspect of artistic research in Ireland and notes the establishment of a performance and research doctorate in 2006 at the Royal Irish Academy of Music as a step towards embracing this developing movement.<sup>10</sup> Such pedagogical advocacy will emphasise the importance of performing such underperformed works and ideally inspire performances of this repertoire. By doing so, stereotypes and misconceptions of the duet as embodying mere utilitarian, pedagogical and functional roles will be actively critiqued and reassessed. In the

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<sup>9</sup> The authors suggest this may be a result of the focus on Schubert's unique handling of form, harmony, and thematic development: Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin, eds, 'Introduction' in *Schubert's Piano* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 1–6 (pp. 1–2).

<sup>10</sup> Denise Neary, 'The Development of Music Performance as Artistic Research' in *Music Preferred: Essays in Musicology, Cultural History and Analysis in Honour of Harry White*, ed. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley (Vienna: Hollitzer Verlag, 2018), pp. 293–306 (p. 293), doi:10.2307/j.ctv6jm9gm.

words of Alec Rowley, ‘only ignorance of the mass of material published’ has hindered ‘the popularity and extension of this medium’.<sup>11</sup> Schubert’s piano duets exploit the full use of the piano’s expressive and textural qualities and explore a vast range of styles. As William Glock rightly remarks, Schubert’s duets are akin ‘to a rich tapestry hanging from bottom to top of the keyboard, every strand of which has its own contribution to make to the effect of the fabric’.<sup>12</sup> Musical and technical brilliance is required in Schubert’s duets, from the symphonic manner of ‘Lebensstürme’ (D.947) to the more restrained yet poignant Rondo in A Major (D.951). Schubert’s engagement in this genre was on par with that of his solo piano works, and he was just as comfortable writing for piano duet as he was for solo piano.

## II. Literature Review

An extensive review of the literature, including consulting the Literature Index of the New Schubert-Ausgabe, revealed an absence of scholarship on Schubert’s four-hand music and piano duets in general.<sup>13</sup> For example, there are comprehensive sources designated to an extremely wide range of genres such as the String Quartet, the Symphony, and the Lied, but not on the Piano Duet. This is an anomaly considering duet-playing was an institution and was as beloved as solo piano during the nineteenth century. In *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, there is a subsection on duets up to the 1830s, which is then followed on by a section on nineteenth-century piano duets from the 1830s on.<sup>14</sup> Schubert’s position as the main contributor to the piano duet repertoire is recognised, though only briefly addressed in a few lines due to the all-encompassing nature of the Companion. There are only a small handful of

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<sup>11</sup> Alec Rowley, *Four Hands-One Piano: A List of Works for Duet Players* (Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Maurice Brown, *Schubert’s Variations* (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd., 1954), p. 40.

<sup>13</sup> Literature Index of the New Schubert-Ausgabe <<https://schubert-literatur.de/en/>> [accessed 25/07/2024].

<sup>14</sup> David Rowland, ‘The music of the early pianists (c.1830)’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, ed. by David Rowland (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 135–50 (pp. 149–50); J. Barrie Jones, ‘Piano music for concert hall and salon c.1830–1900’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, ed. by David Rowland (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 151–75 (pp. 171–74).

sources addressing the topic of Schubert's piano duets. However, in the few sources that address this topic in twentieth-century sources, the significance of his duets is downplayed and regarded as non-serious. In Brown's *Schubert: A Critical Biography* (first published in 1958), the genre of the piano duet is demeaned, by calling it a 'substitute' medium'.<sup>15</sup> Brown himself gives an insight into the consensus on piano duets of the time by noting some writers are of the opinion that Schubert's original piano duets 'are orchestral works in disguise'; to which Brown adds is 'a view with no evidence to support it and which can only be taken seriously because of the hold it has gained amongst music lovers in general'.<sup>16</sup> There is some rationale behind considering the piano duet a substitute or temporary medium; some composers wrote works scored for piano duet before composing for larger instrumental forces. The contrary is also true – duet arrangements and transcriptions of orchestral, operatic, and chamber music (amongst other genres too) were immensely popular, and this played an integral role in disseminating music to the public. While Schubert wrote just a few piano duets of his orchestral overtures, such as *Alfonso and Estrella*, most of his duets were original piano duets written solely for four hands medium – despite many sources in musicology viewing the duets as provisional.<sup>17</sup> In Hutchings' *Schubert* (originally published in 1945), as part of The Master Musicians series, the reader is asked 'what musician does not recall the four-handed orgies of his bachelor Schubertiads?'.<sup>18</sup> He also calls upon 'more humble players' to play these duets, as he insinuates virtuosos may have no interest in such music, implying they would have to compromise their position to perform them, as well as noting that there is 'no need to recommend Schubert's duets to undergraduates and music students'.<sup>19</sup> While Schubert's piano duets have been acknowledged in early twentieth-century musicology, they are often given faint praise, but

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<sup>15</sup> Maurice Brown, *Schubert: A Critical Biography* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1961), p. 86

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> An example being Schubert's 'Grand Duo' Sonata, which some believed to be intended for orchestra. This issue will be discussed in subsection 1.6.

<sup>18</sup> Arthur Hutchings, *Schubert, The Master Musicians* (London: JM Dent & Sons Ltd., 1947), p. 152.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

considered as non-serious – demonstrated in the above statements. These stereotypes and misconceptions of duets perpetuated from early twentieth-century musicology will be actively critiqued throughout my research.

However, there is one book written solely on Schubert's four hand music by piano duo Dallas Weekley and Nancy Arganbright that addresses historical, analytical, and performance aspects of Schubert's works. In this source, all of Schubert's duet works from a music analysis perspective as well as from a performer's perspective are investigated.<sup>20</sup> This substantial source fills somewhat of a gap in the literature – though written quite some time ago, the repertoire is still ignored by theorists. The authors write entries on all of Schubert's piano duet works – though some entries are not particularly detailed. Hence, my dissertation aims to discuss some of these overlooked works in more detail. This source is a continuation of Dallas Weekley's doctoral dissertation titled 'The One-Piano Four-Hands Compositions of Franz Schubert: An Historical and Interpretive Analysis'.<sup>21</sup> This dissertation was completed in 1968 and was the manifestation of some years of performing piano for four hands literature (including a performance in Carnegie Hall) and studying original sources in Vienna. Both Weekley and Arganbright's combined research was conducted in collaboration with Schubertian authority Erich Otto Deutsch and other Schubertian scholars. Although their co-authored book on Schubert was published over three decades ago, this book remains to be a relevant document of unprecedented significance. Their career in performance and scholarship of piano duets, in which Schubert is a key figure, is so extensive that there is a doctoral dissertation exploring their contribution: 'The Contributions of Dallas Weekley and Nancy Arganbright to Piano Duet

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<sup>20</sup> Dallas Alfred Weekley and Nancy Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands; A Comprehensive Guide to Performing and Listening to the Dances, Fantasies, Marches, Polonaises, Sonatas, Variations, Waltzes and Other Duets* (New York: Pro/Am Music Resources, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> Dallas Alfred Weekley, 'The One-Piano, Four-Hand Compositions of Franz Schubert: An Historical and Interpretive Analysis' (doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1968).

Performance and Literature'.<sup>22</sup> Particularly relevant to my research is the chapter ascertaining to piano duets prior to Weekley and Arganbright's contribution to the genre. The appendices of this source include lists of four-hand works the duo edited, and detail concert programmes and venues in which the duo performed, ranging from the early 1960s to 1998. The author of this dissertation, Kimberly Dreisbach Jensen, further explored Weekley and Arganbright's career in the biographical *Weekley and Arganbright: A Renaissance of the Piano Duet*.<sup>23</sup>

A further important source written around the period of Weekley and Arganbright's early career is Lubin's *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, which provides a generalist approach to a miscellany of major duet composers.<sup>24</sup> Despite the breadth of composers' works discussed in this book, Schubert is rightfully designated three chapters; divided into his variations and divertissements, his sonatas and fantasies, and the smaller pieces.<sup>25</sup> One similarly useful reference book is *Keyboard Duets from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (1995), which tracks the narrative of the piano duet from its early roots to the modern period.<sup>26</sup> Schubert's engagement in the piano duet is dealt with in a chronological manner over four pages.<sup>27</sup> In both of these sources, Schubert's distinct contribution to the genre is justly recognised.

Schubert's Lieder are what has secured his position in the musicological canon, later endorsed by his late symphonies, late chamber works and more recently, late piano sonatas. The years around his bicentenary anniversary of his birth saw the emergence of scholarship on Schubert's piano works, especially his piano sonatas. This includes Newbould's *Schubert*

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<sup>22</sup> Kimberly Dreisbach Jensen, 'The Contributions of Dallas Weekley and Nancy Arganbright to Piano Duet Performance and Literature' (doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 2010).

<sup>23</sup> Kimberly Dreisbach Jensen, *Weekley and Arganbright: A Renaissance of the Piano Duet* (San Diego: Neil A. Kjos Music Company, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Ernest Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists* (New York: Grossman, 1970).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37–44, 45–54 and 55–71.

<sup>26</sup> Howard Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10–13.

*Studies* (which had its roots in the centenary conference at the University of Leeds), in which Schubert interpreter Schiff writes a chapter titled ‘Schubert’s piano sonatas: thoughts about interpretation and performance’, as well as Eva Badura-Skoda’s ‘The Piano Works of Schubert’ in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*.<sup>28</sup> This surge of publications also includes scholar Margaret Notley’s chapter on ‘Schubert’s social music: the “forgotten genres”’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (1997).<sup>29</sup> In this, she addresses his ‘social’ works; namely his duets, dances, and part-songs. Relevant to my research is her acknowledgement of the juxtaposition between Schubert’s perceived sociable and serious music. For the bicentennial occasion, Walden Hughes wrote ‘Franz Schubert’s Piano Music: Celebrating the Composer’s Bicentennial Year’ in which he discussed Schubert’s solo piano and duet works; the duets are discussed briefly.<sup>30</sup> More substantial and pertinent to this research is Newbould’s chapter on Schubert’s piano duets in *Schubert: The Music and the Man*.<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Norman McKay’s contribution to Schubert’s piano music – with occasional references to the duets, includes *Schubert: The Piano and the Dark Keys* as well as *The Impact of the New Pianofortes on Classical Keyboard Style: Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert*.<sup>32</sup> The latter resource is especially seminal; the influence the piano’s increasing capabilities had on Schubert’s compositions is often overlooked in Schubertian scholarship since this publication in 1987, despite the growing trend of the historically-informed performance movement (hence this thesis aims to provide insights into this topic). More recently, scholarship on Schubert’s solo piano music, both

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<sup>28</sup> András Schiff, ‘Schubert’s piano sonatas: thoughts about interpretation and performance’ in *Schubert Studies*, ed. by Brian Newbould (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 191–208; Eva Badura-Skoda, ‘The Piano Works of Schubert’ in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. by R. Larry Todd (Schirmer Books: New York, 1990), pp. 97–146.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Notley, ‘Schubert’s social music: the “forgotten genres”’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 138–54.

<sup>30</sup> Walden Hughes, ‘Franz Schubert’s Piano Music: Celebrating the Composer’s Bicentennial Year’, *Clavier*, 36.1 (1997), pp. 10–13.

<sup>31</sup> Brian Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man* (Great Britain: Victor Gollancz, 1997), pp. 234–49.

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Norman McKay, *Schubert: The Piano and Dark Keys* (Tutzing: Schneider, 2009) and *The Impact of the New Pianofortes on Classical Keyboard Style: Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert* (West Midlands: Lynwood Music, 1987).

conducted in Ireland, include Marie-Charline Focroulle's 'Final thoughts? Interpretation of the first movements of Beethoven's and Schubert's last three piano sonatas' and Horng Kent Tham's 'Interpretation and Performance: An Investigation into Franz Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major D959'.<sup>33</sup>

Strahan's doctoral research, conducted at Maynooth University, has made important strides to Schubert duet scholarship. She wrote an article for Maynooth University's Postgraduate Journal, titled 'Music of a lesser genre? Schubert's development and transformation of the piano duet medium'. In this, she addresses the significant transformations in the piano duet genre as a direct result of Schubert's efforts.<sup>34</sup> In 2013, she completed a thesis entitled '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias'.<sup>35</sup> The focus of her research is on the genre of the fantasy and Schubert's fantasies within Schubert's piano duet oeuvre. This source is of great significance to this study, as it is one of the very few sources which examines Schubert's piano duets in any depth. In Strahan's literature review, she remarks that sources concerning Schubert's duets are more prevalent in the twentieth century and are discussed in context of 'social' and 'popular' music (which provides the grounds for reappraisal of his duet works); though this present researcher finds that the tide is turning regarding the volume of writings on his duets.<sup>36</sup> Promisingly, the last few decades have seen an increasing trend of relevant sources in addition to Strahan's contribution. Chusid's *Schubert's Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity* (2013) investigates and analyses Schubert's dance output; Chusid includes some piano duets here as a

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<sup>33</sup> Marie-Charline Focroulle, 'Final thoughts? Interpretation of the first movements of Beethoven's and Schubert's last three piano sonatas' (doctoral thesis, the Royal Irish Academy of Music, 2017); Horng Kent Tham, 'Interpretation and Performance: An Investigation into Franz Schubert's Piano Sonata in A major D959' (doctoral thesis, the Royal Irish Academy of Music, 2016).

<sup>34</sup> Barbara Strahan, 'Music of a lesser genre? Schubert's development and transformation of the piano duet medium', *Maynooth University: Postgraduate Journal*, 2 (2009), pp. 19–39.

<sup>35</sup> Barbara Strahan, '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias' (doctoral thesis, Maynooth University, 2013).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, xxx.

number of Schubert's duets were dances.<sup>37</sup> Walburga Litschauer wrote the introduction to this, providing background information on the dance culture in Vienna.<sup>38</sup> Litschauer is an important figure in this research as she contributed greatly to the authoritative Neue Schubert-Ausgabe by editing the volumes of Schubert's piano sonatas, four-hand works and dances, and she also wrote the critical report for some of these volumes.<sup>39</sup> Like the duets, Schubert's dances have otherwise attracted minimal attention from scholars. Some of Schubert's duets were dances, and this interesting combination of dances in duet form has much more scope for further study. The main focus of Chusid's *Schubert's Dances; for Family, Friends and Posterity* is to provide a musical analysis of chosen works, rather than offering a comprehensive contextual analysis of each work. Daub's *Four-Handed Monsters*, published the year after Chusid's monograph, is of great importance for my research as he addresses the nature of duet-playing and its many functions within society on a macro-level.<sup>40</sup> Throughout this book, Daub explores the cultural and aesthetic implications of duets by often referring to contemporaneous literary works, which provide insights into nineteenth-century society. As stated in his acknowledgements, Daub is not a musicologist, but his research penetrates the intersectionality of literature, music, and philosophy.<sup>41</sup> His approach is informed by his expertise in both Comparative Literature and German Studies. The humorous use of the noun 'monster' in the title refers to the large volume of duets composed during the nineteenth century, in which quantity over quality often took precedence, particularly in transcriptions. In my research, I will critique the extent to which

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<sup>37</sup> Martin Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2013), pp. 159–78.

<sup>38</sup> Walburga Litschauer, 'Dance Culture in Biedermeier Era' in *Schubert's Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2013), pp. xi–xxxiv.

<sup>39</sup> Including Franz Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 1*, ed. by Walburga Litschauer (Kassel: Franz Schubert. Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke VII/1/1, Bärenreiter, 2007); Franz Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 3*, ed. by Walburga Litschauer and Werner Aderhold (Kassel: Franz Schubert. Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke VII/1/3, Bärenreiter, 2011); Franz Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 5: Ouvertüren*, ed. by Walburga Litschauer (Kassel: Franz Schubert. Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke VII/1/5, Bärenreiter, 1984).

<sup>40</sup> Daub, *Four-Handed Monsters: Four-Hand Piano Playing and Nineteenth-Century Culture*.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. vii–viii.

piano duets were unjustly perceived due to negative connotations of the piano duet transcription. One further source that addresses the unexplored area of piano duet transcriptions on a more historical and descriptive level is *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*.<sup>42</sup> There is one chapter entitled ‘Beethoven and Schubert’ which acknowledges that Schubert’s duet-writing efforts were focused on original works, rather than transcriptions (the book’s focus is on transcription).<sup>43</sup> As a result, the emphasis of this brief section lies on transcriptions of Schubert’s works composed posthumously by others, including Josef Hüttenbrenner, Joseph Czerny, and Carl Reinecke.<sup>44</sup> However, Schubert’s own four-hand transcriptions are not even mentioned. The transcription of Schubert’s piano duets for orchestral forces and other ensembles is a point of contention that is also addressed in the following source.

Scott Messing’s *Marching to the Canon: The Life of Schubert’s ‘Marche militaire’* (2014) explores Schubert’s *Marches militaires* duets, with a primary focus on the first march. This march, along with the Fantasy in F Minor (D.940), are amongst the few duets that have garnered much attention.<sup>45</sup> Messing tracks these marches as they transformed into other forces Schubert did not intend (Hutchings’ suggestion that Schubert possibly wrote these marches with the intent of later scoring them for military band is speculative).<sup>46</sup> This includes transcriptions and arrangements for solo instruments, bands, and orchestras. Messing explores the unique inclusion of the military marches in the canon. The exploration as to why these marches (along with his last fantasy) became to be so popular, but not his other duets, is of relevance to my research. Furthermore, the fact that the most popular march was transformed

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<sup>42</sup> Ian Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription* (Norwich: Kingswood Publishing, 2008).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 45–51.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>45</sup> Scott Messing, *Marching to the Canon: The Life of Schubert’s Marche militaire* (University of Rochester Press, 2014).

<sup>46</sup> Hutchings, *Schubert, The Master Musicians*, p. 152.

into other media raises connotations regarding perceived limitations of the four-hand medium. In *Schubert: Interpretationen* (2014), fresh interpretations of Schubert that have been emerging in the last two decades are explored, addressing lacunae in scholarship – four-handed works included.<sup>47</sup> In the chapter entitled ‘Schubert’s Quellen’, Hermann Danuser analyses the aforementioned *Marches militaires* as well as the Allegro in A Minor.<sup>48</sup> Danuser contrasts the former work with the latter by noting Schubert’s departure from the utilitarian and functional roots of the duet. A further source from 2014, *Schubert: Späte Klaviermusik; Spuren ihrer inneren Geschichte*, analyses the popular Fantasy in F (D.940) and the Sonata in C (D.812), as well as the *Divertissement sur des motifs originaux français* (D.823). These three works are analysed in a chapter devoted to each, out of ten chapters overall.<sup>49</sup>

Other scholars who have addressed the fantasies include Schubert scholar Su Yin Mak; in *Schubert’s Late Music: History, Theory, Style* (2016), the Fantasy in F Minor is provided as a case study.<sup>50</sup> She also reviews the Bärenreiter publication of the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe volume which features this fantasy – a large focus is placed on the F minor fantasy in this review (e.g. most musical figures addressed are of this work).<sup>51</sup> *Rethinking Schubert* (2016) is of great significance for modern-day Schubertian scholarship due to the relatively newfound significance assigned to Schubert’s instrumental works.<sup>52</sup> Plantinga’s chapter ‘Schubert, Social Music and Melancholy’ is relevant to my research, as both the serious and the elevated styles of Schubert’s duets are debated, and Plantinga observes that one is becoming more cognisant

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<sup>47</sup> Ivana Rentsch and Klaus Pietschmann, eds, *Schubert: Interpretationen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2014).

<sup>48</sup> Hermann Danuser, ‘Schuberts Quellen: Über zwei Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen’ in *Schubert: Interpretationen*, ed. by Ivana Rentsch and Klaus Pietschmann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2014), pp. 105–18.

<sup>49</sup> Renate Wieland and Jürgen Uhde, *Schubert: Späte Klaviermusik; Spuren ihrer inneren Geschichte* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2014), pp. 204–36, pp. 237–61 and pp. 262–86.

<sup>50</sup> Su Yin Mak, ‘Formal ambiguity and generic reinterpretation in the late instrumental music’ in *Schubert’s Late Music: History, Theory, Style*, ed. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 282–306.

<sup>51</sup> Su Yin Mak, “‘Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen’ by Franz Schubert, Kassel, Bärenreiter, 2013’, *Performance Practice Review*, 20.1 (2015), pp. 1–21, doi:10.5642/perfpr.201520.01.04.

<sup>52</sup> Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton, eds, *Rethinking Schubert* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

that these styles are often ‘indistinct’.<sup>53</sup> Davies’ recent monograph entitled *The Gothic Imagination in the Music of Franz Schubert* (2024) addresses four of Schubert’s four-hand works in which he probes into the Fantasy in F Minor (D.940) and the lesser-known works of Fantasy in C Minor (D.48), Fantasy in G Minor (D.9), and the *Grande marche funèbre* (D.859).<sup>54</sup> Davies presented the research on the Gothic element of Schubert’s four-handed works in Maynooth University’s Research Seminar series.<sup>55</sup> Lastly, there are two more extremely significant contributions to the literature in recent times; in Byrne Bodley’s *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, there is a chapter on the duets, signalling a growing appreciation and understanding of his genre.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, at the tail end of writing this thesis in 2024, *Schubert’s Piano* was published (following on from the *Schubert am Klavier* conference in 2019), which addresses many issues that have not yet been comprehensively explored in Schubert scholarship – including some aspects upon which this thesis expands. Several chapters here are particularly germane to my research, including Christensen’s ‘Schubert’s Four-Hand Piano Works’ chapter and Lindmayr-Brandl’s chapter ‘Franz Schubert as a Pianist’.<sup>57</sup>

## Literature Review of Piano Duet Repertoire Books

To date, there have been three main repertoire books of piano duets published. The earliest is Alec Rowley’s *Four Hands – One Piano: A List of Works for Duet Players* (1940).<sup>58</sup> The compiled list is sectionalised into general duets, Classical, English, French, pedagogical, and

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<sup>53</sup> Leon Plantinga, ‘Schubert, Social Music and Melancholy’ in *Rethinking Schubert*, ed. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 237–50 (p. 241).

<sup>54</sup> Joe Davies, *The Gothic Imagination in the Music of Franz Schubert* (UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2024).

<sup>55</sup> Joe Davies, ‘Hearing, Feeling, and Interpreting the Gothic in Franz Schubert’s Music for Four Hands’, Maynooth University Research Seminar Series, Maynooth University, 9 March 2022.

<sup>56</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, pp. 420–28.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Christensen, ‘Schubert’s Four-Hand Piano Works’ in *Schubert’s Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 70–90; Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl, ‘Franz Schubert as a Pianist’ in *Schubert’s Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 9–29.

<sup>58</sup> Rowley, *Four Hands-One Piano: A List of Works for Duet Players*.

graded works. Each section alphabetically itemises the composer, work, and publisher. This book is regrettably out of print. Secondly, Cameron McGraw's *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands* (first published in 1981, but revised in 2016) is also a useful tool of reference.<sup>59</sup> Notably, this comprehensive catalogue consists of works originally composed for piano duet alone, and transcriptions are omitted (with the odd exception). The catalogue is arranged alphabetically by the composer's surname. For each entry, the primo and secondo are assigned a difficulty rating, ranging from elementary to upper-advanced. There is also a brief overview description of each composer's engagement with the original piano duet genre, as well as descriptions of significant works. To supplement this catalogue of works, Luis Miguel De Araújo Magalhães devised *An Annotated Catalogue of Works for Piano Duet: A Supplement to Cameron McGraw's Piano Duet Repertoire*.<sup>60</sup> The approximate 1,200 works listed here augment McGraw's catalogue of 3,200 works. Some important works not featured in McGraw's catalogue are listed, including works by Czerny, Weber, Beethoven, Liszt, Brahms, Schumann, Smetana, Debussy, Ravel, and others. One must note that these works were compiled several years before the most recent edition of McGraw's repertoire book was published (in 2016). Magalhães also provides a more comprehensive list of transcriptions and arrangements. This lies in contrast to McGraw, who deliberately omits most transcriptions and arrangements, with the exception of the following; in cases that the composer themselves arranged the work, and for arrangements/transcriptions that traditionally are considered as part of the four-hand repertoire.<sup>61</sup> McGraw's catalogue of piano duets is more useful for this research, as the main focus lies on original piano four-hands works, rather than arrangements and transcriptions.

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<sup>59</sup> Cameron McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands* (Indiana University Press, 2016).

<sup>60</sup> Luis Miguel De Araújo Magalhães, 'An Annotated Catalogue of Works for Piano Duet: A Supplement to Cameron McGraw's Piano Duet Repertoire' (doctoral thesis, University of Cape Town, 2011).

<sup>61</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. xxi.

Finally, the third repertoire list of duets is the *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument* by Klaus Börner (2005), written in German.<sup>62</sup> There is no English translation. Börner has decades of experience with four-hand piano music in both performing and teaching capacities. This catalogue consists of titles, descriptions and practical advice, as well as assigned difficulty ratings. Rather than alphabetically listing entries by a composer's name like in the aforementioned catalogue, this list is organised chronologically, and based on geographical location. The listing encompasses a wide range of nationalities – approximately thirty. There is also a chapter on transcriptions and arrangements. Both systems of cataloguing have their benefit; the alphabetical system works well if one is researching a particular composer. The musical period system is helpful when one is researching unknown composers from a particular era of music (for example, if one wanted to investigate Schubert's lesser-known contemporaries, but did not have a particular individual in mind). In both McGraw's and Börner's catalogue, old and newer works are included, and thus there is a large overlap. Howard Ferguson's aforementioned *Keyboard Duets from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (1995) also includes a repertoire list, but this more selective and it is not the main focus of the book.<sup>63</sup> Rather than providing an extensive listing of repertoire, Ferguson provides selective repertoire of both original piano for four-hand works, as well as works for piano duo. It is a selective list; for example, the works of Czerny are absent, despite writing some original piano duet works of concert standard. In addition to the above literature, further four-hand repertoire leads can be discovered in Comeau's *Piano Pedagogy: A Research and Information Guide*.<sup>64</sup>

In summation to the literature review, only a few scholars have written about the significance of Schubert's duets in detail and a more substantial study is long overdue. Many

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<sup>62</sup> Klaus Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument* (Zürich/Mainz: Atlantis Musikbuch, 2005).

<sup>63</sup> Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century*, pp. 41–95.

<sup>64</sup> Gilles Comeau, *Piano Pedagogy: A Research and Information Guide* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2009)

duet-specific sources acknowledge his contribution, but due to the nature of these sources, his duets are often only addressed briefly. There is also an absence of music analysis and exploration into many of his duets, though some works have often been addressed, such as the Fantasy in F Minor (D.940).<sup>65</sup> It became apparent during the literature review that there has been a growth of interest in his duets in the last few decades, following on from the emergence of writings on his solo piano works. The literature review has provided fertile grounds for this research and will aid the researcher in providing a more detailed account and insight into the elusive figure that is Schubert – a man who took a popular genre – that later became marginalised – and elevated it to new heights.

### **III. Research Questions**

1. What are the reasons behind Schubert's duets and duets more broadly being cast into a 'lowly estate' and neglected in scholarship? <sup>66</sup>
2. How did Schubert elevate the genre of the piano duet?
3. What is Schubert's legacy and influence on subsequent piano duet literature and performance history?

### **IV. Methodology**

The methodology utilised in this thesis draws from four approaches, which are interwoven with one another: Historical Research, Reception History, Music Analysis and Narrative Enquiry. Firstly, examining Schubert's history and reception history – particularly in relation to his

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<sup>65</sup> Su Yin Mak, 'Formal ambiguity and generic reinterpretation in the late instrumental music', pp. 282–306; Strahan, '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias'; Uhde, 'Fantasie f-Moll für Klavier zu 4 Händen op. 103 D 940', pp. 237–61.

<sup>66</sup> Laurence Petran, 'Piano Duets', *Bulletin of the American Musicological Society*, 8 (1945), p. 10.

piano duet music – is essential to this discussion, and it is addressed in order to track perceptions of this genre, and hence identify gaps. The trajectory of piano duets in a broader context is investigated to provide contextualisation and to place Schubert’s duets within the wider sphere.

As Gardner and Martin quite rightly note, discussions on Schubert’s piano music tended to be ‘almost exclusively’ focused on his two-hand sonatas, and that there is attention given to the ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy, the impromptus, and the piano trios as well. They put the argument forward that discussions on these works tend to be analysis-driven – analysing harmony and structure, particularly in relation to sonata-form – and consequently, other chamber works of Schubert’s have been overlooked such as his four-hand works, variations, marches, and fantasies.<sup>67</sup> It is in this vein that a varied selection of Schubert’s lesser-known four-hand works were chosen for this thesis, including a march, two polonaises, Ländler, and variations. The analyses of these works in Part 2 serves not only to highlight compositional traits of Schubert, but to consider relevant performative issues as well, bridging the gap between analysis and performance. Furthermore, in writings on Schubert’s duets, musical examples are occasionally typeset in a manner which amalgamates the primo and the secondo into two staves, making it difficult to ascertain what exactly each part is playing. The author of this doctoral research deliberately presents the primo and secondo individually – as per the musical score – as it is important to show clearly what Schubert designated for each part, with the aim of uncovering how skilful he was in his treatment of the primo and secondo.<sup>68</sup> This ties in fittingly with the budding research into the performative issues of playing piano duets, which according to Oinas, has not been extensively studied until recently.<sup>69</sup> In Part 2, a comparative analysis of Schubert’s

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<sup>67</sup> Gardner and Martin, eds, ‘Introduction’ in *Schubert’s Piano*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>68</sup> Examples in: Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, pp. 234–49.

<sup>69</sup> Cecilia Oinas, ‘From Four-Handed Monster to All-Embracing Vishnu: The Case of “Middle Hands” within a Piano Four Hands Duo’, *Music & Practice*, 5 (2019), pp. 1–19 (p. 2), doi:10.32063/0511.

two Polonaises in D Minor (D.599 and D.824) is included with the goal of revealing Schubert's elevation of the genre, since these works were written several years apart. Directly related to analysis are the case studies of the *Kindermarsch* (D.928) and the *Four Ländler* (D.814), both of which I taught and recorded as part of my piano teaching practice – this forms part of narrative enquiry which is becoming a more popular method in qualitative music education research.<sup>70</sup> The *Kindermarsch* is dealt with in a reflective account, drawing from practical teaching experience.

## **V. Difficulties Encountered in this Thesis**

Primary sources concerning details of Schubert's biography can be unreliable and inconsistent. Accounts of various aspects of his life are shaped by many factors, depending on who is speaking. Even those who are reliable witnesses are not always fully informed. In this thesis, accounts in letters and memoirs from his family, friends, peers, and reviews of his performances are consulted. These accounts are pertinent in particular to understanding the reception of his piano duets and our understanding of Schubert as a pianist. As Montgomery highlights though, Schubert studies is disadvantaged in areas such as the 'evolution of instruments, ensembles, and voices; the evidence of autographs, editions, proofs, marginalia, parts, books, diaries, and letters; tutors and related writings by teachers and performers over the years; and the documentation of concert life in programs and reviews'.<sup>71</sup> The lack of sources can be rationally explained; for example, since Schubert did not travel much, he did not have the need to write many letters. Articles written on Schubert during his lifetime are scarce and

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<sup>70</sup> Kay Ann Hartwig, ed., *Research Methodologies in Music Education* (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), p. 4 <<https://www.cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-4438-5416-0-sample.pdf>> [accessed 20/05/2024].

<sup>71</sup> David Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance: a brief history of people, events, and issues' in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 270–83 (p. 270).

Gibbs suggests the reasoning behind this is multifactorial. He assigns this to Schubert's youth, as well as Viennese practice. More pertinent to this study, he suggests the primary reason behind this is the fact Schubert was most known for composing in 'unassuming genres' – he lists the Lieder, part songs, keyboard music, and dance music in this assertion.<sup>72</sup> The lack of sources in certain aspects of Schubert's life poses difficulties for researchers, particularly in chronology and performance practice.

Naturally, the information relayed in historical sources can be marred by bias for a number of reasons. For example, time can influence the reception of a composer; accounts of Schubert long after his passing by his aged contemporaries can be clouded by hazy memories or influenced by the need to glorify the dead Schubert. Furthermore, the issue of dating his works – particularly some of his piano duet works – can be problematic, as often sources are contradictory. To further complexify the matter of chronology, publications of his works often were released long after his death and there may be more than one version of a work, such as his Rondo in D (D.608). It can be hard to place with conviction when some of his works were composed. The DRACMarkS (Digitization, Recognition, and Automated Clustering of Watermarks in the Music Manuscripts of Franz Schubert) initiative aims to provide further detail in the cataloguing Schubert's works, though the results of the project are not planned for release until early 2025, after submission of this thesis.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Christopher H. Gibbs, 'German reception: Schubert's "Journey to Immortality"' in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 241–53 (p. 243).

<sup>73</sup> Schubert Digital, 'Projekte: Benutzung' (Vienna, August 2024) <<https://schubert-digital.at/benutzung-dracmarks.html#en>> [accessed 02/10/2024].

## VI. Pathways for Future Research

There are immense research and performance possibilities that may arise from this research. This thesis aims to investigate several of Schubert's often overlooked works in scholarship, particularly the more miniature pieces such as the *Ländler* and the *Kindermarsch*. Though, due to the limitations of the thesis word count, only a select few works out of Schubert's extensive piano duet corpus could be discussed in detail (though there is a chronological overview provided). Hence, there are many other piano duets by Schubert that could be explored in future research. Further musical analyses of Schubert's lesser-known piano duet works are possible, as is a comprehensive analysis of his transcriptions.

Gibbs notes that critics have 'played down' the influence Schubert had on later nineteenth-century composers and claims that this area of research (at least as of 1997) has not received its due recognition.<sup>74</sup> Hence while this thesis does address this to some extent, further investigation into the influences of Schubert on other composers' four-hand works is also possible, particularly that of Liszt, Brahms, and Schumann. More generally, research into these composers' piano duet works in their own right could be addressed, particularly in the case of Brahms and his transcriptions. It is on this topic that Willi Apel unfairly remarks: 'Besides Mozart, the only great composer who was seriously interested in four-hand music was Schubert' – this downplays the contributions of other composers.<sup>75</sup> Beyer and Dagul express a similar sentiment to mine in their disappointment in a reviewer's preamble to new piano duets – the duo points out that there is a wealth of repertoire outside of Mozart and Schubert.<sup>76</sup> In terms of social history, the role that women played in the development of the piano duet genre was noted in this thesis, though this topic could be investigated in more detail in other research.

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<sup>74</sup> Gibbs, 'German reception: Schubert's "Journey to Immortality"', pp. 248 and 320.

<sup>75</sup> Willi Apel, *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 574.

<sup>76</sup> Such composers include Moscheles, Hummel, Dussek, Goetz, Rheinberger, Coenen, Rubinstein, and Czerny: Isobel Beyer and Harvey Dagul, 'Piano Duets', *The Musical Times*, 121.1644 (1980), p. 87.

Other pathways may arise in the form of a monograph on the piano for four hands genre as there is no such comprehensive source of such currently. Further research may also lead to archival work (such as uncovering duet works of Schubert's contemporaries), performances, and performance-based research, which is a growing interest in European conservatoires – including in Ireland. Since the piano duet as a genre is becoming more acknowledged both in scholarship and performance, the medium of a lecture-recital would be a useful tool in revealing their merits to wider audiences. It is also intended that this thesis will lead to further pedagogical advocacy and support for piano duets by Schubert and other composers in practice-based contexts, such as that in teaching and syllabus development.

**—Part 1—**

**The Piano Duet:  
Origins, Decline, and Comeback**

Chapters 1–3

# Chapter 1

## Genesis of the Piano Duet: A Chronological Overview

### 1.1 Defining the Piano Duet

Duets are classified into two types; the first refers to two pianists playing at one piano, and the latter to two pianists at two separate pianos. The first type of duet is referred to as ‘piano for four-hands.’ Often, the terms ‘à quatre mains’ in French or ‘zu vier Händen’ in German are used. When there are two separate pianos, it is commonly called a ‘piano duo’. The repertoire for piano for four-hand compositions exceeds that of piano duos; this is largely due to practical reasons. It was unlikely that one venue could host adjacent pianos, particularly in domestic settings. Additionally, both pianos would need to be in tune with each other in order for there to be a pleasing musical outcome. Both genres had similar roots historically (with some isolated exceptions) until approximately the mid-eighteenth century, after which both genres took separate directions, embodied different functions, and graced a plethora of venues. A significantly large amount of piano music for four hands was intended to be performed in domestic spaces (but not exclusively), whereas duets for two pianos were more likely intended for concert performance. More recently, there has been a clearer distinguishment between the two categories of piano duets and this is welcome in that the term ‘piano duet’ is less ambiguous and of course, both genres exist in their own right. The growing distinguishment between the two is evident in more recent repertoire books that address four-hand works alone (as mentioned in the literature review); whereas some older sources addressed them together, such as *Keyboard Duets from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century*.

The four-hand genre has been considered as a domestic category of music, in contrast with the piano duo, which is described as ‘more glamorous’.<sup>78</sup> In fact, the Grove article unfairly deems the four-hand genre ‘as a modest, essentially a domestic branch of music’, which is a simplification that deserves scrutiny in the reappraisal of the four-hand genre.<sup>79</sup> A further oddity of the Grove article is that the history of the four-hand piano and two-piano genres is dealt with in one article; a separate entry or a subsection for both would be more logical and give each genre the space they deserve (that being said, there is some shared history). In the preface to the first edition of McGraw’s piano duet repertoire book, McGraw describes the four-hand genre as ‘less spectacular than its sister art’.<sup>80</sup> This perception arises from the fact that on two pianos, both pianists can display their virtuosic abilities without spatial limitations. In four-hand playing, both players are spatially restricted. Dawes goes so far as to say that the pianists playing four-hand works are ‘cramped’ in comparison to the piano duo.<sup>81</sup> While there is truth to these statements, it is worth noting that there are many four-hand works that are virtuosic and spectacular – as exemplified by Schubert and others such as Mendelssohn – and that the four-hand genre lies on par with the piano duo. Conventionally, a virtuoso is defined as ‘a person of notable accomplishment; a musician of extraordinary technical skill’.<sup>82</sup> This term may seem incongruent with the four-hand piano genre, since two pianists are involved in playing just one piano, rather than two at two pianos. However, I argue that four-hand playing is virtuosic. It shows a remarkable skill to play duets, for both pianists must be fluent in solo playing, as well the niche area of duet-playing. While it is often said the ultimate aim of four-hand playing is for both pianists to emulate one, both pianists bring their

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<sup>78</sup> Frank Dawes, ‘Piano duet’ in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.21629.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. x.

<sup>81</sup> Dawes, ‘Piano duet’ in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>82</sup> Owen Jander, ‘Virtuoso’ *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.29502.

individual capabilities and experience to the fore, bringing vitality and diversity to their interpretations. The fact that both pianists must discuss and consider their interpretations carefully – possibly challenging their own preconceptions – may manifest itself in more well-founded interpretations of duet works. This is linked strongly with virtuosity, for the virtuosity principle has evolved throughout time; its meaning shifted from the mid-1800s, and the term is now inextricably bound to interpretation.

Note that I have termed the four-hand field as a genre above. This is done intentionally, for the four-hand piano is a genre of its own, while simultaneously a medium.<sup>83</sup> This can be likened to that of the solo piano; the medium is the piano for two hands, while the genre is a distinct category derived from past repetitions. Within this medium, many genres are present ranging from sonatas, dances, nocturnes, and so on. For example, Schubert composed an extremely diverse range of four-hand works, ranging from lengthy sonatas, to variations, marches, polonaises, dances, Ländler, and much more. Strahan argues that taxonomising such a varied repertoire into one taxonomy runs the risk of ‘oversimplifying’ these genres.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, one may find it useful to comprehend the four-hand genre as an umbrella term under which there are many subgenres. Alternatively, one can view Schubert’s unique four-hand contributions as transgressing genre as his compositional style matured; a perception that is exemplified in Carl Dahlhaus’ claim that genre no longer took priority over aesthetic autonomy.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Discussed in detail in this source: Strahan, ‘(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert’s Four-Hand Fantasias’.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>85</sup> Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (University of Illinois Press, 2000), p. 126.

## 1.2 Four-Hand Playing: Chamber Music?

The genre of piano for four hands can be comprehended as an independent genre, while at the same time it is also considered chamber music by current standards; that is, music which is written for a small group of instruments. Such works are typically performed in private settings or to a limited audience. The issue of whether piano duets should be considered a form of chamber music provokes an interesting point, as piano duets were not always considered chamber music. It was only in the late 1800s during which the definition of chamber music came to consider ensemble works for few players as ‘chamber music’. By the early 1900s, chamber music directly referred to the quartets, quintets and piano trios of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and their successors.<sup>86</sup> The scope of chamber music was not necessarily guided purely by the limited number of players; chamber music began to represent the artistically intellectual, and as evident from the writings of many early twentieth-century musicologists, piano duets were not considered as such. For instance, Alfred Einstein sharply contrasts Schubert’s ‘sociable’ music such as his piano duets, with that of the ‘serious’ and ‘real’ Schubert of his string quartets and solo piano works.<sup>87</sup> This divide is evident to some extent even today; Oinas suggests that ‘depending on whom you ask, piano four hands is either a merry social event’ or ‘one of the most challenging forms of chamber music’.<sup>88</sup> One can take away from this that four-hand playing was not necessarily considered of the same ilk as chamber music in the past, and that some misconceptions may linger.

On a positive note, the breadth of chamber music has augmented in the second half of the twentieth century. This is evidenced in Lubin’s *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, in which he endorses piano duets as chamber music; he maintains ‘the very essence of the piano-

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<sup>86</sup> Christina Bashford, ‘Chamber Music’ in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.05379.

<sup>87</sup> Alfred Einstein, *Schubert: A Musical Portrait* (Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 246 and 254.

<sup>88</sup> Oinas, ‘From Four-Handed Monster to All-Embracing Vishnu: The Case of “Middle Hands” within a Piano Four Hands Duo’, p. 2.

duet style' is a form of chamber music'.<sup>89</sup> Notley also makes a good point for this by drawing our attention to a compositional trait that is evident in both Schubert's chamber music with piano and his piano duets; she notes the doubling of the melody at an octave apart, as evident in the 'Trout' Quintet (D.667) and Schubert's two piano trios, is a practice that derives from duet-playing – it is usual for both the primo's hands to do this in piano duets.<sup>90</sup> Questionable however is Notley's claim that in contrast to other chamber music, Schubert's duets 'often do not bother to pretend that the players are equal individuals' – a view that invites critique, considering throughout Schubert's career he elevated the status of the secondo.<sup>91</sup>

### 1.3 Humble Precursors to the Piano Duet

Before we investigate Schubert's contribution, it is necessary to consider the budding popular genre before Schubert, as the genre had very much become part of the daily fabric of Viennese society. By doing so, we can understand the context in which Schubert composed his duets, while also reappraising his predecessors. One must bear in mind that in the early years of keyboard instruments, the small range of the keyboard (not to mention the voluminous clothing of the day) meant that the keyboard was ill-adapted for duets. It is the consensus that the first keyboard duets date from the mid-seventeenth century, namely: *A Battle, and No Battle* (MB, xix, no.108) by John Bull, as well as pieces by Nicholas Carleton and Thomas Tomkins.<sup>92</sup> Carleton and Tomkins were good friends, and it is likely that they played duets together. Tomkins' duet is a fancy (MB, v, no.32), and Carleton's duet was an 'In Nomine' composition. This piece is titled *A Verse for two to play on one Virginal or Organ*, with the option of these

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<sup>89</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> Notley, 'Schubert's social music: the "forgotten genres"', pp. 146–47.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>92</sup> For a deeper discussion on Carleton's work, see: Frank Dawes, 'Nicholas Carleton and the Earliest Keyboard Duet', *The Musical Times*, 92.1306 (1951), pp. 542–46, doi:10.2307/934079.

two instruments implying both a domestic and liturgical role.<sup>93</sup> Before this, the specific instrumentation pertaining to more than two hands on a keyboard instrument was not always explicitly stated, but the roots of the piano duet stemmed from predecessors to the piano, including the clavichord, harpsichord, and organ.

In the early seventeenth century, there were many works written using three staves, particularly by French composers. This indicates that these works could have been played on the same keyboard, or a musician could play the third stave on another keyboard. As mentioned previously, the instrumentation for such works was ambiguous at times; the third stave could have been used by another instrument altogether. *In Keyboard Duets*, Ferguson asserts that many of these pieces without instrumental assignment were used as duets.<sup>94</sup> Except for a small number of pieces, the emergence of the piano duet took a separate route than that of the organ and the virginal. This is due to the keyboard instrument emerging as a staple in the home of the middle-class from the 1790s. Loesser remarks that owning a fortepiano was an ‘aspiration’ and this became a representation of a family’s ‘refinement’ and ‘prosperity’.<sup>95</sup> The growth of the piano duet, as opposed to the piano duo, was heavily influenced by the fact it was not logistically feasible for a home to possess two instruments. Firstly, there were spatial limitations of the home and secondly, both instruments would have to be tuned to one another.

#### **1.4 Mozart’s Four-Hand Contribution**

Piano duets did not become popular until the latter half of the eighteenth century, with Mozart being the main contributor. Before Mozart, the state of piano for four hands was limited and even described as ‘primitive’ by Ferguson.<sup>96</sup> As a child, Mozart performed duets with his sister

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<sup>93</sup> Dawes, ‘Piano duet’ in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>94</sup> Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century*, p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos; A Social History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1990), p. 136.

<sup>96</sup> Howard Ferguson, ‘Mozart’s Duets for One Pianoforte’, *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 73 (1946), pp. 35–44 (p. 36), doi:10.1093/jrma/73.1.35.

throughout Europe, and this popularised the genre. It is said that the history of the four-hand recital began with Mozart and his sister Maria Anna ('Nannerl') in Hicksford's Great Room, Brewer Street in London on May 13, 1765. According to Weekley and Arganbright, this concert predates what is often considered as the first solo piano recital, which took place in 1768 featuring Johann Christian Bach.<sup>97</sup> Upon closer enquiry, this is not necessarily true; Bach's performance was the instrument's third solo outing. The first took place in 1763 in Vienna and the second performance took place in 1768 in Dublin by Mr Henry Walsh, two weeks before Bach's performance.<sup>98</sup> With that being the case, the solo instrumental recital only predates the duet recital by a mere two years. The famous image of Mozart demonstrating a cross-hand technique with Maria Anna reinforces the perception of duets being a domestic outlet, but even by this time, the piano duet embodied more than a mere housebound genre. Its functions were manifold; social, domestic, performative, and for compositional endeavours.

**Figure 1.1 'The Mozart Family', oil painting by Johann Nepomuk della Croce (1780–1781) <sup>99</sup>**



<sup>97</sup> Dallas Weekley and Nancy Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide* (San Diego: Neil A. Kjos Music Company, 1996), p. 4.

<sup>98</sup> Jeremy Siepmann, *The Piano* (London: Carlton Books Limited, 1998), p. 11.

<sup>99</sup> Maria Anna, Wolfgang and Leopold Mozart, and the portrait is of the deceased Anna Maria: Stanley Sadie, *Mozart: The Early Years 1756-1781* (Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 493.

According to his father Leopold in a letter dating from 1765, Mozart supposedly wrote his first piano duet as a child: ‘In London, little Wolfgang wrote his first piece for four hands. No-one has ever written a four-hand sonata before.’<sup>100</sup> This letter dates from the same year as the so-called first four-hand recital was performed, so it is likely the Sonata in C Major (K.19d) was written especially for this concert. Leopold Mozart marketed the concert in an interesting fashion, highlighting the novelty of the genre: ‘The two children will play upon the same harpsichord and put upon it a handkerchief, without seeing the keys.’<sup>101</sup>

Mozart writing this sonata in full may not be factual, nor it is certain that this sonata was the first ever four-hand sonata. In Brussels Conservatory, there are four-hand sonatas by both Niccolò Jomelli and Johann Christian Bach, believed to predate 1765.<sup>102</sup> While Mozart is widely considered as the founder of the four-hand duet, it has been suggested that the above Johann Christian Bach was amongst its founders, considering he was one of the first composers to write for four hands.<sup>103</sup> Similarly, Lubin remarks that the genesis of the piano duet originates with J.C. Bach as he was the first master to compose a significant number of duets.<sup>104</sup> This is somewhat at odds with the Grove entry on J.C. Bach, which does not seem to attach any importance to his duets (the same could be said for the Grove entry on Mozart).<sup>105</sup> Though, it is included in J.C Bach’s entry that despite Bach being considerably older, Bach and Mozart played harpsichord duets together, and that Bach influenced Mozart’s compositions (who in turn influenced Schubert).<sup>106</sup> It is accepted however that it was Mozart who took the genre out

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<sup>100</sup> Dawes, ‘Piano duet’ in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>101</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, pp. 22–23 (a list of his works is provided). It has also been suggested that J.C. Bach or Mozart was the founder (‘Erfinder’): Wieland and Jürgen Uhde, *Schubert: Späte Klaviermusik; Spuren ihrer inneren Geschichte*, p. 262.

<sup>104</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 10.

<sup>105</sup> Christoph Wolff and Stephen Roe, ‘Bach, Johann [John] Christian’ in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.6002278196; Cliff Eisen and Stanley Sadie, ‘Mozart, (Johann Chrysostom) Wolfgang Amadeus’ in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.6002278233.

<sup>106</sup> Eisen and Sadie, ‘Mozart, (Johann Chrysostom) Wolfgang Amadeus’ in *Grove Music Online*.

of its embryonic state and to a higher level of sophistication. Altogether, Mozart wrote some sonatas for piano duet, a fugue and a fantasia (organ), and an Andante with Variations (appendix 2). For a large number of piano duets, the primo part consisted of the thematic material, whilst the secondo part often played dull and repetitive figures, thereby providing the harmony. As Townsend writes, piano duets often were written to showcase the ‘shimmering’ higher register of the keyboard, while the secondo was destined to play ‘uninteresting’ and ‘inferior’ parts.<sup>107</sup> It was firstly Mozart though who began to showcase the potential of the genre and who first transcended the limitations of the piano duet as it were. Mozart’s contribution is summed up nicely by Ferguson; Mozart was the first of the two greatest composers of piano duets (followed by Schubert).<sup>108</sup> One can draw many parallels between Mozart and Schubert’s compositional life as a duet composer; Klaus Börner of the *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen* divides Mozart’s contribution to the four-handed genre into three periods:<sup>109</sup>

1. The young boy who performed and popularised duets and possibly wrote a sonata for duet in 1765 as a child.
2. As a youth and young man in which his early duet works conform to that of the time for the most part.
3. Thirdly and lastly, Mozart composed several piano duets of high quality in his thirties. These consists of the Sonata in F Major (K.497), Sonata in C Major (K.521), Sonata in G Major (K.357/497a) and the Andante Variations in G Major (K.501), and Mozart’s Fantasia in F Minor duet for mechanical organ (K.608). The

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<sup>107</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 128. Original source: Douglas Townsend, *Programme notes for Musical Heritage Society Recording of Schubert’s four-hand works*, Christian Ivaldi and Noël Lee (US: MHS 3911/12/13, 1978).

<sup>108</sup> Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century*, p. 6.

<sup>109</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 30.

Fantasia in F Minor for mechanical organ warrants more ‘frequent hearings’.<sup>110</sup> Particularly noteworthy is the Sonata in F Major (K.497) which is his most mature contribution to the genre. Blom describes that the work as an ‘almost uncomfortably great piece of domestic music’, thus suggesting that Mozart had defied typical conventions of the piano duet – causing friction.<sup>111</sup>

In the second half of the eighteenth century, there were other composers that composed piano duets, including Friedrich Beck, Johann Egidius Geyer, Christian Gottlob Saupe, Josef Schuster, and Christian Gottlob Niefe – most of whom studied with Mozart.<sup>112</sup> Georgii goes as far as to claim that child Mozart was the ‘progenitor’ of the piano duet; however, this is not a claim that can go unchallenged based on the discussion above.<sup>113</sup> By extension, Gál’s claim that Schubert was the ‘founder’ of piano duet music is not fully accurate either.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, it was firstly Mozart and then Schubert who greatly elevated the genre. The metaphorical baton of four-hand compositions was passed on to Schubert from Mozart. Schubert’s engagement in the genre mirrors that of Mozart and can also be divided into three periods:

1. Schubert as a youth whose first large composition was a Fantasy in G Major (D.1) for four hands. Schubert’s friend Joseph von Span states in his memoirs that ‘Already at the age of ten or eleven Schubert was trying his hand at small songs, quartets and little pianoforte pieces. His first larger work was a Fantasy for pianoforte duet which he wrote at the beginning of 1810’.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Robert Winter, ‘Keyboard Music: The Classical sonata’ in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.14945.

<sup>111</sup> Eric Blom, *Mozart* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1962), p. 273.

<sup>112</sup> Howard Gerald Aultman, ‘Walter Georgii’s Klaviernmusik, Part II: a Translation and Commentary’ (doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1983), p. 26.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>114</sup> Hans Gál, *Franz Schubert and the Essence of Melody* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1974), p. 146.

<sup>115</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 3.

2. Schubert as a young man; his first sojourn in Zselíz was his first important year in duet writing as he wrote a number of four-hand compositions for the Esterházy sisters. Similar to Mozart, many of these works conform to characteristics of duets at the time, though he explores more genres.
3. The last period in his life can be described as the last few years before his death, including the Sonata in C ('Grand Duo') D.812 from 1824. This year formed a critical juncture in the realm of four-hand works. The year of 1828 bore even richer fruit. During 1828 he composed the Fantasy in F Minor (D.940), Allegro in A Minor (D.947), Fugue in E Minor for Piano or Organ (D.952) and the Rondo in A Major (D.951).

While there are many parallels to be drawn from Mozart and Schubert's four-hand compositional life, there are some contrasting elements. Robert Winter argues that while Mozart demonstrated a degree of ambition to explore the genre outside of its ephemeral and utilitarian qualities, it was Schubert who truly invested in the genre by taking a seemingly negligible genre and making it central (similar to that of the Lied), and placing it on par with the 'prestigious' genres of the sonata, symphony, and string quartet.<sup>116</sup> I agree with the assertion that Schubert provides himself to be the foremost representative of the four-hand genre. From both quality and the large number of duets Schubert wrote (approximately seven/eight hours of music amounting to roughly 500 pages), Schubert surpasses Mozart. Schubert's four-hand works also display a far wider range of styles. Schubert used 'serious' forms such as sonatas and fantasies for his four-hand works, but he also composed in 'lighter' genres including dances, divertissements, and marches – though he often merges the serious and the light. Out of ten works of Mozart's keyboard duets, six of these were sonatas. The remaining works were

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<sup>116</sup> Maurice J.E. Brown, Eric Sams and Robert Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.25109.

a fantasy, a fugue, an Adagio and Allegro, and an Andante and Variations (see appendix 2). However, to say Mozart wrote ten *complete* duet works explicitly for four-hand *piano* is not true; the Adagio and Allegro Fantasy (K.594) and the Fantasy in F Minor (K.608) were commissioned for a type of mechanical organ. The piano duet arrangement of K.608 arose in 1799 by an arranger after Mozart's death, and there is also a more recent arrangement by Paul Badura-Skoda. Furthermore, the fugue (K.401) was also most likely written for the organ while later assigned as a piano solo. The fugue consists of two staves rather than the standard four, but the writing strongly suggests this was written as a duet in mind as there are uncharacteristic stretches such as tenths. The K.594 and K.608 works are often included in listings of Mozart's duet works despite not explicitly written for piano. To add to this, the Sonata in G Major (K.357) remained incomplete and as previously discussed, the Sonata (K.19d) is now categorised as doubtful.<sup>117</sup> Taking all of this into account, Mozart wrote fewer piano duets than led to believe in the popular imagination. It would be more accurate to assert that Mozart wrote *c.* five complete piano works for four hands, which pales in comparison to Schubert's output.

Nonetheless, Mozart must be given kudos for making an impression on the genre in just a handful of works.<sup>118</sup> One must also give a nod to his exquisite Sonata in D Major (D.448), which is a two-piano work; it has become a staple of the two-piano duet repertoire. A striking similarity between Mozart and Schubert is that they both did not engage in four-hand transcriptions/arrangements. Despite the high demand for transcriptions, the overwhelming majority of duets Schubert wrote were original duets – with the exception of a small number of works, including two 'im italienischen Stile' arrangements of his orchestral works (D. 592 and D.597), and the overture transcriptions to *Alfonso und Estrella* (D.773) and *Fierrabras* (D.798). It is likely that Schubert was inspired by Mozart's efforts in the genre, and therefore

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<sup>117</sup> Eisen and Sadie, 'Mozart, (Johann Chrysostom) Wolfgang Amadeus' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>118</sup> For a musical appraisal of these works, see: William Kinderman, *Mozart's Piano Music* (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 95–115.

Mozart's contribution must be recognised. A number of scholars have drawn musical links between previous composers and Schubert's most acclaimed piano duet, the Fantasy in F Minor.<sup>119</sup> It has been argued that Schubert was influenced by Mozart's Fantasia in F Minor duet for mechanical organ (K.608).<sup>120</sup> Both works are in F minor – the key associated with lament, as exemplified in the well-known *Ideen zu Einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* by Schubart.<sup>121</sup> Upon comparing these works, one cannot help but notice the dotted rhythm and repeated-note motif evident from the beginning onward in both works. Furthermore, the unusual semitone shift of the key from F minor to F sharp minor is similar, as well as the inclusion of an ending fugue section. To strengthen the possible influence Mozart had on Schubert's four-hand compositions, Newbould suggests that perhaps Schubert was influenced to write his G minor march from *Six grandes marches* for four hands (D.819, No.2) after listening to Mozart's String Quartet in G Minor; Newbould posits this because of the similarities in chromaticism and articulation patterns between both composers' works.<sup>122</sup> Though as Humphreys rightly asserts, both composers' handling of the duet medium varies greatly in their fantasies in F minor. While Mozart's work possibly provided inspiration for Schubert, Mozart was restricted with the use of the mechanical organ, while Schubert explores new territory and embraces the piano duet with 'total seriousness'.<sup>123</sup> This is a valid argument, particularly when one considers the ever-increasing capabilities of the fortepiano as the eighteenth century progresses into the nineteenth, as well as Schubert's advancement of tonal cyclicism. Mozart's use of pitch range here is quite limited in comparison to Schubert's fantasy, and Schubert's duet certainly is more playable. In Mozart's work, the primo's left hand and the secondo's right hand are playing in

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<sup>119</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 287.

<sup>120</sup> David Humphreys, 'Something borrowed', *The Musical Times*, 138.1853 (1997), pp. 19–24, doi:10.2307/1004029; Byrne Bodley, 'Between Society and Solitude: Schubert's Improvisations', p. 47.

<sup>121</sup> Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *Ideen zu Einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Vienna: J. V. Degen, 1806).

<sup>122</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 237 and Brian Newbould, *Schubert's Workshop: Towards an Early Maturity*, I (New York: Routledge, 2023), p. 138.

<sup>123</sup> Humphreys, 'Something borrowed', p. 24.

very close proximity for extended periods – note the almost exclusive use of three treble clefs, and at one point, four.

### 1.5 Beethoven's Four-Hand Works

Beethoven's contribution to the piano duet is far less important than his output for the symphony, string quartet, and sonata for the piano, violin, and cello. His piano duet works in total are far outnumbered by his other works for piano, with a total of five works (see appendix 3). Beethoven's most well-known student, Carl Czerny, was much more interested in composing piano duets in both original and arrangement formats than Beethoven (Czerny then taught Liszt, who was directly influenced by Schubert's duets).<sup>124</sup> For the small number of duets Beethoven did compose, he appears to have been driven by personal reasons or pragmatism, rather than any grand ambitions for the piano duet. For example, he composed song variations (WoO74) for two countesses whom he taught (who 'charmed' him); while he arranged his 'Grosse Fuge' because of his disappointment with Halm's arrangement.<sup>125</sup> For piano duet, Beethoven composed an early sonata, two sets of early variations, three marches harking from his so-called middle period, and an arrangement of his 'Grosse Fuge' (Op.134) from his late period. From this, we can deduce that he did not seem to be inclined to write piano duets, and he rather focused his creative efforts on other instrumental forces. This is not surprising; most major composers wrote piano duets but only did so to a small extent, while the bulk of works were often written by transcribers or arrangers. In *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, his duets are only mentioned briefly in passing.<sup>126</sup> However, this is

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<sup>124</sup> A selection of Czerny's four-hand works: McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, pp. 105–08.

<sup>125</sup> Joseph Kerman and others, 'Beethoven, Ludwig van' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40026; Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, p. 47.

<sup>126</sup> Glenn Stanley, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

not to say that these few works are not worthy of attention. They all bear strong resemblance to his mastery and are unmistakably Beethovenian in compositional style, demonstrating colour and form. Schumann asserted that not even Beethoven's chromatic scales are like those of other composers.<sup>127</sup>

Beethoven's first venture into duet-writing culminated in *Variations on a Theme by Count Waldstein* (WoO67). This is a work of varied character and technical ability. Strahan reflects that this work is typical for the piano duet in its light style, and she contrasts it to Schubert's much more sophisticated development of the theme in his *Variations in A flat Major* (D.813).<sup>128</sup> Beethoven further explored the variations form in *Six Variations on the Song 'Ich denke dein'* (WoO74), which is based on an original song to a text by Goethe. In 1796, he composed his only sonata for piano duet, *Sonata in D Major* (Op.6). This work consists of two movements and serves as an example of his early style. While not groundbreaking in scope, the two-movement form is reminiscent of J.S. Bach's two-movement sonatas; but it also anticipates Beethoven's use of two-movements in his middle and later period (such as his *Sonata No.22 in F Major*, Op.54). Lubin suggests that there is more to Beethoven's piano duet works than it may initially seem, thus refuting the claim that Beethoven's piano duet works are largely 'immature'.<sup>129</sup>

Works of particular note to our study are his *Three Marches* (Op.45), dedicated to the Princess Esterházy. Beethoven's marches are amongst the finest in the genre and are more mature in style than his previous efforts. From historical evidence, we can ascertain Beethoven's thoughts on these marches. In a letter to Breitkopf and Härtel, Beethoven wrote

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<sup>127</sup> Donald Francis Tovey, *Concertos and Choral Works: Selections from Essays in Musical Analysis* (New York: Dover Publications, 2015), p. 69.

<sup>128</sup> Strahan, 'Music of a lesser genre? Schubert's development and transformation of the piano duet medium', p. 29.

<sup>129</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 26; Frederick Ming Chang and Albert Faurot, *Team Piano Repertoire: A Manual of Music for Multiple Players at One or More Pianos* (Scarecrow Press, Inc.: Metuchen, NJ, 1976), p. 4.

that his marches are easy, but not unimportant and he states the last march is so substantial, that ‘it may be called the March of the three Marches’.<sup>130</sup> There are some passages of orchestral colour in these works and consequently, the marches have been arranged for various media including arrangements for the organ, orchestras, and bands. A similar fate fell upon Schubert’s *Marches militaire* (D.733). Many parallels and differences have been drawn between Beethoven and Schubert’s music, but there is little investigation into Beethoven’s possible influence on Schubert’s piano-duet writing outside of his variations.<sup>131</sup> We know that Schubert dedicated his *Eight Variations on a French Song* (D.624) to Beethoven, who reputedly critiqued the score in return.<sup>132</sup> Given Schubert’s strong admiration of Beethoven, it is not unlikely that Schubert was inspired by Beethoven’s four-hand marches while he wrote his own marches. Schubert clearly had a close affinity with four-hand marches as he wrote seventeen independent ones. At the very least, Beethoven provided the roots for further composers to explore; Messing remarks that Beethoven’s set of marches for four hands were the first amongst this genre in Vienna, and they struck a successful balance between the artistic and the commercial.<sup>133</sup>

An outlier in Beethoven’s duet output is the ‘Grosse Fuge’ (Op.134), dating from 1826. It was Beethoven’s arrangement of the original finale of his String Quartet (Op.133). As was commonplace, Artaria, Beethoven’s publisher, requested that the work be arranged. The work is fiercely difficult for a string quartet, so it is possible the piano duet medium was suggested rather than a piano solo. Anton Halm first transcribed the work, but Beethoven took it upon

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<sup>130</sup> Alfred Christlieb Kalischer, *Beethoven’s Letters* (USA: Dover Publications, 1972), p. 49.

<sup>131</sup> Literature on the Beethoven-Schubert relationship: Focroulle, ‘Final thoughts? Interpretation of the first movements of Beethoven’s and Schubert’s last three piano sonatas’; John M. Gingerich, *Schubert’s Beethoven Project* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>132</sup> There are differing versions of this account; see Christopher Mark Wiley, ‘Re-Writing Composers’ Lives: Critical Historiography and Musical Biography’ (doctoral thesis, Royal Holloway, 2008), pp. 108–13.

<sup>133</sup> Messing, *Marching to the Canon: The Life of Schubert’s Marche militaire*, p. 7; Lubin suggests Beethoven’s four-hand marches may have provided the impetus for Schubert to write his four-hand marches: Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 28.

himself to undertake the transcription as he was not content with the outcome. Beethoven attempted to make the material more pianistic by changing contrapuntal lines, altering tremolos, and extending the range of the ‘cello’ line outside the cello range.<sup>134</sup> The work went out of print quickly and in 1927, Harold Bauer arranged the work for two pianos to increase its accessibility. Unfortunately, this version was also unpopular.<sup>135</sup> The consensus on this duet is that the work is unpianistic and too difficult to play. McGraw states that the work is ‘agonisingly unpianistic’ and Lubin remarks that ‘the work has not really made its way’.<sup>136</sup> Shepherd agrees that the work is ‘notoriously difficult’.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, Frederic Ming Chang and Albert Faurot go as far to deem the work a ‘moribund experiment’.<sup>138</sup> Similarly, Ferguson considers the work ‘so unpianistic and so awkwardly laid out’.<sup>139</sup> While the work as a piano duet missed the mark, the work remains a musical curiosity and it is interesting to study Beethoven’s methods of transcription. It serves as a reminder that not all composers write fluently for piano duet, as Schubert did. In short, Beethoven’s contribution to four-hand playing was minimal, certainly in comparison to Mozart and Schubert. However, the works produced hints of what Beethoven was to further explore in other media. He clearly left a mark on Schubert; for Schubert dedicated his *Eight Variations on a French Song* for four hands (D.624) to Beethoven. According to Joseph Hüttenbrenner, Beethoven approved of this work and played the work most days with his nephew.<sup>140</sup> To conclude, while Beethoven had long been associated as the master of the piano sonata, string quartet, and symphony (though scholars

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<sup>134</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 30.

<sup>135</sup> Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, p. 48.

<sup>136</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 38; Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 29.

<sup>137</sup> Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, p. 47.

<sup>138</sup> Chang and Faurot, *Team Piano Repertoire: A Manual of Music for Multiple Players at One or More Pianos*, p. 5.

<sup>139</sup> Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century*, p. 10.

<sup>140</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 28.

now agree that Schubert is on par with Beethoven), the genre of the piano duet is very much Schubert's territory.

## 1.6 A Chronological Overview of Schubert's Duets

It is well known that Schubert's earliest surviving composition was a piano duet; the Fantasy in G Major (D.1 and fragments in D.1b), written at the ripe age of thirteen. In fact, his three earliest endeavours in composition were fantasies for piano duet, composed between 1810–1813 (see appendix 1). This marks the beginning of a life-long affiliation with duets and demonstrates youthful experimentation. It is likely that Schubert utilised the fantasy form due to its malleability. For the young Schubert, was using the fantasy a safer means of experimenting with compositions, without being bound by constraints of other classical forms? Strahan takes from this Schubert's innovation, for he chooses a genre that is typically for solo piano.<sup>141</sup> In the Grove article on Schubert, it is posited that 'a four-hand fantasy would have proved less intimidating to a precious young composer than the more settled standards for a two-hand sonata'.<sup>142</sup> Although an interesting stance, one must take into account the difficulty of composing for four-hands and award Schubert his due credit; would it not have been considerably easier to write for two hands from a practical point of view? It is intriguing that the young Schubert did not choose a smaller-scale form, such as a waltz or a march – a more obvious choice for a first foray into composing duets, particularly taking into account his young age. He was the first composer to seriously consider composing piano fantasies for four hands, so the combination of using a fantasy in the four-hand genre was exceptional, and a sign of what was to come. In this work (D.1), Schubert consciously designates the main theme to the *secondo* in the opening – a noteworthy feature. In fact, both the opening sections of the *adagio*

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<sup>141</sup> Strahan, '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias', p. 43.

<sup>142</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

and andante are heard in the secondo. These themes in the secondo are based in the middle of the piano – the most robust section of the fortepiano – and scored using a treble and a bass clef (in contrast to two bass clefs which often is the case with duets), and thus the importance of the secondo is elevated. Furthermore, the primo does not enter until bar 16. The dialogue between the primo and secondo evident in this work may stem from Schubert’s training in ensembles, as he participated in his family’s string quartet, as well as in other ensembles in the Stadtkonvikt. The general tendency for Schubert to elevate the secondo status to match the primo in many of his four-hand works may be a result of this experience. This is not to say that his treatment of the primo and secondo in this piece are as equal as his works were to become; Arganbright and Weekley’s view is that the secondo plays the role of the ‘mere’ accompaniment in this work, with one brief exception.<sup>143</sup> Though, this view is overgeneralising; the secondo contains some melodic material (for example, the opening adagio and andante), and often the primo has accompanimental figures. For a performer’s perspective, the assignment of mid-range to high notes in the opening of the secondo player makes it a little awkward to play. Since the primo is resting for quite some time, it may be a feasible solution for the secondo player to sit themselves in a more comfortable position towards the middle of the piano stool (and for the primo to leave more space). Then for the allegro section, when the primo’s right and left hand enter and the secondo’s scoring is written in two bass clefs, the secondo must make space for the primo. In some parts, the texture of this work is quite sparse, and in other parts, the texture is quite the opposite. To say that traces of an orchestral style pervade this work is an understatement. Schubert’s orchestral elements are evident in many of his piano duet works, though none more so obvious than his early works –

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<sup>143</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 4. Furthermore, the varying difficulty/level of equality between the primo and secondo (within the same work) in some of Schubert’s duets opens far more possibilities for pianists; duo configurations can consist of two seasoned pianists, a student/teacher, two students/pianists of equal ability, or two students/pianists of unequal ability. As Byrne Bodley observes, Schubert’s duets are constructed ‘to create duos that complement each pianist’s personal talents’: Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 430.

he becomes more imaginative as the years go on. For example, throughout this work, there are tremolos that are prolonged for many bars, and these are evocative of string-playing. The clean execution of these is quite a task, particularly considering the work is long (over 1000 bars), and there are quite a few changing tempo markings written in. Note that in many of the duet works from Schubert's early period, orchestral features are common; his training at the Stadtkonvikt is never far from his mind. For example, in the autograph copy of Fantasy in G Major (D.1), Schubert explicitly marks in 'trumpet' for a repeated dotted-note motif on a G4, and the orchestral quality is further bolstered by the octave tremolo, which evoke drum-rolls. This motif is further highlighted by the primo player resting when this motif enters.<sup>144</sup> In fact, orchestral traits were characteristic of Schubert's four-hand works throughout his lifetime. Though, these effects were less relied upon as time went on, due to Schubert's evolving compositional style.

The year thereafter, the Fantasy in G Minor (D.9) for duet was composed, a shorter and more compact work than the previous fantasy. Noteworthy here is that Schubert self-quotes from his first Lied, 'Hagar's Klage' (D.5); a characteristic of his compositions that continues throughout his lifetime. It is remarkable that he combines the lesser-explored genres together of the Lied and four-hand piano, genres that he greatly elevated and with which his name became synonymous. Börner rates this work's playing difficulty as '3(-4)' out of 5; assuming Schubert played this duet with a family member/friend, this is a testament to the high level of playing he was capable of from a young age.<sup>145</sup> This rings especially true considering Arganbright and Weekley's observation of some 'technically awkward areas especially in such

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<sup>144</sup> Franz Schubert, *Fantasie in G für Klavier zu Vier Händen* (autograph score) <[https://schubert-online.at/activpage/manuskripte.php?top=1&werke\\_id=464&herkunft=gattungeneinzelansicht](https://schubert-online.at/activpage/manuskripte.php?top=1&werke_id=464&herkunft=gattungeneinzelansicht)> [accessed 31/07/2024], p. 4.

<sup>145</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 117.

early pieces’ – though they provide solutions in the form of swapping particular notes between hands, and on occasion, to the other pianist.<sup>146</sup>

The opening of five bare Gs on a dotted minim, with a fermata, is almost an identical opening to that of the Impromptu in C Minor (D.899, No.1), composed in his penultimate year. Although D.9 begins in G minor, Schubert makes the unusual decision to end the piece in the key of D major. It was expected of the time that a composition ends in the tonic key it begins with, though a piece ending in a different key was not an uncommon occurrence for Schubert in his early works, such as ‘Auf der Donau’ (D.553) and his Piano Sonata in A flat Major (D.557), both composed in 1817. The Sonata in A flat Major ends in E flat major and thus it is fair to initially question whether Schubert intended to write another movement, to end the work in A flat; though, this sonata is regarded as complete, and the third movement is very much in the spirit of a finale. While Schubert may have set ‘unrealistic high artistic goals’ in the words of Christensen, Strahan notes that even from D.1 to D.9, early in his career, Schubert demonstrates in his works his ability to surpass the domestic associations of the four-hand genre.<sup>147</sup>

Schubert’s decision to write piano duets for his first compositions is not one to be taken lightly. By Schubert’s time, piano duets had become a much-loved form of leisure, and they tended to be more technically facile and accessible in comparison to two-hand works. These cultural factors likely contributed to Schubert choosing to write for piano duet, though he also had artistic ambitions for the genre. Rast puts forward that Schubert regularly wrote duets so that he could explore textures at the piano which lay somewhat between solo playing and

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<sup>146</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 6.

<sup>147</sup> Christensen, ‘Schubert’s Four-Hand Piano Works’, p.73; Strahan, ‘(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert’s Four-Hand Fantasias’, p. 224.

orchestral textures, as well as include more thematic material.<sup>148</sup> Schubert certainly perceived the piano duet as a self-contained genre. Schubert used the same medium and fantasy genre for one of his last ever compositions, the seminal Fantasy in F Minor, and this shows that from an early age, and continuing until his death, Schubert had a special artistic curiosity and fondness for writing duets. His use of duets from an early age foreshadows his lifelong endeavours in the genre, just like his first fantasy anticipates his last.

After writing a further fantasy, Fantasy in C Minor (D.48), no further piano duet fantasy was to be composed until his final year. While in the previous two fantasies, Schubert tended to highlight the solo player at different points (either primo or secondo), there is more shared material in the Fantasy (D.48), showing a development of his compositional style. In 1817–1818, he composed two piano duet arrangements of his orchestral overtures (D.592 and D.597), as was standard at the time, and this demonstrates his pragmatic use of the four-hand medium (though these were only published posthumously). He also composed the charming Rondo in D Major (D.608), which was his first original piano duet outside of his forays into the fantasy as a youth, and the work signals a different approach to duet-writing in style. In this rondo, Christensen rightly points out that the melodic material is shared between primo and secondo.<sup>149</sup>

His next duets were composed when Schubert was the musician in residence for the Esterházy family on their family estate in Zselíz for four months in 1818. Schubert taught vocals and piano to the two young countesses, Karoline (aged thirteen) and her elder sister Marie (aged sixteen).<sup>150</sup> Zselíz is a place of significance for Schubert's journey into piano duets, as he wrote several during his 1818 and in 1824 sojourns there. Before Schubert's arrival

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<sup>148</sup> Nicholas Andrew Rast, 'Analysis of Structure in Schubert's Piano Duets' (doctoral thesis, University of London; King's College, 1988), p. 8.

<sup>149</sup> Christensen, 'Schubert's Four-Hand Piano Works', pp. 75–76.

<sup>150</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 315.

at Zselíz, both Karoline and Marie were described as ‘already very good pianists’.<sup>151</sup> According to von Hellborn (Schubert’s first biographer), Marie had an ‘exquisite high soprano voice’ and she devoted more time to her singing, while Karoline worked successfully at playing accompaniments.<sup>152</sup> Several years later, Marie was described as a ‘dilettante in pianoforte playing’ in an 1823 Viennese Directory.<sup>153</sup> As discussed above, duets were commonly used as pedagogical material and we can safely assume that pieces were intended as material for the countesses’ piano tuition. One cannot help but wonder if Schubert would have engaged in writing piano duets to the same degree were it not for his appointments in Zselíz. While one can reasonably assume Schubert would have written some piano duets if it were not for his tutelage of the Esterházy daughters, he may not have composed piano duets to such an extent without this position; and thus, his position here influenced his compositional career greatly as he brought a ‘lightweight’ genre to new artistic planes.

According to von Hellborn, Schubert returned from his 1818 and 1824 stays at Zselíz with ‘by no means barren of results’, in terms of musical output.<sup>154</sup> In 1818, he composed Four Polonaises (D.599), Sonata in B flat (D.617), Deutscher with 2 Trios and 2 Ländler (D.618) and *Eight Variations on a French Song* (D.624). The *Eight Variations on a French Song* are composed in Schubert’s earlier style in that they are not as developed as his later works, but they anticipate the later A flat variations masterwork. Schubert must have been content with the French variations as he dedicated it to Beethoven, whom he revered. A striking characteristic of the 1818 piano duets is the growing role of the secondo player as a melodic contributor.

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<sup>151</sup> Chusid, *Schubert’s Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 163.

<sup>152</sup> Heinrich von Hellborn, *The Life of Franz Schubert*, I, trans. by Arthur Duke Coleridge (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1869), p. 138.

<sup>153</sup> Chusid, *Schubert’s Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 163.

<sup>154</sup> Von Hellborn, *The Life of Franz Schubert*, I, p. 140.

Interestingly, in March 1818, Schubert along with Anselm Hüttenbrenner, Therese and Babette Kunz performed an eight-hand transcription of one of Schubert's orchestral overtures entitled 'im italienischen Stile' (D.592 or D.597). There is no evidence of an eight-hand version, so it is safe to assume that there were two duos doubling up on the original four-hand work.<sup>155</sup> It was notably the first time for Schubert to appear as a pianist publicly. This eight-hand performance on two pianos foreshadowed the craze of multiple pianos being played simultaneously, often with two players per piano. This came into fashion in the middle of the 1820s.<sup>156</sup> Franz von Schlechta reviews this in the *Theaterzeitung* with a special nod to Schubert:

A beginning was made with an overture for two pianos, eight hands, by Franz Schubert, performed by the Fräulein Therese and Babette Kunz and Herren Schubert and Hüttenbrenner. The reviewer regards it as his duty to draw special attention to the young artist, Herr Schubert, since he has several times had an opportunity of admiring his rich gifts. Profound feeling, disciplined yet spontaneous force and appealing charm mark his every work, large and small, and that once practice, that mother of all human perfection, has done her own work with him, they will without a doubt find their favoured place among the productions of the day. The performance too deserved all praise.<sup>157</sup>

The context of these two 'im italienischen Stile' works provides further grounds for exploration, particularly when we consider the fresh appraisal of Schubert in Byrne Bodley's new biography. In the reappraisal of Schubert, Byrne Bodley notes Schubert's 'lifelong debt' to Italian compositional technique, in contrast to the German style, the latter of which has been most discussed in scholarship.<sup>158</sup> Bear in mind here that Schubert had attended compositional

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<sup>155</sup> Though it may have been a different arrangement composed for this occasion, that was then lost: Lindmayr-Brandl, 'Franz Schubert as a Pianist', p. 21. There is just one further mention of Schubert and an eight-hand arrangement for two pianos for a different work. In the *Neue Schubert-Ausgabe*, Landon notes there is a lost manuscript (D.Anh.1/7, formerly D.858) of a march for two-pianos for eight hands with Schubert's name on it; it is documented as 'doubtful', and Landon posits the work was an arrangement of one of his popular four-hand marches: Franz Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon (Kassel: Franz Schubert. Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke VII/1/4, Bärenreiter, 1972), P. XII.

<sup>156</sup> Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos; A Social History*, p. 363.

<sup>157</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents* (New York: W.W Norton and Company, 1947), pp. 87–88.

<sup>158</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*.

lessons with Antonio Salieri from a young age, and Salieri strongly encouraged Schubert to compose in the Italian style.

Schubert had a certain fondness for writing marches for piano duet. He wrote seventeen independent marches, which contrasts starkly to his solo piano works, for which he wrote just one march, the March in E Major (D.606). A march's requirement of utmost precision and synchronicity between companions fits in well with the duet medium. It is likely he was influenced by the Zeitgeist of the Napoleonic wars, which ended in 1815. Marches can embody a wide range of functions, from military functions to 'popular' marches, and funeral marches. Perhaps this is one pragmatic reason why Schubert utilised this medium, along with the influence of contemporary historical events. For example, Schubert wrote *Grande marche funèbre* (D.859) for the death of Tsar Alexander I, marking the divergence from duets as light-hearted and 'non-serious' pieces and casting them into a political sphere. In a follow-up composition, Schubert composed the *Grande marche héroïque* (D.885) to pay homage to the new Tsar. It is not certain what prompted Schubert to write these two works in response to Russian events, though Einstein suggests Schubert was hoping for a 'token of Russian generosity' whilst similarly, Sams suggests the titles were in part a publisher's sales strategy.<sup>159</sup> The *Grande marche funèbre* was supposedly very successful and in the same year 1826, a piano solo version was published by Pennauer (the manuscript is lost and whether Schubert arranged this himself is up for debate).<sup>160</sup> Lubin observes that none of Schubert's biographers had any information as to the reasoning behind these compositions, though with Byrne Bodley's new biography on Schubert, some context to the works are provided. Byrne Bodley informs the reader that the Tsar was popular in the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815) and that he had visited Vienna between 1818 and 1822; she posits that Schubert had likely composed

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<sup>159</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 64; Eric Sams, 'Schubert's Piano Duets', *The Musical Times*, 117.1596 (1976), pp. 120–21 (p. 120), doi:10.2307/960215.

<sup>160</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 65.

the *Grande marche funèbre* before the Tsar's death.<sup>161</sup> Both marches place in the highest quality of his four-hand genre overall and evoke orchestral qualities, conveyed through tremolos, pizzicato-like figures, and drum-rolls. The dynamic range is expansive, as it spans from 'pp' and reaches the 'fff' level – an uncommon dynamic for Schubert. Special notice must be given to the *Grande marche héroïque*, in which Schubert experiments with the march form. The form is rather unconventional and complex in comparison to his other marches, and its performance lasts approximately seventeen minutes. It is certainly more extended than the *Grande marche funèbre*. The *Grande marche funèbre* is standard in form, consisting of AB-trio-AB. In contrast, the *Grande marche héroïque*'s unusual form is AB-trio-AB-trio-AB Coda. After the first AB and trio, there is no da capo as one would expect. Rather, Schubert composes an allegro giusto march section, containing new musical material and its own trio. A lengthy coda ends the work, during which motifs from the first A and trio section are combined. Without any background knowledge of the work, it may seem unusual, but the *Grande marche héroïque* was later orchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov and performed by Balakirev in Russia in 1868, presumably as an homage to its Russian link and the original work's orchestral evocations.

Schubert continued developing the march style into the artistic realm. The *Trois marches héroïques* (D.602) were likely assigned as 'héroïque' by the publishers, as it was commonplace for publishers to assign catchpenny titles. Cameron Gardner theorises that it is feasible Schubert encountered some of Beethoven's music with the 'heroic' epithet, and I suggest perhaps Schubert and/or the publishers wished to capitalise on this link (these marches were published during Schubert's lifetime in 1824).<sup>162</sup> The date of composition is ambiguous. It is not unlikely that the duets were written in 1824, but according to Arganbright and Weekley,

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<sup>161</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 425.

<sup>162</sup> Cameron Gardner, 'Distancing the heroic: the Piano Sonata in D Major (D.850)' in *The Unknown Schubert* (New York: Routledge, 2016), ed. by Barbara M. Reul and Lorraine Byrne Bodley, pp. 177–200 (p. 179).

they were written in 1818, while both years are listed in the Grove article on Schubert.<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, they were published in 1824. The marches are not particularly ‘heroic’ sounding and are technically accessible, as Schubert likely wrote these duets to utilise in his lessons with the Esterházy daughters. The first march is marked *allegro moderato* and commences in a unison perfect fourth in all parts, imitating a call to arms. The second march is a sparkly piece in the simple and innocent key of C major, marked *maestoso*. The piece is framed by a repeated motif in dotted rhythms and incessant repeated notes, which both are musical characteristics associated with marches. Its repeated phrases and rhythmical panache are not dissimilar to Rossini’s style. The final march entails a tuneful melody against repeated chords. The trio section commences in a minor key, evoking a pining operatic duet, before resolving back to the major key.

Schubert wrote eleven polonaises in total, and ten these were written for piano duets. Akin to his marches, Schubert must have felt the four-hand medium was an ideal means of expression for this genre. All ten polonaises were published during his lifetime, as were an extremely high volume of his duet output.<sup>164</sup> This is a remarkable testament to the popularity of these piano duets, especially considering many of Schubert’s works were not published until after his death (sometimes decades after). The Four Polonaises (D.599) were composed during his first time in Zselíz (1818), and the later Six Polonaises (D.824) were published in 1826. The polonaise has its origins in Poland as a ceremonial dance in triple meter, its main attributes being phrase endings on the third beat and a rhythmical motif that underpins the melody. This rhythmical feature is frequently utilised throughout Schubert’s polonaises.

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<sup>163</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 22; Brown, Sams and Winter, ‘Schubert, Franz’ in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>164</sup> Chusid, *Schubert’s Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 159.

What is striking about Schubert's polonaises is the high number of polonaises in minor keys. Six out of twenty-two sections (including the trio sections) are in minor keys. For example, the first polonaise of D.599 set is in D minor and the trio in A minor. Another distinguishing feature of the polonaises is his wide use of chromaticism.<sup>165</sup> Chusid even suggests neither Schubert's former compositional teacher Salieri, nor theorists of the time would have approved of the Polonaise in D Minor (D.599) due to the dissonance.<sup>166</sup> The D.824 set from 1826 demonstrates Schubert's progression in piano duets and in the polonaise genre. In general, this set of polonaises is longer and the compositional design is more adventurous. The secondo parts show a deviation from the convention of the melody being confined to the primo and the secondo to the accompaniment. For example, more equality of the players is present in the set's fourth piece, in which the opening statement is imitated by the secondo part, while the primo now plays the accompaniment. A review of this later set was published by an unknown author in the Frankfurt *Allgemeiner musikalischer Anzeiger*:

Not polonaises in the true sense of the term should be expected here, but short most original and for the most part melodious little movements for the pianoforte in polonaise rhythm, which, however, we should have preferred not [to be] maintained throughout these two books [which] resulted in undue uniformity, hardly compensated for by the other beauties and peculiarities. The execution is difficult at times on account of the sometimes surprising – and sometimes, it may be said, far-fetched – modulations. Thoroughly recommended.<sup>167</sup>

This quote exemplifies Schubert's novel harmonic language. Though these modulations are not as striking to the ear as they would have been at the time of conception, they are still worth noting as such modulations would have been arresting to the average listener from the Biedermeier period.

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<sup>165</sup> Chusid goes as far as to put the level of chromaticism into percentages, and he scales the polonaises as 4.64 out of 5 chromatic pitches: Ibid., pp. 163–64.

<sup>166</sup> Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 165.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

The composition year of the *Trois marches militaires* Op.51 (D.733) is disputed; most recent scholarship questions Deutsch's assignment of 1824. Deutsch was aware of von Spaun's 1858 memoir of Schubert, in which von Spaun states that 'four marches likewise for four hands' were composed during Schubert's 1818 sojourn in Zselíz.<sup>168</sup> However, no Schubert marches were published in a set of four. Von Spaun's memoir and Deutsch's investigations into the publication history of the *Marches militaires* (published in 1826) lead to its ambiguous date of conception. It is not unlikely that it was written during summer or autumn of 1818; however, this is as questionable as the dating of 1824 is. Before 1826, the term '*marche militaire*' was an uncommon title for pieces, although marches in general were very familiar to the Viennese.<sup>169</sup> There is no known affiliation of this work with any military connections. That leads one to the possibility that the use of the innovative title provided a unique selling point for Schubert's marches – a genre that was already immensely popular.

The first *Marche militaire* (the most popular) is light-hearted and pompous, in contrast to the connotations the title may evoke. The march-like characteristics include horn calls in perfect fourths in the introduction, akin to a call to arms or a fanfare. All three marches include a subdominant modulation in the trios and are framed in ABA form overall. The third march is the set's most march-like and it exhibits Schubert's penchant for remote keys, which strikes the ear as unexpected. The trio section serves as an apt example. Schubert modulates through several keys in just one page. For example, the third march's outer sections are in E flat major, and the trio begins in the subdominant key, A flat major. Schubert ventures through the subdominant of A flat major (D flat) with the addition of the G flats. Unexpectedly, a *ic-V7-i* cadence in F minor is heard, by way of a common-chord between the two keys (F minor) – see

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<sup>168</sup> Messing, *Marching to the Canon: The Life of Schubert's Marche militaire*, p. 2.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the below example of the secondo. In D flat major, F minor is the mediant. Modulating to the mediant is a hallmark of Schubert's duets:<sup>170</sup>

**Example 1.1, Schubert, *Trois marches militaires*, No. 3 (D. 733), bars 15–17 of the trio**



These marches contain exotic or pseudo-exotic elements in their composition. Such elements include percussive accents, grace notes, and boisterous dynamics. However, these elements are not explicitly linked to the *style hongrois*, simply because Schubert was exposed to it during his time in Zselíz (though this style of music was also heard in Vienna). Whether these intermusical connections were applied consciously or not is another matter. However, in the three movements of his *Divertissement à la hongroise* (Autumn 1824?), Schubert makes blatant use of Hungarian idioms, incorporating dotted rhythms, drone-like fifths, ornamentation, and tremolos to imitate the cimbalom. Unlike many duets of the time, more technical brilliance is required in this substantial work, especially in the distinctive cadenza-like passages. In the entry on Schubert in Grove music, it is noted that the work is more substantial than the title suggests.<sup>171</sup> In both scholarship and in performance, this divertissement is a hidden gem.<sup>172</sup> In the nineteenth century, in fact, this divertissement was amongst Schubert's most popular duets.<sup>173</sup> However, it has received its fair share of criticism. Lubin states the work is in 'Schubert's lightest vein', which is a statement that does not do the work justice, and he

<sup>170</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 32.

<sup>171</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>172</sup> This present researcher attended a concert programme of Schubert's duets, performed by Mitsuko Uchida and Jonathan Biss in 2023; the Hungarian divertissement was featured, and the work certainly was not out of place in the concert hall.

<sup>173</sup> Hutchings goes as far as to say it was once Schubert's most popular duet; Hutchings, *Schubert, The Master Musicians*, p. 151.

suggests its initial popularity may have played a role in ‘a slighting estimate of Schubert’s importance.’<sup>174</sup> Mendelssohn and Wagner also were critical of the work. In an entry in Schumann’s diary from 1836, Schumann mentions Mendelssohn ‘stamped his feet’ with impatience over the work.<sup>175</sup> Wagner expressed that the work was Schubert’s only instrumental work known, which displayed a false impression of the composer.<sup>176</sup> One can draw musical parallels in the folk idioms between this work and the later Fantasy in F Minor (and in his solo piano music, the Impromptu in F Minor, D.935). This *divertissement* merits attention as it is one of the earliest examples of treating folk music in a romantic manner.<sup>177</sup> Another overlooked gem is the *Divertissement sur des motifs originaux français*, composed in c. 1825. Publisher Theodor Weigl published the second and third movements the year after the first was released (possibly due to commercial incentives). The technical demands in this work are not quite at the level of technical virtuosity expected from sonatas, as Byrne Bodley pens, but the demands surpass those of Schubert’s dances.<sup>178</sup> This shows a divergence from earlier piano duets; while engaging and entertaining as befits the *divertissement* genre, it is a demanding large-scale work that astonishingly remains in obscurity.

Schubert’s sojourn in Zselíz in 1824 produced fruit of a higher calibre – presumably the Esterházy daughters’ pianistic abilities had improved significantly since his previous sojourn. It is in these works his compositional style of piano duets demonstrate a noticeable heightening of the genre. Gibbs comments on this period in Schubert’s life, saying that his instrumental works shifted from amateur to professional during this period. Gibbs specifically mentions the Sonata in C Major (D.812) in his statement.<sup>179</sup> The work is commonly referred to

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<sup>174</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 44.

<sup>175</sup> Brown, *Schubert: A Critical Biography*, p. 160.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 54.

<sup>178</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 426.

<sup>179</sup> Christopher H. Gibbs, “‘Poor Schubert’: images and legends of the composer” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 36–55 (p. 41).

as the ‘Grand Duo’, though there has been no evidence that Schubert named it such (it was published with this epithet posthumously). Schubert’s previous sonata for piano duet (Sonata in B flat Major, D.617) was written in his previous stay in Zselíz. Schubert wrote just two sonatas for piano duet, and quite a lot of scholarship has been focused on the ‘Grand Duo’, while the earlier sonata is viewed as of lesser importance.<sup>180</sup> In the B flat sonata, while traces of Mozart’s influence are evident in the melody, the hallmarks of Schubert’s unique harmony and modulations are evident. Even the way the work begins is peculiar for Schubert. The primo opens with a flourish on a V7 chord followed by a semi-chromatic semiquaver passage on the higher register of the keyboard. This is the only time Schubert opens a piano solo or duet sonata with such a figure.

Using Schubert’s letters, Gibbs deduces that it is likely Schubert viewed his earlier larger-scale works as preparatory works.<sup>181</sup> It is difficult to ascertain if this is true, however one can clearly hear the distinction between his earlier sonata and the ‘Grand Duo’. The ‘Grand Duo’ is ambitious and even virtuosic; its length is double that of his previous sonata. The work requires technical and musical maturity to execute well. With this sonata, Schubert conceptually elevated the piano sonata and the four-hand genre from a domesticised form of music-making to that of concert proportions, similar to his achievement of the solo Piano Sonata in A Minor (D.845). Like Blom’s comment of Mozart’s Sonata in F Major (K.497) being an ‘almost uncomfortably great piece of domestic music,’ many composers and musicologists have questioned the ‘Grand Duo’ as a piano duet for the very same reasons.<sup>182</sup> The fact that some of these composers and musicologists held this view was justified purely by their standing – Schumann included. Schumann and Tovey debated the legitimacy of the

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<sup>180</sup> His Fantasy in C Minor (D.48) is excluded here, which is nicknamed the ‘Grande Sonate’ title (Schubert wrote in ‘Fantasie’ and not ‘Sonate’ in the autograph): Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 1*, ed. by Walburga Litschauer, p. XII.

<sup>181</sup> Gibbs, “‘Poor Schubert’: images and legends of the composer”, pp. 41–42.

<sup>182</sup> Blom, *Mozart*, p. 273.

‘Grand Duo’ as a piano duet, for both believed such a serious and almost symphonic work could not remain in the perceived humble realms of a piano duet. Several composers have followed suit and arranged the sonata for orchestra, most notably by Joachim in 1855. Tovey used Joachim’s orchestration in his symphony analysis book, stating that ‘there is not a trace of piano style in the work’.<sup>183</sup> This is an interesting remark, as some performers have commented that Schubert’s piano music is awkward under the fingers. Perhaps Tovey misunderstood Schubert’s piano style; a piano duet, due to the range available, can sound orchestral – without the composer ever intending to score it for orchestra. The orchestral traces include tremolos, rapid repeated notes, passages evoking varied instrumental sections, as well as pedal notes, which are held for quite some time and which may be difficult to realise on the piano. That being said, the orchestral nature of duets had been acknowledged prior to Schubert’s engagement with the medium, as orchestral features are also evident in Clementi and Mozart’s duets, and to a lesser extent, in solo piano music.<sup>184</sup> One must place this within the context of increasing technical advancements on the fortepiano, an instrument that could now provide an ‘aural impression of orchestral balance’.<sup>185</sup> Newbould similarly contextualises this and states that Classical composers often composed for orchestra and thus, their piano compositions may contain elements of orchestral nature.<sup>186</sup> The orchestral evocations in Schubert’s piano music have not only been remarked upon, but unhelpfully criticised, as Brown states.<sup>187</sup> Strahan posits that while works containing orchestral characteristics arose across genres, the orchestral style emanated in the ‘Grand Duo’ was ‘unorthodox’.<sup>188</sup> This signifies

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<sup>183</sup> Franz Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone (Divine Art, DDA21701, 2017) Programme notes, p. 13 <<https://d2ajug1vehh95s.cloudfront.net/21701booklet.pdf>> [accessed 25/05/2022].

<sup>184</sup> Dawes, ‘Piano duet’ in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>185</sup> Anthony Williams, *The Piano Teacher’s Survival Guide* (London: Faber, 2017), p. 99.

<sup>186</sup> Newbould, *Schubert’s Workshop: Towards an Early Maturity*, I, p. 141.

<sup>187</sup> Maurice J.E. Brown, ‘Schubert’s Sonatas’, *The Musical Times*, 116.1592 (1975), 873–75 (p. 873), doi:10.2307/959203.

<sup>188</sup> Strahan, ‘Music of a lesser genre? Schubert’s development and transformation of the piano duet medium’, p. 30.

that through the ‘Grand Duo’, Schubert defied expectations of the once lightweight genre, and that the idiosyncrasies of Schubert’s piano writing were not yet fully valued.

The orchestral arrangements seem to be a misguided attempt at realising the composer’s intentions, as Schubert wrote ‘sonata for four hands’ on the manuscript and referred to it as such in letters to his brother Ferdinand and his friend von Schwind.<sup>189</sup> Einstein argues that the duet’s compositional language is anti-orchestral (and cites the triplets in the first movement as an example) and that Schubert the symphonist, would have restricted himself to a different scope of modulations.<sup>190</sup> In Notley’s ‘Schubert’s social music: “the forgotten genres”’, it is claimed that Einstein would have perceived the ‘Grand Duo’ as part of the ‘deeply serious Schubert,’ a self-derived category (though she adds, ‘if he had allowed any four-hand work to do so’).<sup>191</sup> This study into this work’s reception leads to the conclusion that the ‘Grand Duo’s’ advancement in the piano duet genre led to scepticism and friction. It did not fit into the preconceived notions of the piano duet. As Christensen puts forward, this sonata exceeded the realm of what amateur pianists could sight-read, and one can infer from this that Schubert wished to bring duets from domestic settings into the concert circuit.<sup>192</sup>

Further piano duet compositions dating from 1824 include *Six grandes marches* (D.819) and the Variations in A flat Major (D.813). It is possible his Introduction, Variations and Finale in B flat (D.968a, formerly D.603) was written in the same year, though Brown posits that there is no Schubert work that is more elusive than this one.<sup>193</sup> The D.819 and D.813 were published in 1825, D.818 in 1826, though D.968a was not published until 1860. The D.813 variations are a masterwork written in a typical variation idiom. Texture changes are

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<sup>189</sup> Strahan, ‘Music of a lesser genre? Schubert’s development and transformation of the piano duet medium’, p. 30.

<sup>190</sup> Einstein, *Schubert: A Musical Portrait*, p. 241.

<sup>191</sup> Notley, ‘Schubert’s social music: the “forgotten genres”’, p. 145.

<sup>192</sup> Christensen, ‘Schubert’s Four-Hand Piano Works’, p. 80.

<sup>193</sup> Brown, *Schubert’s Variations*, p. 38.

what provide the appeal of a theme and variations; hence for a piano duet, the textural compass is twofold, allowing the composer to explore many textural possibilities. The variation's significance as a duet lies in the equal weight bestowed upon both players. The *secondo* contains melodic material and interest, divergent to it being confined to the 'accompaniment' role. This signifies a break from traditional expectations of the duet. Through the equal treatment of both parts, noteworthy lines are to be heard in both players' parts, creating an antiphonal dialogue. While Schubert's contrapuntal treatment of the texture is a rarity in his solo piano music, Notley states that Schubert seldom used imitative counterpoint in his solo sonatas, though he exploited it to its full capacity in his piano duets.<sup>194</sup> Four-hands at one's disposal certainly makes the possibility to explore counterpoint more attractive and allows more options. Some of Schubert's best contrapuntal writing for piano is present in his four-hand compositions and this refutes the myth perpetuated in older scholarship that Schubert was unskilled in contrapuntal writing. Perhaps this misconception originated in the fact that Schubert had a lesson with respected music theorist Sechter (sickness hindered any further lessons), and this self-directed study was seen as a necessity rather than a desire to learn and speak with an expert.<sup>195</sup> Such misconceptions of Schubert's compositional skills were further perpetuated by Schubertian scholar Brown, who boldly claimed that: 'His work is completely devoid of such academic contrivances such as diminution, augmentation, inversion and so on – devices which, as one eminent critic has said, belong to the nursery apparatus of composition'.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Notley, 'Schubert's social music: the "forgotten genres"', p. 146. The counterpoint in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy for solo piano (D.760) is an exception.

<sup>195</sup> Christopher H. Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 167.

<sup>196</sup> Brian Newbould, 'Composing with the "nursery apparatus": thoughts prompted by two lesser-known Schubert Piano Works' in *The Unknown Schubert* (New York: Routledge, 2016), ed. by Barbara M. Reul and Lorraine Byrne Bodley, pp. 201–17 (p. 201). Original source: Maurice J.E. Brown, 'Schubert, Franz', *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (London: Macmillan, 1953), ed. by Eric Blom, VII, p. 562.

The poignant penultimate variation of D.813 is arresting in its use of chromaticism and ambiguous sense of key. This has become a hallmark of Schubert's duets; they have now become more daring and more advanced. In the 'Grand Duo' and the *Six grandes marches* in particular; Schubert's penchant for modulating into remote keys is evident. Often, he does so in semitones, creating a perceivable shift in the harmony. For example, in the last march, Schubert modulates from the key of E major up a semitone to F major. These keys are distant from one another, as F is the lowered supertonic in E. Some of these modulations are obvious and were not intended as subtleties, so they do strike the ear. Similarly, Schubert modulates by a semitone in the fifth march from A to B flat; he does so quite blatantly, but the B flat chord is used as a dominant to bring us back to the tonic of E flat minor. A similar modulation is evident in 2 *Marches caractéristiques* (D.968b), which are both scored in C major and are Schubert's only marches in 6/8 time. In the second march, Schubert begins the theme in the recapitulation in B major before returning to C major quite quickly. While this adds some interest to the harmonic colour of the piece, it is only in passing; unlike the modulations into semitone-related keys of the Sonata in D.812 (the so-called 'Grand Duo') which forms an integral part of the structure in all movements except for the scherzo.

Compared to the previous military marches he wrote for four hands, the *Six grandes marches* are larger in scale and more ambitious. In fact, the duration of the *Six grandes marches* is approximately one hour. Lubin posits that while the march form may appear limited, Schubert puts this into question by composing with such variety in his marches, especially evident in his *Six grandes marches* (thus transgressing norms).<sup>197</sup> In a letter to his father and stepmother in 1825, Schubert describes the popularity of his compositions, including his marches – not only in Vienna itself:

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<sup>197</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 61.

I have come across my compositions all over Upper Austria, but especially in the monasteries at St. Florian and at Kremsmünster, where, assisted by an excellent pianist, I gave a very successful recital of my Variations and Marches for four hands.<sup>198</sup>

In 1827, Schubert took advantage of the demand for compositions based on a recently popularised theme, as Mozart and Beethoven did. He composed *Variations on a Theme from Hérolde's 'Marie'* (D.908), which Brown believes is an 'artistic failure' and goes as far as to write that 'few things so empty and unrewarding have come from Schubert's pen'.<sup>199</sup> Perhaps Brown's comment is indicative of friction that exists between the popular vs serious music. While Brown's view of the work is unflattering, it is this present author's opinion that while this work is not as imaginative or inventive as the A flat variations, Schubert did exceptionally well with expanding on quite a simple theme. There are some interesting moments such as the beginning of variation six, which commences on a German sixth chord rather than the tonic of C major. One further noteworthy inclusion is an accelerando towards the work's end in bar 95 of the finale, an uncommon direction for Schubert to include. Overall, the work also serves as a showcase of Schubert's pianistic toolbox; there are scalar passages, including chromatic scales, double octaves, and chords abundant in both difficult primo and secondo parts which span from the depths to the heights of the keyboard. Furthermore, the work was commented upon positively in the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in 1828.<sup>200</sup> It states: 'The theme is captivatingly treated... the variations are... diversified, and rich without affectation, it

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<sup>198</sup> Letter to his father and stepmother, Steyr, 25 July 1825: Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert's Letters and Other Writings*, trans. by Venetia Savile, foreword by Ernest Newman (New York: Freeport, 1970), p. 97.

<sup>199</sup> Brown, *Schubert's Variations*, pp. 81–82.

<sup>200</sup> *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 'Variationen für das Pianoforte zu vier Händen über ein Thema aus der Oper: Marie, von Herrold — componirt von Franz Schubert', 30.6 (Leipzig, February 1828), pp. 86–87 <<https://archive.org/details/allgemeinemusik16unkngoog/page/n60/mode/2up?view=theater> [accessed 27/07/2023].

must be numbered among the best of recent times'.<sup>201</sup> Schubert also received positive feedback from publisher Probst on this work. Probst wrote to Schubert:

I have further taken delight in several four-hand works, e.g. the four Polonaises, Opus 75 and the Variations on the miller's song, Opus 82, which convince me more and more that it would be easy to disseminate your name throughout the rest of Germany and the North, in which I will gladly lend you a hand considering a talent like yours.<sup>202</sup>

Though this work was successful at the time, it fell out of fashion especially as it is not one of Schubert's most attractive or inventive duets. As Arganbright and Weekley claim, the piece is no longer appreciated and Börner highlights that the verdict on the work differs.<sup>203</sup> However, I offer the thesis that this work would be fitting as a concert item. Arganbright and Weekley note that the intention with this work is mainly 'to excite and entertain' and Strahan similarly suggests that the work's intent is that of a bravura concert item due to the extended chromatic passages and the use of full range.<sup>204</sup> The work is quite virtuosic; to refute the argument that Schubert sacrificed difficulty for commerciality in this work, one must only look at the high level of technical facility required for both players in the work. McGraw rates the work as upper intermediate to advanced level.<sup>205</sup> Similarly, Börner puts the difficulty level at difficult for the secondo, and difficult or even very difficult (the highest difficulty rating) for the primo.<sup>206</sup>

Schubert's piano duets written in his last year are of paramount importance to duet literature. These works are a culmination of all the advancements he made in the genre. The

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<sup>201</sup> Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone, programme notes, p. 23.

<sup>202</sup> Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, p. 735.

<sup>203</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 67; Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 129.

<sup>204</sup> Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone, programme notes, p. 23 and Strahan, '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias', p. 30.

<sup>205</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 467.

<sup>206</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 129.

significance of these works cannot be understated; their contribution is seminal not only within the piano duet genre, but in overall piano literature. Long gone are the days in which the secondo is considered inferior to the primo, playing repetitive harmonic figures. Piano duets are no longer simply light-hearted pieces of limited technical facility to please the masses. While a high volume of Schubert's piano duets was published during his lifetime (see Byrne Bodley's table of those that were), two of these three seminal works were not:<sup>207</sup>

**Table 1.1, Schubert's Four-Hand Works Composed in 1828**

Title of Work	Month/Year Composed	Year Published
<b>Fantasy in F Minor</b>	January-April 1828	1829, op. 103
<b>Allegro in A Minor</b>	May 1828	1840, op. 144
<b>Rondo in A Major</b>	June 1828	1828, op. 107

The Fantasy in F Minor is one of Schubert's most revered works of his entire output and arguably the most well-known in complete body of duet literature. Schubert fittingly dedicated the work to his former piano student, Karoline Esterházy, whom he had now known for a decade. Gibbs has described this trilogy as 'among not only his greatest but his most original'.<sup>208</sup> He also considers the Fantasy in F Minor as a refinement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy for solo piano, in terms of its structure and overall unity.<sup>209</sup> Schubert demonstrates he is a master of unity and seamless transitions here. There are four sections which segue into the next without delay. The end of each section prepares the key for the next section, rather than ending each section in the key in which it began. Remarkably, we can trace this element back to Schubert's first endeavours in writing fantasies when he was a youth. Newbould's comment on Schubert's early Fantasy in G Major is fitting here (also ironic); he commented that Schubert beginning his compositions in one key and ending in another can be put down to the

<sup>207</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 429.

<sup>208</sup> Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert*, p. 161.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, pp. 161–62.

‘inexperience of a fledgling composer,’ and that Schubert did not yet have a focused view of his intentions concerning structure.<sup>210</sup> In the Fantasy in F Minor, this progressive tonality was groundbreaking and like his song cycles, the fantasy is also testament to his unique concept of unity.

The Allegro in A Minor (D.947) was written in the month following the completion of the Fantasy in F Minor. Little is known about its origins but there has been some speculation that Schubert intended this to be the first movement of a sonata (a two-movement sonata, perhaps?), with the later discussed Rondo in A as the finale.<sup>211</sup> However, this is more than likely a chronological coincidence, as Byrne Bodley theorises.<sup>212</sup> The title ‘Lebensstürme’, translated as the Storms of Life, was given by the publisher by Diabelli, most likely to increase its appeal. The content of the music is compatible with this title, as it evokes programmatic connotations through the symphonic-like opening and virtuosity in the descending runs that transfer to/from both parts. Again, both the primo and secondo enjoy the same status, and this has become more prominent in his last few works. Schubert’s inclination for striking modulations is exemplified in the second subject. The tempestuous piece commences in A minor, but the more lyrical second subject is in the unrelated key of the flattened tonic in its major mode. These sudden changes in mood are hallmarks of Schubert’s style in his later piano works and chamber music; he juxtaposes the ‘almost abnormally serene’ with ‘violent contrasts’.<sup>213</sup> Alas, there was little interest in publishing his string quartet and last three piano sonatas, demonstrating a rejection by publishers of large-scale, experimental works. Thus, it is possible that Artaria was offered the adventurous Allegro in A Major too, but that it was decided to publish the Rondo in A Major only. The rondo has been described as the ‘apotheosis’ of Schubert’s entire duet

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<sup>210</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 30.

<sup>211</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, pp. 77 and 79.

<sup>212</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 430.

<sup>213</sup> Susan Wollenberg, *Schubert’s Fingerprints: Studies in the Instrumental Works* (Great Britain: Routledge, 2011), p. 167.

output.<sup>214</sup> I argue that perhaps it is best to view the whole year of 1828 as the culmination of his entire piano duet output. Nonetheless, in the words of Notley, ‘no piano duet by Schubert is more “easy-going”, yet eloquent’ than his Rondo in A.<sup>215</sup> This rondo certainly puts Cone’s claim that ‘Schubert had always had trouble in controlling the rondo’ into serious question.<sup>216</sup>

## 1.7 Schubert’s Four-Hand Transcriptions

In contrast to fellow composers, Schubert’s four-hand literature differed drastically in that he composed mostly original works as opposed to transcriptions. As Strahan notes, Schubert’s duets consisted exclusively of original duets from 1824 onwards.<sup>217</sup> This marks Schubert as a unique contributor; while composing duet arrangements was standard, composing original duets almost exclusively was far less common. Christensen observes that as the nineteenth century progressed, the number of duet arrangements far surpassed that of originals.<sup>218</sup> That being said, Schubert composed several transcriptions, as evident in the tables below. He composed six overtures for four-hands from 1817 to late 1823. Such works included transcriptions of his opera overtures and orchestral overtures, though it would be an exaggeration to say that he transcribed ‘many’ of his works, as Chang and Faurot claim.<sup>219</sup> Since the majority of Schubert’s four-hand literature are originals, most of the scholarship has focused on this output. Notably, in *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, Shepherd provides us with a chapter titled ‘Beethoven and Schubert’, yet Schubert’s transcriptions are not mentioned; it is noted that Schubert composed original duets

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<sup>214</sup> Einstein, *Schubert: A Musical Portrait*, p. 282.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Edward T. Cone, ‘Schubert’s Beethoven’, *The Musical Quarterly*, 56.4 (1970), pp. 779–93 (p. 787).

<sup>217</sup> Strahan, ‘(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert’s Four-Hand Fantasias’, p. 35.

<sup>218</sup> Christensen, ‘Schubert’s Four-Hand Piano Works’, p. 82. Furthermore, the number of piano duet arrangements on IMSLP far outnumbers that of originals.

<sup>219</sup> Chang and Faurot, *Team Piano Repertoire: A Manual of Music for Multiple Players at One or More Pianos*, p. 32.

rather than transcriptions.<sup>220</sup> The author then addresses other composers' transcriptions of Schubert's music, but it is not acknowledged that Schubert did write some himself.<sup>221</sup> Similarly, in Maurice Hinson's entry for Schubert in *The Pianist's Guide to Transcriptions, Arrangements and Paraphrases*, Hinson omits all of Schubert's own duet transcriptions, but includes other composers' Schubert arrangements.<sup>222</sup> I argue that it is essential to address Schubert's own transcriptions when assessing his four-hand contribution and that the overture transcriptions occupy a special territory in Schubert's music. The transcriptions serve as a study into Schubert's aptitude in transferring his orchestral works into a chamber-music format. The importance of his four-hand overtures is highlighted in the fact that one of the five Neue Schubert-Ausgabe volumes of his four-hand works is dedicated to his four-hand overtures.<sup>223</sup> An exploration into this area of Schubert is welcome – the negative associations of transcriptions and arrangements influenced the reception of these Schubertian works. There is a growing acceptance in musicology nonetheless to consider non-original works seriously; in Nancy November's paper 'Cultivating Musical Arrangements in Early 19th-Century Vienna: Uncovering Women's Agency in the Domestic Sphere', November prioritises arrangements over original works and notes this is an innovative approach to take.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, Shepherd's book contributes to the growing appreciation of transcriptions, as he recognises that piano transcriptions are overlooked and frequently perceived as 'second-rate salon music', especially

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<sup>220</sup> Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, p. 51.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> The reasoning behind the omission of Schubert's own transcriptions is not clear. His works fulfil Hinson's criteria of being published, not pedagogical in function, written by a well-known composer, and written for four hands. Note that Hinson did include some other composers' transcriptions of their own works; Maurice Hinson, *The Pianist's Guide to Transcriptions, Arrangements and Paraphrases* (Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 120–24.

<sup>223</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 5: Ouvertüren*, ed. by Walburga Litschauer.

<sup>224</sup> Nancy November, 'Cultivating Musical Arrangements in Early 19th-Century Vienna: Uncovering Women's Agency in the Domestic Sphere', (Second Annual Conference of the Schubert Research Center; Women's Agency in Schubert's Vienna, 2022); Abstract: <[https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/kommissionen/schubert/ProgrammA4-Schubert-Research-Center-Womens-Agency-in\\_Schuberts-Vienna-V-20-10-2022.pdf](https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/kommissionen/schubert/ProgrammA4-Schubert-Research-Center-Womens-Agency-in_Schuberts-Vienna-V-20-10-2022.pdf)> pp. 8–9 [accessed 26/10/2022]. This view is further explored in: Nancy November, *The Age of Musical Arrangements in Europe 1780-1830* (Cambridge University Press, 2023).

those for four hands.<sup>225</sup> To add to this, the author of this present doctoral thesis proposes that arrangements, including four-hand arrangements, were influential factors in the canonisation of symphonic works, and hence they must be appraised as such.

Not all of these six overtures had their origins as orchestral works, however. McGraw notes that the Overture in F Major (D.675) was written originally for four-hands piano; this may also be the case with Overture in G Minor (D.668); meaning that these works may not be transcriptions of original orchestral works.<sup>226</sup> In the *Neue Schubert-Ausgabe*, Walburga Litschauer suggests that the Overture in G Minor had no orchestral model and exists as a ‘piano overture’.<sup>227</sup> Similarly, there is no surviving orchestral original of the Overture in F Major, but Litschauer suggests that Schubert may have intended to write a version for orchestra as there are compositional hints that suggest so.<sup>228</sup> Conversely, Börner claims that only the Overture in F Major (D.675) was originally a piano work and maybe it is for this reason that he does not include the remaining five Schubert overtures in his handbook.<sup>229</sup> However, it appears to be the consensus that both D.675 and D.668 had no orchestral model. The remaining four works though are Schubert’s four-hand transcriptions of his original works for orchestra:

**Table 1.2a, Schubert’s Four-Hand Transcriptions of his Orchestral Works**

Title of Original Work	Year of Composition	Year of Publication	Title of Four-Hand Work	Year of Composition	Year of Publication
<b>Orchestral Overture (D.590)</b>	1817	1886	<b>Overture ‘im italienischen Stile’ in D Major (D.592)</b>	1817	1872
<b>Orchestral Overture (D.591)</b>	1817	1865	<b>Overture ‘im italienischen Stile’ in C Major</b>	1817	1872

<sup>225</sup> Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, p. 4.

<sup>226</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 465.

<sup>227</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 5: Ouvertüren*, ed. by Walburga Litschauer, p. IX.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 121.

			(D.597)		
<i>Alfonso and Estrella</i> (D.732)	1822	1892	<b>Overture to Alfonso and Estrella</b> (D.773)	1823	1826
<i>Fierrabras</i> (D.796)	1823	1886	<b>Overture to Fierrabras</b> (D.798)	1823	1897

**Table 1.2b, Schubert's Four-Hand Transcriptions with no Orchestral Original**

Title of Work (with no orchestral original)	Year of Composition	Year of Publication
<b>Overture in F Major (D.675)</b>	1819	1825
<b>Overture in G Minor (D.668)</b> 230	1819	1897

Based on the close proximity of the composition dates between the original works of his four orchestral and operatic works, and the four-hand transcriptions, one can deduce that the transcriptions were composed to disseminate his works and expose the general public to them – though most of these duets were not published until after Schubert's death (four out of six). Christensen reckons that the lack of published duet transcriptions of Schubert's work during his lifetime and the following few decades hampered the dissemination of his music.<sup>231</sup> This does pose the question, if Schubert composed more duet transcriptions, would he have further bolstered his career in Vienna and beyond? Perhaps so – the D.773 and D.675 works were popular, and the market was ready-made; Dahlhaus asserts that piano transcriptions of chamber and symphonic works were a 'cornerstone of bourgeois musical culture'.<sup>232</sup> While these works form a small minority of Schubert's four-hand literature, they remind us that he did compose

<sup>230</sup> McGraw expresses uncertainty as to whether this work was based on an orchestral original or not; McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 465.

<sup>231</sup> Christensen remarks here that during Schubert's lifetime, the only composers to have their symphonic works transcribed 'heavily' for duets were Haydn and Beethoven, and to a smaller extent, Mozart: Christensen, 'Schubert's Four-Hand Piano Works', p. 83.

<sup>232</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 422; Strahan, '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias', pp. 32–33.

with commercial intent – Schubert was not a maverick in this manner. However, after late 1823, Schubert only composed original duet works, despite the popularity of D.773 and D.675. Approximately half of his piano duet output (all original duets) stemmed from the period of 1824 to his death, and during these years, he penetrated uncharted territory. One can draw from this that he regarded piano duets as stand-alone entities, not only as vehicles for disseminating music in orchestral, operatic, and other chamber music guises.

### **1.8 Schubert's Duet Partners**

This subsection aims to contribute to the little scholarship on Schubert as a duet player – much of the scholarship on Schubert's four-hand genre is focused primarily on his compositions. In Vienna at the time, the gamut of pianists ranged from amateurs to professionals. According to Montgomery, such active pianists during Schubert's lifetime included Schubert himself, Karoline Esterházy, Marie Esterházy, Karl Haas, Anselm Hüttenbrenner, Josef Hüttenbrenner, Albert Schellmann, Josef Gahy, Joseph Groß, Anna Frölich, Louis Hartmann, Betty Wanderer, Herr Winkler, Maria Blahetka, Carl Maria von Bocklet, Carl Czerny, J.N. Hummel, possibly Hiller, von Schwind, Johann Baptist Jenger, Louise Weiss, Marie Wagner, Therese Kunz, and Babette Kunz.<sup>233</sup> A number of these pianists were active in Schubert's circle, and some of the above pianists were duet partners of Schubert (though to varying degrees of regularity). Schubert played duets with quite a few of the above names, which no doubt bolstered each other's musical presence in Vienna. These figures are Anselm Hüttenbrenner, Karoline Esterházy, Marie Esterházy, Josef Gahy, Carl Maria von Bocklet, Therese Kunz, and Babette Kunz (see table below). In addition to a number of these pianists listed by Montgomery, Bauernfeld at least once played duets with Schubert. The same applies to Franz Paul Lachner

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<sup>233</sup> David Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2003), p. 18.

who debuted the seminal Fantasy in F Minor with Schubert. It must be noted that a considerable number of his friends were not pianists of a level required for duet-playing, such as Schober, Spaun, Mayrhofer, and Johann Senn. This may explain Schubert's frequent collaborations with the same duet partners. The 'brilliance' of Schubert's duet partners and their astute audiences facilitated the development of his piano duet style.<sup>234</sup> A delve into Schubert's duet-playing life will aid the gap in scholarship regarding Schubert himself as a duet player and illustrate the important contribution others made in establishing Schubert as a duet performer/composer, especially women. It is important to frame the latter point within the reception history of Schubert, in which the role many females played in Schubert's life is often not addressed.<sup>235</sup>

**Table 1.3, Schubert's Duet Partners**

Name	Profession	Venue	Work/s	Month/Year
<b>Josef von Gahy</b>	Civil servant; pianist	Many Schubertiads	Schubert's four-hand works and arrangements of Beethoven symphonies <sup>236</sup>	Several years
<b>Josef von Gahy</b>	Civil servant; pianist	Von Spaun's residence	'Grand Duo' (D.812) and <i>Divertissement sur des motifs originaux français</i> (D.823) <sup>237</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup> January 1827
<b>Johann Baptist Jenger</b>	Civil servant; pianist	Pachler's residence in Graz	Unknown <sup>238</sup>	September 1827
<b>Franz Paul Lachner</b>	Composer and conductor	Lachner's residence	Fantasy in F Minor (D.940)	9 <sup>th</sup> May 1828
<b>Karl Maria von Bocklet</b>	Pianist	Von Spaun's residence	Variations in A flat Major (D.813)	28 <sup>th</sup> January 1828
<b>Anselm Hüttenbrenner</b>	Composer	Zum römischen Kaiser	Overture 'im Italienischen Stile' in C Major (D.597) or Overture 'im	12 <sup>th</sup> March 1818 (the overture)

<sup>234</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 428.

<sup>235</sup> See 'Schubert's Women' for more discussion: Ibid., pp. 504–07.

<sup>236</sup> Peter Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 55.

<sup>237</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 487.

<sup>238</sup> It is stated that Schubert and Jenger played duets together during their trip, without specifying the repertoire; George Grove, ed., 'Schubert, Franz' in *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, III (London and New York: Macmillan and Co., 1883), p. 347.

			Italienischen Stile' in D Major (D.592); Handel Oratorios and Operas <sup>239</sup>	
<b>Anselm Hüttenbrenner</b>	Composer	Matthäus von Collin's apartment	<i>8 Variations on a French Song</i> (D.624)	1820
<b>Therese Kunz</b>	Pianist	Zum römischen Kaiser	Overture 'im Italienischen Stile' in C Major (D.597) or Overture 'im Italienischen Stile' in D Major (D.592)	12 <sup>th</sup> March 1818
<b>Babette Kunz</b>	Pianist and piano teacher	Zum römischen Kaiser	Overture 'im Italienischen Stile' in C Major (D.597) or Overture 'im Italienischen Stile' in D Major (D.592)	12 <sup>th</sup> March 1818
<b>Karoline Esterházy</b>	Countess	Esterházy Residence in Zselíz	See table 1.4a/b	1818 and 1824
<b>Marie Esterházy</b>	Countess	Esterházy Residence in Zselíz	See table 1.4a/b	1818 and 1824
<b>Eduard von Bauernfeld</b>	Dramatist (also a competent pianist)	Own residence	Unknown	1825 <sup>240</sup>
<b>Karoline Eberstaller (?)</b> <sup>241</sup>	Daughter of a French general	Steyr	Unknown	Possibly 1819, 1823 or 1825
<b>Josephine von Koller</b> <sup>242</sup>	Daughter of a music patron	Steyr	Unknown	1819 and 1820

<sup>239</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, trans. by Rosamond Ley and John Nowell (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. 180.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., p. 242.

<sup>241</sup> It is not established whether Eberstaller did or did not play piano duets with Schubert; see the later entry on Karoline Eberstaller for further information.

<sup>242</sup> Christian Fastl, 'Koller, Joseph Vinicentius Ferrarius Faustinus von', *Musiklexicon online* (2004) doi:10.1553/0x0001d551.

## 1.9 Duet-Playing in Schubert's Career: Background

Given the popularity of four-hand works during his time and considering Schubert wrote his first compositions for piano duet, it is likely he played piano duets as a youth. McKay notes that during Schubert's school years, groups of students sang part-songs, ballades, and Lieder together, as well as played chamber music and duets.<sup>243</sup> Following his school years, historical evidence shows that Schubert performed piano duets regularly at Schubertiads. A typical example of a Schubertiad occurred on the evening of the 15th December 1826, during which Michael Vogl sang almost thirty of Schubert's songs, followed by several piano duets played by Schubert and Gahy. This event has been described as a 'mammoth' event.<sup>244</sup> In Franz von Hartmann's diary (a friend of Schubert), Hartmann wrote: '15<sup>th</sup> December 1826: I went to Spaun's, where there was a big, big Schubertiad....There was a huge gathering' and he also documents the contribution of Gahy, 'who played gloriously à quatre mains with Schubert'.<sup>245</sup>

## 1.10 Schubert's Duet Partners

### Josef von Gahy (1793–1864)

Josef von Gahy was a civil servant and a member of Schubert's circle, but he is noted as a fine and musical pianist who was in high demand at Viennese events such as balls.<sup>246</sup> Similarly, from a source dating from 1866, two years after Gahy's death, he was described as a 'first-rate pianist'.<sup>247</sup> It is likely Gahy was introduced to Schubert through von Spaun, a colleague of his. Gahy was present at many Schubertiads and played duets with Schubert, becoming a favourite duet partner of Schubert. Gahy had a particular reverence for Schubert's piano duet works.

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<sup>243</sup> Elizabeth Norman McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 22.

<sup>244</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>245</sup> David Gramit, "'The passion for friendship': music, cultivation, and identity in Franz Schubert's Circle" in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 56–71 (p. 65).

<sup>246</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, p. 55.

<sup>247</sup> Hugh Reginald Haweis, 'Schubert and Chopin', *Contemporary Review*, 2 (1866), pp. 80–102 (p. 84).

Testament to both Schubert and Gahy's pianistic capabilities is their performance of Schubert's seminal 'Grand Duo' and the *Divertissement sur des motifs originaux français* at a Schubertiad.<sup>248</sup> They also played piano duet arrangements of other composers, including Beethoven's symphonies. Gahy's fondness of Schubert's music manifested itself in Gahy's playing; von Spaun remarks that Gahy's interpretation of Schubert's waltzes, Écossaises, and Deutsche 'electrified the dancers'.<sup>249</sup> In homage to his dear friend, Gahy arranged approximately thirty instrumental and vocal works by Schubert for four-hands.

### **Franz Paul Lachner (1803–1890)**

Like Gahy, Lachner played duets with Schubert, though he was not as frequent a duet partner. The primary incidence of Schubert and Lachner performing together is mentioned in Eduard von Bauernfeld's diary; he mentioned that the premiere for the Fantasy in F Minor work was the 9th May in 1828, and that Schubert played the work with Lachner in Lachner's residence.<sup>250</sup> This performance must have had a profound effect on both Lachner and Bauernfeld. In 1872, Lachner asked Bauernfeld the following while at a dedication to the Schubert monument in Vienna's Stadtpark: 'Do you still remember how Schubert and I played you his new Fantasia for piano duet for the first time?'<sup>251</sup> One can also thank Lachner for Schubert's only fugue for four hands on the piano duet or organ; a unique piece in Schubert's output that anticipates Wagnerian chromaticism.<sup>252</sup> Both instrumentations were added by the publisher, though with the clear pedal points and Lachner's indications, one can assume the organ was the intended instrument (though its publication by Diabelli as a piano duet was likely a sales strategy). Supposedly, on an excursion with Lachner to Heiligenkreuz, both friends agreed to visit the

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<sup>248</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 487.

<sup>249</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, p. 55.

<sup>250</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 242.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*. Furthermore, Schubert's willingness to compose a fugue specifically reveals his desire in later life to hone his contrapuntal skills, taking into account he attended a lesson with Sechter.

well-known organ. Schubert suggested they both compose a fugue and perform them in the morning for monks in the monastery. Lachner and Schubert performed the fugues for the monks, whose reaction was unrecorded.<sup>253</sup>

Lachner composed some piano duets, and it is likely he was inspired by Schubert in composing them, taking the above anecdotes into account. It is accepted that he was influenced by Schubert.<sup>254</sup> He wrote a piano duet work titled *Momento capriccioso* which he performed with Babette Kunz.<sup>255</sup> The work is typical of its time, though unimaginative in comparison to Schubert's piano duets. It is reminiscent of the *brilliant* style, which was in its apex in the 1810s–1830s and of which Weber, Hummel, and Czerny were important contributors.<sup>256</sup> Like Schubert, Lachner employs the use of tremolo and repeated notes to imitate orchestral effects. Schubert's tremolos are generally less chordal and more octave-based; while in this Lachner work, tremolos in both chordal and octave form are a characteristic throughout. Generally, the primo contains the melodic material and the secondo provides the harmonic support. The sweeping scalar passages are evocative of higher and lower strings and the ending certainly stirs connotations of a majestic orchestral cadence. The overall effect is that of an orchestral transcription (even if this may not be the case). It is not particularly pianistic in comparison to Schubert's piano duets, though there is some resemblance between this work and Schubert's earliest experiences writing for piano duet in the incessant repeated octaves and chords. Perhaps most interesting is the occasional chromatic work; in particular, the winding chromatic thirds in the primo's right hand. The primo's hands are almost exclusively scored in unison,

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Horst Leuchtman, 'Lachner Family' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.15780.

<sup>255</sup> Franz Paul Lachner, *Momento capriccioso* (Vienna: Pietro Mechetti qm Carlo, 1824) <[https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/1/1c/IMSLP113902-PMLP232554-Lachner\\_F.\\_-\\_003\\_-\\_Momento\\_capriccioso\\_4H.pdf](https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/1/1c/IMSLP113902-PMLP232554-Lachner_F._-_003_-_Momento_capriccioso_4H.pdf)> [accessed 15/04/2023].

<sup>256</sup> Schubert also contributed to this; he integrated this style in his variations for four-hands, such as D.624, D.968a, D.813, and D.908.

while in Schubert's works, the treatment of the primo and secondo tends to be much more varied and imaginative, and there is more independence distributed between the hands.

### **Karl Maria von Bocklet (1801–1881)**

While Gahy and Lachner have been noted as Schubert's favourite partners, there is historical evidence that he duetted with others.<sup>257</sup> Karl Maria von Bocklet was another duet partner of Schubert. Similar to Lachner, Bocklet was a professional musician. In fact, he was a virtuoso pianist with strong improvisational skills and was the most professional pianist in Schubert's circle. He was a skilled interpreter of Schubert's works. He performed the 'Wanderer' Fantasy (D.760) and premiered several of Schubert's works. Schubert dedicated his ambitious Piano Sonata in D Major (D.850) to Bocklet. Both the 'Wanderer' Fantasy and this sonata are works at the higher end of the technical spectrum of Schubert's output for pianists. In January 1828, Bocklet performed the Variations in A flat Major (D.813) with Schubert at what was Spaun's last Schubertiad; 'everyone was enchanted and the highly delighted Bocklet embraced his friend'.<sup>258</sup> Notley states that Schubert performed the aforementioned variations on multiple occasions to a pleased audience.<sup>259</sup> One cannot be certain if the performer was Bocklet for all of these performances, however it is not out of the realm of possibility. According to *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians* from 1879, Bocklet was the first to bring Schubert's piano music into the public sphere.<sup>260</sup> His virtuoso ability no doubt was required for the demanding passagework of the Variations in A flat Major. Much like Gahy and Lachner, duet-playing with Schubert must have had a long-lasting impact on Bocklet as he later founded a private piano school for duet-playing.<sup>261</sup> Scholar Brodbeck draws an interesting link between Schubert,

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<sup>257</sup> Sams, 'Schubert's Piano Duets', p. 120.

<sup>258</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, p. 16.

<sup>259</sup> Notley, 'Schubert's social music: the "forgotten genres"', p. 147.

<sup>260</sup> George Grove, ed., 'Bocklet, Carl Maria von' in *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, I (London and New York: Macmillan and Co., 1879), p. 252.

<sup>261</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, p. 17.

Bocklet, and Brahms (a composer who championed Schubert's music). Brahms studied music with Eduard Marxsen, who was previously taught by Bocklet, and so Brodbeck puts forward that Brahms was exposed to Schubert's music through Marxsen's tuition, and he notes Brahms' performance of Schubert's four-hand marches in a tavern in 1848.<sup>262</sup>

### **Eduard von Bauernfeld (1802–1890)**

It has also been documented that Eduard von Bauernfeld played duets with Schubert, though this is less known in the popular imagination. Like Gahy, his profession was not in music. He was a dramatist, though he was described as a 'competent' pianist.<sup>263</sup> He studied with Johann Baptist Schenk, a respected pianist and teacher. Bauernfeld heard Schubert perform some songs, but they did not become friends until February in 1825. They swiftly developed a friendship after Schwind invited Schubert to Bauernfeld's residence. Bauernfeld's notes that: 'At Schwind's request, I had to recite some crazy youthful poems of mine; we then went to the piano, where Schubert sang and we also played duets, and later to an inn till far into the night'.<sup>264</sup> Bauernfeld then expresses that the friendship between himself, Schubert and Schwind was 'inseparable', so it is likely Bauernfeld played duets with Schubert or other members of his circle on more than one occasion.<sup>265</sup> In the programme notes to a Schubert four-hand recording, Clemmow and Goldstone claim Bauernfeld was a 'frequent' duet partner of Schubert.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> David Brodbeck, 'Brahms as Editor and Composer: His Two Editions, Ländler by Schubert and His First Two Cycles of Waltzes, Opera 39 and 52' (doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1984), pp. 5–6.

<sup>263</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, p. 8.

<sup>264</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 227.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone, programme notes, p. 13.

## 1.11 Female Pianists in Schubert's Vienna

### Therese and Babette Kunz (born in 1789 and 1794)

Besides Gahy, Lachner, Bocklet, Bauernfeld, and Anselm Hüttenbrenner, there is little knowledge of other duet partners of Schubert. It is known that Schubert played his 'im Italienischen Stile' Overture in C Major (D.597) or in D Major (D.592) for eight hands on two pianos on 12 March 1818; the only score existent is a four-hand score, so presumably two players played the primo part and two played the secondo, as opposed to an actual eight-hand arrangement.<sup>267</sup> The four pianists for this occasion consisted of Schubert, Anselm Hüttenbrenner, and a duo of two sisters.<sup>268</sup> The sisters also performed other duets for the same event.<sup>269</sup> Steblin claims that the two sisters were 'most likely' Therese and Babette Kunz, while other scholars more certainly state it was these sisters.<sup>270</sup> In Deutsch's writings, he appears not to focus overly on the females within Schubert's circle, and the only information about the Kunz sisters provided is that the two sisters were not recorded in Viennese music history: 'Die beiden Damen Kunz, wahrscheinlich Schwestern, hat die Musikgeschichte Wiens nicht registriert'.<sup>271</sup> Moreover, there is no biographical entry for Therese nor her sister Babette in Clive's *Schubert and His World: A Biographical Dictionary*, so this subsection aims to provide some insight into the possible role the sisters played in Viennese life and more specifically, the role they played in Schubert's four-handed music. While the Esterházy sisters promptly come

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<sup>267</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>268</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 69.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>270</sup> Rita Steblin, 'Schubert: The Nonsense Society Revisited' in *Franz Schubert and His World*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs and Morten Solvik (New Jersey: Princeton Press, 2014), pp. 1–38 (p. 8) Elisabeth Th. Fritz-Hilscher and Helmut Kretschmer, eds, *Wien Musikgeschichte, Von der Prähistorie bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna: Lit Verlag, 2011), p. 548; Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. XI.

<sup>271</sup> Rita Steblin, *Babette und Therese Kunz: Neue Forschungen zum Freundkreis um Franz Schubert und Leopold Kupelwieser* (Vienna: Vom Pasqualatihaus, 1996), p. 14.

to mind in the discussion of Schubert's piano duets, it is important not to omit the role of other female pianists in Vienna.

In the figure below, Schubert is seen with Therese and Babette Kunz standing to the left. Steblin suggests that Schubert had brought the sisters to this event and this theory is supported by the fact that Schubert and the sisters often met.<sup>272</sup> While Schubert was employed as a music teacher at the Esterházy's residence for five months in 1818, Schubert stayed in close contact with the Kunz sisters. 1818 marked the first substantial year for Schubert's four-hand compositions. Steblin suggests that one could hypothesise that there is a relation between Schubert's contact with the Kunz sisters and his growing interest in four-hand compositions during this period, and that perhaps the pieces were written with the Kunz sisters in mind.<sup>273</sup> This is an extension to my thesis that argues that the Esterházy countesses played a crucial role in shaping Schubert as a duet composer. This conclusion further appraises the important role female pianists played in the emergence of Schubert as a duet composer.

Despite Deutsch's assertion that the Kunz sisters had not been recorded on the Viennese music scene, a further inspection reveals that this is not the case. Three months prior to the aforementioned performance with Schubert, Babette performed a private piano concert on 14th December 1817. Two reviews critiqued Babette's playing for a lack of accuracy and expression. The first review was published in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (Vienna):

Die Ausführung dieses Stückes muss sowohl von Seiten des Pianoforte als von Seiten der Begleitung mit äusserster Delicatesse und Präcision geschehen, welches aber nicht der Fall hier war; auch fehlt es der Dlle. Kunz, welcher übrigens Fertigkeit im Spiele nicht abzusprechen ist, an der nöthigen Kraft, um nicht von der concertanten Begleitung verdunkelt zu werden.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., pp. 51–52.

The second review in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (Leipzig) reads: ‘Sie trug das Septett, und das Rondeau brillant von Hummel mit ziemlicher Geläufigkeit, aber mit zu wenig Ausdruck vor’, which translates as; ‘she performed the septet, and Hummel’s *Rondeau brillant* with considerable fluency, but with too little expression’.<sup>275</sup> Fortunately, later reviews dating from approximately a year thereafter show that Babette must have improved considerably and that she had established a profile as a pianist and teacher in Vienna. In the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (Vienna) from January 1819, Babette is noted as one of the most important pianists and that she has many merits as a teacher (‘als Künstlerinnen auf dem Pianoforte gehören die Fräulein Kunz hier zu den bedeutenderen, und als Lehrerinnen desselben haben sie vieles Verdienst’).<sup>276</sup> Similarly, in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (Leipzig) in February 1819, Babette is praised for her progressive virtuosity.<sup>277</sup> Babette also crossed paths with one of the other aforementioned duet partners of Schubert, namely Franz Paul Lachner. Babette and Lachner performed the *Momento capriccioso* for four hands together.<sup>278</sup> The work was published as Op.3 and dedicated to Michael Kunz.

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Lachner, *Momento capriccioso* (Vienna: Pietro Mechetti qm Carlo, 1824).

**Figure 1.2, Carl Friedrich Zimmerman's ink drawing 'Zur Unsinniade 5. Gesang' (1817); Therese and Babette Kunz, and Franz Schubert in centre left <sup>279</sup>**



### **Karoline Eberstaller (1812–1902)**

Least well known, is that Schubert also possibly played duets with Karoline Eberstaller, the daughter of a French General, when he stayed in Steyr.<sup>280</sup> He visited Steyr in three separate visits from 1819, 1823, and 1825, but information on his playing with Eberstaller is scant. It is reported that Eberstaller played with Schubert in the later years of his life and that later in life, Eberstaller performed Schubert's duet music with Anton Bruckner (1824–1896). In a biography of Bruckner, Schönzeler discusses Bruckner's relationship to Eberstaller and provides some information on her:

Contact with Karoline Eberstaller, the daughter of a French general, who had played piano duets with Schubert whenever he stayed in Steyr during the last years of his life. Karoline Eberstaller now

<sup>279</sup> Steblin, *Babette und Therese Kunz: Neue Forschungen zum Freundkreis um Franz Schubert und Leopold Kupelwieser*, p. 8.

<sup>280</sup> Robin Holloway, *On Music: Essays and Diversions 1963–2003* (Britain: Claridge Press, 2003), p. 71; Janet I. Waterman, *Karoline Eberstaller: Is She the Real Link Between Franz Schubert and Anton Bruckner?* (Minnesota: Center for Austrian Studies, 2004), p. 2; Timothy L. Jackson and Paul Hawkshaw, *Bruckner Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 190.

introduced Bruckner to the romantic world of Franz Schubert. Together they played his music for piano duet and for two pianos, and thus a new facet was given to the musical vision of the young Bruckner.<sup>281</sup>

One can assume that when Schönzeler here refers to playing Schubert's piano duets for two pianos, he is referring to transcriptions or arrangements of Schubert's music, as Schubert did not write any piano duo music. In reality, the link between Eberstaller and Bruckner is hazy; Howie notes that it is not established whether Eberstaller and Bruckner met and that he does not believe that they would have played Schubert's piano duets.<sup>282</sup> Is it a myth? Nevertheless, if Schönzeler's account is to be believed, Schubert did play duets with Eberstaller. Given that Eberstaller lived many decades after Schubert's death, when Schubert gained much more recognition and based on the positive experiences from his other duet partners such as Gahy and Lachner, it is likely that she also treasured her time playing with the composer. The one and only mention of Eberstaller in *The Schubert Reader* highlights this; Deutsch remarks in an editorial note Eberstaller 'boasted in old age of having been Schubert's friend'.<sup>283</sup> There is also a Grabkreuz dedicated to Eberstaller in Steyr, which was erected during the centenary anniversary of Schubert's death.<sup>284</sup>

### **Karoline and Marie Esterházy**

While Schubert did not teach as much as his major contemporaries, he was trained as a schoolteacher.<sup>285</sup> Presumably this aspect of his life has been overlooked as teaching did not form as integral a role in his career overall as it did for other composers. Nonetheless, it must be realised that Schubert's teaching of the Esterházy sisters was vital to the development of the

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<sup>281</sup> Hans-Hubert Schönzeler, *Bruckner* (New York: Grossman, 1970), p. 28.

<sup>282</sup> Waterman, *Karoline Eberstaller: Is She the Real Link Between Franz Schubert and Anton Bruckner?*, p. 18.

<sup>283</sup> Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, p. 122.

<sup>284</sup> Waterman also cautions that Eberstaller's account of being Schubert's friend is not indisputable; Schubert did not mention Eberstaller in any of his writings, as he did with other younger connections such as Faust Pachler and the Esterházy daughters; Waterman, *Karoline Eberstaller: Is She the Real Link Between Franz Schubert and Anton Bruckner?*, p. 5.

<sup>285</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 108.

piano duet genre as the position provided him the impetus to return to composing piano duets. These two sisters arguably played the most important role in shaping Schubert as a piano duet composer. In scholarship, there has been much focus on the unrequited love between Schubert and Karoline Esterházy, particularly when we consider Schubert dedicated his last Fantasy to Karoline.<sup>286</sup> There is less scholarship on Marie Esterházy; for example, in *Schubert and his World*, Karoline Esterházy and her father Johann Karl are assigned individual biographical entries, yet Marie is not.<sup>287</sup> I offer the thesis that the two sisters were essential factors in Schubert evolving into such a major duet composer. He composed a considerable number of duets at Zselíz, during which he taught the two countesses (see table below). While it is likely that Schubert would have written some piano duets otherwise, especially considering the ready-made market for piano duets, it is likely that he would not have engaged with the genre to such an extent. Furthermore, it was his first stay at Zselíz that re-introduced him to writing piano duets – he had written several piano duet fantasies in his youth but in Zselíz, Schubert began to explore the medium in a myriad of genres outside of the fantasy, as evident in the table below. A comparison between both tables shows some overlaps. Brown highlights this parallelism in that both years resulted in variations and a sonata along with other similar works.<sup>288</sup>

**Table 1.4a, Schubert's Four-Hand Works Composed in 1818**

Title of Work	Composed	Published
<b>4 Polonaises (D.599)</b>	1818	1827, op.75
<b>3 Marches héroïques (D.602)</b>	1818 or 1824	1824, op.27
<b>Grand Sonata in B Flat (D.617)</b>	1818	1823, op.30
<b>German Dance with Two Trios and Two Ländler (D.618)</b>	1818	1909

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., pp. 420–21.

<sup>287</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, pp. 44–47.

<sup>288</sup> Brown, *Schubert's Variations*, p. 32.

<b>Polonaise and trio, sketches (D.618a), trio used in D.599</b>	1818	1972
<b>8 Variations on a French Song (D.624)</b>	1818	1822, op.10
<b>3 Marches militaires (D.733)</b>	1818?	1826, op.51

**Table 1.4b, Schubert's Four-Hand Works Composed in 1824**

Title	Composed	Published
<b>Sonata in C (D.812)</b>	1824	1838, op.140
<b>Variations in A flat Major (D.813)</b>	1824	1825, op.35
<b>4 Ländler (D.814)</b>	1824	1869
<b>Divertissement à la hongroise (D.818)</b>	c. Autumn 1824	1826, op.54
<b>6 Grandes marches (D.819)</b>	Autumn 1824?	1825, op.40
<b>Introduction, 4 Variations on an Original Theme and finale, Bb (D.968a, originally D.603)</b>	1818 or 1824? <sup>289</sup>	1860, op.82/2

The Esterházy sisters Marie (1802—1837) and her younger sister Karoline (1805—1851), were introduced to Schubert when he was employed as a music teacher to them when they stayed in Zselíz during the summers in 1818 and 1824. Before Schubert attained this position, Schubert's teaching was confined to reluctantly teaching elementary students at his father's school, but he did also give some private music tuition to supplement his income.<sup>290</sup> After this, the two countesses can boast that they remained to be his only piano students in his lifetime. Von Hellborn claims that Schubert had a 'special aversion' to teaching though he accepted this position at Zselíz unreluctantly.<sup>291</sup> Luckily for Schubert, he had two budding

<sup>289</sup> Strahan dates the composition of this work from possibly 1824, while Arganbright and Weekley suggest possibly 1818, but they also note it is open to question: Strahan, '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias', p. 10; Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>290</sup> McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography*, p. 55.

<sup>291</sup> Von Hellborn, *The Life of Franz Schubert*, I, pp. 136–38.

musicians at his disposal. While there was a societal expectation for a female of their status to play the piano, both countesses were very keen on music. Based on sources, Marie seemed to be the more musically apt; she had a lovely voice, and it was noted by Deutsch that Marie was listed in an 1823 Viennese Directory as a ‘dilettante in pianoforte playing’ due to the level of ‘perfection’ she reached.<sup>292</sup> However, both countesses were described by Schönstein as ‘already very good pianists’ before Schubert’s arrival.<sup>293</sup> Further testament to their playing abilities is that Schönstein posited the two sisters needed more coaching than teaching, which suggests they had a sound foundation to begin with.<sup>294</sup> This was fortunate for Schubert; one can only speculate how different or compromised his piano duet works may have been were the Esterházy sisters less musically apt, or even if they were beginners. It has been suggested that the ‘high level of musicianship’ demonstrated by the two sisters perhaps spurred Schubert to continue writing piano duets during his second stay at Zselíz, as a homage to their ability.<sup>295</sup>

Schubert’s duties in this position included piano tuition for the countesses, providing musical entertainment, and the countesses also sang songs to Schubert’s accompaniment. For example, Schubert’s *Sing-Übungen* (D.619) was most likely written for the two countesses to be sung with their father Count Johann Carl Esterházy. In his second sojourn, he composed a vocal quartet for SATB, to be sung by the Esterházys (including Karoline and Marie) and friends. More pertinent to this research, Schubert composed piano duets here during both his sojourns and he used them as pedagogical material. Through this, Schubert demonstrates an elevation of the genre and crosses genre boundaries; a feat which is most evident in a comparison of the works from both sets. There is scant information on whether Schubert played the duets with one of the countesses, or whether the sisters played them together (or both).

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<sup>292</sup> Chusid, *Schubert’s Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 163.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, ‘Schubert, Franz’ in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001).

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

McKay theorises that the sometimes more complex primo part was played by Schubert, while a more accessible secondo was played by one of the countesses (McKay suggests the Theme and Variations on a French Air D.624 and the Four Polonaises D.599).<sup>296</sup> McKay then further suggests that perhaps some of the marches were written for the countesses to play together.<sup>297</sup> She points out that in a letter, when referring to his ‘Grand Duo’ and the Variations in A flat Major, Schubert provides no indication as to whether he played these himself with one of the two Esterházy countesses, or whether the countesses played with each other.<sup>298</sup> Certainly, it is likely he played his own piano duet compositions with the two Esterházy daughters during his two sojourns as music teacher in Zselíz in 1818 and 1824. Chusid notes the likelihood that the older and more advanced sister played the primo part for the polonaises (D.599).<sup>299</sup> These are fair suggestions. The primo and secondo are not always of equal difficulty in Schubert’s piano duets – more so in the early duets. Rather than viewing this as a negative, the difference in demand increases the playability and accessibility of the duets as this allows for a wider scope of pianists to engage in this material. Nevertheless, it is important here not to fall for the trope of the secondo part always being the easier part in duet-playing, particularly in that of Schubert works. In fact, there may be certain elements of accompanimental playing that is more challenging than primo playing. For example, memorisation is often considered as more difficult in parts providing the harmony, over parts that have a melody. There is also the aspect of pedalling which generally is taken by the secondo. From a pedagogical standpoint, students may find the reading of a secondo part more taxing, since the music is commonly scored in two bass clefs. Furthermore, a primo part is often scored in unison, while the secondo often is playing with larger textures. Of course, one must be warned against generalisations either way. Nonetheless, in the Grove article on Schubert, it is stated that both primo and secondo parts

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<sup>296</sup> McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography*, p. 87.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>299</sup> Chusid, *Schubert’s Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 163.

‘are equally demanding’ for the Zselíz works, which is certainly a justifiable claim.<sup>300</sup> Karoline, in particular, must have made a strong impression on Schubert, as he dedicated his Fantasy in F Minor to her (D.940) and much has been made about Karoline as Schubert’s muse. Following Schubert’s death, it transpired that Karoline Esterházy also owned several of Schubert’s manuscripts, including both of Schubert’s Italian overtures for piano duet.<sup>301</sup>

### **Irene Kiesewetter (1811–1872)**

While it is not known if Kiesewetter played duets with Schubert, she was a member of Schubert’s circle who contributed to the performance of his works overall. In a letter to Marie Pachler, Johann Baptist Jenger referred to her as ‘one of the foremost women pianists in Vienna’.<sup>302</sup> In the 1830s, she was described as a true virtuoso (‘wahre Virtuosin’) and that she has the talent to become a great virtuoso.<sup>303</sup> On occasion she accompanied Schubert and performed songs with the singer Baron Schönstein. Kiesewetter appears to be an important figure in Schubert’s circle as Schubert wrote ‘Kantate für Irene Kiesewetter’ (D.936) and ‘Der Tanz’ (D.826), the former of which was written to celebrate Kiesewetter’s recovery from an illness.

Regarding four-hand playing, she played Schubert’s *Divertissement à la hongroise* (D.818) with Jenger on the 26 October 1827 in Sophie von Müller’s salon. This work defies connotations of divertissements as requiring a limited technical facility. In fact, this is a work that Börner rates as difficult to very difficult, and Byrne Bodley notes that in this work, pianistic

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<sup>300</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, ‘Schubert, Franz’ in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>301</sup> Brown, *Schubert: A Critical Biography*, p. 313.

<sup>302</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, p. 94.

<sup>303</sup> Anja Herold, ‘Kiesewetter von Wiesenbrunn, Irene, verh. Gräfin Prokesch-Osten in Europäische Instrumentalistinnen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts’, *Sophie Drinker Institut für musikwissenschaftliche Frauen- und Geschlechtsforderung* (2008) <<https://www.sophie-drinker-institut.de/kiesewetter-von-wiesenbrunn-irene>> [accessed 07/12/2024].

demands are not diminished.<sup>304</sup> This, along with the above testaments to her playing reveals that she must have been a very talented pianist and was considered a virtuoso, something Schubert had not been known as. Further to this performance, according to Irene Kieseewetter's biographical entry on the Sophie Drinker Institut für musikwissenschaftliche Frauen- und Geschlechtsförderung, Kieseewetter performed other Schubert works for four-hands, as well as four-hand arrangements of Beethoven works.<sup>305</sup> Clive specifies Kieseewetter and Jenger played Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony and the *Egmont* Overture for four hands on 16 October 1830.<sup>306</sup> While Kieseewetter's link to Schubert's duets is not as explicit as that of the Esterházy sisters, she played a small role in perpetuating Schubert's music which did include some duets. In the context of female pianists in Schubert's Vienna, the Esterházy sisters, the Kunz sisters, and Kieseewetter are important examples that demonstrate the high level of proficiency seemingly obscure female pianists had in Vienna at the time, many of whom were on par with their male counterparts. Much like the integral role female musicians Anna Fröhlich, Sophie von Müller, and Katharina von Lásny played in Schubert's success in the last years of his life, these additional women were fundamental in the development and performance of Schubert's four-hand works.

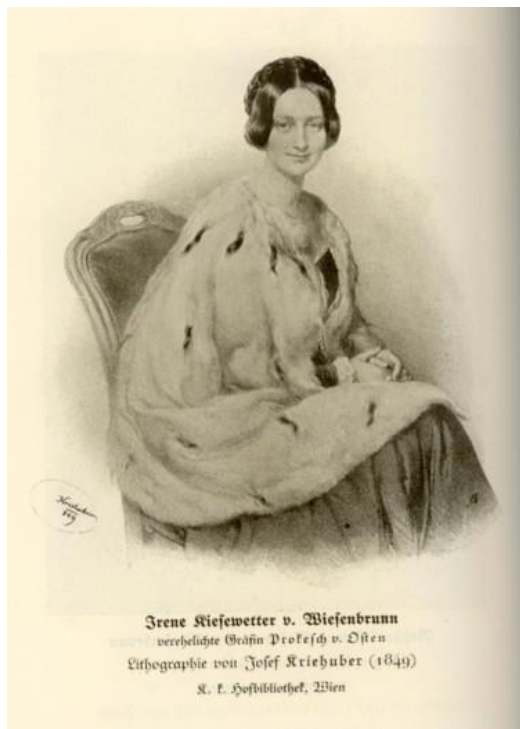
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<sup>304</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 125; Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 427.

<sup>305</sup> Herold, 'Kieseewetter von Wiesenbrunn, Irene, verh. Gräfin Prokesch-Osten in Europäische Instrumentalistinnen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts'.

<sup>306</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, p. 90.

**Figure 1.3, Irene Kiewewetter von Wiesenbrunn** <sup>307</sup>



### 1.12 Schubert: Primo or Secondo?

There is even slimmer information on whether Schubert played the primo or secondo part as a duet player, or whether he switched roles. Eric Sams expresses his certainty that Schubert was the ‘Primo inter pares’ (first among equals with Schubert playing the primo).<sup>308</sup> Von Hellborn notes that ‘Franz used to play the treble’ when playing with Gahy.<sup>309</sup> When Schubert played Handel’s oratorios and operas, Anselm Hüttenbrenner occasionally joined in. Hüttenbrenner commented; ‘We made the task easier for ourselves by Schubert taking over the high parts’.<sup>310</sup> However, Schubert’s duet writing bestows much more equality between the primo and secondo players, particularly in his later works; both parts are of significance and the secondo often

<sup>307</sup> Herold, ‘Kiewewetter von Wiesenbrunn, Irene, verh. Gräfin Prokesch-Osten in Europäische Instrumentalistinnen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts’. Portrait taken from: Otto Erich Deutsch, *Franz Schubert: Sein Leben in Bildern* (München und Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1913), p. 402.

<sup>308</sup> Sams, ‘Schubert’s Piano Duets’, p. 120.

<sup>309</sup> Von Hellborn, *The Life of Franz Schubert*, I, p. 131.

<sup>310</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 180.

contains the melodic interest, so the trope of the ‘better’ player playing the primo does not always hold water in Schubert’s piano duets. Sams ascribes the equality Schubert places upon both parts to intentional ‘altruism’ on Schubert’s part and gives an example of the ‘Grand Duo’, a work in which the secondo is an equal to the primo.<sup>311</sup> Moreover, it is known that Schubert performed one of his most advanced duets, one in which the parts are equally demanding, with one of the finest virtuoso pianists of the time (Bocklet). Nevertheless, making a blanket statement that both the primo and secondo for all of Schubert’s piano duets are of equal difficulty is not accurate, as this is not always the case. In Börner’s repertoire list, he assigns a difficulty level to the duets, and some of the primo parts for Schubert’s duets are assigned in the difficulty level above that of the secondo.<sup>312</sup> Schubert also played duets with those who were considered amateur pianists as opposed to professional, so with this in mind, it is feasible to suggest that Schubert played both duet parts depending on the occasion, the composition, and the particular duet partner.

### **1.13 Four-Hand Transcriptions of Schubert’s Works**

When tracing the legacy of Schubert’s four-hand works, Liszt, Brahms, and Schumann may promptly spring to mind. However, Schubert clearly inspired others to compose duet transcriptions of his works, including those in his inner circle. Many transcriptions of Schubert’s works were arranged following his death and this includes both two- and four-hand arrangements. For instance, approximately thirty solo and four-hand transcription works are listed in Schubert’s entry in *The Pianist’s Guide to Transcriptions, Arrangements and Paraphrases*; however, not all the duet transcriptions noted in this thesis’ subsection are included in Hinson’s entry.<sup>313</sup> Many of these works in these arrangements are unknown in the

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<sup>311</sup> Sams, ‘Schubert’s Piano Duets’, p. 120.

<sup>312</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, pp. 117–34.

<sup>313</sup> Hinson, *The Pianist’s Guide to Transcriptions, Arrangements and Paraphrases*, pp. 120–24.

popular imagination today, though Christensen justly theorises that four-hand transcriptions of Schubert's works played an important role in disseminating his music historically – this is not to be undervalued.<sup>314</sup> From this, we can deduce that the area of Schubert transcriptions is vast, largely unexplored, and this discussion aims to investigate further.

Many of Schubert's works known in their original instrumentation were arranged for piano duet, both during his lifetime and posthumously. Joseph Czerny arranged the Quintet in A Major (D.667) for piano duet, which was simultaneously published with the first edition of the original (known as the 'Trout' Quintet) in 1829. Jan Brandts-Buys composed arrangements of Schubert's symphonies and quite a number of other works.<sup>315</sup> Hugo Ulrich transcribed the seminal Quintet in C Major (D.956) for piano duet in 1871. Some members of Schubert's inner circle also transcribed Schubert's works for piano duet. For example, Josef Hüttenbrenner composed a piano duet of the overture to *Die Zauberharfe* (D.644). Josef Hüttenbrenner's brother Anselm composed a piano duet version of the 'Unfinished Symphony' (D.759), which in its original orchestral form was given to him by Schubert. Carl Reinecke wrote the official duet transcription of this work which was published by C.A. Spina in 1866. Josef von Gahy, a duet partner and friend of Schubert's, wrote approximately thirty transcriptions of Schubert's orchestral and vocal works for piano duet, including the Piano Trio in B flat Major (D.898), and the Sonata in A Minor for arpeggione and piano (D.821), the Octet (D.803), the G major String Quartet (D.887), and the Notturmo in E flat (D.897).<sup>316</sup> Gahy wrote these out of love for Schubert, with whom he valued every hour of playing duets: 'I count the hours I spent playing duets with Schubert among the most enjoyable in my life and I cannot think back on that period

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<sup>314</sup> Christensen, 'Schubert's Four-Hand Piano Works', p. 86.

<sup>315</sup> See table for a list of four- and eight-hand arrangements of Schubert's works: Christensen, *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>316</sup> Franz Schubert, *Franz Schubert: The Unauthorised Piano Duos, Vol. 2*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone (Divine Art, DDA25039, 2006) Programme notes, p. 3  
<<https://d2ajug1vehh95s.cloudfront.net/25039booklet.pdf>> [accessed 07/12/2024].

without being overcome by profound emotion'.<sup>317</sup> Gahy did not intend for these works to be published, and hence these works can be considered a homage to Schubert rather than for capital gain.

The above works were generally faithful to the original works, presumably due to the loyalty of Schubert's friends to his music. However, in line with the growth of two-piano duos in the twentieth century and the popularity of virtuosity, Sergei Prokofiev arranged some of Schubert's solo waltzes for two pianos.<sup>318</sup> These works require virtuosity that is not required in their original Schubertian format and Prokofiev changes some of the original harmonies. Prokofiev himself and Samuel Feinberg performed this as an encore in Moscow in 1927. Additionally, Ede Poldini (1869–1957) composed a study for two pianos on Schubert's Impromptu in E flat Major (D.899/2). In both works, both composers employ some artistic licence. In Poldini's work, he weaves in a waltz theme from Schubert's 'Wanderer' Fantasy (D.760) alongside the impromptu. More recently, duo Clemmow and Goldstone tapped into the largely unexplored area of Schubert transcriptions.<sup>319</sup> The duo released three volumes of Schubert's 'unauthorised' duets, many of which were world premieres, such as Czerny's Quintet in A Major for piano and strings (D.667), Hüttenbrenner's overture to *Die Zauberharfe* (D.644), and Hugo Ulrich's Adagio from String Quintet in C Major (D.956). Goldstone himself realises a four-hand transcription of the sketches from Polonaise in B flat (D.618a).<sup>320</sup>

As evident from above, there is a lack of scholarship in the area of four-hand transcriptions of Schubert's works, let alone in performance and recordings. Musically, these transcriptions need to be examined before they are set aside. Goldstone notes that if one were

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> He arranged some of these Schubert waltzes for piano solo too, reminiscent of Liszt's *Soirées de Vienne*.

<sup>319</sup> Franz Schubert, *Franz Schubert: The Unauthorised Piano Duos*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone (Divine Art, DDA25026/ DDA25039/ DDA25125, 2004–2015).

<sup>320</sup> Franz Schubert, *Franz Schubert: The Unauthorised Piano Duos*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone (Divine Art, DDA25026/ DDA25039/ DDA25125, 2004–2015).

not aware of the original instrumentation for the ‘Trout’, one would readily accept the-four-hand transcription.<sup>321</sup> While some may be of more musical importance than others, some remain of historical interest at least, and are curiosities. For instance, in Gahy’s transcriptions (who played the secondo parts), the players encounter some challenges. Two of Gahy’s right-hand fingers became paralysed and hence he had to assign the primo some material. According to Howie, this results in ‘unusual adjustments’ that the players must make.<sup>322</sup> It is understandable that one would compare transcriptions to their original counterparts, particularly to the Schubert’s works that are so well known in their original format. However, through transcriptions, one can familiarise themselves with Schubert’s works without waiting for the opportunity to attend concerts (or listen to recordings in later years), as this 1880 review on four-hand arrangements of Schubert’s symphonies declares:

To understand Schubert’s symphonies thoroughly, they must either be frequently heard or read from the full scores. It is not, however, necessary to wait for the opportunities of becoming acquainted with them in this manner, for many who are ready to recognise genius whenever it presents itself, or in whatever form it exists, do not have either means at their disposal. For them, arrangements such as that now before us have a special value. The thoughts of the author are reduced to a simple colouring, it must be admitted, but if there are beauties enough to gratify the ‘ear and charm the sense’, none should be ungrateful for the attempt to place the otherwise unavailable in an available form.... [These] duets stand as fair an opitome [sic] of the scores as can be obtained.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Franz Schubert, *Franz Schubert: The Unauthorised Piano Duos, Vol. 1*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone (Divine Art, DDA25026, 2004) Programme notes:

<<https://d2ajug1vehh95s.cloudfront.net/25026booklet.pdf>> [accessed 07/12/2024], p. 3.

<sup>322</sup> Crawford Howie, *Review of Franz Schubert: The Unauthorised Piano Duos, Vol. 2*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone <<https://divineartrecords.com/review/the-schubertian-25039-a-crawford-howie/>> [accessed 07/12/2024].

<sup>323</sup> Christensen, ‘Schubert’s Four-Hand Piano Works’, p. 88. Original source: ‘Reviews’, *The Monthly Musical Record* (London: Augener & Co., July 1880), p. 96.

## 1.14 The Influence of Schubert's Duets on Schumann

Musical duets become duets of the heart and the conversation and language of kindred souls; that is when they are most beautiful and valuable. Playing piano duets will always be the most beautiful prime pleasure.<sup>324</sup>

The above quote from teenage Schumann demonstrates his affection for duet-playing. He made a small contribution to the genre in a handful of compositions that are inventive, attractive, and of miniature stature. Broadly, the handful of original four-hand compositions mark the different stages in Schumann's life, as remarked by McGraw and Lubin.<sup>325</sup> Some of his works are very idiomatic for the pianist, and his twelve *Four Hand Pieces for Big and Little Children* (Op.85), are examples of this – they were written as a counterpart to the seminal *Album for the Young* (Op.68) for solo piano. Schumann shows his skill for writing for younger pianists here, while being imaginative and colourful in his writing. The work's title may be misleading; some pieces such as *Am Springbrunnen* are quite difficult pianistically. Generally, both McGraw and Börner rank his works as intermediate.<sup>326</sup>

Schumann's relationship to Schubert is often considered problematic due to his perceptions of Schubert that musicologists now criticise. This issue first arose when Schumann expressed his consideration of Schubert as a 'Mädchencharakter'.<sup>327</sup> Other factors complicating their relationship resulted from Schumann's critique on the Schubert impromptus.<sup>328</sup> However, it is clear he adored much of Schubert's music, particularly his four-hand works. He did not write nearly as many piano duets as Schubert did, but because of

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<sup>324</sup> Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 232.

<sup>325</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 470; Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 85.

<sup>326</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, pp. 470–72; Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, pp. 152–55.

<sup>327</sup> Messing discusses this in: Scott Messing, *Schubert in the European Imagination* (University of Rochester Press, 2006), pp. 2–4.

<sup>328</sup> John Daverio, "'One More Beautiful Memory of Schubert': Schumann's Critique of the Impromptus, D. 935", *The Music Quarterly*, 84.4 (2000), pp. 604–18.

Schubert's elevation of the genre, Schumann wrote some piano duet works that are clearly modelled on Schubert's. Schubert's reverence of Schumann has been discussed in scholarship. see the 'Schumann's heroes' chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, for example.<sup>329</sup> Schumann was first introduced to Schubert's music through 'Der Erlkönig' (D.328), the Piano Sonata in A Minor (D.845), and a Lied titled either 'Der Du von dem Himmel bist' (D.224), or 'Nähe des Geliebten' (D.162). Schumann attended piano lessons under the tutelage of Friedrich Wieck in 1828, during which Schumann was introduced to the *Variations on a Theme from Herold's 'Marie'* (D.908), the Rondo in A Major (D.951) and the polonaises (either D.599 or D.824, or both). Emil Flechsig notes that Schumann acquired all Schubert works that were available to him, and he also remarks that himself and Schumann played Schubert's polonaises.<sup>330</sup> Flechsig was criticised for his apparently inadequate playing of the secondo part. Schumann for some time also played piano duets weekly with Anton Töpken, and regular works they played included Schubert's polonaises (D.599 and D.824) and variations (D.908).<sup>331</sup> Schumann also played piano duets with Clara Wieck, August Böhner (also including the polonaises), his sister-in-law Therese, and Fritz Täglichsbeck.<sup>332</sup>

As evident from the above, Schumann was well acquainted with Schubert's polonaises, which provided the model for his own four-hand polonaises (some material was to be later used in Schumann's *Papillons*. Schumann described Schubert's polonaises as 'purely and simply thunderstorms breaking forth, with romantic rainbows over a sublimely slumbering universe'.<sup>333</sup> It takes only a glance to see the similarities between Schubert's and Schumann's polonaises. Though, Börner notes that Schumann's polonaises are more technically demanding

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<sup>329</sup> Nicholas Marston, 'Schumann's heroes; Schubert, Beethoven, Bach' in *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. by Beate Perry (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 48–62.

<sup>330</sup> Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 232.

<sup>331</sup> John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a 'New Poetic Age'* (Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 57–58.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>333</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 22.

than Schubert's and those of Schumann's contemporaries.<sup>334</sup> Certainly, Schubert's second set of polonaises are closer to the difficulty of Schumann's over his first set. The influence of Schubert's harmony on Schumann must not be overlooked. Daverio points out a similarity in Schumann's polonaises; namely the penchant for flat keys.<sup>335</sup> For example, Daverio highlights the third-related modulations in the first section of Schumann's first polonaise, which forays into the tonality of G flat and B (C flat) in the overall tonic of E flat major. He similarly demonstrates an interest in the Neapolitan key; in the fifth polonaise, Schumann shifts from C major to D flat. This is similar to the kind of Schubertian shift found, for example, in the final variation of his Variations in A flat Major (D.813), in which Schubert moves up a semitone from A flat major to A for quite a significant amount of time. Outside of the polonaises, there is a striking similarity in melody and harmony between the theme of the second movement of the 'Grand Duo' (which Schumann was undoubtedly aware of) and that of Schumann's 'Seit ich ihn gesehen'.<sup>336</sup>

### 1.15 The Influence of Schubert's Duets on Liszt

Liszt (1811–1886) is regarded as one of the masters of solo piano music and one may think that he did not desire to write for piano duet in both its forms, however this is not the case. While it is accepted that he only wrote one original piano for four-hands work entitled *Festpolonaise*, Liszt wrote a significant number of arrangements for four hands on one piano, as well as four hands for two pianos, and eight hands for two pianos.<sup>337</sup> McGraw and Lubin both note that the *Festpolonaise* is Liszt's only authentic piano duet.<sup>338</sup> The remaining works

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<sup>334</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 152.

<sup>335</sup> Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a 'New Poetic Age'*, p. 49.

<sup>336</sup> This intermusical link, amongst others, is discussed in: Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 46

<sup>337</sup> The cataloguing of works by Liszt is a challenge due to the large number of compositions that exist in various arrangements.

<sup>338</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 310; Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 108.

were arrangements and transcriptions, including arrangements of his solo music, his orchestral music, and arrangements of works by other composers, including that of Schubert.

It is widely accepted that Liszt strongly revered Schubert and Liszt's many arrangements of Schubert's vocal music for solo piano promptly come to mind.<sup>339</sup> He was a significant exponent of Schubert's music and he put Schubert's music on the map; Gibbs notes that reworkings of Schubert's works helped increase Schubert's popularity throughout Europe, and he points out that Liszt was a particularly important figure in this.<sup>340</sup> However, the influence of Schubert as a four-hand composer upon Liszt in this genre has not been examined. In *Liszt and Virtuosity*, Doran notes that one of the aims of this source is to provide a reconsideration of Liszt's links to composers such as Czerny, Chopin, Brahms, Debussy, Marie Jaëll – and Schubert.<sup>341</sup> Often, in the discussion of the links between Schubert and Liszt, their contribution to the four-hand oeuvre is omitted, while the focus is on works more known in the popular imagination such as the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, which Liszt reworked on several occasions. Hence, this section serves to open the discussion on the influence Schubert had on Liszt from a four-hand work perspective.

Liszt as a duet composer may appear as the antithesis of Schubert. Schubert wrote almost exclusively original piano works save for a few transcriptions/arrangements, and he did not compose two-piano duets. His compositional style for piano is not outwardly virtuosic in the sense of Liszt's. Furthermore, Liszt's duet output consists almost exclusively of arrangements and transcriptions. Moreover, he ventured into the more extravagant realm of two-piano duets, and even eight-hand duets on two pianos. Lubin remarks that it is no

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<sup>339</sup> Maria Rena Eckhardt, Charnin Mueller and Alan Walker, 'Liszt, Franz' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.48265; Gibbs and Solvik, *Franz Schubert and His World*, p. xii.

<sup>340</sup> Gibbs, 'German reception: Schubert's "Journey to Immortality"', p. 247.

<sup>341</sup> Robert Doran, ed., *Liszt and Virtuosity* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), p. 11.

coincidence that Liszt contributed almost nothing to the original duet medium and juxtaposes Liszt's outwardly virtuosic style with the more intimate chamber music style.<sup>342</sup> Despite the almost paradoxical approaches to this genre from Schubert and Liszt, there is a strong link between both composers in that Schubert's duets directly inspired Liszt.

Liszt arranged some of Schubert's works in many formats. He arranged Schubert's solo piano music, as well as arranged Schubert's solo piano music for duet, and conversely, he arranged some of Schubert's duet music for solo piano. For example, Liszt composed *Soirées de Vienne* for solo piano, which were based on some of Schubert's solo dances. Liszt played these arrangements and experienced 'sensational success' doing so.<sup>343</sup> He was an advocate of Schubert's music in general and his high profile aided him in introducing Schubert's music to more European audiences. Liszt performed throughout Europe – something that Schubert was not in the position to do due to financial limitations, not to mention his health. While it is true that Liszt was a proponent of Schubert's music, he did not always promote the dances, or his other music, in their original form. Furthermore, due to Liszt's popularity, his transcriptions of these dances received many times the fee that Schubert would have been given a decade before.<sup>344</sup> Notable examples (see tables below) of Liszt taking inspiration from Schubert's four-hand piano works include *Drei Märsche von Franz Schubert* for piano solo, which consisted of a potpourri of several of Schubert's piano duet works. Additionally, the *Divertissement à la hongroise* was used as original source material for Liszt's *Mélodies hongroises d'après Schubert* for solo piano (S.425), the latter of which he performed on several occasions.<sup>345</sup> Reid notes that this is a virtuosic arrangement which transforms the performance settings from a

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<sup>342</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 5.

<sup>343</sup> Gál, *Franz Schubert and the Essence of Melody*, p. 142.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 142–43.

<sup>345</sup> Shay Loya, 'Recomposing National Identity: Four Transcultural Readings of Liszt's *Marche hongroise d'après Schubert*', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 69.2 (2016), pp. 409–76, doi:10.1525/jams.2016.69.2.409.

home setting to a ‘public concert with a spotlight on a charismatic player’ (though the researcher of this current thesis argues that the original piano duet work by Schubert is worthy of a concert item and shows virtuosity in both players).<sup>346</sup> Furthermore, Liszt composed an arrangement of Schubert’s *Divertissement à la hongroise* piano duet (D.818) for orchestra, thus strengthening the ties with this particular Schubert work. Liszt scholar Shay Loya states that his interest in this work has yet to be explained, at least as of 2011.<sup>347</sup> There may be some truth to Lubin’s suggestion that the *Divertissement à la hongroise* may have provided the blueprint for Liszt’s *Hungarian Rhapsodies*.<sup>348</sup> More recently, Byrne Bodley posits that Schubert’s use of Hungarian themes are ‘pre-Lisztian *Hungarian Rhapsodies*’.<sup>349</sup> Certainly, there are many musical parallels in the Hungarian flavour, with elements such as cimbalom-effects, Magyar rhythms, modality, and ornate cadenzas present in both (Wiesli elaborates on these parallels).<sup>350</sup> Schubert’s *Divertissement à la hongroise* was first published in 1826 when Liszt was a teen, and it may be surprising to read that this work was amongst the most well-known of Schubert’s four-hand works in the generation following his death. Being such a life-long avid supporter of Schubert’s music and using material from Schubert’s *divertissement* for several works, it is reasonable to suggest that Schubert did have a direct – or indirect – influence on Liszt’s *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. Though, it is important not to overestimate this influence, as this Hungarian style was not unique to Schubert.<sup>351</sup> Elements of the *style hongrois* are also present

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<sup>346</sup> Paul Reid, ‘Schubert Piano Duets: Pattern of Publication’, *The Schubertian*, 79 (2014), pp. 18–22 (p. 19).

<sup>347</sup> Shay Loya, *Liszt’s Transcultural Modernism and the Hungarian-gypsy Tradition* (New York and Suffolk, University of Rochester Press and Boydell & Brewer Limited), p. 276. He later designates an article to this topic in Loya, ‘Recomposing National Identity: Four Transcultural Readings of Liszt’s *Marche hongroise d’après Schubert*’.

<sup>348</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 5.

<sup>349</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 285.

<sup>350</sup> Andrea Wiesli, ‘“Schubert Would Have No Objection if He Knew about It”: Franz Liszt’s Reception of Schubert’s Music’ in *Schubert’s Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 301–23 (p. 318).

<sup>351</sup> The issue of Hungarian Folk Music within Schubert’s music is a source of contention with differing views on which works contain such elements; Csilla Pethő, ‘“Style Hongrois.” Hungarian Elements in the Works of Haydn, Beethoven, Weber and Schubert’, *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 41.1/3 (2000), pp. 199–284 (pp. 252–81) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/902575>> [accessed 13/04/2023].

in Haydn, Beethoven and Weber, Mozart (though conflating Hungarian and Turkish styles), and of course in Hungarian Folk Music, from where Western Art composers drew inspiration. Liszt was exposed to such folk music from his native Hungary, including hearing music from travelling Romani bands and in masses. He was also exposed to Western Art Music from a young age – he was taught piano from age 7 and he was a piano student of Carl Czerny for a period of fourteen months in Vienna in 1822–1823. Nevertheless, Schubert’s four-hand works influenced Liszt directly, in some cases explicitly so, as evident in the titles given by Liszt. Although Liszt’s contribution to the four-hand genre is minimal in terms of original works, there are some four-hand arrangements of his solo works that deserve to be on par with the solo versions.

**Table 1.5a, Liszt’s Usage of Several Schubert Four-Hand Works (for solo piano) in *Drei Märsche von Schubert***

Title of Movements from <i>Drei Märsche von Schubert</i> (S.426)	Original material by Schubert (all piano duet works)
<i>Trauermarsch (Grande marche funèbre)</i>	No.5 of 6 <i>Grandes marches</i> , D.819
<i>Grande marche</i>	Using themes from No.3 of 6 <i>Grandes marches</i> , D.819 and <i>Grande marche funèbre</i> , D.859
<i>Grande marche caractéristique</i>	Themes from Nos.1–2 of 2 <i>Marches caractéristiques</i> , D.968b and Nos.1–2 of 6 <i>Grandes marches</i> , D.819

**Table 1.5b, Liszt’s Usage of Schubert’s *Divertissement à la hongroise* (D.818) in Solo Piano Composition**

Title of Liszt’s Work (Solo Piano)	Original material by Schubert (Piano Duet)
<i>Mélodies hongroises d'après Schubert</i> , S.425 <sup>352</sup>	<i>Divertissement à la hongroise</i> , D.818

<sup>352</sup> Due to the work’s difficulty, Diabelli issued a second version in 1846 titled *Schuberts Ungarische Melodien auf eine neue leichtere Art gesetzt*, in which Liszt simplified and made some cuts to the music: Wiesli, “‘Schubert Would Have No Objection if He Knew about It’: Franz Liszt’s Reception of Schubert’s Music”, p. 317.

### 1.16 Schubert's Influence on Brahms as a Duet Composer

Much like Liszt, Brahms (1833–1897) was inspired by Schubert's piano duets and wrote both piano for four-hand works, as well as two piano works (see appendix 6 for a list of his original four-hand works). As is the case with Liszt, the compiling of Brahms' four-hand contribution is complex, since he wrote some original four-hand works, as well as arrangements and transcriptions of his own works and the works of others. Some duets were written for two-pianos which further complicates the matter. Nevertheless, Brahms grew up when the piano's popularity was at its apex. Duet-playing played an important role in Brahms' life from a young age, and he duetted with Clara Schumann, Carl Tausig, Frau Engelmann, Hermann Levi, Ignaz Brüll, and Gustav Nottebohm. There are many primary sources that document Brahms playing duets and his fondness of it.<sup>353</sup> McGraw notes that while Brahms' original four-hand contribution was fairly small, he made up for this in his 'inventive genius, rigorous self-criticism, and solid craftsmanship'.<sup>354</sup> Along with a small number of such original four-hand works, he arranged a significant number of his (and that of other composers) chamber music and symphonies for four hands throughout his life. Shepherd notes that Brahms took the genre of transcriptions seriously, but he cautions that this is understated in the popular imagination.<sup>355</sup> Brahms' serious approach to the genre is evidenced in the high volume of arrangements Brahms wrote, which can be contrasted with other composers, who often were more than happy to leave this to arrangers. This is not to say Brahms did not work with arrangers – though, he was involved in giving feedback to arrangers. For example, Brahms increasingly became unsatisfied with his arranger Robert Keller's literal piano arrangements of his works in the later years of their relationship, so much so that Brahms asks for 'light, brisk, leaving out all that is

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<sup>353</sup> See the following source for a discussion of these primary sources: Salocks, 'A Discussion of Selected Four-Hand Works by Brahms and Dvořák', pp. 8–10.

<sup>354</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 69.

<sup>355</sup> Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, p. 68.

possible' music 'just so it sounds really well for 4 hands and is playable!'.<sup>356</sup> This comment reveals that there is a skill in writing for piano duet which Brahms, like Schubert, possessed.

Brahms' *Hungarian Dances* (similar to Schubert's first military march, D.733) have been arranged for such varied instrumentation, that one forgets they were originally written for four hands. Another work embedded in the popular imagination is Brahms' Sixteen Waltzes for piano duet (Op.39) composed in 1865. The inspiration Brahms drew from Schubert's music is not speculative, as Brahms explicitly likens his waltzes to those of Schubert in a letter to Eduard Hanslick, to whom the set is dedicated: 'They are two books of little innocent waltzes in Schubertian form.'<sup>357</sup> In comparison to Liszt's *Soirees de Vienne*, which are written in typical Lisztian style, Brahms arrangements of Schubert's dances are more faithful to the original. Brodbeck remarks the 'uncanny resemblance' between the first piece from Brahms' set and Schubert's waltz published as Op.18, No.2.<sup>358</sup> Brahms also edited some of Schubert's dances and arranged sixteen of them for piano duet (catalogued as Brahms' Anh.Ia/6, arrangements of Schubert's two-handed Ländler).<sup>359</sup> In a review of the Op.39 by the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, an entry of recently published piano duet compositions was listed. The entry for these Brahms' waltzes is below and note that some credit should be given to Schubert here, due to the clear influence Brahms derived from Schubert's waltzes. This comment could easily have been written about Schubert's dances too:

First to be considered is a volume of waltzes (16 in number) by Joh. Brahms Op. 39 (published by Rieter-Biedermann), which we would like to recommend most warmly to all friends of music. Even in this form,

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<sup>356</sup> George S. Bozarth, ed., *The Brahms-Keller Correspondence* (University of Nebraska, 1996), p. xxxii.

<sup>357</sup> Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 239. Further discussion on intersection of Brahms and Schubert duets; Johannes Behr, 'Franz Schuberts 20 Ländler D 366 / D 814 - nicht bearbeitet von Johannes Brahms', *Die Musikforschung*, 64 (2011), pp. 358–67 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41703225>> [accessed 30/09/2024].

<sup>358</sup> David Brodbeck, 'Primo Schubert, Secondo Schumann: Brahms's Four-Hand Waltzes, Op. 39', *The Journal of Musicology*, 7.1 (1989), pp. 58–80 (p. 62).

<sup>359</sup> George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch, 'Brahms, Johannes' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.51879.

our admirable young master's excellent inventive talent is so conspicuous that one completely forgets the lowly rank of the genre. The various waltzes are of various characters, sometimes showy and fervid, sometimes softly swaying, sometimes tender, sometimes wild like gypsy music - but always original and, in spite of the brevity of a form (the majority of waltzes occupy only one other player's pages), rising up stirringly and somehow momentarily. We reserve all else concerning them for our view, which, because of their abundance of beautiful ideas, these 'waltzes' unquestionably deserve.<sup>360</sup>

Other four-hand works of interest include Brahms' arrangement of Schumann's Piano Quartet in E flat Major (Schumann, Op.47), which is just as effective as the original work itself, marking the evolution of the duet arrangement from a light-hearted medium to a serious genre. Perhaps the most unique and adventurous use of the piano duet is in Brahms' *Neue Liebeslieder* (Op.52 and Op.65), which is scored for four vocalists and piano duet in the style of Schubert's *Ländler*. This novel combination was first experimented by Schumann's *Spanische Liebeslieder* (Op.138). As performers, these particular works of Schumann and Brahms are a delight to play. Pianist Niall Kinsella amongst others performed these works along with Schubert's Four Polonaises (D.599) in the National Concert Hall (Dublin) in 2019.

Magalhães claims that for a significant number of composers, the piano duet appears to represent a less serious genre in comparison to their other explored genres; he includes Brahms in this remark.<sup>361</sup> This is a hard claim to justify when we consider that Brahms took great care in his four-hand works and held them in regard, particularly in his arrangements – scholars tend to agree on this claim.<sup>362</sup> While earlier in the twentieth century, Brahms' four-hand contribution may have been overlooked (Komaiko elaborates on this), there is a growing trend to addressing

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<sup>360</sup> Brodbeck, 'Primo Schubert, Secondo Schumann: Brahms's Four-Hand Waltzes, Op. 39', p. 58.

<sup>361</sup> Magalhães, 'An Annotated Catalogue of Works for Piano Duet: A Supplement to Cameron McGraw's Piano Duet Repertoire', p. viii.

<sup>362</sup> Robert Pascall, 'The editor's Brahms' in *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. by Michael Musgrave (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 250–67. Salocks, 'A Discussion of Selected Four-Hand Works by Brahms and Dvořák'; Robert Komaiko, 'The Four-Hand Piano Arrangements of Brahms and Their Role in the Nineteenth Century Volume 1' (doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, 1975).

previously sidelined four-hand works.<sup>363</sup> This is evidenced by the assertion by Pascall in *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, that Brahms' four-hand arrangements are 'wonderfully' written.<sup>364</sup> Furthermore, the upsurge in interest in four-hand music is demonstrated by the fact that in the new Brahms Complete Edition, all of Brahms' piano arrangements of his own music (mainly for four hands) are included, unlike in the old edition.<sup>365</sup> Brahms' four-hand oeuvre needs further exploration, and it would be wise to trace any influence from Schubert in this medium, as Brahms said, 'my love for Schubert is a serious one, precisely because it is not a passing fancy'.<sup>366</sup>

Newbould postulates that the impact of Schubert on Brahms has been approached by scholarship but that this area has not been addressed 'exhaustively'.<sup>367</sup> It is certain that without Schubert's efforts in the piano duet genre, neither Brahms, Schumann, nor Liszt would have engaged in piano duets to the extent that they did. Schubert paved the path for future composers. Byrne Bodley rightly claims that Schubert's engagement with the piano duet genre influenced the piano duets of the future generation's composers with immediacy.<sup>368</sup> The truth is the consequences are even more far reaching than that, in that Schubert's piano duet works inspired composers outside of the duet genre too, as evident from the discussion above and throughout this thesis. It is on this point that Mayer posits that without Beethoven and Schubert, there would be no Schumann, Liszt, or Chopin. She ascribes this to Beethoven and Schubert transgressing the boundaries of the piano, both artistically and technically, as well as the distinct expression they brought to the instrument.<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Komaiko, 'The Four-Hand Piano Arrangements of Brahms and Their Role in the Nineteenth Century Volume 1', pp. ii–iv.

<sup>364</sup> Pascall, 'The editor's Brahms', p. 254.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

<sup>366</sup> Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: For Family, Friends and Posterity*, p. 237.

<sup>367</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 405.

<sup>368</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 430.

<sup>369</sup> Gabriela Mayer, *The Art of the Unspoken: Rhetorical Devices, Linguistic Parallels and the Influence of the Singing Voice in Classical and Romantic Piano Literature* (Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd., 2023), pp. 137–38.

### 1.17 The Decline of the Piano Duet

The decline in popularity of duets in the twentieth century is a multifactorial matter and deserves further scholarship. In the Grove entry for ‘Piano Duet’, this area seems to have been overlooked.<sup>370</sup> Magalhães outlines that the piano duet experienced a decline in the twentieth and twenty-first century; by the mid-twentieth century, Magalhães remarks that while there were new duet compositions being written, they seemed to be geared for the extremes – the stage or the classroom.<sup>371</sup> Haylock argues that the decline in four-hand piano playing was a knock-on effect from the First World War – it was impossible to recreate the ‘magical essence, warm conviviality and childhood innocence’ inherent to duet repertoire.<sup>372</sup> Though, the decrease in popularity began somewhat before this. Georgii places the waning popularity of duets from approximately the 1870s on – at least in the German tradition; French composers such as Bizet, Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel took the forefront in the second half of the twentieth century in duet compositions.<sup>373</sup> Less well known are duet works by French composers Florent Schmitt, Chabrier, Satie, and Poulenc.

Many of such works were subsequently orchestrated; the French focus on sonority made orchestrations an ideal vehicle of expression. As a result, some piano duets became more well known in their orchestral arrangement, in both French and German traditions.<sup>374</sup> This is

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<sup>370</sup> Dawes, ‘Piano duet’ in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>371</sup> Magalhães, ‘An Annotated Catalogue of Works for Piano Duet: A Supplement to Cameron McGraw’s Piano Duet Repertoire’, p. vii.

<sup>372</sup> Julian Haylock, ‘Four hand piano: how the fashion for piano four hands started and why it was popular for its romantic possibilities’ (Classical Music, BBC, 2024) <<https://www.classical-music.com/features/instruments/four-hand-piano-when-did-the-fashion-for-piano-four-hands-start>> [accessed 23/11/2024].

<sup>373</sup> Aultman, ‘Walter Georgii’s Klaviermusik, Part II: a Translation and Commentary’, p. 104.

<sup>374</sup> Nichols claims (at least as of 1998) that Debussy’s *Petite suite* in its orchestration by Henri Büsser is the most commonly heard version: Roger Nichols, *The Life of Debussy* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 56. Similarly, Jensen notes the merits of Debussy’s *Marche écossaise sur un thème Populaire* in its original four-hand version, but remarks that the orchestration is a ‘real crowd-pleaser’: Erik Frederick Jensen, *Debussy* (Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 149. With Ravel, he orchestrated *Ma mère l’Oye* and he also used some of the musical material for a ballet. Likewise, Fauré’s *Dolly Suite* was orchestrated by Henri Rabaud and used in a ballet. Similarly, Lubin asks if listeners have heard Schubert’s military marches in their original format at opposed to orchestral arrangements and he poses similar questions regarding Brahms’ waltzes and Schumann’s *Abendlied*; Ernest Lubin, ‘The Piano Duet Style’, *The American Music Teacher*, 19.3 (1970), pp. 35 and 40 (p.

similar to what happened to Schubert's military marches – they became so popular in various instrumentations that a reviewer of Schubert's piano works asserted they were written for orchestra first.<sup>375</sup> The French contribution to the piano duet genre then waned, and Weekley and Arganbright go as far to say that by the 1950s, there was such a small demand for four hand music and subsequently, only a small number of publishers published duets – and a limited number at that.<sup>376</sup> Townsend posits that piano duets at this time became so unpopular that publishers demanded that composers do not write duets, and surprisingly, publishers had difficulty selling piano duet works of major composers Mozart, Schubert, and Schumann.<sup>377</sup>

The reasons behind the decline of duets are manifold. Firstly, the development of technology altered the way in which audiences heard music. Piano duets were previously one of the primary vehicles for disseminating symphonic and chamber music, as well as other formats of works. With the invention of the gramophone and then the radio before the turn of the twentieth century, followed by television and the cinema, people no longer needed to play through scores to hear such works. They could now hear orchestral, operatic, and other works in their original format, whether it be through recordings or concerts. The majority of four-hand works previously were arrangements and transcriptions and thus, it became less popular to compose arrangements and transcriptions for the medium. Lubin comments that the duet fell out of fashion during the lifetimes of Richard Strauss (1864–1949) and Gustav Mahler (1860–1911).<sup>378</sup> It is in this context that Wetzel-Stettin in the early years of the twentieth century presents the question, who even plays piano duets anymore (referring specifically to original

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40). Haylock points out that Brahms' *Hungarian Dances* and Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* 'have only achieved musical immortality in their orchestral guises': Haylock, 'Four hand piano: how the fashion for piano four hands started and why it was popular for its romantic possibilities'.

<sup>375</sup> Messing notes that in *Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitung* in 1862, the author asserts their certainty that Schubert's *Marches militaires* were written originally for orchestra: Messing, *Marching to the Canon: The Life of Schubert's Marche militaire*, p. 15.

<sup>376</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 5.

<sup>377</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 128. Original source: Townsend, *Programme notes for Musical Heritage Society Recording of Schubert's four-hand works*.

<sup>378</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 170.

duets)?<sup>379</sup> The development of the gramophone and the radio, however, does not mean that that these devices acted as ‘replacements’ for piano duets. The devices embodied one of the functions of piano duets to an extent by disseminating music, but without the same spirit of conviviality and active musicking that was associated with duet-playing. We are reminded here of the nostalgia experienced by many a duet player such as Adorno:

That music we are accustomed to call classical I came to know as a child through four-hand playing. There was little symphonic and chamber music literature that was not moved into home life with the help of those oblong volumes, bound uniformly green in landscape format by the bookbinder. They appeared as if made to have their pages turned, and I was allowed to do so, long before I knew the notes, following only memory and my ear. Even violin sonatas by Beethoven were found among them in curious arrangements. Many a piece from that time in my life, such as Mozart's Symphony in G minor, became so imprinted in my memory that even today it seems to me as though no orchestra could ever produce the tension of the introductory movement of eighth notes as fully as the questionable touch of the second player. Better than all others, this music befitted the home. It was brought forth from the piano, a piece of furniture, and those who went at it without fear of faltering and false notes were part of the family.<sup>380</sup>

Secondly and related to the above, there was a social function that four-hand phenomenon fulfilled in its prime years. The duet medium provided entertainment and diversion during the Biedermeier period, while the concert hall as a fixture was not fully established. The medium provided men and women an outlet for courtship and some level of physical intimacy in a time when it was not accepted for unmarried men and women to experience this otherwise. We are reminded here that many duets require both players to cross over each other's hands even when it was not always necessary for the music to require this. Thirdly, the growth of two-piano works was a contributing factor, with works of concert and professional proportions appearing. The two-piano duo branched out into many configurations

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<sup>379</sup> Hermann Wetzel-Stettin, ‘Schubert's Werke für Klavier zu Vier Händen’, *Die Music*, XXII, 6.7 (1906/1907), pp. 36–44 (p. 37).

<sup>380</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Four Hands, Once Again’ in *Cultural Critique*, trans. by Jonathan Wipplinger, 60 (2005), pp. 1–4 (p. 1).

from the second half of the nineteenth century onward, as noted in Grove article on piano duets, and examples such as Willem Coenen's *Caprice concertante* for eight players at sixteen pianos, and Gottschalk's assembly of thirty-one pianists at sixteen pianos in Rio de Janeiro in 1869 are cited.<sup>381</sup> More recently, two-piano works such as Dave Brubeck's *Point on Jazz* (1961) and works by prominent two-piano composer Joan Trimble are popular.

Lastly, the general perception of duets in the twentieth century as occupying a lower ranking in genre is a contributing factor towards its decline. Petran's remark that piano duets are held in a 'lowly estate' is representative of the status of piano duets within the musical hierarchy.<sup>382</sup> Similarly, Wetzel-Stettin in the early years of the twentieth century notes that 'compared to the accomplishments of soloists, playing with four hands seems to many to be something of lesser value', and it is 'more an item of curiosity than an artistic achievement to be fully honoured'.<sup>383</sup> Citron shines a light on this more broadly, she asserts that emphasis in Western Art Music after 1800s was placed on larger forms, with the symphony and opera taking precedence: 'Since c. 1800 art music has generally placed greater value on the larger forms (genres). Symphony and opera have occupied the top rung of instrumental and vocal music, respectively'.<sup>384</sup>

With this in mind, piano duets would place at a lower ranking in the genre hierarchy, particularly because a significant number of piano duets were written in smaller unassuming forms, such as the march. It must be acknowledged however that Schubert also composed larger-scale works, such as two sonatas and several fantasies (one of which is arguably the most well-known piano duet in all literature), thus challenging these misconceptions of the

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<sup>381</sup> Dawes, 'Piano duet' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>382</sup> Petran, 'Piano Duets', p. 10.

<sup>383</sup> Daub, *Four-Hand Piano Playing and Nineteenth-Century Culture*, p. 69. Original source: Wetzel-Stettin, 'Schubert's Werke für Klavier zu Vier Händen', p. 38.

<sup>384</sup> Marcia J Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (University of Illinois Press, 2000), p. 130.

genre. A further factor in the neglect of duets is the perception of duets as a housebound form of music that consists of only pedagogical material; the roots of this inaccurate association may relate to older attitudes of femininity. It was women who taught piano to a very large extent. In one decade from c. 1903, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examined students of which more than 90% were female, and a similar percentage of their teachers were also female.<sup>385</sup> Furthermore and germane to this argument, Strahan affirms that the concept of the salon as a women's place of performance also marred the reception of duets.<sup>386</sup>

### 1.18 Conclusion

This chapter traced the genre of the piano duet from its early roots to its decline in popularity. It was Mozart who popularised the genre and he contributed a small number of piano duets, with the Sonata in F Major (K.497) being the culmination of his efforts, which pushed the boundaries of genre conventions. Beethoven contributed minimally to the genre, but it was Schubert who then took the metaphorical baton from Mozart. An overview of Schubert's biography reveals he had an affiliation with the piano duet genre from a young age. He played duets with his friends in the Stadtkonvikt and he wrote three piano duet fantasies as a youth. His employment for two summers in the Esterházy residence as a music teacher to Karoline and Marie provided the impetus for Schubert to write more piano duets. I pose the question that if it were not for this employment, would Schubert have engaged with piano duets? Considering the popularity of piano duets (particularly as a vehicle of disseminating music), it is not at all unlikely that he would have composed piano duets anyway, but possibly to a lesser extent. It is difficult for today's reader to fully understand just how engrained piano duets were

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<sup>385</sup> Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Early Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 119–20.

<sup>386</sup> Strahan, '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias', p. 38.

in the everyday fabric of musical life – while today the genre may be seen as secondary to solo playing. This is to say Schubert's choice to compose piano duets was not groundbreaking by any means, however, his unique contribution is that he focused extensively on the genre and explored many different styles, as opposed to only writing a minimal number of duets like other major composers, and/or composing arrangements or transcriptions like so many of his contemporaries. While the piano duet genre was not always considered a marginal genre during Schubert's lifetime and beyond, it was considered an unassuming genre which ranked low in the musical hierarchy. Schubert questioned this through his works as his ambition for the genre grew, similar to his heightening of the Lied.

Since Schubert's two sojourns in Zselíz were several years apart, one can see a marked difference in his compositions, particularly in the treatment of the primo and secondo. What is also important to this discussion is the fact that the Esterházy daughters were skilled at piano playing to begin with – evident in Schönstein's quote that they needed more coaching than teaching.<sup>387</sup> Along with playing duets with them, Schubert played duets with other pianists, including skilled amateurs and leading Viennese pianists. Other female pianists he played with included Babette and Therese Kunz, and Josephine von Koller (additionally, possibly Karoline Eberstaller, though this may be questionable). He also played and performed with Gahy, Lachner, Bauernfeld, and with one of the leading Viennese pianists, Karl Maria von Bocklet. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Schubert did not busy himself composing piano duet transcriptions – although he did write a small number of them which occupy a special part of his output. He focused more on original piano duets which encompassed a vast array of styles including dances, polonaises, sonatas, divertissements, marches, variations, rondos, and a fugue. He was ever the pragmatist – Schubert had more business acumen than was previously thought in public consciousness – Schubert attempted to publish his piano duet works in

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<sup>387</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

Vienna, as well as further afield in Germany. In fact, a significant number of the duets was published during his lifetime, and it was his Lieder, dances, and piano duets that contributed to his standing as a composer during his lifetime. Though somewhat ironically, he did not receive the same attention to his dances and piano duets posthumously, certainly not in comparison to the Lieder. This is despite the argument that Schubert's most unique contribution to keyboard repertory is arguably his piano duets, as the Grove article posits.<sup>388</sup> After Schubert's death, Schumann, Liszt, and Brahms were extremely familiar with Schubert's piano duets, and they arranged and edited some of his piano duet works for various formats and wrote their own piano duets (in the case of Liszt, almost exclusively two-piano works). These composers made their own contribution to duet-music, particularly Brahms who treated the genre seriously by putting meticulous care into his piano arrangements.<sup>389</sup> Though despite these contributions, no major figure composed so extensively and with such variety for the piano duet after Schubert. In the last few decades of the nineteenth century, French composers such as Bizet, Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel expanded the repertory, though the genre became less popular as time went on. The changing perceptions of the amateur alongside the rise of the solo pianist, the low consideration of duets, as well as the invention of recordings and increased accessibility to concerts were all contributing factors in the public's decreasing interest in duets.

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<sup>388</sup> Ibid.

<sup>389</sup> Hinson, *The Pianist's Guide to Transcriptions, Arrangements and Paraphrases*, p. 32.

## Chapter 2

### The Renaissance of Four-Hand Playing

#### 2.1 Twentieth-Century Reception of Four-Hand Music in Scholarship and Performance

The lack of scholarship regarding Schubert's piano works for four hands is largely due to inaccurate and detrimental misconceptions of duets that were perpetuated by twentieth-century musicologists. To a certain extent, one can understand that some of these perceptions – or misconceptions – have their roots in some truth. It was a regular occurrence that piano duets were composed for commercial gain, and not necessarily out of great artistic ambition. The fact that many of these were transcriptions of orchestral and choral works of varying quality also strengthened the outlook that the piano duet was a substitute medium. Some of these perceptions emerged during Schubert's time and before as a byproduct of the duet transcription craze, while other perceptions took time to transpire. The opinion that the duet was limited to the amateur pianist and as a medium not intended for concertising did not hold during this period as no concert hall existed in Vienna yet and public concerts were rare during this time.<sup>390</sup> Gibbs notes that during Schubert's lifetime, the amount of opportunities for public performance in Vienna was restricted, and to evidence this, he mentions there was no public concert hall before the 1830s.<sup>391</sup> In fact, the solo recital was still fairly rare in the 1840s.<sup>392</sup> It was only slightly after Schubert's time in the 1830s (beginning in the 1820s) that piano duo and duet works were featured regularly in benefit concerts, with leading pianist-composers Hummel, Hiller, and Moscheles being key figures. Though, it must be said that the piano duo was more

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<sup>390</sup> Notley, 'Schubert's social music: the "forgotten genres"', p. 138.

<sup>391</sup> Christopher H. Gibbs, 'Images and legends of the composer' in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 36–55 (p. 48).

<sup>392</sup> Kenneth Hamilton, 'The virtuoso tradition' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, ed. by David Rowland (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 57–74 (p. 63).

common in these programmes.<sup>393</sup> One must be cognisant on this matter that the loaded term ‘amateur’ had a different meaning in Schubert’s time than today. There were three categories of musicians then: the Liebhaber, who had a restricted knowledge of music; the Kenner, who was a professional, and the Connoisseur, who worked outside of music but had an excellent understanding of music. Schubert’s works were mostly performed by the connoisseurs; in the words of Brendel, Schubert did not ‘idolise the facile performer’.<sup>394</sup> With this knowledge, today’s reader, when they note that Schubert wrote music for amateurs, must not conflate this with lower-quality or technically limited music. In fact, Gál puts forward that one may feel respect for the amateur pianists of the time who played Schubert’s four-hand works, due to the technical demands that the works necessitate.<sup>395</sup> Likewise, Christensen posits that Schubert’s duet works contain many passages that would have been technically challenging for amateurs of the time.<sup>396</sup>

Misconceptions of the duet were perpetuated by twentieth-century musicologists who often classified works in a hierarchy of genre, with piano duets occupying a lower tier. Laurence Petran provides an insight into the twentieth-century consensus on duets; they occupy a ‘lowly estate’ in the musical landscape, and he goes as far as to claim that writers have almost entirely ‘neglected’ the genre, despite a few brief inconsequential writings.<sup>397</sup> From a performance standpoint, Petran notes that the performance of a piano duet in concert settings is a rarity; in fact, the duet in such situations has been ‘generally disdained’ – considered unworthy of performance.<sup>398</sup> This entry was written in 1942, and it remains relevant many decades later. Indicative of this is Gál’s comment from 1970s; ‘when practically all types of

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<sup>393</sup> Janet Ritterman, ‘Piano music and the public concert 1800–1850’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. by Jim Samson (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 9–31 (p. 25).

<sup>394</sup> Alfred Brendel, *Music, Sense and Nonsense: Collected Essays and Lectures* (London: Bateback Publishing, 2015), pp. 132–33.

<sup>395</sup> Gál, *Franz Schubert and the Essence of Melody*, p. 147.

<sup>396</sup> Christensen, ‘Schubert’s Four-Hand Piano Works’, p. 72.

<sup>397</sup> Petran, ‘Piano Duets’, p. 10.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*

music tend to find their way to the concert platform, the piano duet is rarely performed in public.<sup>399</sup> Petran's comment from 1942 that piano duets are held in a lower regard deserves further inspection. Petran provides reasoning for this, and what is most noteworthy is that he does not believe that the quality of the music is amongst the main factors in its low ranking. Instead, he claims that piano duet's 'lowly estate in the musical world can be laid to various factors – auditory, visual, practical, and associative, of which the most decisive are actually of little importance musically'. Unfortunately, this is not expanded upon in the brief one-page entry, and thus the factors below are addressed with possible reasonings behind this estimation.

**Auditory:** It is often alleged that the experience of playing piano duets is considerably more pleasing for players than listeners. Cooper insinuates that four-hand playing is more satisfying for the pianists rather than the listener. His questionable reasoning behind this is that the piano is a percussion instrument, and attempts to disguise this can result in 'mechanical clatter'.<sup>400</sup> Music critic Dervan perpetuates this perception by noting he is a 'big fan' of piano duets, but more so from a player's point of view rather than the listener, as the sound created from two people at one keyboard can easily 'tire the ear'.<sup>401</sup> In a review of Evgeny Kissin and James Levine's four-hand concert in Carnegie Hall in 2005, another reviewer points out that this music was intended to be played more than listened to, as the purpose of the repertoire when written was not for performance purposes.<sup>402</sup> Similarly, in Dervan's review of a recording of two of Mozart four-hand sonatas, he notes the pianists gave 'the impression of delivering a special kind of non-performance – the music as the players want to hear it just for

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<sup>399</sup> Gál, *Franz Schubert and the Essence of Melody*, p. 147.

<sup>400</sup> Martin Cooper, 'The Chamber Piano' in *The Book of the Piano*, ed. by Dominic Gill (Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 126–49 (p. 149).

<sup>401</sup> Michael Dervan, 'Played by four hands or two, piano comes to the fore in Kilkenny', *The Irish Times*, 16 August 2011.

<sup>402</sup> Bernard Holland, 'Schubert's Intimacy Endures Four-Hands and 6,000 Ears', *The New York Times*, 3 May 2005.

themselves.<sup>403</sup> More surprisingly, Lubin (author of *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*) questionably claims that when playing piano duets, one is playing for themselves rather than for a listener; the audience is there by courtesy.<sup>404</sup> Would Lubin also consider the audience at a performance of solo piano works that were not originally intended for performance as there by courtesy? I assume not. Perhaps this raises issues of unconscious bias. The mere reason that a very large proportion of piano duets were not written as concert items should not limit performers from featuring them in their performances; an omission of duets from performance would be a great disservice and it may endanger the genre's survival.

The above examples feature internationally renowned pianists, who naturally perform to a high standard, but one must also acknowledge that historically, it was amateur pianists who participated in duet-playing largely, and this is the context in which duets were heard. With four hands at the composer's disposal, the players face serious challenges of balances between four hands, which can result in flaws in its execution. Often, players are warned against sounding indulgent; Ferguson states that this is the most overlooked issue in duet-playing.<sup>405</sup> Adjustments must be made continuously to the balancing of hands. Often, soloistic tendencies can mar the auditory outcome greatly. For example, the *secondo's* right hand will regularly fulfil the role of an inner voice, but as a soloist, it is extremely commonplace to emphasise the right hand. Such soloistic instincts can be detrimental to the musicality of duet-playing, and in the words of Brendel, duet-playing tends to sound 'stiff' or 'sloppy'.<sup>406</sup> Perhaps this is what Petran meant when he listed that auditory factors played a role in the lower placement of piano duets in the hierarchy. A further potential explanation is that the setting where people most frequently heard duets was in domestic environments – often with amateur

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<sup>403</sup> Michael Dervan, 'Mozart: Sonatas for piano four hands – up close and personal at the keyboard', *The Irish Times*, 6 August 2021.

<sup>404</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 187.

<sup>405</sup> Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century*, p. 30.

<sup>406</sup> Brendel, *Music, Sense and Nonsense: Collected Essays and Lectures*, p. 201.

duettists sight-reading – in which case, duets may not have always been heard in a polished and rehearsed manner, thus making the activity more pleasurable for the pianists and not those listening.

**Associative:** Based on the inspection of sources addressed for this study, one can deduce that there are many connotations associated with duets; including connotations of pedagogy, amateurism, utilitarianism, purism, femininity, and childhood innocence. Petran himself states that the majority of four-hand works were written for pedagogical and recreational purposes.<sup>407</sup> In an article from *Etude* in 1944, Berkowitz further elaborates on some of these connotations. This article was written approximately two years after Petran's article. Berkowitz notes that most people misconceive that the body of duet works consist only of orchestral and chamber music arrangements, as well as some salon works by Moszkowski and Scharwenka.<sup>408</sup> Similarly, Strahan observes that the popularity of transcriptions had a negative effect on the perception of duets; she also rightly claims that the association of the salon with duets – and by extension, with femininity – had a detrimental impact on their perception.<sup>409</sup> I argue that these pigeon-holed and prejudiced views of piano duets are long overdue a re-examination, manifesting itself in an understanding that the genre embraces a tapestry of rich and diverse works, suitable for the beginning student to the seasoned professional, and for the home as well as the concert stage.

**Practical:** It may be somewhat self-explanatory, but Petran presumably is referring here to the practical complications of two pianists performing on the same piano. There are spatial challenges with both pianists sitting in close proximity to one another. The primo's left

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<sup>407</sup> Petran, 'Piano Duets', p. 10.

<sup>408</sup> Ralph Berkowitz, 'Original Music for Four Hands: A Reference Article of Real Value to Teachers', *Etude*, 62.1 (1944), p. 27.

<sup>409</sup> Strahan, '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias', pp. 3, 32, 33, and 38.

hand and the secondo's right hand cannot move as freely as in solo playing and clashes may occur. Both pianists may require adjustments of fingering and ulnar deviation may happen. Pedal distribution and stylistic detail are also challenges.

**Visual:** It is not clear what Petran means here, as he does not elaborate in the small article. Perhaps the visuals of two people in such a close proximity at one keyboard can simply be awkward for viewers to watch, if they are not familiar with duet-playing. This was presumably more so the case historically, when piano duets were one of the few acceptable outlets for unmarried men and women to have close contact with one another, so much so that when performing in public, the listener 'may feel at best an intruder, at worst a voyeur'.<sup>410</sup>

Further belittling the genre is Hutchings' plea that 'more humble players' should perform Schubert's duets in concert, insinuating that the virtuosi would consider duets to be beneath them.<sup>411</sup> Moreover, writers may exalt the virtues of Schubert's piano duets but temper their praise with something less positive. For example, the entry on Schubert's piano duets in an encyclopaedia reads that the duets 'show evidence of true improvisation and even of delirium'.<sup>412</sup> Additional negative perceptions are evident in twentieth-century musicologist Alfred Einstein's juxtaposition of Schubert's social music and Schubert's later piano sonatas and string quartets.<sup>413</sup> 'Social' music here refers to Schubert's dances, and more importantly, his piano for four-hand works. The later piano sonatas and string quartets were of the 'deeply serious Schubert' and these works belong to 'the real and great Schubert'.<sup>414</sup> Note the exclusion of piano duets here. Hans Gál, the author of *Franz Schubert and the Essence of Melody* notes

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<sup>410</sup> Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (University of California Press, 1974), pp. 134–35. Daub elaborates on this: Daub, *Four-Handed Monsters: Four-Hand Piano Playing and Nineteenth-Century Culture*, pp. 82–104.

<sup>411</sup> Hutchings, *Schubert, The Master Musicians*, p. 153.

<sup>412</sup> Benny Green and others, *The Larousse Encyclopaedia of Music*, ed. by Geoffrey Hindley (Middlesex: Hamlyn, 1971), p. 273.

<sup>413</sup> Einstein, *Schubert: A Musical Portrait*, pp. 246 and 254.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*

in 1974 that four-hand playing is antiquated, calling it an ‘old-fashioned form’ of musicking.<sup>415</sup> Similar to Petran and Gál, Maurice Brown claims that (as of 1966) the genre is almost entirely disregarded.<sup>416</sup> More recently and in a similar vein, Leppert suggests that four-hand playing unfortunately is evocative of something ‘quaint’ and even ‘archaic’.<sup>417</sup> There are some positives to be drawn from the writings by twentieth-century musicologists, however. For example, Petran notes that the four-hand medium has begun to feature in some important recordings (which since then has obviously increased exponentially). While he asserts that writings on duet-playing are virtually absent in music encyclopaedias, piano literature books, and in ensemble-playing literature, the last few decades have seen a re-emergence of the genre with more scholarship on the topic.<sup>418</sup>

While it is true that many composers wrote piano duets from a pedagogical or ephemeral standpoint and that the piano duet was intended to be performed in domestic settings, there are many duets that demonstrate the genre can encompass the artistic too. This contradicts the limited view people may have of the duet as trivial. Gál longingly wished that one day Schubert’s piano duets would garner the recognition they deserve, as his sonatas did – albeit much later after Schubert’s death, in the twentieth century.<sup>419</sup> Current trends in the musical landscape seem to indicate that his wish is becoming reality. It is much welcomed that more scholars and performers alike are dedicating some attention to this genre. The place of duets within in today’s concert environment will be given special attention below.

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<sup>415</sup> Gál, *Franz Schubert and the Essence of Melody*, p. 146.

<sup>416</sup> Maurice Brown, *Essays on Schubert* (Great Britain: Macmillan & Co Ltd., 1966), p. 85.

<sup>417</sup> Richard D. Leppert, *Sound Judgement: Selected Essays* (UK: Ashgate, 2007), p. 267.

<sup>418</sup> Petran, ‘Piano Duets’, p. 10.

<sup>419</sup> Gál, *Franz Schubert and the Essence of Melody*, p. 147.

## 2.2 Musical Landscape of Duets from Twentieth Century to Today

The renowned Anderson and Roe piano duo discuss recent advancements in the landscape of piano duets in Cameron McGraw's *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*.<sup>420</sup> This book was first released in 1981, but the most recent edition was published in 2016. The fact that this book was re-released with approximately one thousand additional works is testament to the rise in popularity of four-hand playing in recent years. This can be contrasted to the musical landscape that piano duo Harvey Dagul and Isobel Beyer experienced in the 1960s–1980s, one in which piano duos were a rarity. Dagul notes that earning a living from piano duets during this period was 'out of the question'.<sup>421</sup> Even in the mid-1990s, Dagul expressed that the piano duet genre is still underappreciated to a large degree and that Radio 3 presenters still show surprise when introducing Schubert's piano for four-hand works – on the rare occasion such a work is featured.<sup>422</sup>

In the first half of the twentieth century, performances of piano duets were a rarity since the invention of recordings and the increased accessibility to attend concerts rendered their function somewhat redundant. In the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* from the 1980s, the piano duets are noted as a rare inclusion in concerts.<sup>423</sup> As Gibbs remarks, 'one became more likely to "play" Schubert on the phonograph than on the piano with a friend or family member'.<sup>424</sup> That is not to say that there were not some performances of duets. The two-piano duet achieved some popularity as a serious concert medium; both members of a duo could showcase their pianistic prowess on one piano each, displaying virtuosity and not being limited by spatial factors. However, some of these duos would often include a small number of four-hand works

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<sup>420</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, pp. ix–xii.

<sup>421</sup> Harvey Dagul, 'Discovering and Exploring Schubert Duets', *The Schubertian*, 12 (1995).

<sup>422</sup> Harvey Dagul, *Book Reviews: Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century for One and Two Pianos* (1996) <<https://www.schubertinstituteuk.com/book-reviews>> [accessed 9/12/2024].

<sup>423</sup> Don Randel, ed., 'Piano Duet' in *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (USA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 636.

<sup>424</sup> Gibbs, 'German reception: Schubert's "Journey to Immortality"', p. 253.

in their programme. Journals and interviews of the time strongly suggest that most of these professional duos did not perceive the four-hand duet as a stand-alone medium worthy of performance, despite including a limited number of four-hand works in their programmes.<sup>425</sup> For example, Josef and Rosina Lhévinne performed as a piano duo from time to time and in an *Etude* article dating from 1933, they assert their preference for two-piano works over four-handed works.<sup>426</sup> To them and to many others, the piano duo bears greater fruit musically.<sup>427</sup> At this point in time, two-piano works were newer than four-handed works and one can easily ascertain their perception of both forms of duet: ‘Two piano playing is practically virgin territory and this, perhaps, is its chief interest. The possibilities of entertainment and instruction, both to the performers and their hearers, are virtually limitless’.<sup>428</sup> Musically, they consider the piano duo to be superior.

An article from *Etude* in 1941, dating only eight years after the aforementioned article, also conforms to the stereotype of the piano duo being musically superior to four-hand playing.<sup>429</sup> West claims that in piano duets, the primo has the ‘important’ part and the secondo is confined to the accompaniment, thus rendering the possibility of balance between the parts; while this is true in many cases, it is a narrow-minded view that is not representative of the whole body of duet works. Furthermore, the author even goes as far as to claim a piano duo is worth twice as more as a piano duet:

Two-piano playing is as different from ordinary duet playing (four hands at one piano) as it is from solo work. Its ultimate beauty lies in the richness of sonority and volume released by the two instruments, and this can never be duplicated on one alone. Also, when working at one piano, the two players sit too close for complete freedom. Again, one plays the Primo (or important) part while the other takes the Secondo

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<sup>425</sup> Jensen, *Weekley and Arganbright: A Renaissance of the Piano Duet*, p. 40.

<sup>426</sup> Josef Lhévinne and Rosina Lhévinne, ‘Four Hands that Play as Two’, *Etude*, 51.12 (1933), pp. 809–10.

<sup>427</sup> It is described here as being ‘musically more valuable’: Jones, ‘Piano music for concert hall and salon c. 1830–1900’, p. 173.

<sup>428</sup> Josef and Rosina Lhévinne, ‘Four Hands that Play as Two’, p. 809.

<sup>429</sup> Stephen West, ‘The Art of Piano Ensemble’, *Etude*, 59.1 (1941), p. 5.

(or obbligato) throughout the entire duet, a circumstance which nullifies the possibility of balance between the voices. And, lastly, the technical resources of the two players at one piano are decidedly limited. Four-hand duets are very pleasing to hear, and they provide a measure of ensemble training which is decidedly better than none at all; still, in order to explore the fullest possibilities of piano ensemble work, two pianos are just as twice as valuable as one.<sup>430</sup>

The above quote is representative of the common perception of piano duets of the time. It dates from the first half of the twentieth century. What was the consensus during the second half of the century? In the preface to *Music for More than One Piano: An Annotated Guide* (written in 1983), the author states that contemporary composer Gilman Collier posits boldly that all four-hand works must be played on two pianos, if they are available.<sup>431</sup> The preference for two piano duos is also evident in Chang and Faurot's *Team Piano Repertoire: A Manual of Music for Multiple Players at One or More Pianos*, published in 1976. In this source, under forty pages are designated to four-hand piano works, while approximately seventy pages are assigned to piano duo works, even though four-hand repertoire is more voluminous.<sup>432</sup> Many of the four-hand works that are discussed do not portray the genre as a concert-worthy medium; the focal point of this source is on literature for amateurs. Once again, an analysis of primary sources places four-hand works as an inferior genre of performance to the piano duo, and this uncovers that negative perceptions of the four-hand genre still existed in the second half of the twentieth century.

Conversely, there are some sources that document the merits of duet-playing and exhibit an awareness of misconceptions regarding duets. In an article from *Etude* in 1944 by Ralph Berkowitz, there is a strong glimmer of hope. Berkowitz's belief in piano duets seems to be the exception during the first half of the twentieth century. He provides an insight into

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Maurice Hinson, *Music for More than One Piano: An Annotated Guide* (Indiana University Press, 2001), p. ix.

<sup>432</sup> Chang and Faurot, *Team Piano Repertoire: A Manual of Music for Multiple Players at One or More Pianos*.

the attitudes that many pianists held towards piano duets during this time and provides some reasoning for these misconceptions:

Few piano masterworks are as little known as those for two players at one instrument. Many pianists as well as music lovers are probably unaware of the richness and variety of original music for four hands, a repertoire considerably larger than that for two pianos. There is a peculiar misconception in most people's minds concerning piano duets. These are generally thought to consist of orchestral and chamber music arrangements, and, perhaps, some salon pieces by Moszkowski and Scharwenka. Most duet collections, as a matter of fact, are made up of these very things. Yet almost all the great masters composed four-hand music; and in some instances one may discover truly remarkable works in this medium. The finest of these compositions are much more than piano pieces set for a larger range than one pianist can manage. The great piano duets are essentially great pieces of chamber music.<sup>433</sup>

It was the latter few decades of the twentieth century during which the above belief in piano duets began to take hold in performance. Performers began to revisit four-hand works; many performers now performed as duos and began to include more four-hand works in their programmes alongside their solo and possible piano duo work. This includes high-profiled names such as Martha Argerich and Alexandre Rabinovitch, Nelson Freire, Lilya Zilberstein, Yefim Bronfman, Evgeny Kissin, and James Levine. The trend of more frequent performances of piano duets is evident as early as 1951; Owens expresses his hope that this trend in both professionals and amateurs continues so that the beauty of the genre is fully realised.<sup>434</sup> The steady increase in piano duos in both one and two piano forms provided fertile ground for new compositions in the genre, including works by Luciano Berio, Sylvano Bussotti, Mauricio Kagel, and Karlheinz Stockhausen.<sup>435</sup> In an Irish context, well-known composer Joan Trimble (1915–2000) formed a piano duo with her sister Valerie Trimble and the duo performed

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<sup>433</sup> Berkowitz, 'Original Music for Four Hands: A Reference Article of Real Value to Teachers', p. 27.

<sup>434</sup> Frederick Farnam Owens, 'An Evaluation of Piano Literature Originally Written for Four Hands – One Piano' (doctoral dissertation, University of the Pacific, 1951), p. 90.

<sup>435</sup> Such works include Berio's *Canzonetta* for four-hands (1991) and Stockhausen's *Mantra* for two pianos (1970).

together for three decades. In fact, the duo was ‘worldwide known’.<sup>436</sup> Duo member Joan Trimble composed and performed a significant number of two-piano works (she did not compose piano works for four hands), with the most advanced being *Sonatina* (1940). Joan’s two-piano works exhibit the influence of traditional Irish music amalgamated with traits of French impressionism – as is consistent with her compositions for other instrumentations – making her two-piano music distinctive in style.<sup>437</sup> The duo often had two-piano works written for them; Joan’s teacher Arthur Benjamin wrote the popular work *Jamaican Rumba* for the duo, which became synonymous with the duo. Joan Trimble later wrote a four-hand arrangement of this. Testament to their popularity, the duo became a ‘household name’ in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>438</sup> The general public was exposed to the duo through wartime performances and radio broadcasts. In *To Talent Alone: the Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848–1998*, it is noted that Ann Clancy and her later-to-be husband Frank Heneghan established themselves as a ‘notable duo’ in the following decade.<sup>439</sup> They attained various competition successes, including winning the Trimble Cup for two pianos. More recently, composers based in Ireland and Canada were commissioned to compose new piano duets in collaboration with an Foras Feasa (The Institute for Research in Irish Historical and Cultural Traditions).<sup>440</sup> The composers included Eibhlís Farrell, Paul Frehner, Scott Edward Godin, Victor Lazzarini, David Stalling, and Ian Wilson. These works were premiered by pianists Debbie Armstrong and Naomi Edemariam in London on 30 June 2010. In 2019–2020, as part of a collaborative composition module at Maynooth University, composer Pàdruig Morrison composed the Gaelic-influenced

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<sup>436</sup> Richard Pine and Charles Acton, eds, *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848–1998* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillian, 1998), p. 503.

<sup>437</sup> Sarah M. Burn, ‘Joan Trimble’ in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43088; Pine and Acton, eds, *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848–1998*, p. 425.

<sup>438</sup> The Guardian, *Joan Trimble Obituary* (2000) <<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2000/aug/15/guardianobituaries>> [accessed 18/01/2023].

<sup>439</sup> Pine and Acton, eds, *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848–1998*, p. 332.

<sup>440</sup> Contemporary Music Centre, *A concert of new Irish piano duets takes place on 30 June in London* (2010) <<https://www.cmc.ie/news/250610/concert-new-irish-piano-duets-takes-place-30-june-london>> [accessed 18/01/2023].

‘Sileán na Carraige’ for piano for four hands, written for Darragh Gilleece and a fellow pianist.<sup>441</sup> Similarly, contemporary Irish composer Ailbhe McDonagh has also composed works for piano duet, with both the early-stage learner and professional in mind.<sup>442</sup> McDonagh composed ‘The One N Only’ for four-hands, which was commissioned by the Dublin International Chamber Music Festival in 2019 and dedicated to renowned pianist John O’Conor.

Furthermore, testament to the rising popularity of piano duets is the increasing number of piano duet competitions. Such competitions include the Valberg International Piano Duet Competition (France), the Ars Nova International Duet Competition (Singapore) and most interestingly, the International Schubert Competition for Piano Duets (Czech Republic).<sup>443</sup> Similarly, Pettit notes that the rise in popularity of duet-playing in the USA is evidenced by the fact many competitions include them.<sup>444</sup> More specific to this thesis, a new category (one of three in total) for piano duet has been recently introduced to ‘Franz Schubert und die Musik der Moderne 2025’ chamber music festival, which will take place in the University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz. In Ireland, a survey of music festival competitions reveals that duet options are widely offered. In the Feis Ceoil, Ireland’s largest music festival, three junior four-hand competitions, as well as one senior are offered, along with one two-piano competition (the Trimble Cup).<sup>445</sup> Four-hand duet options are also available in other popular music festivals such as the Arklow Music Festival, The European Piano Teachers Association Ireland Festival,

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<sup>441</sup> Pàdraig Morrison, *Sileán na Carraige* (2020) <<https://padruigmorrison.weebly.com/silean-na-carraige.html>> [accessed 29/01/2023].

<sup>442</sup> Ailbhe McDonagh, *Compositions: Sheet Music Downloads* <[https://www.ailbh McDonagh.com/store/c2/Sheet\\_Music\\_for\\_Piano.html](https://www.ailbh McDonagh.com/store/c2/Sheet_Music_for_Piano.html)> [accessed 14/02/2023].

<sup>443</sup> Magalhães, ‘An Annotated Catalogue of Works for Piano Duet: A Supplement to Cameron McGraw’s Piano Duet Repertoire’, p. x.

<sup>444</sup> Heather Pettit, ‘A Passion for Duet Repertoire: An Interview with Dallas Weekley and Nancy Arganbright’, *Clavier*, 43.6 (2004), pp. 12–19 (p. 15).

<sup>445</sup> Feis Ceoil, *Syllabus of Competitions* (2024) <<https://www.feisceoil.ie/syllabus/competitions.asp>> [accessed 10/12/2024].

Newpark Festival, and Kilcoole Music Festival.<sup>446</sup> However, it must be noted that the presence of duet competitions on a syllabus does not mean these competitions are always run; this happens due to a lack of entries. In 2023, the inaugural Be Sharp Piano Competition was launched, which offers two duet competitions.<sup>447</sup> The Navan Choral and Instrumental Festival does not have a specific piano duet competition, though a piano duo could enter the ensemble competitions.<sup>448</sup> In 2022, the inaugural Irish Youth Piano Festival took place in which several duet competitions were on the syllabus. A welcome difference between this festival and the aforementioned ones is the inclusion of a non-competitive four-hand category in which a beginner student plays an own-choice piece with their teacher. The option for a teacher/student duet is an aspect other competition organisations could further explore. In the beginner to early levels, it is difficult to source material that has a primo and secondo of equal difficulty, which would be solved if a teacher could take the more difficult part (in beginner levels, the primo is often much easier than the secondo, while in later stages this may reverse; it is often said that the primo is more difficult).<sup>449</sup> A commonality between festivals in Ireland is that there is generally no prescribed material for duet competitions; the competitor selects own-choice pieces. This lies in contrast to solo piano competitions, which generally have prescribed repertoire, or competitors choose from a pre-selected era of music or composer. Presumably, the own choice options are there to encourage more engagement in the less popular form of piano playing – the number of piano duo entries across the board is far less than that of solo piano. The Feis Maitiú (Cork) however does prescribe some material for the duet

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<sup>446</sup> Arklow Music Festival, *Syllabus 2023* <[https://arklowmusicfestival.com/festival\\_tabs.php](https://arklowmusicfestival.com/festival_tabs.php)> [accessed 12/12/2022]; EPTA, *11<sup>th</sup> EPTA Ireland Festival Competition* <<https://epta.ie/epta-ireland-piano-festival-2023/>> [accessed 12/12/2022]; Newpark Academy of Music, *Newpark Festival 2025; Pianoforte Competitions* <<https://www.newparkmusic.ie/pianoforte-competitions>> [accessed 10/12/2024].

<sup>447</sup> Be Sharp Piano, *Be Sharp Piano Competition (2023)* <<https://besharppiano.ie/>> [accessed 17/01/2023].

<sup>448</sup> Navan Choral and Instrumental Festival, *Instrumental: Solo and Ensemble* <<https://navanchoralfestival.com/solo-instrumental-ensemble-competitions/>> [accessed 19/01/2023].

<sup>449</sup> Duets written for early-stage students generally consist of a much more accessible primo than the secondo e.g. through use of hands separate material and a limited pitch range (for example: John Thompson, *First Piano Duets* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corp., 2005).

competitions.<sup>450</sup> Schubert last featured in 2020; his *Four Ländler* (D.814) was prescribed for the 14s and under category. This overview of the Irish music festival circuit reveals a continued understanding of the importance of duets from the side of the festival management teams, though the uptake is trumped greatly by solo piano. Perhaps further engagement in this genre can be encouraged from the side of piano teachers, as there are ‘at least 7,500’ private music teachers in Ireland.<sup>451</sup> Considering the popularity of the piano as an instrument, we can safely assume a high proportion of this figure refers to piano teachers. This figure is a rough estimate of the minimum number of private teachers – it does not include those who teach exclusively in music schools, universities, and conservatories.

Outside of the competition circuit, there have been some positive developments in the provision of tuition in four-hand playing and in terms of professional development for pedagogues. For example, TU Dublin Conservatoire, as part of The Progressive Piano Teacher course, hosted an interactive workshop on collaborative pianism with a focus on four-hand repertoire as well as other instrument combinations. Furthermore, the Royal Irish Academy of Music launched a fundraiser titled ‘Piano Duet-athon’ in recent years. The organisation also offers students the opportunity for tuition in four-hand piano within the chamber music area. No piano duet in either form was featured in the RIAM ChamberFest Dublin 2022 and the 2021 programme, despite a varied range of instrumentation featured otherwise, such as solo piano, voice, wind, brass, and percussion.<sup>452</sup> Though, fortunately, there was a ‘Piano Duets’ concert featured in the 2023 programme, including staples in the genre such as Schubert’s *Fantasy in F Minor*, some of Debussy’s *Petite suite* and Brahms’ *Hungarian Dances*, Ravel’s *Ma mère*

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<sup>450</sup> Feis Maitiú, *Feis Maitiú 2020 Syllabus* <<https://www.feismaitiu.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Feis-Maitiu-2020-Syllabus.pdf>> [accessed 29/09/2024].

<sup>451</sup> Deborah Kelleher, ‘Directing the Future: Deborah Kelleher’ in *Final Note Magazine*, April 2015 <<http://finalnotemagazine.com/articles/deborah-kelleher/>> [accessed 01/08/2024].

<sup>452</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *ChamberFest Dublin 2022 Programme* <<https://www.riam.ie/riam-live/chamberfest>> [accessed 10/01/2023]; The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *ChamberFest 2021 Programme* <[https://issuu.com/riamlibrary/docs/chamberfest\\_2021\\_programme](https://issuu.com/riamlibrary/docs/chamberfest_2021_programme)> [accessed 17/01/2023].

*l'Oye* and Rachmaninov's Scherzo and Valse from *Morceaux* (Op.11). Shostakovich's Concertino for two pianos (Op.94) is also featured. In 2024, a wide array of piano duets was programmed too, including the miniature but charming Schubert's *Four Ländler* (D.814). Music critic Dervan posits that the majority of people do not consider piano duets as chamber music; 'piano duets hardly figure in most people's consideration of chamber music'.<sup>453</sup> This raises questions in the broader sense as to our understanding of what constitutes chamber music. Perhaps this will challenge us to reconsider biases we may have and inadvertently pass on through our teaching. Bashford notes the scope of the term 'chamber music' experienced a rehabilitation in the second half of the twentieth century (it augmented in breadth), so there is an element of 'catching up' to this revision in our performance and educational spheres.<sup>454</sup>

Other national piano duet initiatives include Music Generation Carlow in Collaboration with Carlow College of Music's 'Piano Duet Club' in 2014 (discontinued).<sup>455</sup> The dedication of an education programme for piano duets alone is unique within Ireland and challenges the perception of duets as an appendage in traditional one-to-one piano lessons. In the *Making the Grade* documentary from 2017, which explores the relationship between piano students and their teachers, a piano duo of brothers is featured in the grade six section.<sup>456</sup> It is commendable that the filmmakers chose to feature a higher level of duet-playing, rather than featuring a young child/teacher duet – this may have been the most obvious choice. Further playing into the connotations of piano duets as didactic resources, the duo b!z'art performed 'Twenty Fingers on a Piano with Duo b!z'art' in Wexford Arts Centre in March 2023.<sup>457</sup> This is an interactive show tailored for 2–11-year-olds, during which games and music are incorporated. The duo

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<sup>453</sup> Dervan, 'Mozart: Sonatas for piano four hands – up close and personal at the keyboard'.

<sup>454</sup> Bashford, 'Chamber Music' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>455</sup> Music Generation, *Music Generation Carlow Piano Duet Club* (2014) <<https://www.musicgeneration.ie/impact/stories/music-generation-carlow-piano-duet-club>> [accessed 15/12/2022].

<sup>456</sup> Venom Films, *Making the Grade*, dir. by Ken Wardrop (Venom Films, 2017).

<sup>457</sup> Wexford Arts Centre, *Twenty Fingers on a Piano with Duo b!z'art* (2023) <<https://wexfordartscentre.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/873633105>> [accessed 19/01/2023].

features Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite* (which tells the story of fairy tales), Bizet's *Children's Games* (each piece represents a child's game), as well as Pitt's *Cinderella* and 'Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo' by Hoffman, David, and Livingston.<sup>458</sup> The duo also performed a four-hand concert titled 'Shall We Dance' in Wexford Arts Centre in March 2023 featuring works by Mendelssohn, Brahms, Grieg, Barber, Satie, Tchaikovsky, Escobar, Piazzolla, and Tchaikovsky. The duo played into the narrative of duets as an outlet for humour; in their performance of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, the duo employed the use of various hats and costumes to represent the style of each piece. They ended this work in a skit-like manner in which the primo player ran away before the final written tonic chord was played.

As evident above, the last few decades have seen a growth of interest in piano duets. A small subset of pianists focused their efforts on four-hand works, and this has contributed to the rekindling interest in duets. This was helped along by the fact some of these pianists were high-profile solo pianists.<sup>459</sup> Such notable duos are discussed below, as their contribution to the genre is significant. This overview of popular duos from the twentieth century on reveals the extensive repertoire available to pianists, as well as the extremely diverse career paths that pianists may consider when forging their career in performance outside of solo playing.

## 2.3 Notable Piano Duos from the Twentieth- and Twenty-First Century

### Jörg Demus (1928–2019) and Paul Badura-Skoda (1927–2019)

Both solo concert pianists in their own right, Demus and Badura-Skoda were a leading duo in the performance of four-hand works for many years. They were the first duo to significantly

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<sup>458</sup> Duo b!z'art, *Twenty Fingers on a Piano with Duo b!z'art Programme* <<https://www.duobizart.be/twentyfingerspres.pdf>> [accessed 19/01/2023].

<sup>459</sup> Byrne Bodley lists some recent performances of Schubert's duets by high-profile pianists: Byrne Bodley, 'Between Society and Solitude: Schubert's Improvisations', p. 30.

explore Schubert's contribution to four-hand literature in performance and recordings.<sup>460</sup> Mozart was also a key figure in their career as a duo. Their recordings are extensive and include *Franz Schubert: Klaviermusik zu vier Händen*.<sup>461</sup> Badura-Skoda emphasises the uncharted territory that was four-hand recordings; 'it was the first time ever that things like piano for four hands was recorded'.<sup>462</sup> Furthermore, what differentiated them from other pianists was their use of period pianos, and they presented period pianos as the ideal medium for Schubert's music. Badura-Skoda also arranged some piano duet works; including a four-hand or piano duo arrangement of Mozart's Fantasy (K.608), which was published by Schirmer in 1974 as Fantasy for Mechanical Organ. In the forward, Badura-Skoda provide an overview of his approach to this arrangement.<sup>463</sup>

### **Harvey Dagul and Isobel Beyer**

At the turn of the twenty-first century, married duo Harvey Dagul and Isobel Beyer had celebrated fifty years of performing as a duo, rendering them the longest performing duo in the United Kingdom. In 1982, they established their own record company named 'Four Hands Music' and have released many recordings of composers four-hand works including that of Mozart, Carl Czerny, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Dvořák, Debussy, Ravel, along with lesser-known composers Moszkowski, Schmitt, Juon, Alkan, Koechlin, and Ladmirault.<sup>464</sup> The duo undertook a cycle of Schubert's duets in the 1970s, though with the exclusion of the Fantasy in G Major (D.1), which they found 'too long and incoherent' but

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<sup>460</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance: a brief history of people, events, and issues', p. 280.

<sup>461</sup> Franz Schubert, *Franz Schubert: Klaviermusik zu vier Händen*, Paul Badura-Skoda and Jörg Demus (Gramola, GRAM99175, 2018).

<sup>462</sup> Paul Badura-Skoda, 'Paul Badura-Skoda' in *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves*, II, ed. by Elyse Mach (New York: Dover Publications, 1991), p. 11.

<sup>463</sup> Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Fantasy for Mechanical Organ K.608*, arr. by Paul Badura-Skoda (New York/London: Schirmer, 1974), p. 1.

<sup>464</sup> Including: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *The Late Sonatas and Variations for Piano Duet*, Isabel Beyer and Harvey Dagul (Four Hands Music, FHMD9111, 1991); Franz Schubert, *Schubert Piano Duets Vol. 4*, Isabel Beyer and Harvey Dagul (Four Hands Music, FHMD894, 1997).

noted there were some hints of what was to come in Schubert's compositions.<sup>465</sup> Furthermore, it is worth noting they recorded a selection of Carl Czerny's two-hand, four-hand and six-hand works – a composer whose piano duets are omitted from popular imagination (and as the duo point out, while 'very uneven in quality', Czerny's duet repertoire 'is somewhat larger than Schubert's').<sup>466</sup> The six-hand works include the duo's son Guy Dagul. As described by Harvey himself, sustaining a living from performing duets was not feasible at the time of his youth, and this is evidenced by the fact that both Dagul and Meyer worked as schoolteachers initially.<sup>467</sup> The duo has proven that it can a viable option for performers to focus solely on piano duets. Their extensive contribution to performing four-hand works by a vast array of composers has paved the path for later performers to focus on this route.

### **Dallas Weekley (1933–) and Nancy Arganbright (1936–)**

Much of Weekley and Arganbright's scholarship is relevant to my research, and it is important not to underestimate their contribution. Their scholarship is fundamentally underpinned by decades of performance expertise in the genre. According to the *Keyboard Companion* in 2005 (now titled 'Piano Magazine'), it is claimed 'that they have performed more duet concerts than any other team in the history of the medium'.<sup>468</sup> Their first piano for four hands performance took place in 1958 in Huntington College, where both Weekley and Arganbright were faculty members. Their programmes often included two major composers of piano duets: Schubert and Mozart. Mozart works they often performed included Mozart's Sonata in D Major (K.381), the Sonata in F Major (K.497), and the Sonata in B flat Major (K.358). A wider selection of Schubert's music was chosen, combining well-known duets and those that are lesser known:

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<sup>465</sup> Dagul, 'Discovering and Exploring Schubert Duets'.

<sup>466</sup> Isobel and Harvey Dagul, 'Piano Duets'.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Helen Smith Tarchalski, ed., 'The Renaissance of the Piano Duet: An Interview with Weekley and Arganbright', *Keyboard Companion*, 16.3 (2005), pp. 52–59 (p. 52).

Schubert's Fantasy in F Minor (D.940), *Andantino varié*, Op.84, No.1, (D.823), Introduction, Variations and Finale Op.82, No.2 (D.968a, formerly D.603), 'Lebensstürme' (D.947), *Marche caractéristique*, Opus 121, No.1 (D.968b), and the Four German Dances, Op. 33, Nos. 6, 7, 10, 4.<sup>469</sup> Along with Mozart and Schubert works, they cleverly programmed concert-worthy duet works by Brahms, Mendelssohn, Fauré, Reger, Bizet, Amy Beach, Grieg, Dvořák, Debussy, Ravel, Poulenc, Samuel Barber, Robert Russell, and Bernard Heiden.<sup>470</sup> They did not originally set out to rekindle an interest in four-hand works, though upon advice they decided to investigate this niche area further. In America, four hand playing was less common than in Europe, so this area was fertile ground for the duo to explore. More common in America during this time were piano duos (two pianists at two separate pianos). Under their first management, they were often categorised as 'special attractions', which is the same category in which jugglers and magicians were classified.<sup>471</sup> This classification signifies the novelty of the medium at the time.

Venues the duo performed in include the esteemed venues of Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Brahms Hall, and The Kennedy Centre. They performed approximately thirty to forty concerts a year and retired in 2001. Schubert was a key figure in their careers and his works were performed very regularly as part of their programmes. In fact, one of the main reasons the duo moved to Vienna was to conduct research on Schubert, thus strengthening their insight into his duets. They have also edited some of Schubert duets, along with other literature in the genre. This totals approximately thirty-five publications. As pedagogues, the duo understands the importance of exposing this genre to young pianists. Thus, they composed and arranged many four-hand pieces which were published in approximately thirty-one collections. All their

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<sup>469</sup> Jensen, 'The Contributions of Dallas Weekley and Nancy Arganbright to Piano Duet Performance and Literature', pp. 133–59.

<sup>470</sup> Representative programmes of the Arganbright and Weekley's concerts from 1960s to 1990: Jensen, *Weekley and Arganbright: A Renaissance of the Piano Duet*, pp. 95–102.

<sup>471</sup> Tarchalski, ed., 'The Renaissance of the Piano Duet: An Interview with Weekley and Arganbright', p. 53.

edited works and compositions were published by Neil A. Kjos Publishing and Co. over thirty decades. Alongside these publications, they also taught duets in university, gave duet masterclasses, and they regularly hosted four-hand festivals. Due to their input into the genre, the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) in 2009 renamed their piano duet competition to the MTNA Weekley and Arganbright Senior Piano Duet Competition. The MTNA only added the duet category in 2007.<sup>472</sup>

In Jensen's *Weekley and Arganbright: A Renaissance of the Piano Duet*, Jensen makes the assertion that the duo's contribution to the genre is 'unparalleled' due to their multifaceted approach to duets, incorporating performance, scholarship, pedagogy, and composition.<sup>473</sup> This statement has extensive evidence to support this view. This duo pursued a multidisciplinary approach and through these formats, they attracted listeners, students, pedagogues, and performers to duets. It is unquestionable that they exposed a wide range of people to this neglected genre – particularly to an American audience – a genre which is on par with solo piano music, despite its unwarranted treatment as piano literature's 'poor relative'.<sup>474</sup> Their contribution to performance practice is exemplary. They placed emphasis on performing duets by memory, as they believed this would heighten one's positive assessment of the genre. This marked a departure from the conventions of reading the score for duet performances. Other non-conventional ways of performing duets included assigning the sustain pedal to the primo player with the aim of total melodic clarity. Their efforts were successful. In a review of one of their performances published by *the Times* in 1964, the reviewer claims that 'concert-hall status' must be bestowed upon duets when they are played by Weekley and Arganbright.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Paul Stewart, 'Piano Duet: A New MTNA Competition', *The American Music Teacher*, 55.5 (2006), pp. 4–5.

<sup>473</sup> Jensen, *Weekley and Arganbright: A Renaissance of the Piano Duet*, p. 54.

<sup>474</sup> Jensen, 'The Contributions of Dallas Weekley and Nancy Arganbright to Piano Duet Performance and Literature', p. 75. Original source: 'Four-Hand Piano Duo' in *La Libre Belgique*, November 30, 1964, trans. by Arganbright and Weekley (as per the Jensen citation).

<sup>475</sup> Jensen, 'The Contributions of Dallas Weekley and Nancy Arganbright to Piano Duet Performance and Literature', p. 1.

## **Misha and Cipa Dichter**

This husband-and-wife duo met originally while students at Julliard and are based in the United States of America. They formed a piano duo and have performed and recorded many neglected works – both piano duets and two-piano works. The duo began performing together in 1972 and have toured extensively over many decades. Their ethos is that while there is the perception of duets as less serious, there is a substantial body of literature worthy of performance. Their most substantial contribution to the genre includes recording Mozart's complete piano for four-hand works with Nimbus records. This feat is followed by performing Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances*. The duo often perform a significant range of Schubert's most popular duets, including the Fantasy in F Minor (D.940), the Sonata in B flat (D.617), the Sonata in C (D.812), and the *Divertissement à la hongroise* (D.818). Interestingly, in a concert review from 1991, the reviewer remarks that the performers were successful in demonstrating a sense of excitement in Schubert's Sonata in C (D.812); something that was not as successful in their performance of other composers' works. The reviewer attributed this to the natural ebb and flow of Schubert's writing, thereby acknowledging Schubert's superior four-hand compositional prowess.<sup>476</sup>

## **Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone (1944–2017)**

UK-based pianists Goldstone and Clemmow undertook the unique challenge of performing a complete cycle of Schubert's piano duets in seven recitals in the 1990s. They repeated this feat on three occasions with each concert being cleverly programmed. All of Schubert duets were subsequently recorded on seven CDs and were released in 1999. Schumann's polonaises are featured as encores (he wrote these in response to Schubert's polonaises). In the *Musical Times*,

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<sup>476</sup> Daniel Cariaga, 'MUSIC REVIEW: Cipa, Misha Dichter in Duo-Piano Program', *Los Angeles Times*, 24 July 1991.

world-renowned Schubert scholar Newbould responded to Goldstone and Clemmow's achievement of performing the cycle of Schubert's duets, stating 'it was an occasion, or rather seven occasions, for revising assessments, usually upwards, and for adding immeasurably to one's understanding of Schubert's craft as well as his art' and their 'performances invited one superlative after another'.<sup>477</sup> It is noteworthy that Newbould himself considered the occasion one in which the duets could be revised, altering the perception of the 'Cinderella' pieces and resulting in a heightened respect for Schubert's duets.<sup>478</sup> One positive note is that in 2017, these CDs were re-released by Divine Art, illustrating a recent surge of interest; four-hand piano music in general has experienced a rekindling of interest recently, with more duos focusing their efforts on four-hand repertoire as their main asset.<sup>479</sup>

### **Katia (born 1950–) and Marielle Labèque (1952–)**

The Labèque sisters from France are an internationally renowned piano duo. Their role as a duo is significant in that they were among the first wave of duos who repopularised the genre. Their repertoire encompasses both piano for four hands and two-piano duets. After their training at the Paris Conservatory, the sisters decided to continue their career in a non-conventional manner by pursuing duets. They achieved international recognition for their recording of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* arrangement for two pianos (1980), which was one of the first gold records in classical music. This was at a time when two-piano works had somewhat fallen out of fashion. Furthermore, the sisters anecdotally note that Gershwin was not yet accepted as a serious composer within classical music.<sup>480</sup>

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<sup>477</sup> Brian Newbould, 'Performance Reviews', *The Musical Times*, 135.1811 (1994), pp. 49–56 (p. 56), doi:10.2307/1002851.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

<sup>479</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, pp. ix–xii.

<sup>480</sup> Roslyn Sulcas, 'These Sisters Have Transformed the Piano Duo', *The New York Times*, 25 October 2020.

The duo boasts decades of concertising in this genre along with an impressive array of approximately thirty recordings.<sup>481</sup> The breadth of their repertoire ranges from Classical and Baroque, to contemporary classical, jazz, minimalist, and pop. While stemming from a Classical tradition, they were also a forward-thinking duo. The duo frequently collaborated with composers and were commissioned with works by well-known composers. Such works include ‘Water Dances’ by Michael Nyman, ‘Linea’ for two pianos and percussion by Berio, and ‘Concerto for two pianos and orchestra’ by Phillip Glass. Recently, in 2024, they performed Michael Riesman’s two-piano arrangement of Glass’ Cocteau Trilogy in the National Concert Hall, Dublin. Their contribution is so significant that some regard the Labèque sisters as the most successful duo on the international stage.<sup>482</sup> Their achievements demonstrate the duo’s ability to adapt the duet to modern forms and it is certain that they influenced future duos, such as the Anderson and Roe Duo. It is the author’s opinion that their contribution to the two-piano genre is greater than that of the piano for four hands genre.

### **Anderson and Roe Piano Duo**

Greg Anderson and Elizabeth Joy Roe met in 2000 as Julliard School students, and they formed a piano duo. They are internationally acclaimed as a duo and are both Steinway artists. This duo is one of the current generation’s leading figures in the piano duet circuit, and they have performed in the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Estonia, Romania, Israel, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, New Zealand, and most major US cities. The duo’s repertoire encompasses both piano for four-hand works, as well as piano duo works. Schubert is not as key a figure in their repertoire, as he is in the previous

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<sup>481</sup> Schubert is featured in their Schubert/Mozart recording and features the Fantasy in F Minor and the *Andantino varié* in B Minor for piano duet from D.823; Franz Schubert and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Schubert/Mozart*, Katia and Mariella Labèque (KML label, KML 1117, 2007).

<sup>482</sup> Magalhães, ‘An Annotated Catalogue of Works for Piano Duet: A Supplement to Cameron McGraw’s Piano Duet Repertoire’, p. x.

duos. The duo did arrange a four-hand version of Schubert's 'Ave Maria' and 'Der Erlkönig' for piano duo; however, it can be argued that they are perpetuating the popular rather than promoting familiarity of Schubert's art works in their original form. They have also performed many piano transcriptions. For example, their programme in 2017 was an homage to the world of opera, featuring transcriptions from Mozart's operas. Based on the sample programmes on their website, the duo focuses more on piano duos (rather than four-hand works) and concerto repertoire, thus they are components of the more exuberant type of piano duet. They also have a sample programme for a children's concert, featuring child-friendly works such as *Carnival of the Animals*, and an arrangement of the *Flight of the Bumblebee* for piano duo. Much of their overall appeal lies in their ability to arrange and perform popular hits for piano duet in both forms. For instance, the duo has composed duet arrangements of 'Billie Jean', 'Bohemian Rhapsody', 'Let it Be', 'Hallelujah', 'Fantasy on the Last Rose of Summer' and much more. Just like many classical composers incorporating well-known forms and melodies into their four-hand music, this duo does the same in their arrangements, albeit through a modern perspective. In 2006, they took advantage of this generation's penchant for film music, and they composed and performed the world premiere of 'Four Fantasies on Themes from Star Wars' for piano duo. More recently in December 2020, inspired by COVID-19 restrictions, they arranged and recorded a two-piano version of an aptly titled 'All by Myself', consisting of a mash-up of Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto and Eric Carmen's song 'All by Myself' (the latter's verse is based on this concerto's second movement). Many of these arrangements are virtuosic in nature and their glamorous manner of performing is certainly a spectacle.

In contrast to the previous duos, who are of an older generation, the Anderson and Roe duo regularly utilise social media to promote their music – including through their own site, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Worth noting is their professional music videos available on YouTube and on DVDs, which have attained millions of views over fourteen years. Thus,

their music is more easily disseminated, which in turn exposes audiences to the piano duet on an international level. In *Four Handed Monsters*, Daub considers the duo to be one of the most significant piano duos in the USA, which he ascribes to their creative and often pop-influenced approach to their repertoire.<sup>483</sup> Daub points out a successful example of their innovations in the duo's four-hand arrangement of Astor Piazzolla's *Libertango*.<sup>484</sup> To ensure the style of this piece was fully transferred to the four-hand medium, one pianist muffles the strings while the other takes control of the keys – thus the sound of plucked guitar strings is mimicked – a twentieth-century extended piano technique.<sup>485</sup> Once again, this example demonstrates the duo's capability to adapt the four-hand genre to modern performance.

In the preface to the most recent version of Cameron McGraw's piano duet repertoire book, the Anderson and Roe duo write about the ever-changing perceptions of piano duets. They highlight that at the beginning of their career (early 2000s), four-hand music was not perceived to be a concert-worthy medium. Since then, the piano duet has experienced an 'enormous transformation'.<sup>486</sup> The duo attributes this remarkable metamorphosis to the efforts of many pianists, including themselves, whose aim it is to revive the genre by means of strategic programming, creative arrangements, and the use of effective technological presentation.

### **Lucas and Arthur Jussen**

Lucas and Arthur Jussen are Dutch pianists, who have performed regularly as both soloists and as a piano duo from a young age. They have been signed with Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft since 2010, releasing both solo and duet works. At the time of writing, they have recorded eight albums thus far; a notable feat at their young ages. Their piano duet repertoire

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<sup>483</sup> Daub, *Four-Handed Monsters: Four-Hand Piano Playing and Nineteenth-Century Culture*, p. 129.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid, p. 130.

<sup>485</sup> Greg Anderson and Elizabeth Joy Roe, *Anderson & Roe Piano Duo play "LIBERTANGO" (Piazzolla)*, YouTube, 27/02/2007, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0INlumRpL8>> [accessed 14/12/2024].

<sup>486</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. xi.

incorporates both piano for four hand and piano duo works, spanning from the Baroque, Classical and Romantic Era, to twentieth-century era and beyond. Their repertoire features works such as Schubert's Fantasy in F Minor, the Rondo in A, and the Allegro in A Minor, to Poulenc's Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra in D Minor (FP.61). In contrast to the Anderson and Roe duo, this duo's repertoire is rooted more strongly in the Classical repertoire and tradition (including mostly non-transcriptions), incorporating works by Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Fauré, Poulenc, Stravinsky, and more. Notable recordings include 'Mozart: Double Piano Concertos', featuring Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra in E flat Major, (K.365), Concerto for Three Pianos and Orchestra in F Major, No. 7 (K.242) – re-arranged for two pianos by Mozart – and Mozart's Piano Sonata in D Major (K.381). They also show their willingness to adapt the piano duet genre to modern-day tastes. For example, Turkish pianist/composer Fazıl Say wrote 'Night' specifically for the Jussen brothers. This composition showcases the duo's virtuosity and requires extended pianistic techniques such as strings manipulation. Like the Anderson and Roe duo, they make use of social media and video recordings to disseminate their music. Their appeal lies within the sibling synergy that has been evident since their public performances as child prodigies, and their exquisite pianistic prowess in the duet genre.

### **Simon Callaghan and Adrian Farmer**

In January 2022, this duo released a recording of two of Schubert's most popular duets; the Fantasy in F Minor and the Sonata in C Major (D.812).<sup>487</sup> Pianist Farmer had previously recorded two volumes of Schubert's duets with the late Nina Walker. While it is now not necessarily unique for pianists to release a recording of Schubert's most popular duet works, the recent release of this recording demonstrates the demand for such works. There was also a

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<sup>487</sup> Franz Schubert, *Schubert: Music for Four Hands*, Simon Callaghan and Adrian Farmer (Nimbus, NI8108, 2022).

pragmatic reason for recording these particular works; the Fantasy in F Minor (D.940) and the Sonata in C Major (D.812) were due to be in Farmer and the late Walker's third volume, but this lay unissued. In *The Schubertian*, pianist Callaghan reflects upon recording the four-hand works and acknowledges the task of recording an already well-recorded repertoire; but concludes that they had a desire to develop their own interpretation.<sup>488</sup> Callaghan remarks that he is yet to meet a pianist who does not enjoy playing Schubert's piano duets – a sentiment shared by many a duet-player.<sup>489</sup>

## 2.4 Contextual Study of Duet Performances in Ireland

While there are some pianists in Ireland who perform piano duets, there are no duos that make their living exclusively out of performing them, and rarely does a concert take place that features a full programme of duets – though it is becoming more commonplace. Hence, this subsection deals with the performance of duets in Ireland in the broad sense rather than focusing in on individual duos as in the previous section. In line with the increasing interest in four-hand playing from the fin de siècle on, there was a full-four hand programme performed in the National Concert Hall by Albanian/Greek duo Ermira Lefort and Marina-Maria Bilmezi in 1999. The programme heavily drew from the rich four-hand French repertoire, featuring Bizet's *Jeux d'enfants*, Debussy's *Petite suite*, Ravel's *Rapsodie espagnole*, and Dvořák's *Silent Woods*. In an Irish Times review, music critic Michael Dervan expresses the opinion that the four-hand repertoire is neglected.<sup>490</sup> Interestingly, he also suggests that the programme 'may look like one that poaches from the realm of orchestral music' but proceeds to explain that these works were all written for four hands originally.<sup>491</sup> This provides an insight into misconceptions of duets at the time. There was also some interest in two piano concerts. For

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<sup>488</sup> Simon Callaghan, 'Recording Schubert in Lockdown', *The Schubertian*, 113 (2022), pp. 13–16 (p. 14).

<sup>489</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>490</sup> Michael Dervan, 'Ermira Lefort, Marina-Maria Bilmezi (piano duet)', *The Irish Times*, 24 February 1999.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

example, Darina Ní Chuinneagain and Leonora Carney performed a two-piano concert in the Bank of Ireland Arts Centre in 1996, as reviewed by Martin Adams in the *Irish Times*.<sup>492</sup>

One notable recent duo is Irish pianist Niall Kinsella and London-based pianist Rebecca Cohen, who performed ‘Four Hands – Four Voices’ as part of the Irish Songmakers 2018/2019 season. The programme included Schubert’s Four Polonaises (D.599), Schumann’s *Spanische Liebeslieder* (Op.138), and Brahms’ *Liebeslieder-Walzer* (Op.52). As befits the concert’s title, the latter two works are scored for four-hand piano and four voices. In fact, due to its success, Kinsella repeated this concert programme as part of the Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival in August 2022. In March 2022, a similar programme was featured in St. Peter’s Church of Ireland in Drogheda. The concert, presented by Musici Ireland and titled ‘Four hands and Four Voices’, included the aforementioned Brahms’ *Liebeslieder-Walzer* (Op.52) and Schubert’s Fantasy in F Minor. Lance Coburn and Soo-Jung Ann were the featured duettists. For the Wexford Arts Festival in October 2022, the duo performed the Schubert’s Fantasy in F Minor again, while also performing twentieth-century composer Valery Gavrilin’s *Sketches*. To conclude, contemporary Irish composer Liam Bates’ *Goodbye Mr Johnson* was performed; a work scored for the unusual combination of four hands at the piano and viola.

A notable piano duo concert took place in Blessington as part of the West Wicklow Festival in 2019. The Duo Játékok, based in France, comprises of pianists Näiri Badal and Adélaïde Panaget. The duo performed a full programme of works for two pianos in St. Mary’s Church, featuring Joan Trimble’s Sonatina for Two Pianos, Dave Brubeck’s *Points on Jazz*, Franz Liszt’s Sonata in B Minor (arranged by Camille Saint-Saëns), and a *Carmen Fantasy* (an arrangement of *Carmen* written by Anderson from the Anderson and Roe duo). As an encore, they performed a four-hand arrangement of a Bach choral. The Játékok duo performs and

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<sup>492</sup> Martin Adams, ‘Darina Ní Chuinneagain, Leonora Carney (two pianos)’, *The Irish Times*, 11 October 1996.

records both works for four hands, as well as two pianos. Like the Anderson and Roe duo, Schubert is not a key figure in their repertoire. Both these duos successfully amalgamate the classical with the contemporary though innovative approaches to their repertoire and performances. For example, Duo Játékok was the opening act for the German heavy-metal band Rammstein in the Arena of Nîmes in 2017. In 2019, they were the opening act for the first half of Rammstein's European tour, performing in many venues. Their set consisted of eight four-hand arrangements of tracks from Rammstein's *Klavier* album. For this tour, the duo also performed with the group on the track 'Engel'. The duo still regularly features as the special guests for Rammstein, with performing together in 2021. In 2022, they released a piano duo album of their Rammstein arrangements – it certainly is a unique feat to merge the classical with the metal genre in a piano duo format.

Additional duet concerts include renowned Irish pianist Fiachra Garvey and South Korean pianist Soo-Jung Ann's four-hand concert in the National Concert Hall (Dublin) in March 2022. Soo-Jung Ann, as previously stated, performed in a similar concert titled 'Four Hands and Four Voices' and some of the repertoire overlaps into this concert. This concert, titled 'Shared Dreams' formed part of a chamber series, entitled 'Fantasy and Dreams'. The programme drew inspiration from dreams and dreaming as can be seen in table 2.1 below. The programme consists of a variety of works of concert status. The programme is tail-ended by the ever-popular *Petite suite* by Debussy and the Fantasy in F Minor by Schubert. Perhaps most striking is the inclusion of lesser-known works by marginalised composers Beach and Bonis, whose works form the middle section of the recital. Similarly, the Fantasy in F Minor by Schubert and Debussy's *Petite suite* were performed in 'Flights of Fantasy for Four Hands' in association with MTU Cork School of Music. Irish sibling duo Finghin and Dearbhla Collins also have performed full recitals of four-hand works and two-piano works. As part of the Wigmore Hall Festival 2023, Mitsuko Uchida and Jonathan Biss performed works by Schubert

for piano duet in the opening of the new recital hall in the Royal Irish Academy of Music: the *Divertissement à la hongroise* (D.818), Allegro in A Minor (D.947), Rondo in A Major (D.951), and *Grande marche* No.5 (D.819) featured on the programme. Such recitals by internationally respected pianists play a significant role in the landscape of duet performance in Ireland as it is a rarity for a full programme of four-hand works to take place – particularly of works by one composer alone – and as stated previously, the survival of this genre depends on both the quality and quantity of performances. Fortunately, the frequency of such concerts featuring piano duets is increasing, as evident in the above survey. A common thread between these concerts is a reliance on a few staples of the genre, so I encourage teachers and performers to diversify and further explore lesser-known works.

**Table 2.1, Programme for Fiachra Garvey and Soo-Jung Ann’s ‘Fantasy and Dreams’ in the National Concert Hall, 2022**

Composer	Work	Year Published
<b>Claude Debussy (1862–1918)</b>	<i>Petite suite</i> (L.65)	1889
<b>Amy Beach (1867–1944)</b>	<i>Summer Dreams</i> (Op.47)	1901
<b>Mélanie Bonis (1858–1937)</b>	<i>Suite en forme de valse</i>	1898
<b>Franz Schubert (1797–1828)</b>	Fantasy in F Minor (D.940)	1829

## 2.5 Duet-Playing in Context of Pedagogy

It is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry, that I delight in throwing it at the heads of the wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that great art can never be anything else.<sup>493</sup>

George Bernard Shaw, referring to his play *Pygmalion*, reminds one of the divides that often exist between ‘high art’ and that of a didactic function (though in his context, he is referring to moral didacticism). While duets have been associated with an inferior genre or a ‘forgotten’ genre in the words of Notley, their value as pedagogical tools has been recognised in literature.<sup>494</sup> In some cases, literature on piano duets transcends disciplines, and this shows more interest in the genre all-round. For example, there are recent scientific studies on the psychological processes occurring during duet-playing.<sup>495</sup> It is impossible to separate piano duets’ function as a didactic form of music-making, evident from its conception to current piano pedagogy. The piano can be a solitary instrument, so duet-playing is useful as it compels both players to operate on the same wavelength, as both pianists must negotiate and interpret tempi, dynamics, and articulation in the same manner. Besides piano duets, the only available forms for pianists to play with other musicians are in chamber music, concertos, or as an accompanist; all of which require a high level of skill and years of training. However, I suggest

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<sup>493</sup> George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1957), p. 9.

<sup>494</sup> Notley, ‘Schubert’s social music: the “forgotten genres”’. Relevant piano literature includes: Gisela Waldtraut Scriba, *The Piano Duet as Teaching Medium: an Overview and Selective Syllabus for the Beginner Pianist* (MMus in Piano Didactics, University of Pretoria, 2010); Christopher Fisher, *Teaching Piano in Groups* (Oxford University Press, 2010); Elizabeth Haddon and Mark Hutchinson, ‘Empathy in Piano Duet Rehearsal and Performance’, *Empirical Musicology Review*, 10 (2015), pp. 140–53; Marcella May Poppen, ‘A Survey and Analysis of Selected Four-Hand, One Keyboard, Piano Literature’ (doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1977); Eric Street, ‘In Praise of Teaching Duets’, *Clavier*, 40.6 (2001), pp. 16–17; Zülal Karakuş and Enver Tufan, ‘The Importance of Four-Hand Use In Piano Training At The Beginning Stage’, *Online Journal of Music Sciences*, 3.2 (2018), pp. 122–49, doi:10.31811/ojomus.481500. Duet-playing in other instruments: Pierson A. Wetzel, ‘The Pedagogical Benefits of Duet Playing: A Vannetelbosch Companion’ (doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 2007).

<sup>495</sup> Anja Lender and others, ‘Dynamics in interbrain synchronization while playing a piano duet’, *The New York Academy of Sciences*, 1530.1 (2023), pp. 124–37, doi:10.1111/nyas.15072; Auriel Washburn and others, ‘Temporal Coordination in Piano Duet Networked Music Performance (NMP): Interactions Between Acoustic Transmission Latency and Musical Role Asymmetries’, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12 (2021), pp. 1–19, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.707090.

that piano duets, while existing as a stand-alone genre in their own right, can also be seen as precursors to accompaniment playing, and even concerto playing at a later stage (including playing with an orchestra, and with another pianist playing the orchestral reduction). This is a viewpoint that could be further integrated into teaching practice. Pedagogue Stowell adds a further advantage of duet-playing; gifted ensemble players can be recognised and given further guidance in ensemble-playing.<sup>496</sup> At later levels of studying music, there is potential for piano duets to be used as useful tools in studying orchestration, conducting, and writing arrangements/transcriptions. The above advantages are surely ones a music educator would welcome, though from an American perspective and I suggest it is evident more widely, Poppen notes there is a lack of ensemble opportunities for an early-level pianist in comparison to those who sing in choirs, or who play orchestral and band instruments, and she goes as far as to say that there is almost no opportunity for these early learners to participate in ensemble-playing until they are more advanced.<sup>497</sup> In Taaffe's study of parental thoughts on the most important musical skills, 'playing with others' scored the highest for 'highly important'; and this skill was also ranked 'important' by a significant number of participants.<sup>498</sup> Taaffe also notes that the majority of parents of piano students wish to have more opportunities for their pianist child in ensemble/group settings.<sup>499</sup> Considering piano is an extremely popular instrument, but often a solitary one, it behooves us to consider more music-making activities for young pianists to play together to meet these expectations. The benefits are clear. In a 2018 study of 37 young piano students who undertook four-hand playing in their tuition, all but one student agreed that it gave them pleasure, and 91.9% agreed that playing four-hand pieces

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<sup>496</sup> Patricia Stowell, 'Preparing the Young Collaborative Artist', *The American Music Teacher*, 58.1 (2008), pp. 19–21 (p. 20) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40140682>> [accessed 16/12/2024].

<sup>497</sup> Poppen, 'A Survey and Analysis of Selected Four-Hand, One Keyboard, Piano Literature', p. 3.

<sup>498</sup> Kay Taaffe, 'Key Signature Pedagogy: an exploration of instrumental music teaching and learning in Ireland – 'fascinating laboratory' or 'deviant tradition'?' (doctoral thesis, King's College London, 2014), p. 153.

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

increased their motivation.<sup>500</sup> Taking these clear didactic advantages in mind, pedagogues, performers, composers, and scholars should seriously endeavour to incorporate duet-playing in their practice and free the genre from being a curiosity of the piano lesson ('kuriose Angelegenheit der Klavierstunde').<sup>501</sup>

Piano duets are also the most common form in which pianists can play with each other, in contrast to a violinist for example, who has more options available, such as playing in an orchestra, string quartet, or other ensemble. Furthermore, many four-hand piano works lend themselves naturally to young pianists who may not be able to master a solo piece yet. Weekley and Arganbright caution though that even at this level, a high standard should be strived for, and they poke fun at the misconception students may have about them being able to take a backseat when playing duets, purely because another person is playing with them; they refer to the 'I-couldn't-learn-my-solo-so-I-played-a-duet' syndrome.<sup>502</sup> The piano duet's long-surviving tradition in pedagogy is evident in McGraw's *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, in which five-finger position pieces are marked by '5', something that would certainly not need to be denoted above elementary level.<sup>503</sup>

Pedagogical connotations have long been bound up with piano duets. Composers frequently wrote duet works for a teacher and pupil, with the latter's part being of lesser difficulty, such as Haydn's *Il maestro e lo scolare* from 1778. In this, the pupil imitates the teacher. Haydn may have been inspired by English composer Charles Burney's *Sonatas or Duets for Two Performers on One Piano Forte or Harpsichord* published in the previous year; these duets were the first widely published piano duets. The first edition garnered so much

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<sup>500</sup> Karakuş and Tufan, 'The Importance of Four-Hand Use In Piano Training At The Beginning Stage', pp. 143–45.

<sup>501</sup> Wieland and Uhde, *Schubert: Späte Klaviermusik; Spuren ihrer inneren Geschichte*, p. 262.

<sup>502</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 12.

<sup>503</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*.

success that a second edition was published in 1778.<sup>504</sup> These duet works are characteristically light-hearted and pleasing, and they are not particularly notable; though it is observed that compositionally speaking, they are of higher quality than other such duet compositions of the time.<sup>505</sup> Burney's publications foreshadow the long-lasting relationship of piano duets and their place in pedagogy. Unbeknownst to many, Beethoven's pupil Carl Czerny wrote a substantial body of four-hand music, some of which are pedagogical in design; an example being his *Practical Method for Playing in Correct Time* (Op.824).<sup>506</sup> However, similar to Schubert, Czerny wrote piano duets for a wide range of genres including the sonata, nocturne, rondo, fantasy, overture, and étude, as well as composing dances and variations.<sup>507</sup> While many of these works are not out of the ordinary, there are some stand-out works that deserve more attention, such as the *Grande Sonate Brillante* in C Minor (Op.10) ; this is a scintillating virtuosic work.

One example of Schubert's duet works composed with the young student in mind is Schubert's *Kindermarsch* (Children's March), which was requested by Marie Pachler of Graz for her seven-year old son. The mother and son duo performed this in 1827. In fact, it is because of Schubert's appointment as a music teacher to the Esterházy daughters in Zselíz that he composed piano duets as pedagogical material. However, the works that Schubert composed during this time differ greatly in scope and quality to the *Kindermarsch*. Schubert's sojourns in Zselíz bore rich fruit in this regard and would befit the whole gamut of pianists from early-stages to professionals. Other prominent examples of piano duets with childhood themes and vivid imagery include Ravel's *Ma mère l'Oye*, written for his friends' children; Fauré's *Dolly Suite*, Bizet's *Jeux d'enfant*, and Inghelbrecht's *La nursery*. Some of these were composed for

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<sup>504</sup> Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, p. 23.

<sup>505</sup> Aultman, 'Walter Georgii's Klaviermusik, Part II: a Translation and Commentary', p. 21.

<sup>506</sup> Carl Czerny, *Praktische Taktschule, 44 leichte Uebungsstücke in fortschreitender Ordnung für Anfänger und vorgerückte Schüler Op. 824* (Offenbach, André, n.d.)

<sup>507</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, pp. 105–08.

young pianists to play, while some were composed more so for young children as attractive, easy-listening pieces.

This didactic approach to piano duets has sustained to modern-day pedagogy. Piano pedagogues often compose and arrange four-hand compositions for their students and for tutor books. Such pedagogical material is still used today. Magalhães remarks that such teaching material emerged in the 1890s and the main tutor books – all of which include duets – were John Thompson's *Modern Course for the Piano* (1930), Francis Clark and Louise Goss's *Time to Begin* (1955), Bastien's *Bastien Piano Basics* (1960), and Jane Tan's *Well Prepared Pianist* (1990).<sup>508</sup> The popular John Thompson compendium includes *First Piano Duets* and Dame Fanny Waterman and Marion Harewood's popular 'Me and My Piano Series' includes two *Me and My Piano Duets* books.<sup>509</sup> The Waterman/Harewood series also includes *Two at the Piano: 50 Duets for Young Pianists*.<sup>510</sup> John Thompson's duets consist of the melodic material being played in the student's primo part, often hands separately.<sup>511</sup> Higgins' recent Piano Academy Course, tailored for the beginner Group Piano course at the Royal Irish Academy of Music under my guidance, also contains beginner-level duets.<sup>512</sup> The appeal here lies in the harmony that the teacher can provide to an otherwise bare texture. Waterman and Harewood's approach is versatile, as there are interchangeable parts of equal difficulty. This facilitates the student playing alongside their teacher, as well as possibly with another student (or an able parent). The popular Alfred collection also includes six piano duet books and a version for

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<sup>508</sup> Magalhães, 'An Annotated Catalogue of Works for Piano Duet: A Supplement to Cameron McGraw's Piano Duet Repertoire', pp. viii–ix.

<sup>509</sup> Thompson, *First Piano Duets* and Fanny Waterman and Marion Harewood, *Me and My Piano: Duets Book 1/2* (London: Faber Music Limited, 1992).

<sup>510</sup> Fanny Waterman and Marion Harewood, *Two at the Piano: 50 Duets for Young Pianists* (London: Faber Music Limited, 1979).

<sup>511</sup> Thompson, *First Piano Duets*.

<sup>512</sup> Andrew Higgins, *RIAM Piano Course Book 1A* (Durham: QuietlifeMusic, 2024), ed. assistance by Darragh Gilleece.

adult beginners is available too.<sup>513</sup> To facilitate the interest of students of all ages, many composers arrange popular pieces for piano duet. Such arrangements include Disney and Broadway songs, chart hits from artists such as Adele and Taylor Swift, pieces from films such as *La La Land*, Christmas music, and simplified arrangements of popular Classical pieces.

In relation to the student's musical development, duet-playing is ideal for honing the student's ear, improving their sense of pulse and understanding of textures, and enhancing their confidence in playing. Initially, each duet part must be learned in the same manner as a solo piece. However, when put together, duet-playing demands particular techniques and adjustments that are not required in solo music, thus refuting the misconception that duets are technically undemanding. Such aspects include deciding the distribution of primo and secondo, seating, negotiation of overall interpretation and tempo, note-sharing, fingering, pedalling, and managing a wider range of textures. For these reasons, piano duets should be encouraged to be utilised in piano tuition. In the early stages of tuition, it is recommendable for the teacher to choose repertoire that is of lesser difficulty than the student's solo ability; this is due to the unique demands that piano duets require. Potential repertoire includes Classical Era works, with its characteristics being suitable for the young student in promoting a strict pulse, rhythmical precision, and limited pedal use. One could also draw from more contemporary material such as that listed above, as this material is composed for the young student (or indeed, adult learners). In this stage of duet-learning, one part will regularly consist of melodic material while the other plays the accompaniment. In later stages of duet-learning, melodic and accompaniment material can alternate between both parts.

Some of Schubert's earlier duets (such as those written for the Esterházy daughters) conform to the primo as the melody and secondo as the accompaniment – a clear example being

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<sup>513</sup> Dennis Alexander, *Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course Duet Book 1* (US: Alfred Publishing Company Inc., 1986).

the opening section of Schubert's polonaise D.599/No.2. Though, Schubert diverges from these preexisting conventions throughout his life. Schubert composed many of his piano duets for amateurs of the time, however, the amateur today is generally far less competent than they used to be. There is no Schubert duet repertoire suitable for beginners. In *the Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, Lubin suggests to 'save Schubert till later'.<sup>514</sup> Nevertheless, for early-stage pianists, suitable Schubert duet repertoire includes *Kindermarsch* (D.928) and the *Four Ländler* (D.814). For more advanced students, appropriate repertoire includes pieces of longer duration with richer textures, more intricate pedalling, a wider variety of tone colour, and more. For this level, suitable Schubert repertoire may include his polonaises, or even for the most advanced, the Rondo in A Major, Allegro in A Minor, Fantasy in F Minor, or his two piano duet sonatas.

## 2.6 A Review of Examination Board Engagement in Four-Hand Playing

It is at this point it must be highlighted that piano teaching in Ireland – and much of instrumental teaching – is unregulated, despite a large number of private teachers providing music tuition nationwide. This means that there are many teachers, who teach privately (or even in music schools) who do not have third-level qualifications or diplomas in music/teaching or teaching/concertising experience.<sup>515</sup> Some regard the possession of grade eight as a teaching qualification, or as Chawke deduces, the completion of grade eight (irrespective of the result) is seen as evidence of a 'proficient and independent musician'.<sup>516</sup> Results of a survey in the UK note that while the vast majority of piano teachers have achieved grade eight, only 50% had a

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<sup>514</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 205.

<sup>515</sup> The discussion of a minimum qualification for piano teachers is discussed here (UK perspective): Lorraine Augustine, 'Should there be minimum qualifications for piano teachers?', 27/02/2023 <<https://crosseyedpianist.com/2023/02/27/should-there-be-minimum-qualifications-for-piano-teachers/>> [accessed 03/11/2023].

<sup>516</sup> Aoife Chawke, 'An exploration of the impact of formal and non-formal teaching and learning approaches on piano students' musical knowledge, skills, engagement and motivation: a longitudinal action research study' (doctoral thesis, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, 2022), p. 223.

degree in music, 46% possessed a teaching diploma, and 30% studied piano pedagogy.<sup>517</sup> As per the Music Education National Debate's (Ireland) findings published in 2001, teacher quality is paramount and consequently teacher training must be prioritised.<sup>518</sup> With this in mind, what is on offer for piano teacher training? In Ireland, Chawke found that there are some Continuous Professional Development opportunities for piano teachers in Ireland, but that these are not without flaws; some of the pedagogical modules as part of third-level courses are elective modules and have a low-uptake, despite many who do not partake in these modules progressing to teach music.<sup>519</sup> Through a desktop study of the websites of various Irish institutions, it became apparent that some institutions do not offer any music pedagogical studies to students who progress to teach after their studies (and for some, during their studies). There is also a historical divide between graduates who have come through the university system, and those from the conservatoire system. Taaffe notes that universities generally place the focus on academic studies, while the conservatoires gear the student for a career in performance.<sup>520</sup>

It is important though to temper the negative with the positive on this matter. The tide has been turning in that there are a growing number of initiatives that aim to strengthen the link between research, performance, and pedagogy in both university and conservatoire settings in Ireland. For example, the first Head of Programmes and Research of the Royal Irish Academy of Music was assigned quite recently in 2021 (as per the RIAM's 175 Strategic Plan), and the establishment of Performance Research Ireland also indicates this shift. Furthermore, as

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<sup>517</sup> Frances Wilson, 'An image crisis in independent piano teaching?', 06/10/2014 <<https://crosseyedpianist.com/2014/10/06/an-image-crisis-in-independent-piano-teaching/>> [accessed 03/11/2023].

<sup>518</sup> Frank Heneghan, *Music Education National Debate* (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology, 2001), p. 24 <<https://www.musicnetwork.ie/content/files/MEND09d.pdf>> [accessed 02/08/2024].

<sup>519</sup> Chawke, 'An exploration of the impact of formal and non-formal teaching and learning approaches on piano students' musical knowledge, skills, engagement and motivation: a longitudinal action research study', pp. 253–54.

<sup>520</sup> Taaffe, 'Key Signature Pedagogy: an exploration of instrumental music teaching and learning in Ireland – 'fascinating laboratory' or 'deviant tradition'?', p. 40.

Lennon observes, there has been a growing trend of professionalism in the instrumental teaching trade in Ireland – which is ascribed to increasing numbers of high-quality postgraduates in music and pedagogical electives/specialisms at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.<sup>521</sup> A recommendation of Lennon's is that perhaps the time is right to seriously consider certification and accreditation for instrumental teachers.<sup>522</sup>

For some teachers, their highest grade achieved (or playing level) may be even less than grade eight when they begin teaching, and they may only teach to a grade below this. Augustine notes from their experience that some even may begin teaching with a grade five or lower level of playing, which can have detrimental effects on the student, as the teacher's knowledge in a wide range of areas, such as repertoire and pedagogy is lacking.<sup>523</sup> Cathcart highlights previous research that suggests that qualifications are perceived as 'optional extras' for music teachers.<sup>524</sup> Some begin teaching very soon after finishing secondary school, while studying or working in a different subject area, and all the while not necessarily involving themselves in any other musical activities or Continuous Professional Development. This can create a significant gap in subject knowledge on a teacher's part that can be passed on to student, including the gamut of piano repertoire – despite the best intentions on the teacher's part. Wright describes a comparable situation in the UK. He noted that the work of instrumental teachers is largely 'hidden' and 'unofficial', and that teachers operate in an 'isolated context' – and that this usually results in a limited teaching repertoire and less impetus to investigate pedagogical methods, which does a disservice to the student.<sup>525</sup> Hence, this section aims to add

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<sup>521</sup> Mary Lennon, 'Expanding pedagogical perspectives' in *Music Education for the Twenty-First Century, Legacies, Conversations, Aspirations*, ed. by John O' Flynn and Patricia Flynn (Cork University Press, 2023), pp. 115–38 (p. 134).

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>523</sup> Augustine, 'Should there be minimum qualifications for piano teachers?'.

<sup>524</sup> Sally Cathcart, 'The UK Piano Teacher in the Twenty-First Century: exploring common practices, expertise, values, attitudes and motivation to teach' (doctoral thesis, University of London, 2013), p. 61.

<sup>525</sup> Wright, *The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music: A Social and Cultural History*, p. 225.

to the limited literature of piano pedagogy in Ireland, with the focus directed on the overlooked genre of piano duets.

A large focus of this section addresses exam syllabi on a national and international basis, as the grade exam approach is a popular method that many teachers take, due to many factors such as teacher preferences, lack of knowledge of alternative methods, parental pressures, as well as cultural norms – the grade system is firmly embedded in Britain and in some countries that have been influenced by Britain. The exam or no-exam debate pervades all subject areas and is not unique to music.<sup>526</sup> This goes outside of the scope of this research, however, since many piano teachers are familiar with this component of teaching, taking repertoire ideas from syllabi can be a useful guide and can act as a stepping stone to further exploring duet music, whether for lessons, exams, concerts, competitions or a combination of the above. It is on this point that De Val and Ehrlich quite justly point out, ‘choice of repertoire is in part influenced by examination requirements, from elementary to diploma level; it is what is taught in our conservatories, whose syllabuses reflect and reinforce prevailing custom’.<sup>527</sup> Particularly pertinent to this research is the question, to what extent do the piano duets of the leading composer in this genre – Schubert – feature in various exam syllabi?

Taking all the advantages of duet-playing into account, one would assume that many students would take grade exams in piano duets. However, this is not the case. As long ago as 1952, Weaving (chairman of the RIAM’s board of studies and piano teacher) asserted that there could be more engagement with piano duets. Referring to examinations and competitions, he exclaims: ‘One would like to see many more entries for the pianoforte duets and other ensemble

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<sup>526</sup> For a discussion on this topic in music, see: Darragh Gilleece, ‘Do we need a reframing of instrumental music exams in Ireland?’ from RTÉ Brainstorm <<https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2024/1001/1472968-music-exam-grades-ireland/>> [accessed 01/10/2024].

<sup>527</sup> Dorothy De Val and Cyril Ehrlich, ‘Repertory and Canon’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, ed. by David Rowland (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 115–34 (p. 117).

work'.<sup>528</sup> Weaving elaborates on duet-playing, remarking their practicality, artistry, and notes that there are 'no drawbacks' to playing them.<sup>529</sup> Weaving's sentiment still rings true. While there has been some scholarship on duets as pedagogical tools, there is more room for putting these tools into practice. Scriba believes it is a worrying concern that the realm of piano duets has been neglected within pedagogical practice.<sup>530</sup> A study in the UK paints a picture that while not necessarily neglected, the use of duets could be more frequent. Cathcart found that out of twenty-two aspects of music teaching (ranging from sight-reading to technique and improvisation), duet/trio playing ranked only fifteenth most popular and when duet-playing was incorporated in tuition, most often it was 'sometimes' followed by 'frequently', and lastly, 'very frequently'.<sup>531</sup>

Solo piano receives much more attention than duets in pedagogy. It is necessary here to examine the level of engagement with duets in relation to grade examinations, as thousands of students undertake grades in Ireland yearly as part of their musical education, and hundreds of thousands worldwide. For example, in 2016, c. 80% of all Royal Irish Academy of Music solo instrumental/vocal exams were solo piano examinations; this is contrasted with 0.02% piano duet exams.<sup>532</sup> A mere eight examinations were piano duet exams.<sup>533</sup> Solo piano dominates the 2015 figures too, with just six piano duet examinations and one duet recital.<sup>534</sup>

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<sup>528</sup> Thomas H. Weaving, 'Local Centre and Diploma Examinations in Music' in *Music in Ireland: A Symposium*, ed. by Aloys Fleischmann (Cork University Press, 1952), pp. 129–37 (p. 131).

<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

<sup>530</sup> Scriba, 'The Piano Duet as Teaching Medium: an Overview and Selective Syllabus for the Beginner Pianist', p. i.

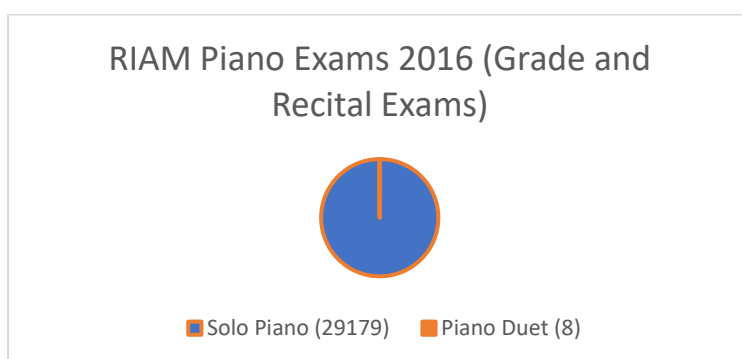
<sup>531</sup> Cathcart, 'The UK Piano Teacher in the Twenty-First Century: exploring common practices, expertise, values, attitudes and motivation to teach', pp. 157–61. It is with this in mind a recommendation can be made to incorporate duet-playing regularly even when using solo pieces in tuition; for instance, the student can play one hand while the teacher plays the other (before swapping) and/or the student/teacher can play together on adjacent pianos.

<sup>532</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Exam Statistics 2016* <<https://network.riam.ie/index.php/component/k2/item/88-exam-statistics>> [accessed 17/03/2021].

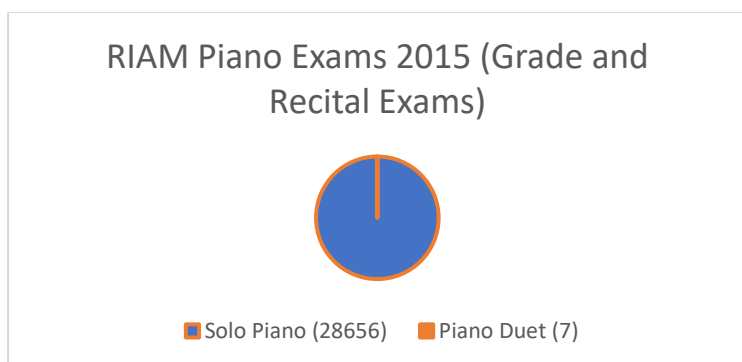
<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

<sup>534</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Exam Statistics 2015* <<https://network.riam.ie/images/2015-Local-Centre-Examinations-Statistics.pdf>> [accessed 07/10/2021].

**Figure 2.1, A Comparison of Solo Piano and Piano Duet Exams in 2016**



**Figure 2.2, A Comparison of Solo Piano and Piano Duet Exams in 2015**



There is a significant discrepancy here, especially when we consider how popular the instrument itself is. The duet option offered by the Royal Irish Academy of Music consists of four levels of difficulty: preparatory, junior, intermediate, and senior. There is also the less common option to perform a piano duet recital, based on three levels of difficulty.<sup>535</sup> Fortunately, Schubert's *Marche militaire* No.1 (D.733) and any one Ländler of the candidate's choice was on the 2019–2022 senior grade syllabus.<sup>536</sup> While it is welcomed, it is peculiar that the latter work is featured at the senior level. This contrasts to the ABRSM ensemble syllabus, in which the *Four Ländler* (D.814) are ranked at a much easier level; primary syllabus

<sup>535</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2019–2022* <<https://www.riam.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2019-10/RIAM-Piano-Exam-Syllabus-revised-corrections-Oct-2019.pdf>> [accessed 30/09/2021].

<sup>536</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

(moreover, it is to be played in its entirety).<sup>537</sup> However, in the recently released 2023–2026 piano syllabus from the Royal Irish Academy of Music, no Schubert work is featured; this is a oddity as Schubert is the leading composer in piano-duet writing.<sup>538</sup> Schubert works are offered in the solo piano syllabus though; his *Moment Musicaux* (D.780, No.3) in F Minor, the second movement of Sonata in A Major (D.664), and the Impromptu in A flat Major (D.899, No.4) are present for grades six, eight, and Senior Certificate respectively. Furthermore, the number of duet pieces on the most recent syllabus has been reduced for all four levels, though there is still a wide range to choose from (see table 2.2 below):

**Table 2.2, A Comparison of Piano Duet Syllabi from 2019–2022 and 2023–2026**

Syllabus	Number of Preparatory Exam Pieces	Number of Junior Exam Pieces	Number of Intermediate Exam Pieces	Number of Senior Exam Pieces
<b>2019–2022</b>	56	57	29	36
<b>2023–2026</b>	16	13	14	32

In the introduction to both the 2019–2022 and the 2023–2026 piano syllabi, the advantages of duet-learning are emphasised and it is stated that the aim of the duet syllabus is to encourage teachers and students to engage more in this genre, thus inferring that duets have been overlooked.<sup>539</sup> While it is clear this examination board has many options for duet-playing, perhaps there could be more promotion and engagement in this area. With the introduction of digital exams in 2020, it is more accessible than ever to take piano duet grades, as a teacher and student duo can record during their usual lesson at any point in the year, rather than travelling to an exam centre. Perhaps duet-playing could be promoted through the RIAM's

<sup>537</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, *Ensemble Syllabus Requirements*, p. 85.

<<https://gb.abrsm.org/media/11705/ensemblescomplete11.pdf>> [accessed 15/05/2022].

<sup>538</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2023–2026*, pp. 56–60

<[https://www.riam.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2022-07/Piano%20syllabus%202023%20draft%20v2\\_2.pdf](https://www.riam.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2022-07/Piano%20syllabus%202023%20draft%20v2_2.pdf)> [accessed 04/08/2022].

<sup>539</sup> Ibid., p. 5 and The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2019–2022*, p.5.

national and annual Key Skills workshop which focuses only on the solo piano material of the syllabus. Furthermore, the RIAM provides YouTube/Vimeo recordings of pieces on the piano solo syllabus, but not for the duets. Including duet repertoire in these recordings would be of particular use to teachers and students who are not familiar with the genre and are searching for appropriate repertoire.

Quite a number of the duets, particularly on the preparatory and junior grade, are not available as recordings online, making it harder to choose repertoire. The only option, which is not necessarily always ideal (especially in context of today, in which digital sheet music is often within reach instantaneously, and preferred), may be to purchase the printed book, and then familiarise oneself with the repertoire. Furthermore, some more guidelines for the duet exam would be welcomed from the Royal Irish Academy of Music. A suggested grade level for each of the four duet grades would be helpful, since many teachers may not be familiar with the repertoire (in comparison, approximate grade levels are given for the recital exams).<sup>540</sup> Below are suggested approximate grades for the duet levels, though with the caveat that varying difficulty levels may exist between the primo and secondo parts, and that the placement of pieces within a grade level is not an exact science.

**Table 2.3, Approximate Grade Levels for The Royal Irish Academy of Music’s Duet Syllabus**

Duet Level	Approximate Grade
<b>Preparatory</b>	Preliminary–primary
<b>Junior</b>	Grade 1–2
<b>Intermediate</b>	Grade 3–5
<b>Senior</b>	Grade 6–8+

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<sup>540</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2023–2026*, p. 62.

These are further considerations that could be clarified in the syllabus:

- Must the student play a designated primo or secondo part, or do they have a choice?
- The ABRSM introduced a new duet option in 2021, and the syllabus denotes who should play which part. It is clear that the examinee is a student who plays with a teacher/more experienced partner.<sup>541</sup> This appears to be the case with RIAM too, as only one result sheet and certificate is circulated, which specifies one candidate only. However, this is not explicitly addressed in the guidelines; while the intended exam candidate may be a student who plays with the teacher, can two students play a duet together? In which case, both candidates should receive an individual result sheet and certificate.
- A further recommendation for the RIAM is to provide a detailed marking scheme of the RIAM piano duet exam. The duet exam consists exclusively of two pieces and thus, fifty marks is awarded per piece out of a hundred. However, there is no marking scheme available online for the breakdown of this, as there is for solo exams.<sup>542</sup> This leads to uncertainty as to what is required to achieve certain grades.
- Both the ABRSM and Trinity College London include the option of presenting one piano duet (up to grade 3) as part of their solo grades. Could the RIAM consider this flexible option?
- Finally, there is differing scope for use of own-choice duet pieces between the examination boards. Subject to prior approval, it is an option to choose own-

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<sup>541</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2023–2024*, p. 13

<<https://www.abrsm.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Piano%202023%20%26%202024%20Prac%20syllabus%2020230807.pdf>> [accessed 31/07/2024].

<sup>542</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *How We Mark Exams* <<https://www.riam.ie/riam-exams/about-our-exams/how-we-mark-exams>> [accessed 01/11/2022].

choice pieces for the ABRSM ensemble exam, along with the prescribed material, or instead.<sup>543</sup> One can take a ‘recital’ exam with RIAM, for which one can present own-choice piano duet pieces. There is no own-choice option though for the specific RIAM duet exams, so perhaps there is scope for this in the future syllabi to encourage engagement. It must be mentioned that in previous RIAM syllabi, one own choice piece was permitted.<sup>544</sup> To ensure piano teachers adhere to the expected level of difficulty, it may be advisable for applicants to submit own-choice pieces in advance for approval should RIAM wish to re-introduce this.

One can take a piano duet exam with Trinity College London, though it is classed under ‘group certificates’. Before this, piano duet exams were classed along with piano solo and piano for six hands. The latter was a preferable method in that all piano teachers/students consulting the piano syllabus would have come across information on piano duets, and this awareness may have resulted in more teachers opting to explore this repertoire. Nonetheless, in both of these syllabi, any three of Schubert’s 20 Ländler were on the intermediate syllabus.<sup>545</sup> The syllabus fails to mention that these are Brahms’ arrangements of Schubert’s two-hand Ländler. Nevertheless, Schubert’s *Four Ländler* for four hands have appeared on various examination boards, as previously stated. While it is not uncommon to have some small deviation between examination boards vis-à-vis the assignment of pieces to a particular grade, such a discrepancy for the same repertoire (Ländler) seems illogical. As discussed above, the level for these Ländler in current and previous syllabi ranges widely from primary, intermediate to senior

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<sup>543</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, *Ensemble Syllabus Requirements*, p. 84.

<sup>544</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2015–2018*, pp. 40–42

<[https://www.riam.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2019-09/RIAM\\_Exams\\_Keyboard\\_Syllabus\\_2015\\_2018.pdf](https://www.riam.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2019-09/RIAM_Exams_Keyboard_Syllabus_2015_2018.pdf)> [accessed 10/12/2022].

<sup>545</sup> Trinity College London, *Piano Syllabus 2012–2014*, p. 58

<<https://www.trinitycollege.com/resource/?id=4192>> [accessed 30/09/2021] and Trinity College London, *Group certificates*, p. 3 <<https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/music/music-certificate-exams/groups>> [accessed 13/04/2023].

level, depending on the examination board. Scriba discusses a similar finding in their analysis of piano syllabi from several examination boards; there are often varying levels of difficulty for pieces within a grade, which can be problematic.<sup>546</sup> To overcome this issue, examination boards could carefully consider further standardisation of duet repertoire for examinations so that the pieces' difficulty levels are consistent within each grade. This will ensure a clearer progression for the student. A positive is that in the 2023–2026 RIAM piano duet syllabus, there is more standardisation in the levels. For example, any one piece from books 1 and 3 of Christopher Norton's *Microjazz Duets Collection* was on the previous syllabus for the preparatory and junior grade. This has now been removed; a glance at these pieces reveals an increasingly significant difference in difficulty as the book progress, so logically it is not feasible to place all pieces in these books at the same level.<sup>547</sup>

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) has introduced a duet option which came into effect from 2021, demonstrating a recent appreciation of duet-playing. In fact, ABRSM published *Piano Star Duets* in which ABRSM duet pieces are featured.<sup>548</sup> One clear advantage of this option is that the student is examined on solo and ensemble work, as well as on scales/arpeggios, aural tests, and sight-reading. When considering taking a piano duet examination with RIAM, for instance, the lack of 'supplementary' tests may be off-putting to teachers who often use exam syllabi alone as a curriculum, so this initiative by the ABRSM is worth praise as one can incorporate such a wide range of playing and skills into one examination.<sup>549</sup> Helpful recordings of the ABRSM's duets are also available on streaming platforms.<sup>550</sup> The ABRSM is also ahead of the curve in incorporating technology into music

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<sup>546</sup> Scriba, 'The Piano Duet as Teaching Medium: an Overview and Selective Syllabus for the Beginner Pianist', p. 3.

<sup>547</sup> Christopher Norton, *the Microjazz Duets Collection Books 1 and 3* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2000).

<sup>548</sup> David Blackwell and Karen Marshall, eds, *Piano Star Duets* (UK: ABRSM, 2020).

<sup>549</sup> Often syllabi and curriculum are used interchangeably, but mistakenly; syllabi in this case refers to repertoire lists, while a curriculum implies the totality of piano tuition.

<sup>550</sup> ABRSM, 'About Piano Exams', 2024 <<https://www.abrsm.org/en-ie/instruments/piano>> [accessed 31/07/2024].

tuition – the ‘Practice Partner’ application is a student tool to help practice of their set works, which includes the piano duets on the syllabus. There is a small cost per track, though one can alternatively purchase a bundle of tracks. The ABRSM in 2021 reported that 64% of children who play an instrument used some form of digital resource to nurture their learning.<sup>551</sup> Such engagement with the genre in the form of publications and teaching/learning aids is to be readily encouraged in other examination boards too; as Scriba remarks, the lack of knowledge of suitable repertoire and ensemble-playing on the teacher’s part, as well as accessibility of scores are factors in the neglect of duet-playing.<sup>552</sup> While the introduction of the duet option for solo grades is warmly welcomed, one must note that the duet option enables the candidate to choose just one duet, but the remaining two pieces must be solo. More significantly, the piano duet option is only available from the initial grade to grade three, thus reinforcing the impression that duets are suitable for the early stages of learning only. There is a wealth of four-hand repertoire that would be suitable for the middle and more advanced grades, so perhaps there is scope for these examinations boards to consider this in upcoming syllabi.

The ABRSM requirements state that the student must play either the designated primo or secondo part; furthermore, the pedalling must be controlled by the secondo.<sup>553</sup> Taking into account that these grades are designed for younger learners up to grade three, and that the student is only permitted to play the primo part for most these duets, it is logical for the secondo (likely a teacher) to take control of the pedal. However, this pedalling requirement is a little simplistic in current-day performance of duets at higher levels of playing. Should the ABRSM/TCL extend the duet option past grade three, perhaps this should be taken into

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<sup>551</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, *Learning, Teaching and Playing in the UK in 2021 ABRSM - Making Music Report 2021* (UK: ABRSM, 2021), p. 7 <[https://www.abrsm.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/web\\_abrsm-making-music-uk-21.pdf](https://www.abrsm.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/web_abrsm-making-music-uk-21.pdf)> [accessed 28/08/2024].

<sup>552</sup> Scriba, ‘The Piano Duet as Teaching Medium: an Overview and Selective Syllabus for the Beginner Pianist’, p. 3.

<sup>553</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2023–2024*, pp. 13–14.

account. A significant number of pianists are increasingly sharing pedalling duties, such as that of Nancy Arganbright and Dallas Weekley.<sup>554</sup> Pedagogue van Breeda also advocates for the primo to take charge of pedalling; she is of the opinion that it is the melody that should dictate pedal changes, not the harmony.<sup>555</sup> Similarly, renowned pianist Alfred Brendel asserts that the primo pedalling in Schubert's four-hand works in particular is wise.<sup>556</sup> Though, when the primo is in charge of the pedalling, they must be acutely aware of the harmonic figurations in the secondo. As Montgomery rightly warns, the primo 'cannot pedal' unless they are cognisant of the underpinning harmony which often lies within the secondo parts.<sup>557</sup>

In the ABRSM 2021–2022 and the 2023–2024 syllabus, no Schubert piano duets are featured from the initial grade up to grade three; this likely is due to the lack of suitable musical material for this level.<sup>558</sup> On the positive side, there are optional duets for all three A, B, and C lists (rather than restricting duets to one list), which means more works of various styles are on offer. Furthermore, the ABRSM does offer ensemble grades, which can include a full duet option as previously mentioned. This consists of primary, intermediate, and advanced levels. Though the syllabus appears not to have been updated since 1989, Schubert features on all three levels (see table below):<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 8.

<sup>555</sup> Claudine van Breda, 'Klavier Ensembleonderrig', *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiekonderwyser*, 126 (1995), pp. 14–16 (p. 16).

<sup>556</sup> Brendel, *Music, Sense and Nonsense: Collected Essays and Lectures*, p. 201.

<sup>557</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 172.

<sup>558</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2021–2022* <https://digitalmediacamps.com/media/kunena/attachments/643/piano-2021-2022-syllabus-rev-sep-2020-final.pdf> [accessed 31/07/2024] and *Piano Syllabus 2023–2024*.

<sup>559</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, *Ensemble Syllabus Requirements*, pp. 85, 89, and 94.

**Table 2.4, ABRSM Schubert Duet Works in the Ensemble Exam Syllabus**

ABRSM Ensemble Exam Level	Title of Work by Schubert
<b>Initial/primary</b>	<i>Four Ländler</i> , D.814
<b>Intermediate</b>	Rondo in D ‘Notre amitié est invariable’, Op.138, D.608
<b>Advanced</b>	<i>Eight Variations in E Minor on a French Song</i> , Op.10, D.624

In Trinity College London’s syllabus, the same option of choosing one duet is offered and similar to the ABRSM, this is only available from the initial grade to grade three.<sup>560</sup> While a positive, it is peculiar why this option is removed after grade three for both examination boards; does this not disadvantage the student from learning more advanced duets (duets not geared for elementary and early-stage students) as part of their tuition? Similarly to ABRSM, Trinity College London provides the exam repertoire in some of their publications. It is worth noting that in the Trinity College London’s 2012–2014 piano syllabus, there was information on an ambitious three-tiered option both for piano duet and piano for six hands, consisting of foundation, intermediate, and advanced level.<sup>561</sup> The information on undertaking a full duet or six-hand exam, however, is now available under the ‘Groups certificates’ syllabus, rather than on the piano syllabus – this may cause some confusion and mar the visibility of such duet options.<sup>562</sup>

## **2.7 Formalisation of the Study of Piano Duets**

Various third-level institutions in Ireland offer chamber-music modules, in which piano duets are often encouraged – particularly in the three conservatoires of Ireland: the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Technological University Dublin Conservatoire, and Munster

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<sup>560</sup> Trinity College London, *Piano Syllabus* <<https://www.trinitycollege.com/resource/?id=9079>> [accessed 16/12/2024].

<sup>561</sup> Trinity College London, *Piano Syllabus 2012–2014*.

<sup>562</sup> Trinity College London, *Group certificates*.

Technological University School of Music. On an international level, some third-level institutions offer ambitious courses in four-hand playing, as well as in duo playing, thus signalling a formalisation of the genre that once was deemed inartistic. For example, the Mozarteum University Salzburg offers a one-year postgraduate course in piano duo studies, which is taught by Andreas Groethuysen and Yaara Tal – members of the internationally renowned piano duo. There is also a Piano Duo Intensive Course at Julliard as part of the Julliard Extension, though the repertoire here deals with the piano duo exclusively.

## **2.8 Accessibility of Four-Hand Repertoire**

The lack of accessibility of piano duet works may act as a barrier to the teaching, performance, and study of the piano duet genre. Scriba notes that in their experience, there is little stock of piano duets due to low demand.<sup>563</sup> Furthermore, some repertoire listed in piano duet repertoire books are out of print, which pushes works further into oblivion, and one must be aware that some duets were never published, though they exist in autograph form. Lubin makes the fair point that music often goes out of print, especially that of piano duets and as an alternative, he suggests the possibility of a pianist sourcing scores through repositories such as the British Museum, or the museum at Brussels that holds J.C. Bach's duet sonatas that were never reprinted posthumously.<sup>564</sup> Similarly, amateur pianist Rusbridger notes that piano duet scores can often be found in second-hand music shops.<sup>565</sup> Nonetheless, accessibility to scores has changed since Lubin's suggestions in 1970 due to the digitisation of scores, the simultaneous decrease of music shops and increase in online shopping. Hence, this section is to serve as up-to-date guidance on locating suitable repertoire for pedagogues, performers, and scholars alike.

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<sup>563</sup> Scriba, 'The Piano Duet as Teaching Medium: an Overview and Selective Syllabus for the Beginner Pianist', p. 109.

<sup>564</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 183.

<sup>565</sup> Alan Rusbridger, 'Classical music. Piano duets', *the Spectator*, 19 December 2020  
<<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/alan-rusbridger-on-the-joys-of-four-hand-piano/>> [accessed 16/07/2023].

The following libraries of tertiary institutions in Ireland may be a helpful lead in the search of repertoire. Important to note here that accessibility to these libraries may vary depending on whether the person wishing for access is a student, staff member, former student, or a member of the public. The Royal Irish Academy of Music (Dublin) has a significant section of piano for four hands works in their library. Due to the institution being a Junior Conservatoire as well as a tertiary institution, there is a significant amount of pedagogical repertoire geared for students, including staples in the repertoire. In fact, the BMusEd course has been delivered for over thirty years and consequently, pedagogical resources are a strength of the collection. The catalogue can be searched online prior to visit.<sup>566</sup> Additionally, the Technical University Dublin Conservatoire's library holds a moderate number of piano duet scores. Maynooth University has a limited number of scores of four-hand works, though fortunately the four-hand volumes of the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe are available as a reference edition (regrettably, the NSA are non-borrowable items). Alas, given that Maynooth University is a third-level institution, there is very little material suitable for earlier-stage learners. Outside of tertiary institutions' libraries, the Music Library in the ILAC Shopping Centre (Dublin) has a small section of about thirty piano duet scores. The Contemporary Music Centre's library in Dublin also holds a small collection of piano duets by twentieth-century and contemporary composers. At the time of writing, the catalogue includes about thirty works by composers such as Brian Boydell, as well as contemporary composers such as Ryan Molloy and June Armstrong.

With the closure of many music shops, purchasing scores online is a popular option and easier than the above suggestion. Music publishers such as Henle and Bärenreiter sell scores of four-hand music. Lastly, the most comprehensive and accessible resource is IMSLP, also

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<sup>566</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Online Catalogue*  
 <<https://library.riam.ie/uhtbin/cgiirsi/?ps=IpEKopDjKI/x/X/60/495/X>> [accessed 13/03/2023].

known as the Petrucci Library. This online library contains a wealth of four-hand works from composers whose music is out of copyright. Note that the bulk of the material is older i.e. out-of-copyright and as such it is not useful for accessing contemporary and many twentieth-century works. A useful tool is the filtering of searches for four-hand pieces only, and one can specify whether one is searching for arrangements or original duets (as well as choosing genres). At the time of writing, 1,809 works are listed under piano for four hands, and 2,627 for four-hand piano arrangements – the researcher has found that works are added regularly.<sup>567</sup>

## 2.9 Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned research, one can deduce that duet-playing was historically not held in such a high regard as solo piano, despite its popularity in the past. The genre was viewed as inferior. This misconception of duets as being juvenile and inartistic due to the large body of works composed for the young student has had negative effects, as duets are still not held in the same calibre as ‘serious’ genres. In his book, Lubin damningly states that ‘for better or worse the piano duet is largely a nineteenth century art’.<sup>568</sup> Christensen similarly states that the development of the original piano duet in the first half of the nineteenth century was ‘with only slight exaggeration, a cultural moment’ and he juxtaposes the decline of the duet with the further development (by other composers) of almost all genres Schubert composed in.<sup>569</sup> Even today, there seems to be some reluctance of pianists to play duets. Byrne Bodley points out that ‘modern pianists are not always willing to share the keyboard (or the limelight) to delight audiences’ with Schubert’s duets.<sup>570</sup> The tide has certainly turned in recent years however; this

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<sup>567</sup> Petrucci Music Library, Piano for four hands scores <[https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For\\_piano\\_4\\_hands](https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For_piano_4_hands)>; Piano for four hands arrangements <[https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For\\_piano\\_4\\_hands\\_\(arr\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For_piano_4_hands_(arr))> [accessed 27/03/2024].

<sup>568</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 4.

<sup>569</sup> Christensen, ‘Schubert’s Four-Hand Piano Works’, p. 82.

<sup>570</sup> Byrne Bodley, ‘Between Society and Solitude: Schubert’s Improvisations’, p. 30.

is evident in the ever-increasing quantity of duet-performances, recordings, compositions, and piano duos dedicating significant portions of their career to the genre, as well as the formalisation of duet-playing in pedagogy and andragogy on a national and international basis. The lack of availability of sheet music when duets were in their decline may have also acted as a barrier to pianists exploring this genre. This has now been remedied by the online availability of sheet music. A further challenge to overcome is the lack of focus of piano duets in piano tuition and as a call to action, organisations should consider providing training for piano teachers in this field.

As evident in this chapter, the variety and quality of piano-duet works is astounding, and many works far transgress juvenile and functional connotations. For example, let us consider Mozart's Sonata in F Major (K.497), his most mature piano duet. The ambitious scope of the work was commented on by Blom – the sonata was an 'almost uncomfortably great piece of domestic music'.<sup>571</sup> Similarly, Georgii remarks that the 'freedom and richness' of the four-hand writing in this work reached new heights.<sup>572</sup> These comments insinuate Mozart had transgressed the norms of what constituted domestic and pedagogical music. This is all the more significant when one acknowledges that during Mozart's time, there was not so much a difference between teaching/domestic pieces and concert material.<sup>573</sup> Schubert also did this, though he took the genre to its pinnacle. Byrne Bodley justly states that Schubert brought the piano duet far away from its domestic roots.<sup>574</sup> Krause accordingly expresses that while duets are often associated with educational purposes and Hausmusik, which may imply reduced aesthetic attributes, Schubert's duets challenge this notion – he does not reduce the pianistic

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<sup>571</sup> Blom, *Mozart*, p. 273.

<sup>572</sup> Aultman, 'Walter Georgii's Klaviermusik, Part II: a Translation and Commentary', p. 34.

<sup>573</sup> John Caldwell and others, 'Keyboard music' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.14945.

<sup>574</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 421.

demands.<sup>575</sup> To conclude, the intrinsic relationship of the piano duet and its associations with childhood and domestic settings should not deter us from appreciating its artistic value, but rather enhance our understanding of duets. This is particularly true in Schubert's case, who composed piano duets in a myriad of genres to the highest quality and amongst his works are fantasies, overtures, rondos, variations, divertissements, sonatas, marches, polonaises, Ländler, and Deutsche. Byrne Bodley rightly states that the best of his duets present pedagogical advantages 'which are still not widely availed of'.<sup>576</sup> Perhaps a starting point would be for examination boards to bolster their support for four-hand playing, and in particular, consider Schubert's imaginative four-hand pieces in future syllabi. The 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 2028 is imminent, and accordingly this would be a fitting time for reappraisal.

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<sup>575</sup> Andreas Krause, 'Die Klaviermusik' in *Schubert-Handbuch*, ed. by Walther Dürr and Andreas Krause, (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1997), pp. 380–433 (p. 405).

<sup>576</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 430.

## Chapter 3

### Rationale Behind the Neglect of Schubert's Duets

#### 3.1 Transcriptions and Arrangements

Due to the rise of the amateur, the market for suitable pieces flourished, especially piano works for four hands. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to claim that the piano duet rivalled the solo genre from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. The majority of these duet pieces were transcriptions and arrangements of orchestral and chamber music works, dances, and other popular tunes.<sup>577</sup> Instead of needing to attend concerts – which was a luxury for many (or simply, not possible), people could create orchestral music from the comfort of their homes. This has led to tarnishing the transcription as a poor man's symphony or a 'poor man's orchestral surrogate'.<sup>578</sup> The importance of arrangements/transcriptions during this era in disseminating repertoire was paramount; transcriptions provided contact between the public and works of art with which they may have not had the opportunity to engage otherwise.

Financial and locational factors come into play here as most people did not live in proximity to concert halls and did not possess the means to attend concerts regularly. This meant that music dominated in the realm of domestic settings (both in significance and scope), and the public performance was secondary to this. Vienna was behind some European cities such as Paris and London in this regard. For example, only one of Beethoven's piano sonatas was performed in a public Viennese concert during his lifetime; a remarkable fact to consider.

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<sup>577</sup> The terms 'transcription' and 'arrangement' are often used interchangeably. Arrangements refer to the adapting of a composition, usually for a different medium from that of the original. Composers of arrangements usually have some license for reworking parts. Transcriptions also are usually written for a different medium than the original, though the term implies a more literal and faithful adherence to the original: Don Randel, ed., 'Arrangement' in *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (USA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 53. Though, the distinction between both can be hazy.

<sup>578</sup> Thomas Christensen, 'Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 52.2 (1999), pp. 255–98 (p. 262).

Many people were familiar with works through transcriptions and there was hardly a major work that was not arranged for piano duet (often, multiple arrangements exist). These works were not always arrangements of orchestral, operatic, and chamber music works. For example, even piano solos were arranged for piano duet. For example, sonatas by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, Chopin Nocturnes, as well as Bach's Two Part-Inventions were arranged for piano duet. Evidence of the omnipresence of the arrangement/transcription includes the fact that Debussy first heard *The Rite of Spring* when he played a duet transcription of it with Stravinsky himself. Furthermore, Robert Schumann's review of Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique* was not based on the original orchestral version, but rather on Liszt's piano solo transcription. Many composers first heard their own orchestral works as piano duet arrangements/transcriptions. Unfortunately, some died with only ever hearing piano duet arrangements/transcriptions of their orchestral works.

Amateurs could now play all types of music outside of solo repertoire. When solo repertoire proved to be too difficult, which was a frequent occurrence, piano duets were utilised. In fact, they flourished since this genre was the most commercially feasible. In an article written by Christensen, he goes as far as to say that no other medium surpassed the four-hand works in terms of dissemination of repertoire.<sup>579</sup> This of course was a gold mine for publishers. The public's appetite for music, particularly transcriptions, was enormous. By the 1800s, composers could expect more return on their works as they could rely on the domestic market instead of relying on subscribers or bearing the cost themselves. For example, composers often had publishers fighting for their newly finished works, including works by Beethoven.

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<sup>579</sup> Christensen, 'Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception', p. 256.

In *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, it is noted that Madame Pleyel (the wife of a piano manufacturing businessman) wrote to her husband: ‘We will do far better to print all sorts of small works every day, which require no great advances and on which the return is sure’, a statement which demonstrates the demand for technically accessible and hence commercially viable works.<sup>580</sup> These works are often considered as mediocre pieces, and many of which are attractively titled as impromptus, bagatelles, and nocturnes – indicative of the shift from longer works to shorter works. As early as 1821, critics noted the modish craze for piano duet transcriptions, with one critic saying its popularity has gone ‘a little mad’.<sup>581</sup> Another factor at play that fed into the stereotype of piano duets being considered low-brow is the relationship between four-hand arrangements/transcriptions and pedagogy; Daub asserts that it was common for critics to consider four-hand arrangements as a more sophisticated element of piano training due to prominent arrangers such as Czerny, Burgmüller, and Bertini writing many études – and he cites the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* from 1841; ‘as much content as is bearable for not-yet-particularly-practiced students’ who require to ‘direct their attention to technical matters in an enjoyable way’.<sup>582</sup> Daub follows this to say that to publishers, the consumers were ‘dupes hoping for Wagner, but unknowingly doing mere finger exercises’.<sup>583</sup>

### 3.2 Publishers’ Ethics

As a result of the mass production of transcriptions, friction between composers, arrangers, and publishers was a common by-product. Two bones of contention here relate to the composers/arranger’s agency and the legitimacy of arrangements/transcriptions as of artistic merit. Copyright did not exist until the earlier years of the eighteenth century, imposed by the

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<sup>580</sup> Rowland, ‘The music of the early pianists (c.1830)’, p. 137.

<sup>581</sup> Christensen, ‘Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception’, p. 258.

<sup>582</sup> Daub, *Four-Handed Monsters: Four-Hand Piano Playing and Nineteenth-Century Culture*, p. 69.

<sup>583</sup> Ibid.

Statute of Anne in England in 1709. This statute protected works for twenty-one years, which was later elongated to twenty-eight years. Other European countries implemented their own copyright laws thereafter. The Berne Convention was the first international agreement on the matter, but this was not until much later, in 1886. Due to the lack of copyright laws prior to this time, publishers could compose arrangements in whatever format they saw fit, commonly without the composer's consent. To put it simply, often the heart of some publishers was very far away – too far ('Es muss eingeräumt werden, dass das Herz manches Herausgebers oft sehr weit ist – zu weit').<sup>584</sup> Consequently, the composer may not have obtained monetary gain, and they may have felt that their position as composers had been compromised by lower-quality transcriptions. The 'Great' composers were not exempt from such publishing politics – often their popularity and revered status in today's world leads one to believe that they experienced great success in their lifetimes. Most people were satisfied to accept the average music of the day, in which fads were commonplace.<sup>585</sup>

This is certainly true in the case of Beethoven – he claimed that there was an illegal piano duet arrangement of *The Ruins of Athens* (Op.113) published by Henning. Beethoven asserted that the duet was not only illegal, but of low quality. Beethoven had recently sold the work to publisher Schott, and Carl Czerny was requested to compose a solo and a duet version. Henning declined Beethoven's request to retract the publication and in response, Beethoven published a notice in a well-known music journal deeming that the Henning's version of his work was illegal and of poor standard.<sup>586</sup>

Haydn also was a victim of ruthless publishing politics. The *Seven Last Words of Christ* was originally premiered in its orchestral version, before Haydn's publishers persuaded him to

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<sup>584</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 22.

<sup>585</sup> Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos; A Social History*, p. 177.

<sup>586</sup> Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, p. 34.

arrange the work for string quartet. Haydn did so, but the publishers also suggested arranging a solo piano version, to Haydn's distaste. Despite this, the publishing firm continued to produce a solo piano version. Haydn read the drafts and made corrections rather than jeopardise his relationship with his publisher by rejecting the arrangement.

### 3.3 Repertoire and Reception of Four-Hand Piano Transcriptions

Piano duet transcriptions in a plethora of genres were constantly published. The available repertoire encompassed parlour genres such as popular songs, potpourri of opera melodies, waltzes, galops, but also included are canonical symphonic, chamber, and choral works. In Adolph Hofmeister's well-known catalogue of published works from 1844, there are almost a remarkable nine thousand works listed for piano duet.<sup>587</sup> This figure includes Germany and its neighbouring lands alone and so, this figure does not encompass publications in Italy, France or England; in which case the figure would be far larger. One tends to regard piano duets as secondary to solo music, however the earliest composers for solo piano often wrote piano duet music too, so much so that between 1760–1860 in Vienna, there was almost the same number of piano duets published as there were solo piano works. This research was conducted by musicologist Alexander Weinmann in collaboration with his brother Ignaz.<sup>588</sup> It is not stated what percentage of these works are arrangements/transcriptions, but one can safely assume that a significant portion of these works were of that ilk.<sup>589</sup> It is worth noting that with some

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<sup>587</sup> Christensen, 'Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception', p. 257. See Adolph Hofmeister, *Handbuch der musikalischen Literatur oder allgemeines systematisch- geordnetes verzeichniss der in Deutschland und in der angrenzenden Ländern gedruckten Musikalien: Dritte, bis zum Anfang des Jahres 1844 ergänzte Auflage*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Leipzig: Hofmeister, 1844), pp. 71–120.

<sup>588</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, 'The Piano Duet: A Medium for Today', p. 16.

<sup>589</sup> The contrasts in numbers of piano solo originals and piano arrangements, vs. piano duet originals and piano duet arrangements in the Petrucci Music Library is striking. At the time of writing, the number of piano solo (49,386) and piano solo arrangements (8,129) far outnumbered that of piano for four hands (1,809) and piano for four hands arrangements (2,627); Petrucci Music Library, <[https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For\\_piano](https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For_piano)> <[https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For\\_piano\\_\(arr\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For_piano_(arr))>; <[https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For\\_piano\\_4\\_hands](https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For_piano_4_hands)> <[https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For\\_piano\\_4\\_hands\\_\(arr\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:For_piano_4_hands_(arr))> [accessed 15/04/2023].

exceptions, transcriptions were usually undertaken by arrangers and thus the emergence of the professional arranger was nigh.

The rise of the piano's popularity in the late eighteenth century coincided with the exponential growth of the transcription. Haydn is a prime example of such a popular composer whose work was frequently arranged for the four-hand medium. In fact, Haydn's contribution to domestic music-making, particularly in relation to four-hand arrangements of his symphonies, is an area that warrants future research.<sup>590</sup> As early as the 1790s, there were a number of transcriptions of extracts from his symphonies – the andante movements were particularly preferred. Shepherd suggests the reasoning for this is that the slower and more stately movements mirror the refinement of domestic performance.<sup>591</sup> All of Haydn's 'London' symphonies were arranged and published with great success by the English publisher Birchall between 1798–1800. These were reprinted a number of times. It is clear that Haydn's symphonies for piano duet were amongst the first of their kind and proved to be very popular, even long after his death. In the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* from 1871 (Leipzig), one critic asserts that they are aware of no less than sixty various duet collections of his symphonies.<sup>592</sup> It is fair to assert that transcriptions in the later 1700s were popular, but that they were considerably less sophisticated than what they were to become in the 1800s. This leads us to Czerny's (1791–1857) contribution to the transcription genre, a composer who studied Haydn as a young student and who used some of Haydn's themes in his own compositions (taking another composer's theme and improvising on it was common practice at the time).

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<sup>590</sup> James Garratt, 'Haydn and posterity: the long nineteenth century' in *The Cambridge Companion to Haydn*, ed. by Caryl Clark (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 226–38 (p. 238).

<sup>591</sup> Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, p. 43.

<sup>592</sup> Christensen, 'Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception', p. 257; taken from *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 6.7 (Leipzig, February 1871), p. 101.

Czerny wrote many piano transcriptions, so much so that Harold Schonberg (author of *The Great Pianists*), suggests Czerny is the ‘most prodigious transcription factory’.<sup>593</sup> For instance, Czerny wrote at least 304 pieces consisting of melodies from 87 operas.<sup>594</sup> These works were opera-based ‘fantasies’, works that appealed greatly to much of the public who had little access to opera otherwise at that time.<sup>595</sup> However, even during his lifetime, Czerny was criticised and belittled as a ‘one-man transcription factory’ by critics.<sup>596</sup> The Grove article does note that there were hundreds of miscellaneous works written for two to eight hands, ranging from one piano to multiple, though it does not actually list any (presumably due to the mammoth task of compiling such a list, and perhaps lack of interest).<sup>597</sup> Like Schubert’s output of piano duets, Czerny composed in an extremely diverse array of genres for the medium, including original duets. This included some genres Schubert did not compose in for piano duet. Czerny’s duets encompassed sonatas, variations, potpourris, rondos, caprices, divertimentos, impromptus, fantasias, souvenirs, toccatas, romances, polonaises, waltzes, and marches.

A commonly voiced complaint of transcriptions was that such an ‘unforgivable’ number of them were of low quality and haphazardly written.<sup>598</sup> Gustav Heuser demonstrates this below:

It is horrifying and worthy of the strongest censure how masterpieces have been arranged – particularly for four hands – with such ineptitude, superficiality, and disrespect. It is enough to make plausible the ironic anecdote about the busy arranger who lays out on his desk four different scores and four empty

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<sup>593</sup> Harold C. Schonberg, ‘Keyboard Fantasies’, *Opera News*, 59.2 (1994), pp. 16–19 (p. 17).

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>595</sup> Charles Suttoni, ‘Piano fantasies and transcriptions’ *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2002), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.O005677.

<sup>596</sup> Christensen, ‘Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception’, p. 269.

<sup>597</sup> Stephan D. Lindeman and George Barth, ‘Czerny, Carl’ in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.07030.

<sup>598</sup> Christensen, ‘Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception’, p. 269.

pages of manuscript paper so that as soon as one page is filled up, he can move on without interruption to another without having to wait until the ink has dried.<sup>599</sup>

Heuser's issue with transcriptions was the fact that many composers omitted important details in the music such as melodic material or harmonies, while emphasising less important aspects – not an atypical critique of transcriptions. This brings up the issue of contrasting approaches to writing piano transcriptions. Ironically, critics will oppose unfaithfulness to the original score, but critique will also be given when the transcription has not been realised for the piano itself. It seems it is rather difficult to achieve a happy medium in this regard. Czerny, as a former pupil of Beethoven, arranged some of Beethoven's works as transcriptions (Mozart's also). He was often criticised for such perceived shortcomings and his transcriptions of Beethoven's symphonies have been used as examples of this.<sup>600</sup> Czerny attempted to stay true to the orchestral score, and he wanted to maintain as many instrumental lines as possible in the piano duet transcriptions; thus, creating a non-idiomatic pianistic style. This can be detrimental to the music if the pianist does not understand the code of practice here – a composer remaining faithful to the original is advisable in that it gives the pianist a better sense of what was in the original score, but also, the pianist can use their discretion on what to omit (this is more true of the era in question, when amateurs were making such music at home for themselves alone – but an argument could also be made that one would need a certain level of musical training to decide on what to omit when playing). Louis Köhler describes such perceived shortcomings in a scathing review:

Czerny packed both hands full, so that very often the possibility of making single tones and voices prominent ceases; indeed in the light-winged scherzos he frequently leads on a dance of leaping hands full of chords, in a manner that is absolutely impracticable; for even with the correct execution of a master's hand, the inward and essential character of the music is not always presentable.... Moreover,

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<sup>599</sup> Ibid.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid.

Czerny always brings in play the entire surface of the keyboard, from the lowest to the highest tones; hence there is an end to all alternation of colouring; a continual screaming dissonance tortures the nerve of hearing, besides falsely representing the orchestral effect. For Beethoven does not continually employ the high violin registers nor half a dozen of never resting piccolos.<sup>601</sup>

### 3.4 Beethoven's Repertoire as Transcriptions

Based on Hoffmeister's catalogue of publications, it is apparent that all of Beethoven's symphonies, string quartets, overtures, and remainder chamber works have been transcribed.<sup>602</sup> To the delight of duettists, there are three different duet arrangements of each symphony. Unusually, his opera *Fidelio*, masses, and piano concertos have been transcribed for piano duet; this is particularly striking as these genres include solo genres and vocalists. Even his thirty-two solo piano sonatas were arranged for piano duet by Louis Köhler and published by Litolf. Some of these seem peculiar; concertos were typically used to showcase the prowess of the soloist. With transcriptions of vocal music, such as Beethoven's *Fidelio* and masses which include SATB, there is the inevitable absence of the libretto in the piano duet versions. In such works, the vocal lines are naturally amalgamated with the orchestral parts. The existence of such seemingly unidiomatic four-hand transcriptions demonstrates the high demand for such works. Another arranger of Beethoven's music, August Eberhard Müller, successfully arranged the piano reduction of the seminal *Eroica Symphony* (Op.55). Beethoven admired this musician as a composer, conductor, and arranger.<sup>603</sup> This transcription was published by Peters in Leipzig (1814). A critic positively wrote that:

Since there are so few orchestras complete and accomplished enough to perform such a difficult work suitably, and since even when one has heard it so performed, it is still very interesting to repeat this music to oneself on a good fortepiano, we will be grateful to the publisher and to Music Director Müller for

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<sup>601</sup> Ibid.

<sup>602</sup> Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>603</sup> Shepherd, *The Drawing Room Symphony: A History of the Piano Duet Transcription*, p. 48.

having provided such a complete keyboard reduction so well suited to the instrument as one could expect from the insights and talents of Mr M. on the basis of other similar works. The list of distinguished composers for four hands is not extensive, and accomplished keyboard players will find rewarding work here.<sup>604</sup>

### 3.5 Schubert: An Anti-Virtuosic Figure?

Schubert's deep affinity with the piano has long been entrenched in his reception history – Schubert is often shown in iconography to be sitting at the piano surrounded by friends, and primary sources are consistent with this image too.<sup>605</sup> Though, in contrast to Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, Schubert was not born into a family of professional musicians and thus he was not expected to become a virtuoso.<sup>606</sup> Schubert's playing was not considered virtuosic in comparison to his contemporaries; he was never recognised as a virtuoso as was Beethoven, Liszt, and Chopin.<sup>607</sup> Once again, Schubert is placed under the shadow of Beethoven. Beethoven's identity as both a virtuoso and composer was well established and his virtuosity no doubt was channelled into his compositions, while Schubert as a composer is at the forefront in the popular imagination over Schubert the pianist. This contrasts to Mozart and Beethoven, who were revered as both composers and pianists. It is telling that when Hutchings discussed Schubert's piano sonatas, he points out a particular personal trait of Schubert which 'would have been good in the sonatas had he been a pianist' – the last part of the remark is one that an author certainly would not write about Mozart or Beethoven, for example.<sup>608</sup> Eduard Hanslick (in 1869) in a chapter titled 'Epoche: Beethoven – Schubert' as part of his book on Viennese

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<sup>604</sup> Wayne M. Senner, Robin Wallace and William Rhea Meredith, *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions by German Contemporaries*, Vol 2 (University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 35.

<sup>605</sup> See Gardner's subsection on this iconography: Matthew Gardner, 'Schubert and the Viennese Piano' in *Schubert's Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 93–115 (pp. 106–08).

<sup>606</sup> Martin Chusid, 'Schubert's chamber music: before and after Beethoven' in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 174–92 (p. 174).

<sup>607</sup> Olga Samaroff, 'The Piano Music of Schubert', *The Music Quarterly*, 14.4 (1928), pp. 596–609 (p. 599).

<sup>608</sup> Hutchings, *Schubert, The Master Musicians*, p. 144.

music history, Hanslick details Beethoven's life as a pianist, while Schubert is marked as a lesser-known composer – he must not have been on Hanslick's radar as a pianist.<sup>609</sup> To further substantiate this, Schubert is not mentioned in the section on virtuoso concerts in 1800–1830 (the section included biographies on Beethoven, Hummel, Moscheles, Weber, Bocklet, and some others).<sup>610</sup> In *Schubert's Piano*, published at the tail end of this thesis in 2024, Lindmayr-Brandl quite rightly poses the questions: Did Schubert have pianistic limitations or did he lack overall competency? Or perhaps he did have the ability to undertake a performing career but wished not to?<sup>611</sup> It is the purpose of this section to add some further insight into this discussion.

There are approximately forty historical documents describing Schubert's playing – appendix 7 provides a selection of these comments, including self-appraisal by Schubert himself. These sources include Schubert's aptitude as not only a soloist, but as a keen duettist and sensitive accompanist too. From this, one can determine his pianistic prowess. It must be forewarned however that fully trusting primary sources regarding Schubert's life can be problematic, as the information can be incorrect, unreliable, clouded by subjectivity (whether consciously or unconsciously), and the documentation can vary depending on the changing perceptions of the composer at different periods. However, this researcher finds that the sources regarding Schubert's playing are quite consistent in content, and this includes accounts from his family members, friends, peers, and reviewers.

While it is important not to fall for the trope of Schubert the born prodigy, he was clearly skilled at playing piano from a young age. From a young age, his brother Ignaz was

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<sup>609</sup> Eduard Hanslick, *Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1869), pp. 273–85 <[https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_yxMQAAAAYAAJ/page/n297/mode/2up?view=theater](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_yxMQAAAAYAAJ/page/n297/mode/2up?view=theater)> [accessed 01/07/2024].

<sup>610</sup> Ibid., pp. 208–27.

<sup>611</sup> Lindmayr-Brandl, 'Franz Schubert as a Pianist', p. 9.

fascinated with Schubert's piano progress. Schubert's precious talents are evidenced in the following account by Ignaz, his brother who was twelve years older:

I was much astonished when, after only a few months, he informed me that he now had no further use for my teaching and would be quite able to get on by himself. And indeed he went so far in a short time that I myself had to acknowledge him as a master far surpassing me and no longer to be caught up with [by me].<sup>612</sup>

That being said, the following account by von Spaun reveals that upon entering the Stadtkonvikt, Schubert 'already played quite nicely' but that Schubert declared 'he found Mozart very difficult to play well.'<sup>613</sup> However, this comment presumably refers to stylistic issues rather than one of technical competence (and possibly Schubert's humility is at play here). It was documented in a letter that 'it was only later he made great strides in his piano playing'.<sup>614</sup> Nonetheless, Schubert received 'sehr gut' (highest grade) in all but one of his school reports.<sup>615</sup> Wenzel Ružička was his music instructor. Upon completion of his second year at the Stadtkonvikt, a report was sent to the Hofmusikgraf Kufstein: 'especial attention should be paid to the musical education of Franz Schubert, since he shows so excellent a talent for the art of music'.<sup>616</sup> Schubert also was promoted to the position of first violin in the Stadtkonvikt orchestra, and even conducted them when Ružička was absent. His clear talents from a young age in not only piano, but his ability to sing and play the violin, no doubt had an influence upon his piano compositions. The singing style needed from the piano in many of his melodies may have come from his ability to sing clearly, which stemmed from his partimento training, and the orchestral nature so often evident in his piano works (including his piano duet

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<sup>612</sup> Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, p. 921.

<sup>613</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, pp. 126–27.

<sup>614</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>615</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 83.

<sup>616</sup> Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, p. 18.

works) is likely a result of string music never being far from his mind, whether as a player or composer.

There is some criticism (or faint praise?) on his piano playing. In *The Great Pianists*, Schonberg comments that while Schubert was not a ‘brilliant’ pianist like his contemporary Beethoven, ‘he could get around the piano well enough’.<sup>617</sup> Hiller’s comment similarly notes that Schubert’s playing ‘in spite of not inconsiderable fluency, was very far from being that of a master’.<sup>618</sup> Schubert stopped playing the ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy while performing it according to witnesses, and claimed ‘Let the Devil play the stuff!’.<sup>619</sup> Hüttenbrenner notes that Schubert also found it difficult to play his own Sonata in C sharp Major ‘without stumbling’; though he ascribes this to the difficulty of the writing, not necessarily to Schubert’s lack of ability.<sup>620</sup> At the premiere of ‘Der Erlkönig’, Schubert (eighteen years of age) was questioned as to why he substituted the triplets for quavers, to which he replied: ‘They are too difficult for me: a virtuoso may play them’.<sup>621</sup> In this account however, it mentions this omission occurred the *second* time when Schubert played this work during the premiere. Rather than this revealing that he was incapable of playing the part, it suggests the work is a challenging work to play for all due to the repeated octaves and chords in the right hand, all framed within a fast tempo.<sup>622</sup> In Schubert’s defence he was still attending school when he premiered this and furthermore, in the last year of his life, he played his challenging Variations in A flat Major with one of the most accomplished pianists in Vienna – Karl Maria von Bocklet. He also performed the ‘Grand

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<sup>617</sup> Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Pianists* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), p. 78.

<sup>618</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 90.

<sup>619</sup> Schiff, ‘Schubert’s piano sonatas: thoughts about interpretation and performance’, p. 193.

<sup>620</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 185.

<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>622</sup> There are four versions of this work composed by Schubert, one in which the triplets are replaced by quavers, thus partially alleviating technical challenges. For a detailed discussion, see: Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl, ‘Schuberts Erlkönig: Entstehung, Werkgestalt und Dramatisierung des Werkkonzepts’, *Musikgeschichte als Verstehensgeschichte. Festschrift für Gernot Gruber zum 65. Geburtstag* (2004), pp. 261–77. When Schubert sent his songbook to Goethe, the version of ‘Der Erlkönig’ he included was the version with quavers. An account is provided in: Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, pp. 174–178.

Duo' with Gahy at a Schubertiad. To perform such a musically and technically demanding work to success bears testimony to Schubert's playing, especially as his illness was progressing. Although we do not know if Schubert played primo or secondo for this, both primo and secondo are of equal proportions in terms of material. The Grove entry on Schubert documents the success of the performance of the variations with Bocklet:

Bocklet, Schuppanzigh and Linke played one of the piano trios, after which Schubert and Bocklet played piano duets (including the magnificent Ab Variations) so brilliantly that, Spaun recalled, 'everyone was enchanted and the highly delighted Bocklet embraced his friend [Schubert]',<sup>623</sup>

To further illustrate his mastery over the instrument, Schubert, to his satisfaction, also performed the variations from his Sonata in A Minor (D.845), which as Lindmayr-Brandl puts it, 'no small amount of pianistic skill is required to execute them'.<sup>624</sup> Schubert's unique manner of playing is evidenced in his brother Ferdinand's comments. What is also worth noting is Ferdinand's assertion that Schubert did not *represent* himself as a pianoforte virtuoso. Ferdinand wrote this revealing extract regarding his brother's playing, taken from the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*:

Although Schubert never represented himself as a pianoforte virtuoso, any connoisseur who had the chance of hearing him in private circles will nevertheless attest that he knew how to treat this instrument with mastery and in a quite peculiar (original) manner, so that a great specialist in music, to whom he once played his last sonatas, exclaimed: 'Schubert, I almost admire your playing even more than your compositions!'<sup>625</sup>

Similarly, in the Grove article on 'Keyboard music', it is posited that Schubert 'never billed himself as a pianist'.<sup>626</sup> This however does not mean that he did not have the skills to do so and

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<sup>623</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>624</sup> Lindmayr-Brandl, 'Franz Schubert as a Pianist', p. 18.

<sup>625</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, pp. 36–37.

<sup>626</sup> Caldwell and others, 'Keyboard music' in *Grove Music Online*.

that he was not an all-round solid pianist. This is evident from the contemporary accounts we have of his playing as a soloist (including as an improviser), an accompanist, a duettist, and as a pianist in other ensembles. The fact he also wrote so extensively for piano in his short lifetime – including solo piano sonatas, piano sonata fragments, three sets of Impromptus, *Moment musicaux*, over 400 dances, and many original piano duet works (not to mention his compositions with piano e.g. Lieder and other chamber music) is clear testament of his affinity with and deep understanding of the piano.

Schubert was considered ‘one of our most excellent pianoforte players’ by Viennese actress and professional musician Sophie Müller (pianist, guitarist, and singer).<sup>627</sup> More substantial is this testament by school friend Stadler: ‘To see and hear him play his own pianoforte compositions was a real pleasure. A beautiful touch, a quiet hand, clear, neat playing, full of insight and feeling. He still belonged to the old school of good pianoforte players, whose fingers had not yet begun to attack the poor keys like birds of prey.’<sup>628</sup> Anselm Hüttenbrenner noted that Schubert was not elegant as a pianist, ‘but he was a safe and fluent one’ and that ‘he read all the clefs with equal ease and even in the mezzo-soprano and baritone clefs no note of importance escaped him, just like our Papa Salieri who was a remarkable score player’.<sup>629</sup> To be compared to Salieri’s level of score reading bears testimony to Schubert’s ability. Regarding Schubert’s playing, Gahy commented on his ‘clear, fluent playing, the individual conception, the manner of performance, sometimes delicate and sometimes full of fire and energy’.<sup>630</sup> These sudden contrasts in mood have often been commented upon in Schubert’s compositions. It has also been stated that Schubert’s capacity to express emotion through music far surpassed his technical prowess; ‘With Schubert, the expression of the

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<sup>627</sup> Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, p. 761.

<sup>628</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 146.

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

emotions of the world within him obviously far outweighed his technical development'.<sup>631</sup> This comment matches Kinderman's assertion that in Schubert's compositions, musical expression presides over technical virtuosity.<sup>632</sup> Similarly, Joseph Lanz, a friend of Schubert provides the following account of Schubert's playing:

Schubert's piano playing was nearly that of a Kapellmeister's, only much more tender. He also didn't have suitable hands but short, thick fingers. It is out of the question that he had a beautiful finger action or even good fingering. In spite of this, his playing conveyed such clarity in the presentation of ideas, especially in his own compositions, that one would have had to have heard him oneself in order to have gained a true impression of this.<sup>633</sup>

Patricia Fallows-Hammond suggests that Schubert's small hands and shorter fingers may have resulted in a disposition to using repeated figures and chords in his compositions, though it is my view that this relation is reductionist; it is more feasible that his penchant for repeated figures stem from his orchestral style of composing.<sup>634</sup> What might be more contributory towards Schubert not playing and composing virtuoso repertoire is the fact he more than likely had smaller than average hands – his official height was 5'2. Lindmayr-Brandl also suggests his physique was a hindrance in pursuing a virtuoso path.<sup>635</sup> We also know that he performed his 'Wanderer' Fantasy (which is his most virtuosic piano work) though he apparently stopped playing the piece during the final movement in frustration. This work is technically demanding and muscular and may have just exceeded Schubert's technical grasp at times, as the repeated double octaves and chords may have caused strain. Though, credit must

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<sup>631</sup> Ibid., p. 330.

<sup>632</sup> William Kinderman, 'Schubert's piano music: probing the human condition' in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 155–73 (p. 155).

<sup>633</sup> Rita Steblin and Frederick Stocken, 'Studying with Sechter: Newly Recovered Reminiscences about Schubert by His Forgotten Friend, the Composer Joseph Lanz', *Music & Letters*, 88.2 (2007), pp. 226–65 (p. 237).

<sup>634</sup> Patricia Fallows-Hammond, *Three Hundred Years at the Keyboard: A Piano Sourcebook from Bach to the Moderns: Historical Background, Composers, Styles, Compositions, National Schools* (California: Ross Books, 1984), p. 85.

<sup>635</sup> Lindmayr-Brandl, 'Franz Schubert as a Pianist', p. 27.

be given to Schubert to have played through the other three movements, which consists of approximately seventeen minutes, while the last movement is just c. four minutes long.

Based on the accounts of his playing, it is evident that while he was not a virtuoso, he was an extraordinarily versatile and musical player. He could fluently play legato, cantabile, and conjure a myriad of tonal colours as required by his compositions.<sup>636</sup> His style of playing was not influenced by the virtuoso movement which was emerging. This is evidenced in his letters, as he writes he strongly dislikes the banging of the piano that virtuoso pianists exhibited.<sup>637</sup> This perceived lack of virtuosity did the reception of his music no harm during his lifetime. In the 1820s, he was one of the most published composers, known in particular for his command of miniature works. In fact, the more moderate technical demands in his works benefitted the contemporaneous reception of his music, as the more mild technical challenges satisfied the public's appetite for playable piano works – in particular, duets.<sup>638</sup> The truth is more nuanced, however. Schubert did not simplify his pieces purely to meet publishers' expectations; some of his repertoire was difficult for amateurs. Upon Schubert trying to attain more published works, publisher Probst wrote to Schubert:

Only I must frankly confess to you that our public does not yet sufficiently and generally understand the peculiar, often ingenious, but perhaps now and then somewhat curious procedures of your mind's creations. Kindly, therefore, bear this in mind on sending me your MSS. Selected songs, not too difficult pianoforte compositions for 2 and 4 hands, agreeable and easily comprehensible, would seem to me suitable for the attainment of your purpose and my wishes.<sup>639</sup>

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<sup>636</sup> During Schubert's generation, legato playing became the default way of playing unless otherwise indicated: Mario Aschauer, 'Viennese Pianoforte Treatises as a Reflection of Schubert's Pianistic Audience' in *Schubert's Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 136–58 (p. 153).

<sup>637</sup> Schiff, 'Schubert's piano sonatas: thoughts about interpretation and performance', p. 193.

<sup>638</sup> On Piano Library, Schubert's solo piano works are ranked in order of difficulty on a scale from 1 to 5; the majority of works (465 out of 555) are ranked 1.5 to 2/2.5 i.e. demanding moderate technical facility. I suggest the large number of his dances may have skewed this; Piano Library, *Works by difficulty; Franz Schubert* <<https://www.pianolibrary.org/difficulty/schubert/>> [accessed 28/04/2023].

<sup>639</sup> Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, pp. 549–50.

A further example of Schubert's piano works being challenging for amateurs to play, is the second set of impromptus, which were deemed 'too difficult for little pieces' and considered 'unmarketable' by Schott's Parisian contacts.<sup>640</sup> Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Schubert's music was broadly performed by a type of amateur considered connoisseurs, that is, those who worked outside of the music profession, but nonetheless had comprehensive knowledge of music. Numerous duets, particularly those in the later years, demand a high level of ability, which would have appealed to this cohort. For example, the *Divertissement sur des motifs originaux français*, published during Schubert's lifetime, is considered an advanced level work to play, according to Weekley and Arganbright.<sup>641</sup>

Based on the aforementioned discussion, one can conclude that Schubert, while skilled, was not a virtuoso. His attitude in fact was 'dismissive, or 'at least critical' towards superficial virtuosity; Lindmayr-Brandl further points out that the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe's volume of Concert Pieces contains only four compositions, all of which are scored for strings, and that he never wrote a piano concerto.<sup>642</sup> The above discussion poses the question, should one perceive Schubert as an anti-virtuoso figure? The term 'anti-virtuoso' is a seldom-used term which does not have a definable meaning in scholarship thus far, but it refers to the preference of a more intimate sentiment in performance, in which less emphasis is placed on sheer endurance and speed.<sup>643</sup> An obvious example of an anti-virtuoso is the impressionist composer Eric Satie, who, while composing *Socrate*, remarked 'Let us mistrust Art: it is often nothing but virtuosity'.<sup>644</sup> On the other hand, it may come as a surprise that some may consider Clara

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<sup>640</sup> Daverio, "One More Beautiful Memory of Schubert": Schumann's Critique of the Impromptus, D. 935', p. 607.

<sup>641</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 103.

<sup>642</sup> Lindmayr-Brandl, 'Franz Schubert as a Pianist', pp. 27–29.

<sup>643</sup> One example of the use of the term: Pianist Daniil Trifonov has been dubbed as 'The Anti-Virtuoso in an Age of Virtuosos'; Peter Goddard, 'Daniil Trifonov: The anti-virtuoso in an age of virtuosos', *The Globe and Mail*, 31 January 2018 <<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/music/daniil-trifonov-the-anti-virtuoso-in-an-age-of-virtuosos/article37812489/>> [accessed 07/05/2022].

<sup>644</sup> Jane Ginsborg, "The brilliance of perfection" or "pointless finish"? What virtuosity means to musicians', *Musicae Scientiae*, 22.4 (2018), pp. 454–73 (p. 456).

Schumann an ‘anti-virtuosic virtuoso’ (as George Grove does), since her contribution to performance signalled the transformation from virtuosity to interpretation.<sup>645</sup> This is clearly evidenced in her telling statement on virtuosity in 1841:

I pity the musician who has no understanding of this magnificent art [Beethoven’s sonatas]. The less I play in public now, the more I hate the whole world of mechanical virtuoso showpieces; concert pieces like Henselt’s Etudes, Thalberg’s Fantasies, Liszt, etc. have become completely repugnant to me...I will play them only if I need to for a concert tour.<sup>646</sup>

I argue that Schubert also did the same, though the virtuosity during his lifetime refers to the *style brillant* of the Classical Period, rather than the concept of Romantic virtuosity.<sup>647</sup> Historical accounts provide an insight into Schubert’s understanding of ‘virtuosity’. Schubert’s playing indicates that he did not play in the manner of the rising virtuosos and that he disliked the contemporary pianists who attacked ‘the poor keys like birds of prey’.<sup>648</sup> Reminiscent here is the famous Thalberg’s playing, whose playing is often juxtaposed with Liszt’s virtuosity. Thalberg focused heavily on the legato cantabile style and his manner of performing was ‘unostentatious’.<sup>649</sup> Clara Schumann and Thalberg’s mode of performance relates to Schubert in that he did not present himself in a showy manner as per the accounts on his playing, and we know that Schubert also focused on the legato cantabile style (for example, he was pleased when listeners remarked upon this element of his playing and he criticised the chopping style of other pianists).<sup>650</sup>

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<sup>645</sup> Žarko Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject: The Reception of Instrumental Virtuosity, c.1815–c.1850* (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), p. 1.

<sup>646</sup> Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* (Cornell University Press, 2024), p. 255.

<sup>647</sup> Contemporary understanding of the *style brillant* encompassed not only ‘virtuosity’ and ‘technical bravura’, but it also referred to ‘a striking and expressive delivery’: Christine Martin, ‘Schubert and the *Style Brillant*: Variation and Figuration in Schubert’s Concertante Chamber Music with Piano’ in *Schubert’s Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 241–58 (pp. 241–42).

<sup>648</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 90.

<sup>649</sup> Hamilton, ‘The virtuoso tradition’, p. 58.

<sup>650</sup> Schubert commented upon his own performance in Upper Austria: ‘I presented my variations and marches with a nice success. The variations from my new 2-hand sonata were especially well received; I played them myself and apparently not without an angel over my shoulder, because a few people assured me that under my

However, Liszt, who spearheaded the virtuoso movement, was a great admirer of Schubert and he was aware that even for virtuoso pianists, Schubert requires a high level of ability.<sup>651</sup> This lies in contrast to the past consensus of Schubert's piano music. Even Dunsby admits that he was first introduced to Schubert's piano music in form of the early virtuoso Romantic movement and cites technically challenging works such as the scherzo from Schubert's Piano Sonata in D Major (D.850), the F Minor *Moment Musical* (D.780), and the Piano Sonata in C Minor (D.958) as examples; however, he admits that after reading scholarly articles, that he began to 'sink into the general habit' of considering Schubert's piano music as one of the least significant aspects in the assessment of his music.<sup>652</sup> This anecdote opens a wider discussion as to the misconceptions perpetuated in the narrative of Schubert's reception history and this feeds into the trope of Schubert's works not being pianistic. Perhaps one should take into account that Liszt himself regarded Schubert as the virtuoso Schubert – this perception should be further considered in the reappraisal of Schubert as a pianist.<sup>653</sup> The meaning of a virtuoso has augmented throughout time and virtuosity is now understood as far exceeding the qualities of speed, accuracy, and endurance alone. This is evidenced in the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music's* entry for virtuoso as an adjective: 'There is sometimes an implication that a virtuoso performance excludes emotional and expressive artistry, or subdues it to technical display, but a true virtuoso is both a technician and artist'.<sup>654</sup> In a study from 2018 (n=102), professional musicians and music students undertook a keyword-in-context analysis

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hands the keys became like voices. If this is true I am really pleased, because I can't stand this damnable chopping that even quite advanced pianists indulge in. It pleases neither the ear nor the spirit.' : Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>651</sup> Jonathon Dunsby, 'Liszt's Symbiosis: The Question of Virtuosity and the Concerto Arrangement of Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy' in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, ed. by Robert Doran (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), pp. 239–67 (p. 239).

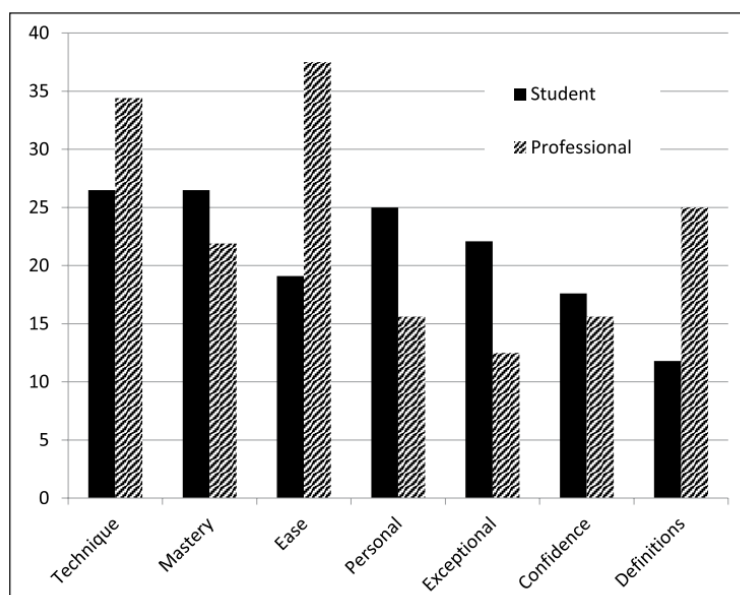
<sup>652</sup> Ibid., pp. 262–63.

<sup>653</sup> Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>654</sup> Michael Kennedy and Joyce Kennedy, 'Virtuoso' in *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music* (Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 793.

and a more in-depth analysis as to their understanding of virtuosity.<sup>655</sup> The results are illuminating. While ‘technique’ arises as a highly-associated quality in both the professionals and students, far more professionals associate the quality of ‘ease’ with virtuosity. Furthermore, and quite surprisingly, the trait of ‘exceptional’ is less associated with virtuosity than the trait of ‘personal’ in both cohorts (see figure below). Schubert’s intimate genres and more personal style of playing required in his piano works fares well here and perhaps he may not be considered an anti-virtuosic figure, but rather a virtuoso through a modern lens or even an anti-virtuosic virtuoso.

**Figure 3.1: Characteristics of Virtuosity** <sup>656</sup>



Schubert’s more intimate style of playing rendered him from attaining virtuoso status in the past, though is it appropriate to label his piano music wholly non-virtuosic? This has been a common misconception; Hutchings called upon more ‘humble’ players to play Schubert’s piano duets, insinuating the virtuosos would consider Schubert’s duets to be beneath

<sup>655</sup> Ginsborg, “‘The brilliance of perfection’ or ‘pointless finish’? What virtuosity means to musicians’, pp. 454–73.

<sup>656</sup> Percentage of respondents’ associations to virtuosity; Ibid., p. 460.

them.<sup>657</sup> I argue that some of his piano works – including his duets – do require virtuosity, notwithstanding the obvious example of the ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy. A review of a virtuoso pianist’s recording of Schubert’s Piano Sonata in E Major (D.157) and his Piano Sonata in G Major (D.894) highlights this debate; the reviewer suggests in jest that a ‘supervirtuoso’ such as Volodos playing Schubert’s most ‘anti-virtuoso’ sonatas would have an unsuccessful outcome.<sup>658</sup> Regarding Schubert’s Piano Sonata in G Major (D.894), it is claimed that while the sonata is ‘anti-virtuosic’, its many challenges lie almost exclusively in its interpretation.<sup>659</sup> There may be some truth behind this – it must be said that at times his virtuosity is intimate and requires a private sense of virtuosity. This is summed up nicely by Schiff: ‘He was not interested in bravura; he doesn’t try to impress, to overwhelm’.<sup>660</sup> In 2020, Dunsby similarly notes the narrative that Schubert’s solo piano writing is regarded as ‘only tangentially, almost accidentally virtuosic’.<sup>661</sup> However, this style of playing certainly must not be understood as any form of ‘semi-pianism’, a term which Hartmann uses for Schubert’s writing.<sup>662</sup> Moreover, Olga Samaroff goes as far as to say that (at least in 1928) it is not fair to ascribe the lack of performances of most of his piano sonatas solely to the ‘egotistic demand for outward effectiveness and personal success’ on the performer’s part.<sup>663</sup> Rather, there are such demands on the pianist that make the playing ‘so difficult and ungrateful’.<sup>664</sup> Samaroff remarks that the neglect behind his piano works is less to do with issues of form and length, but rather to do with Schubert’s pianistic writing; she argues that many of Schubert’s piano sonatas would be

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<sup>657</sup> Hutchings, *Schubert, The Master Musicians*, p. 153.

<sup>658</sup> Jed Distler, ‘Schubert Volodos/Sony’, *ClassicsToday.com* <<https://www.classicstoday.com/review/review-7552/>> [accessed 05/05/2022].

<sup>659</sup> See video description: Ashish Xiangyi Kuma, *Schubert: Piano Sonata No.18 in G Major, D.894 (Volodos)*, YouTube, 4 September 2015, <[https://youtu.be/bX\\_IjA3x\\_rw](https://youtu.be/bX_IjA3x_rw)> [accessed 05/05/2022].

<sup>660</sup> Schiff, ‘Schubert’s piano sonatas: thoughts about interpretation and performance’, p. 192.

<sup>661</sup> Dunsby, ‘Liszt’s Symbiosis: The Question of Virtuosity and the Concerto Arrangement of Schubert’s Wanderer Fantasy’, p. 239.

<sup>662</sup> Bela Hartmann, ‘Schubert, Brahms and Stravinsky – A Neglected Piano Trio?’, *European Piano Teachers Association Piano Journal* (December 2009) <<http://www.belahartmann.com/sbsepta.pdf>> [accessed 19/02/2022], p. 1.

<sup>663</sup> Samaroff, ‘The Piano Music of Schubert’, p. 599.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*

more successful in the repertory, if he possessed more ‘imagination’ as displayed by other major piano composers, who were virtuosi.<sup>665</sup> While this comment comes from 1928, such perceptions of Schubert’s piano writing still linger. Why is this so? More recently and contrary to Samaroff, some Schubertian scholars such as Litschauer have argued that Schubert’s piano sonatas even before 1818 encapsulate his penchant for experimentation, thus putting Samaroff’s comment regarding Schubert’s imagination into question.<sup>666</sup>

Unflattering perceptions of Schubert’s piano writing exist because some pianists claim his compositional style for the piano is not so pianistic and that his pieces do not fit the hands well. Ham goes as far as to remark that this ‘often comes as a big surprise’ to those trying to play Schubert.<sup>667</sup> However, this is an outdated and prejudiced opinion requiring critique. This debate is in its infancy in Schubertian scholarship and is currently topical with the *Schubert am Klavier* Conference hosted in 2019.<sup>668</sup> This conference resulted in the culmination of the recent publication of *Schubert’s Piano* in 2024, published at the tail end of this current thesis.<sup>669</sup> Necessary for this discussion is to define the term unpianistic – for it can have various meanings and is open to a degree of subjectivity. Unpianistic may refer to piano compositions that are not particularly idiomatic to the piano and its capabilities. The term may also refer to music that encompasses awkward leaps, finger-twisters requiring unorthodox fingering, fast repeated figures, over-populated chords, and even physical oddities. Surely, if all Schubert’s piano writing was akin to that of the incessant triplet octaves in the right hand of ‘Der Erlkönig’, calling the piano writing unpianistic might be more justified, but is it appropriate to deem all

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<sup>665</sup> Ibid., p. 600.

<sup>666</sup> Walburga Litschauer, ‘Unknown Versions of Schubert’s Early Piano Sonatas’ in *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Practice, Analysis*, ed. by Brian Newbould (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 101–06 (p. 101).

<sup>667</sup> Ham, ‘Franz Schubert’s Impromptus D.899 and D.935: An Historical and Stylistic Study’, p. 18.

<sup>668</sup> Programme titles and abstracts: ‘Symposion: Schubert am Klavier/Schubert at the Pianoforte 14-16 November 2019 (Universität Tübingen) <<https://uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/philosophische-fakultaet/fachbereiche/altertums-und-kunstwissenschaften/musikwissenschaftliches-institut/forschung/tagungen/schubert-am-klavier/>> [accessed 12/05/2024].

<sup>669</sup> Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin, eds, *Schubert’s Piano* (Cambridge University Press, 2024).

his piano music unpianistic? In this vein, Börner deems some of Schubert's piano music a victim of 'Erk König syndrome', pointing out Schubert's tendency to write repeated octaves and chords in fast tempi.<sup>670</sup> He cites D.1 as an example, though bear in mind Schubert was a youth then, and his style developed greatly throughout his life – for instance, Schubert's later 'Lebensstürme' is also orchestral in its sonic implications, but is much more pianistic to play than D.1. The view of Schubert's piano writing as piano-unfriendly is not particularly uncommon nor is it a recently emerged claim. Even though the articulation of these quick repetitions such as that in 'Der Erk König' would have been much more approachable on a Viennese-action instrument, Schubert received contemporary criticism for this perceived shortcoming. In a review by the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* of Schubert's songs, a critic asserts Schubert is 'addicted to giving too many notes to the piano part, either at once or in succession' (this could refer to thick chords and repetitions of notes/chords). It is interesting that this is a contemporaneous review; what would this reviewer say if they had experienced Schubert's piano parts on a modern piano, upon which repetitions are more difficult? What is certain is that in 'Der Erk König' or 'Gretchen am Spinnrade' and by extension, Schubert's other music involving the piano, the rapid succession of notes form an integral part of the narrative (in this case of the above songs, a galloping horse and the spinning wheel) and so if they were never written in this manner, something quintessential of Schubert would be lost.<sup>671</sup>

Firstly, it is essential to probe deeper into the pianos that Schubert wrote for and was accustomed to. The instrument that Schubert wrote for was vastly different than the more resonant piano today.<sup>672</sup> By the 1820s though, there had been many advancements in the

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<sup>670</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, pp. 115–56.

<sup>671</sup> The continuous figures of the piano part of 'Gretchen am Spinnrade', representing Gretchen spinning the wheel, is also a prime example of Schubert's ability to evoke musical imagery and present a narrative.

<sup>672</sup> For a detailed account, see: Matthew Gardner, 'Schubert and the Viennese Piano', pp. 93–115.

Viennese piano, including a wider range of up to six and a half octaves and the tone production was more robust than previously. The growing accessibility of six-octave pianos allowed composers such as Schubert to use a wider range in their compositions, such as that in Schubert's later piano sonatas (approximately five and a half octaves).<sup>673</sup> Arganbright and Weekley observe that the six octave pianos that were becoming more available by the early 1800s, were termed 'duet range' pianos.<sup>674</sup> Did Schubert use the additional notes available to him? In the Grove article on Schubert, it is posited that Schubert 'made little use' of the additional lower notes on Viennese keyboards as the instruments he had on loan did not possess these notes.<sup>675</sup> In the Grove article on 'Keyboard music', it is mentioned that Schubert did not make use of the added fourth in the bass in Viennese pianos in his last three sonatas (which became available in Vienna in approximately 1816).<sup>676</sup> Gardner similarly indicates that in six of Schubert's piano sonatas dating 1823–1826, Schubert tends to avoid going lower than an F1 on the now-available six and a half octave keyboard, even when the voice-leading calls for this.<sup>677</sup> This may be due to Schubert aiming for these works to be as accessible as possible, as the general public at large would not possess the most up-to-date instrument. However, while maybe not utilised to their utmost extremities, lower and higher extremes often arise in both Schubert's piano solo and duet compositions. In his duets, this may be truer, since there are two pianists sharing one keyboard and a wider array of notes must be used. For example, in his Variations in A flat Major for four hands (D.814), he does go as low as E flat 1 in the sixth variation. The wider use of range aids with playability and overall comfort of playing duets –

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<sup>673</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 318.

<sup>674</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 4.

<sup>675</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>676</sup> Caldwell and others, 'Keyboard music' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>677</sup> Matthew Gardner, 'Schubert and the Viennese Piano', p. 109.

if a composer writing a duet does not use the extremes of the keyboard, both pianists are more physically restricted, and clashes are more common.<sup>678</sup>

The key action of these pianos from 1770 onwards had a quick and sensitive response to touch and its action became known as the *Wienermechanik*. Piano duo Weekley and Arganbright have had the opportunity several times to play a piano which Schubert frequently played (built by Konrad Graf in approximately 1810) and their conclusion of the instrument is that the action is ‘very easy’.<sup>679</sup> The Viennese piano contrasted greatly with the English action or the *Stoßtechnik*, which was developed simultaneously. The tone production of the English action pianos was more powerful, and many pianists had their own view as to which version was superior. Some German composers such as Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms remained loyal to the Viennese style piano and we know that Schubert was gifted a five-octave fortepiano in 1814; likely a Graf.<sup>680</sup> Graf was a popular German-Austrian piano maker whose pianos were played by Beethoven, Chopin, and both Robert and Clara Schumann.<sup>681</sup> Due to Schubert often changing address, he did not always have access to a piano. The lack of accessibility to a piano throughout his life was first documented in his close friend Spaun’s account; Schubert’s ‘means were never sufficient for him to buy or hire a pianoforte and he was restricted to composing his masterpieces at the writing-table’.<sup>682</sup> Schubert may also have made alternative arrangements to access a piano as a result of not owning one for some portions of his life. However, the truth is more nuanced than what Spaun’s account may suggest. Similarly, Neumeyer agrees that von Spaun’s account was problematic, as it turns out Schubert had a

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<sup>678</sup> For example, if a composer’s range is largely focused on the middle section of the piano, the primo’s left hand and the secondo’s right hand may encounter clashes more often. The duo may have to alter fingering more frequently. Furthermore, there may be some physical awkwardness, such as the secondo having to tuck their left arm in to reach the notes. Further discussion of the middle/inside hands (includes example of Schubert’s Rondo in D Major, D.608): Oinas, ‘From Four-Handed Monster to All-Embracing Vishnu: The Case of “Middle Hands” within a Piano Four Hands Duo’, pp. 1–19.

<sup>679</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, pp. 83–84.

<sup>680</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 38.

<sup>681</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 318.

<sup>682</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 355.

piano in his room ‘at least part of the time’ until 1825.<sup>683</sup> Though, misconceptions of Schubert’s access to pianos still exist. A recent author writes that Schubert ‘probably never or only briefly owned or rented a piano’ during his lifetime’.<sup>684</sup> Byrne Bodley comments though that Schubert composed in close contact to the piano.<sup>685</sup> It is extremely far-fetched to believe that a composer and pianist who so extensively composed piano solos and duets, Lieder, and other chamber music with piano, did not have regular access to a piano.

Schubert did have access to a Benignus Seidner piano, now in Schubert Geburtshaus, as well as an Anton Walter & Sohn piano, now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. The Anton Walter & Sohn piano dates from 1820–1825 and ranged six octaves (F1 to F7) and possessed a moderator and a sustain pedal. It was housed in Schubert’s friend Rieder’s residence, who graciously allowed Schubert to use it. In 1897 (the centenary anniversary of Schubert’s birth) the *Neue Freie Presse* notes, ‘It was only in the last years of his life that Franz Schubert succeeded in having a piano he could call his own’ and that this piano was used to help compose many of his works.<sup>686</sup>

When he was staying with Mayrhofer in 1818 to 1820, he did have use of a ‘played out’ piano.<sup>687</sup> There is a depiction of a piano drawn by artist Moritz von Schwind in Schubert’s next residence in 1821; the piano appears to be an old-fashioned piano (c. five to five and a half octaves) with no foot pedals, appearing to be from the last years of the eighteenth century. In his last few weeks though in Ferdinand’s residence, Schubert had access to a much more expansive and modern Elwerkember piano; this piano was six and a half octaves – from C1 to

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<sup>683</sup> David Neumeyer, *Schubert, Dance, and Dancing in Vienna, 1815-1840* (University of Texas, 2015), p. 45 <<http://hdl.handle.net/2152/29532>> [accessed 25/07/2024].

<sup>684</sup> Albert Mooiman, ‘An improvisatory approach to nineteenth-century music’ (doctoral thesis, Leiden University, 2021), p. 420.

<sup>685</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 299.

<sup>686</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 221 (taken from *Neue Freie Presse*, Vienna, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1897).

<sup>687</sup> McKay, *The Impact of the New Pianofortes on Classical Keyboard Style: Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert*, p. 80.

G7 – and had four pedals: an una corda, fagotto or snare pedal, a moderator pedal, and a sustain pedal.<sup>688</sup> Schubert also would have had access to other high-quality instruments prior to this – while in his earlier life it is more likely he played on smaller-range pianos, he was more likely to have played higher-quality instruments when he was performing at the homes of the aristocrats (for example, when he worked in Zselíz). To add to this – while Schubert’s relationship with the piano reveals a deep affinity with the instrument, McKay claims there is no evidence to demonstrate he took ‘particular interest’ in the various piano makes of the time and she contrasts this to the case of Mozart and Beethoven, for which there is evidence of preferred instrument makes, as well as ownership and hiring of pianos.<sup>689</sup> There is but one record of a payment from 19<sup>th</sup> November 1828 in Schubert’s fathers list of funeral expenses and ‘other outlays’; which included a twenty florin payment to Wilhelm Leschen for the repair of Schober’s piano which Schubert had been using.<sup>690</sup> Regarding Schubert’s engagement with the advancements of pianos, there is one record that documents Schubert and other composers, such as Weber, at an event in which composers tested out a new soundboard mechanism by Johann Jakols Goll – the mechanism was to their satisfaction (note that this was a broad statement referring to all the composers, not necessarily to Schubert).<sup>691</sup> Gardner’s account provides much more particulars on this matter. His account reveals that Schubert, advising Anna von Hartmann, cautioned that ‘the new pianofortes have not yet sufficiently proven themselves’ and that he recommends ‘a good one of the old kind, namely one from Vienna’.<sup>692</sup> His approach was one with due caution, but he did not completely disregard the developments

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<sup>688</sup> This aligns with Gardner’s tracing of the expansion of the keyboard’s range from five and a half octaves to six, and then to six and a half by the 1820/30s: Matthew Gardner, ‘Schubert and the Viennese Piano’, p. 96.

<sup>689</sup> McKay, *The Impact of the New Pianofortes on Classical Keyboard Style: Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert*, p. 72.

<sup>690</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>692</sup> For the detailed account on this: Matthew Gardner, ‘Schubert and the Viennese Piano’, p. 104; The letter in question is cited in Walburga Litschauer, *Neue Dokumente zum Schubert-Kreis: Aus Briefen und Tagebüchern seiner Freunde*, vol. 2: *Dokumente zum Leben der Anna von Reverte* (Vienna: Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1993), p. 41.

– the developments were purely in their early stages. A conclusion may be drawn that Schubert often played ‘older’ instruments, though he also showed some interest in some of the new piano’s advancements. One wonders if the less reliable access to pianos may have affected his compositional habits. Interestingly, Schubert’s schoolfriend Stadler described Schubert’s compositional habits: ‘he very seldom made use of the pianoforte while doing it. He often used to say it would make him lose his train of thought.’<sup>693</sup> Thus, perhaps Schubert did compose some of his piano music away from the piano. There would likely have been no place to put down an ink bottle and to write on papers in quarto format on the instrument of the time. It is not implausible to suggest that an amateur composer writing piano duet music away from a keyboard could result in some unpianistic writing – on paper it is much harder to anticipate clashes of hands and issues of shared notes in close proximity than if one were to be sitting at a keyboard. Though for a pianist and composer as sure-handed and pragmatic as Schubert, this appears not to be an issue.

The instrument of Schubert’s time had a wooden frame and a more limited range than the current seven octave piano. Its overall sound was more delicate and thinner. Thicker textures as we understand today were not possible on his instrument and consequently, pianists today must take extra care to not overaccentuate inner voices and the bass lines, when the music does not call for this. It is in this manner that McKay suggests (on modern pianos) that in Schubert’s piano works, the dynamics from ‘ppp’ to ‘ff’ should be understood as ‘a lower level of tone than that which was customary later’.<sup>694</sup> The discrepancy between the Viennese piano and today’s piano manifests itself in performance. In response to Rada Lupu’s performance of Schubert’s A Major Sonata (D.959), along with Haydn’s F Minor Andante with Variations and Beethoven’s Op.110, Malcolm Bilson argues that the Steinway instrument used was not

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<sup>693</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 146.

<sup>694</sup> McKay, *The Impact of the New Pianofortes on Classical Keyboard Style: Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert*, p. 96.

appropriate for this Viennese programme.<sup>695</sup> He boldly asserts that the instrument was the ‘wrong’ one.<sup>696</sup> Pianist and musicologist Levin’s recorded two of Schubert’s Piano Sonatas (Sonata in A Minor, D.537 and in D Major, D.850) on a restored Viennese fortepiano.<sup>697</sup> Levin expresses his confusion regarding a review that suggests Schubert’s piano sonatas *should* be played on a modern grand piano.<sup>698</sup> It should be cautioned to pianists to take this with a pinch of salt. It is this present author’s perspective that exploring Schubert’s piano duet works on a variety of instruments is a worthy endeavour, as playing on a range of keyboards can manifest itself in an extremely varied scope of interpretations. To back this up, I refer to Dodd’s intriguing comparison of recordings of two piano duos playing Schubert’s Rondo in A Major (D.951) for piano duet.<sup>699</sup> One duo played on a modern grand piano, while the other played a Graf piano from 1827. While there are differences in the way both duos performed, the instrument itself also played a part in the contrasting interpretations. The performance on the modern grand piano allowed the notes to be better sustained, and there was a tonal homogeneity across the range of the keyboard. This is juxtaposed with the Graf piano, which could not sustain the notes to the same degree, and the timbre was varied depending on the range in question; the lower notes were described as ‘drone-like’ and ‘buzzing’, while at the top, the notes were ‘jingly’.<sup>700</sup> Both interpretations are valid, and one can conclude that differing instruments and performance approaches convey contrasting characters and moods.

What is less explored is to what extent Schubert’s writing for the Viennese piano has resulted in today’s unfair perception of Schubert’s writing as unpianistic. One must take into account when assessing Schubert as a pianist, that the instrument he had in mind for his writing

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<sup>695</sup> Malcolm Bilson, ‘Schubert’s Piano Music and the Pianos of His Time’, *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 22 (1980), pp. 263–71 (p. 263).

<sup>696</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>697</sup> Franz Schubert, *Schubert Piano Sonatas D.850 and D.537*, Robert D. Levin (Sony Vivarte, SK 53364, 1995).

<sup>698</sup> Robert D. Levin, ‘Performance Prerogatives in Schubert’, *Early Music*, 25.4, (1997), pp. 723–27 (p. 723)

<sup>699</sup> Julian Dodd, *Being True to Works of Music* (Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 8–10.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

was vastly different. Many faster scalar passages, for example, would be easier to articulate on a keyboard with lighter and shallower keys. For example, Newbould notes that in first of the *Drei Klavierstücke* (D.946), the ‘atmospheric runs and tremolandos’ would have been particularly effective on the Viennese instrument.<sup>701</sup> Dunsby cites the last few bars of the Piano Sonata in A Minor (D.784) as an example here and notes that it is ‘virtually unplayable on a modern piano such as an American Steinway’ (if played *allegro vivace*).<sup>702</sup> It is almost then paradoxical that Brendel posits that this work relied upon the future piano to come into its own, and suggests one would realise this if they played this work on an 1820s piano.<sup>703</sup> To further prove his point, Dunsby cites a virtuosic-passage of the ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy played by Mitsuko Uchida – she plays the final ten bars of the work as a slightly slower tempo than the work’s overall tempo.<sup>704</sup> On a historical instrument, perhaps the above passage would be more manageable from a technical standpoint. A similar case is evident in the piano part of ‘Das Wandern’, as Bilson discusses.<sup>705</sup> The rustic patterns are placed in a low register in both hands, with the bass notes encompassing the lowest range available at the time. The Lied begins mezzo forte and changes to piano when the singer enters. Keeping this low figuration soft to allow the singer to be more prominent is a challenge for the pianist on a modern instrument (and singer, as they may need to adjust their ‘piano’ dynamic) – while on a historical instrument, the bass is less obtrusive. A less informed and inexperienced pianist may think Schubert did not write well for the piano based on examples like this.

Often, such prejudices and clichés of Schubert’s piano music are perpetuated without being challenged. Rusch points out on this topic that Schubert’s piano sonatas, along with his

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<sup>701</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 344.

<sup>702</sup> Dunsby, ‘Liszt’s Symbiosis: The Question of Virtuosity and the Concerto Arrangement of Schubert’s Wanderer Fantasy’, pp. 243–44.

<sup>703</sup> Brendel, *Music, Sense and Nonsense: Collected Essays and Lectures*, p. 133.

<sup>704</sup> Dunsby, ‘Liszt’s Symbiosis: The Question of Virtuosity and the Concerto Arrangement of Schubert’s Wanderer Fantasy’, p. 244.

<sup>705</sup> Bilson, ‘Schubert’s Piano Music and the Pianos of His Time’, p. 268.

symphonies and string quartets ‘more often than not hindered his recognition as a composer of high art throughout the latter half the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth’ and notes that this was due to criticism pertaining to harmonic and formal conventions.<sup>706</sup> One must acknowledge the efforts of figures who helped disseminate Schubert’s piano sonatas by bringing them into the public sphere, thus unveiling Schubert’s sonatas as worthy art works. In the nineteenth century for example, pianist Sir George Hallé performed Schubert’s works on a number of occasions; he notably performed all eleven of Schubert’s sonatas that were in print in 1868 in England. He programmed these sonatas alongside some of Beethoven’s shorter pieces. Reed mentions that from 1890s that the sudden surge of interest in Schubert’s popularity dwindled and that ‘Schubert was largely forgotten’ so much so that when Schnabel performed Schubert’s sonatas, some thought he was the first to do so.<sup>707</sup> Following on from this, there were several other important pianists in the twentieth century who aimed to bring Schubert’s sonatas into public knowledge; pianist Eduard Erdmann, followed by Wilhelm Kempff, Rudolf Serkin, and Alfred Brendel.<sup>708</sup> We do know that as of 1928, Schubert’s piano sonatas ‘count for little either with pianists or the public’ so it is thanks to the above pianists for shining a spotlight on his sonatas.<sup>709</sup> To substantiate the neglect evident during this time, note that pianist Harold Bauer released an edited version of this Sonata in B flat Major (D.960). His aim by doing this was to bring the work out of neglect. Regarding the work, he suggests that it has ‘practically been laid aside by pianists owing to its excessive length and needless repetitions’

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<sup>706</sup> René Rusch, *Schubert's Instrumental Music and Poetics of Interpretation* (Indiana University Press, 2023), p. 2–3.

<sup>707</sup> John Reed, ‘Schubert’s reception history in nineteenth-century England’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 254–62 (p. 262).

<sup>708</sup> Franz Schubert, *SCHUBERT, F.: Piano Sonatas Nos. 19 and 21* (1954), Eduard Erdmann (Archipel, ARPCD0679, 2022); Franz Schubert, *SCHUBERT, F.: Piano Sonatas Nos. 16 and 21* (1950–1953), Wilhelm Kempff (Decca, 00028948425822, 2022); Franz Schubert, *SCHUBERT, F.: Piano Sonatas Nos. 15, "Reliquie" and 21* (Rudolf Serkin - *The Art of Interpretation, 1955 and 1975*), Rudolf Serkin (Sony Classical, 5099751287421, 2004); Franz Schubert, *SCHUBERT, F.: Piano Sonatas Nos. 14-16* (1972–1974), Alfred Brendel (Decca, 00028948703913, 2008).

<sup>709</sup> Erik Brewerton, ‘After Playing Schubert’s Pianoforte Sonatas’, *The Musical Times*, 69.1028 (1928), pp. 887–89 (p. 887), doi:10.2307/915772.

and that the work ‘will be found greatly improved by the cuts which have been freely made’.<sup>710</sup> However, he boldly omitted 389 bars from the 1918 edition and 406 from the 1942 edition, along with many other edits and rewrites. From this we can draw two insights: 1. This particular piano sonata was considered by pianists to be too long and repetitious (a sonata that now is held in high regard). 2. Even though Bauer endeavoured to present this piano sonata to the public’s attention, he went about this in questionable fashion and possibly contributed to perpetuating the trope of Schubert’s music as lacking in coherence and unity. Hutchings’ following statement below – dating from the 1940s – is also indicative of the general opinion of Schubert’s piano sonatas at the time. He documents that until recently (the 1940s), only Schubert’s Sonata in A Minor (D.845) and Sonata in G Major (D.894) found an occasional place in concert programmes, but he points out that the Sonata in B flat Major (D.960) was becoming more favoured.<sup>711</sup>

Brendel is an important and recent contributor who addressed neglected repertoire and misconceptions of Schubert’s writing for piano.<sup>712</sup> In Brendel’s *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts*, he directly addresses misconceptions of Schubert’s writing. Most importantly for this discussion, he lists ‘Schubert’s piano works are “unpianistic” as a prejudice number four.’<sup>713</sup> Out of the four prejudices he explores, this is the prejudice that is designated the most discussion, thus highlighting the complexity and significance of exposing this myth. He expresses his understandable surprise that Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* along with Brahms’ Second Piano Concerto have been accepted, yet there are accusations that Schubert’s piano writing is unpianistic.<sup>714</sup> What is revealing is that Brendel attempts to address some of these

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<sup>710</sup> Anne M. Hyland, (Un)Himmlische Länge: editorial intervention as reception history’ in *Schubert’s Late Music: History Theory, Style*, ed. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 52–76 (p. 55).

<sup>711</sup> Hutchings, *Schubert, The Master Musicians*, p. 141.

<sup>712</sup> Rena Fruchter, ‘Seeing Schubert Whole’, *The New York Times*, 10 April 1988.

<sup>713</sup> Alfred Brendel, *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts* (London: Robson Books, 1976), p. 65–74.

<sup>714</sup> Referring to Brahms’ Second Piano Concerto, Brendel expresses that the work possesses ‘unsurpassable pianistic perversions’; Brendel, *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts*, p. 65. Pianist Philippe Bianconi agrees

misconceptions, while also perpetuating some elements of it; such as the idea that some pages from the C minor and C major sonata would suit other instruments better over the piano – these musical ideas were forced onto the piano in Brendel’s argument.<sup>715</sup> Building upon Brendel’s endeavours, pianist András Schiff is a modern key figure in addressing this unpianistic myth; he focuses very heavily on Schubert’s solo piano sonatas.<sup>716</sup> He has, along with others, attempted to ‘set the record straight’ vis-à-vis Schubert’s sonatas and bestow upon them the value they deserve – bear in mind this comment stems from approximately twenty-five years ago at the time of writing.<sup>717</sup> Hinrichsen exclaims that it speaks volumes that Schubert’s sonatas are now part of the repertoire of every sophisticated pianist.<sup>718</sup> Though, as Focroulle points out, Schubert’s last three piano sonatas today are still neglected and to substantiate her point, she remarks that in piano competitions, conservatoires, and universities, it is largely Beethoven’s sonatas that feature on programmes over Schubert’s.<sup>719</sup> Pare similarly puts forward that Schubert’s solo piano sonatas are not considered as a ‘monumental achievement’ in the manner of Bach’s *Wohltemperierte Klavier* and Beethoven’s 32 piano sonatas, which are often referred to as the Old and New Testament in piano literature.<sup>720</sup> Montgomery suggests

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that this Brahms’ second piano concerto contains ‘unpianistic’ material as the work was conceived in orchestral terms, rather than from a pianistic perspective – the same argument is often used regarding Schubert’s piano music, in both his solo and four-hand works; Jacob Stockinger, ‘Classical music Q&A: What makes Brahms’ Piano Concerto No. 2 so great? French pianist Philippe Bianconi discusses his upcoming performances of it this weekend with the Madison Symphony Orchestra. Plus, the memorial performances for singer Ilona Kombrink are this Sunday afternoon’ <<https://welltempered.wordpress.com/2013/10/15/classical-music-qa-what-makes-brahms-piano-concerto-no-2-so-great-french-pianist-philippe-bianconi-discusses-his-upcoming-performances-of-it-this-weekend-with-the-madison-symphony-orchestra/>> [accessed 08/10/2024]; Similarly, Hartmann claims that some of the pianistic material in the concerto is written ‘in spite’ of the pianist; Hartmann, ‘Schubert, Brahms and Stravinsky – A Neglected Piano Trio?’, p. 2.

<sup>715</sup> Brendel, *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts*, p. 66.

<sup>716</sup> Schiff, ‘Schubert’s piano sonatas: thoughts about interpretation and performance’, pp. 191–208.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>718</sup> Translated from ‘...Schuberts Klaviersonaten, die heute ins Repertoire jedes anspruchsvollen Pianisten gehören’: Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen, *Franz Schubert* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2011), p. 122.

<sup>719</sup> Focroulle, ‘Final thoughts? Interpretation of the first movements of Beethoven’s and Schubert’s last three piano sonatas’, p. 4. Moreover, while the programming of Schubert’s piano works had become more frequent over time (based on Gould’s study of five different eras, beginning from the early days of the piano recital to 1980), ‘Schubert had long lagged behind Chopin and Liszt’: John Gould, ‘What Did They Play?: The Changing Repertoire of the Piano Recital from the Beginnings to the 1980s’, *The Musical Times*, 146.1893 (2005), pp. 61–76 (pp. 66 and 68), doi:10.2307/30044125.

<sup>720</sup> Arabella Pare, *Franz Schubert: The Fragmentary Piano Sonatas* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2022), p. 1.

that the perception of Schubert's music as not being technically very demanding was still alive (at least as of 1997 when this source was published) in conservatoires and competitions.<sup>721</sup> One can trace this perception to quite some time back. When this view was asserted by someone to Brahms, Brahms retorted 'Don't say that! His music is so often eternally perfect! I believe that most people doubt the difficulty of Schubert's music, because it is known how easily he composed'.<sup>722</sup> Following on from this, as late as 1905, Edmondstone Duncan asserts boldly and unjustly that 'the simple secret of the inadequacy of Schubert's pianoforte writing in his sonatas, as compared with the full and finished work of Beethoven, is probably explainable by Franz's half-mastery of the instrument'.<sup>723</sup> One must be aware that while his piano works broadly are not extremely difficult in technical terms, the interpretation of his works is paramount and can be challenging. One is reminded here of Porter's comment that 'although this neglect and misunderstanding of his works may have been partly due to prejudice it was also quite probably due to performance, for the pianist who played a Schubert sonata as he would one by Beethoven must have given a very misleading interpretation'.<sup>724</sup>

To further investigate the theory that Schubert's piano music features less in syllabi, I consulted the three most recent piano syllabi of the leading Irish examination board and found results to support this theory. Beethoven and Mozart's piano music appears on the syllabus more often, which is interesting considering the prevalence of the Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert tripart in the popular imagination. In fact, works by J.S Bach, Scarlatti, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and Debussy occur more often than Schubert's works – some considerably more so.<sup>725</sup> This does not appear to be new. In 1952, Weaving remarks that

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<sup>721</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance: a brief history of people, events, and issues', p. 278.

<sup>722</sup> Richard Heuberger, *Erinnerungen an Johannes Brahms*, ed. by Kurt Hofmann (Tutzing: Schneider, 1976), p. 120. Translation from Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance: a brief history of people, events, and issues', p. 278.

<sup>723</sup> Ernest G. Porter, *Schubert's Piano Works* (London: Dobson Books, 1980), p. 6.

<sup>724</sup> Ibid.

<sup>725</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2023–2026*, *Piano Syllabus 2019–2022*, and *Piano Syllabus 2015–2018*.

through the RIAM grade system, only a ‘small selection’ of Schubert is represented.<sup>726</sup> To further substantiate this point, while three works by Schubert are featured in both the ABRSM 2023–2024 and the 2024–2025 piano syllabus, the number pales in comparison to works listed by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.<sup>727</sup> Apparently the lack of Schubert was evident from the first piano syllabi of the ABRSM too (exams commenced in 1890). In its early days at the turn of the nineteenth century, only two levels of examinations were offered: junior and senior level. Schubert was featured just once on the junior level, while works by Mozart, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn were more prominent. For the senior level, Beethoven’s sonatas were most popular, but it is not stated if any of Schubert’s works were at senior level, so possibly Schubert’s works were absent?<sup>728</sup> Though, these particular instances are understandable in context, as Schubert’s piano music had not yet experienced its uncovering by early twentieth-century pianists. Nevertheless, Rosen also holds the position that while Schubert’s solo piano works have become more popular, they have not reached the level of ‘prestige’ afforded to piano works by Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, or Debussy.<sup>729</sup> Of course, one must take into account that examination boards, universities, and conservatoires need to offer music from varying eras, provide contrasting pieces, featuring appealing pieces by popular composers as well as those by the lesser-known – all the while keeping pieces commensurate with the expectations of their studies. There is also a growing call for music institutions to include works by a more diverse range of composers, such as works by women composers and composers from varied ethnic backgrounds. For example, the ABRSM recently came under scrutiny for the lack of ethnic representation in their syllabi.<sup>730</sup> However, is the lack of Schubert’s piano

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<sup>726</sup> Weaving, ‘Local Centre and Diploma Examinations in Music’, p. 131.

<sup>727</sup> Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2023–2024* and *Piano Syllabus 2024–2025* <[https://www.abrsm.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Piano%202025%20%26%202026%20Prac%20syllabus%2020240524\\_access.pdf](https://www.abrsm.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Piano%202025%20%26%202026%20Prac%20syllabus%2020240524_access.pdf)> [accessed 31/07/2024].

<sup>728</sup> De Val and Ehrlich, ‘Repertory and Canon’, p. 132.

<sup>729</sup> Rosen, ‘Schubert and the Example of Mozart’, p. 1.

<sup>730</sup> Rosie Pentreath, ‘ABRSM must include more black and BAME composers in exam syllabus, music leaders urge’ in *Classic FM*, 16 July 2020 <<https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/abrsm-urged-include-black-bame-composers-exam-syllabus/>> [accessed 01/08/2024].

works on syllabi, as discussed above, indicative of something deeper at play at an unconscious level?

From our discussion, we do know that Schubert has been accused of unpianistic writing. One need only look at online piano forums to see this view amongst some pianists.<sup>731</sup> Firstly, some pianists are of the opinion that Schubert's piano compositions are unidiomatic to the piano. This is repeated all too often. Secondly, throughout both his piano solo and duet works, the 'orchestral' nature of Schubert's writing has often been acknowledged, and even critiqued or misunderstood.<sup>732</sup> Robert Schumann himself is a prime example of such a critic – regarding Schubert's Sonata in C (D.812), it seemed to him that such a work of huge proportions and orchestral evocations could not be written for piano duet; it was a 'symphony in disguise'.<sup>733</sup> Such perceptions are also evident in scholarship and reviews. For example, Natalia Gardner claims that Schubert's piano music 'seems to lie less comfortably under the hands than the works of his contemporaries'.<sup>734</sup> Similarly, Schonberg remarks that some of the writing in Beethoven's piano sonatas is not 'pianistic', and he likens this to much of Schubert's music too.<sup>735</sup> In Gottlieb Wallisch's information on his recording of Schubert's Piano Sonatas Nos. 2, 3, and 6, he elaborates upon the 'unpianistic' writing of Schubert:

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<sup>731</sup> Piano World, 'What does it mean for a piece to be 'pianistic'?' 26/02/2014 <<https://forum.pianoworld.com/ubbthreads.php/topics/2238491/1.html>> [accessed 26/07/2024]. This present author has also encountered this opinion by others.

<sup>732</sup> Dale's comments on the *Grande marche funèbre* (D.859) and the *Grande marche héroïque* (D.885) are representative of this; 'Though they can be made to sound tolerably effective on the piano, they can hardly be adequately interpreted through this medium' and similarly, comments on the *Rondeau brillant* of the *Divertissement sur des motifs originaux français* (D.823) read: 'sorely needs orchestral colour to provide the indispensable sheen requisite to its somewhat superficial glories': Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, pp. 96 and 98. Original source: Kathleen Dale, 'The Piano Music' in *The Music of Schubert*, ed. by Gerald Abraham (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1947), pp. 111–48 (pp. 126 and 128); Hutchings gives specific examples of such orchestral traces: Hutchings, *Schubert, The Master Musicians*, pp. 145–48.

<sup>733</sup> Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert*, p. 130.

<sup>734</sup> Natalia Gardner, 'Schubert: The musical poet Sonata D 959 and its pianistic challenges' (doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 2016), p. 38.

<sup>735</sup> Schonberg, *The Great Pianists*, p. 78.

Generally in both D. 279 and D. 459 the piano-writing is unwieldy and unpianistic in character - it was Schubert's intention to translate absolute music directly onto the piano, music that largely recalls a string quartet or orchestral movement. More than in later years Schubert thinks in these early works in a completely unpianistic way. Many sequences of hand movements, awkward leaps and almost unnatural octave passages betray the still rather inexperienced pianist, in no way a great virtuoso. The piano must here be understood partly as a fortuitous available means of expression for Schubert's inspirations and ideas.<sup>736</sup>

Similarly, Ham notes characteristics of Schubert's perceived unpianistic style. This encompasses sudden changes in texture which create orchestral effects; 'scrambling' scales which often require chromatic fingering, and repeated chordal passages. Ham goes as far as to say that the lack of comfortableness of the notes under the hands is surprising to those who attempt to play Schubert's piano music for the first time.<sup>737</sup> Natalia Gardner remarks that a pianist who is not familiar with Schubert's other piano works such as the impromptus and *Moments musicaux*, may experience 'frustration' and 'technical difficulties' when playing Schubert's Sonata in A Major (D.959), for example.<sup>738</sup>

Are these assertions fair? I argue that Schubert's piano writing is pianistic, while also posing its fair share of unique challenges, such as those concerning interpretation and technical demands. In support of the argument that Schubert composed idiomatically for the piano, Schumann writes:<sup>739</sup>

Particularly as a composer for piano, [Schubert] has something more to offer than others,...more even than Beethoven....This superiority consists in his ability to write more idiomatically for the piano, i.e.

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<sup>736</sup> Gottlieb Wallisch, 'About this Recording: Schubert: Piano Sonatas Nos. 2, 3 and 6', trans. by Keith Anderson, *Naxos* <<https://www.naxos.com/MainSite/BlurbsReviews/?itemcode=8.557639&catnum=557639&filetype=AboutThisRecording&language=English>> [accessed 25/07/2024].

<sup>737</sup> Ham, 'Franz Schubert's Impromptus D.899 and D.935: An Historical and Stylistic Study', p. 18.

<sup>738</sup> Natalia Gardner, 'Schubert: The musical poet Sonata D 959 and its pianistic challenges', p. 13.

<sup>739</sup> David Neumeyer, *Schubert, Valses sentimentales, D. 779, no. 13, Waltz in A major: A Collection of Readings*, p. 143.

everything sounds as if drawn from the very depths of the instrument, while with Beethoven we must borrow for tone colour, first from the oboe, then the horn, etc.

While Schubert's piano music generally is of moderate technical difficulty, the interpretation of his works is a whole different matter. In terms of interpretation, his works are as difficult as any composed in the nineteenth century.<sup>740</sup> Heneghan goes as far as to state that Schubert's piano sonatas are considered by pianists as 'notoriously difficult to interpret'.<sup>741</sup> A common critique of Schubert's piano writing is that he seems to write for the ear and not the fingers. For example, pianist Gottlieb Wallisch suggests the use of piano was 'fortuitous' and similarly, pianist Bela Hartmann claims that Schubert wrote his piano music in 'abstractum'.<sup>742</sup> This implies that the music was written for the music's sake, leaving the pianist to manage the task of fitting it to the instrument. Maurice Brown (in 1975) directly assigns the neglect of Schubert's piano music in teaching practice to this:

Piano teachers have been known to dismiss Schubert sonatas as of little use as teaching material – in the words of the late Colin Mason: 'the sonatas are not sufficiently specific to the pianoforte in conception to win themselves a place in the indispensable literature of the instrument.'<sup>743</sup>

Brown explores this further and makes the assertion that Schubert's music, along with Beethoven and Mozart regularly command more than the piano is capable of. In fact, he goes as far as to write that Schubert 'had become so lost in the creative passion that the physical limitations of the piano were not so much forgotten as ignored'.<sup>744</sup> He provides the Piano Sonata in C Major (D.840) as an example in that the theme demands increasingly more 'power and force' that the piano is incapable of.<sup>745</sup> While I would agree with Brown in that Schubert's

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<sup>740</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>741</sup> Heneghan, *Music Education National Debate* (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology, 2001), p. 267.

<sup>742</sup> Gottlieb Wallisch, 'About this Recording: Schubert: Piano Sonatas Nos. 2, 3 and 6', trans. by Keith Anderson and Hartmann, 'Schubert, Brahms and Stravinsky – A Neglected Piano Trio', p. 1.

<sup>743</sup> Brown, 'Schubert's Sonatas', p. 873.

<sup>744</sup> Ibid.

<sup>745</sup> Ibid.

sonatas are on par with Beethoven's and Mozart's in terms of demands, it seems belittling to assert that Schubert ignored the capabilities of the instrument and that this may be a 'failure' on Schubert's part. Furthermore, he posits that lesser demands from 'pianistic composers' is what results in 'congenial' music to pianists and teachers.<sup>746</sup> Is he insinuating Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert are not pianistic composers? Schubert was well aware of the ever-increasing capabilities of the piano and exploited them to their fullest. To provide a specific example of Schubert's pianistic treatment in his piano works, Newman writes that Schubert took 'special delight in the new highs and lows' of the piano, and he cites the fourth movement of Schubert's Sonata in A Major (D.959) as an example.<sup>747</sup> Certainly, the highs and lows are also evident in Schubert's F Minor Impromptu, (D.935, No.4) which certainly is a technically challenging impromptu. In the middle section a fortissimo climax is reached with an A Major descending scale in unison, encompassing almost four octaves of the tonal space available. Schubert goes even further to finish the piece; there is a spectacularly pianistic six-octave descending scale on F minor, beginning at the top note of Schubert's piano and ending on the last. Similarly, Ham uses Schubert's impromptus to highlight Schubert making full use of the piano's capabilities, such as the instrument's ability to produce a wide variety in touch and shade.<sup>748</sup> This puts into question Youens' claim of the view that 'Schubert did not seek to extend or even to use all the capabilities of the Viennese fortepianos for which he wrote' – an assessment that is challenged throughout this thesis (though perhaps Youens based this evaluation on Schubert's treatment of the piano specifically in his Lieder and not in a broader

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<sup>746</sup> Ibid.

<sup>747</sup> William S. Newman, *The Sonata Since Beethoven* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983), p. 121.

<sup>748</sup> Ham, 'Franz Schubert's Impromptus D.899 and D.935: An Historical and Stylistic Study'.

sense).<sup>749</sup> In the words of Mayer, Schubert ‘broke the barriers and previous limitations of the piano from both an artistic and technical point of view’.<sup>750</sup>

In other artists’ cases, musicologists often note that a composer writes with the instrument’s capabilities very much at the forefront of mind i.e., not in abstractum, as the quotes above suggest with Schubert’s music. This includes the piano works of Chopin, revered as one of the greatest composers whose music demands an exquisite pianistic technique. The demands in Chopin’s piano compositions are fitting for the piano as an instrument; the difficulties in his music seem to be tailored for the instrument itself.<sup>751</sup> The études are testament to this, including the Étude Op.10, No.5 (the so-called ‘Black Key Étude’) in which the pianist’s right hand plays exclusively on the black keys – except for just one note. Similarly, the Étude Op.10, No.2 is written exclusively for the pianist in mind. In this étude, the pianist requires successful articulation of the weaker fingers in chromatic passages. Chopin’s preludes also demonstrate Chopin’s instrument-focused approach to composing music, for the twenty-four preludes act as an exploration into all major and minor keys. Newbould and Hartmann would likely agree with one another on the assertion that Schubert was ‘not a specialist piano composer’ in the manner of Chopin.<sup>752</sup> The question one must ask is why is this so and should this view be challenged? What more could Schubert have done to be considered a specialist piano composer? After all, he wrote a prodigious number of works for and with piano; piano solo

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<sup>749</sup> Susan Youens, *Retracing a Winter’s Journey: Schubert’s Winterreise* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 104.

<sup>750</sup> Mayer, *The Art of the Unspoken: Rhetorical Devices, Linguistic Parallels and the Influence of the Singing Voice in Classical and Romantic Piano Literature*, p. 137.

<sup>751</sup> On this point, Brendel raises a valid argument that most pianist composers were also vocal, instrumental, and ensemble composers, which led to the organic transference of characteristics typical of other instrumental/vocal forces to piano compositions. This lies in contrast to Chopin, who largely wrote for solo piano: Oscar Caravaca Gonzalez, ‘A Critical Reflection on the Impact of String Instruments in Piano Performance: Insight from the Pianist’s Perspective’, *Música Hodie*, 24 (2024), p. 5, doi:10.5216/mh.v24.78343.

<sup>752</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 90; Hartmann, ‘Schubert, Brahms and Stravinsky – A Neglected Piano Trio’, p. 1.

sonatas, impromptus, *Moment musicaux*, dances, piano duets, Lieder, and other chamber music.

One factor playing into the perception of Schubert's piano writing as 'unpianistic' is the fact he never wrote a piano concerto or a piano duo (two players at two pianos), both of which allow the pianists to showcase their virtuosity with full use of the keyboard. Similarly, it is not recorded if he performed a piano solo recital.<sup>753</sup> While in contrast, Chopin wrote almost exclusively for the piano and two piano concerti. According to Fallows-Hammond, Chopin had knowledge of hand physiology and keyboard resources and she points out the *Études* (Op.10 and Op.25) as examples of this in her Chopin entry.<sup>754</sup> This claim is certainly not unfamiliar for pianists who have played Chopin, as he purported the idea that the inequality of the fingers was a strength in that they each produced unique sounds, in contrast to others who wished to equalise the strength of each finger. Chopin stated 'there are as many different sounds as there are fingers. Everything hangs on knowing how to finger correctly'.<sup>755</sup> Similarly, it is known that Chopin suggested that budding pianists learn the B major scale first over C major. The second, third, and fourth fingers in the right hand in B major fit over the black notes comfortably, while the easier to access white notes are played with the thumb. He notes that the scale 'that places the long fingers comfortably over the black keys.... While [the scale of C major] is the easiest to read, it is the most difficult for the hands, since it contains no purchase points'.<sup>756</sup> It is also known from George Sand that Chopin intended to write a piano method book.<sup>757</sup> It is striking that Chopin's piano writing is considered pianism at its best, but that his

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<sup>753</sup> McKay, *The Impact of the New Pianofortes on Classical Keyboard Style: Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert*, p. 73.

<sup>754</sup> Fallows-Hammond, *Three Hundred Years at the Keyboard: A Piano Sourcebook from Bach to the Moderns: Historical Background, Composers, Styles, Compositions, National Schools*, pp. 128–42.

<sup>755</sup> Maurice Hinson, ed., *At the Piano with Chopin* (California; Alfred Music, 1986), p. 11.

<sup>756</sup> Edwin M. Riplin and others, 'Pianoforte [piano]' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.21631.

<sup>757</sup> Hinson, ed., *At the Piano with Chopin*, p.8.

fingering conventions were once considered unorthodox.<sup>758</sup> In this spirit, perhaps a re-examination of Schubert's pianism is due. Schubert and Chopin's are often contrasted; in the words of Haweis from 1866: 'What Schubert was to the songs in Germany, Chopin was to its pianoforte music'.<sup>759</sup> However, upon closer inspection of Schubert and Chopin's music, there are very similar traits such as their profound lyricism and also, occasional filigree passagework that would more commonly be associated with Chopin than Schubert. An example of this is in the filigree passages in the andante section of Schubert's first *Klavierstücke* (D.946) from 1828. This certainly is reminiscent of (and foreshadows?) the idiomatic filigree passages ubiquitous in Chopin's piano music. In a similar vein, Newbould points out that in Schubert's 'Grazer Fantasy' for solo piano (D.605), idiosyncrasies of Chopin are present, and he draws on intermusical connections between this fantasy, and that of Chopin's *Fantaisie-Improptu* (Op.66) and Improptu in A flat Major (Op. 29/No.1) to support this view.<sup>760</sup> Furthermore, Newbould puts forward that the virtuosic opening in the final movement of Schubert's Sonata in F Minor (D.625) is also redolent of Chopin.<sup>761</sup> Taking this all into account, it is peculiar that Schubert is not seen as a 'pianistic composer' in the same way Chopin is.

The representation of Schubert as a pianist may have also been moulded by the fact that he did not liaise with the most popular musicians of the day until later in his life, in comparison to his contemporaries who may have used connections to popular musicians to further their performing career.<sup>762</sup> Furthermore, as Montgomery points out, Schubert did not appear in performance treatises or performance tutors, which would have bolstered the reception of him as a pianist.<sup>763</sup> To this I add that while composers/pianists such as Czerny passed the baton on

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<sup>758</sup> Jim Samson, 'Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2023), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.51099.

<sup>759</sup> Haweis, 'Schubert and Chopin', p. 94.

<sup>760</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 94.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>762</sup> Chusid, 'Schubert's chamber music: before and after Beethoven', p. 174.

<sup>763</sup> David Montgomery, 'Modern Schubert Interpretation in the Light of the Pedagogical Sources of His Day', *Early Music*, 25.1 (1997), pp. 101–18 (p. 104)

to his students – including future significant pianists such as Liszt, Thalberg, Heller, Kullak – Schubert did not – he did not teach save for the exception of the Esterházy sisters and some private music tuition in 1815.<sup>764</sup> The above cases are exemplary of the common perception that Schubert's writing is less pianistic in comparison to that of Chopin or Liszt.<sup>765</sup> However, Fallows-Hammond suggests an alternative way of viewing Schubert's virtuosity. She noted that Schubert exceeded in a different form of virtuosity; one that anticipated the lyricism of Schumann and Chopin, that of lyric poetry.<sup>766</sup> She quite rightly posits that the nuances and colour in Schubert's piano music demand a technique of its own, one that is distinctly Schubertian. Focroulle certainly sums this up nicely; pianists in Schubert's works are demanded to:

Show their capacities to create a sudden different sound, to sing with melodies as if they were just new, to repeat an already well-known passage and simultaneously underline what is different, or emphasise what changed, to breathe new life into a repeated section, to show the listener the excitement felt by discovering these similar ideas in a completely different character or colour.<sup>767</sup>

Then quite rightly, Focroulle indicates that while the above traits are the most challenging aspects of Schubert's music, they are also revealing of his genius.<sup>768</sup>

Pace correctly notes Schubert is not the only figure who has been accused of unpianism – Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms have also faced unfair criticism for the same matter.<sup>769</sup> I argue that Schubert did write pianistically by exploiting a diverse range of pianistic tools, while also organically merging orchestral and vocal effects in his piano compositions, creating a style

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<sup>764</sup> McKay refers to Schubert providing 'private musical instruction' in 1815, but she does not give any specifics whether this is teaching piano, violin, composition etc.: McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography*, p. 55.

<sup>765</sup> Pace also observes this frequently held belief: Ian Pace, 'Rethinking Romanticism', King's College London, 12 November 2003, p. 16.

<sup>766</sup> Fallows-Hammond, *Three Hundred Years at the Keyboard: A Piano Sourcebook from Bach to the Moderns: Historical Background, Composers, Styles, Compositions, National Schools*, p. 85.

<sup>767</sup> Focroulle, 'Final thoughts? Interpretation of the first movements of Beethoven's and Schubert's last three piano sonatas', p. 152.

<sup>768</sup> Ibid.

<sup>769</sup> Ian Pace, 'Rethinking Romanticism', p. 16.

quite distinct. Idiomatic pianistic effects such as scalar patterns and arpeggios are present throughout his piano music; orchestral evocations are present particularly in his piano duet works (such as that of the 'Grand Duo'), and of course, his exquisite melodies influenced by his vocal writing are evident across the board, such as that in his piano duet works (e.g. the Rondo in A Major).<sup>770</sup>

While I agree with Brewerton that Schubert exudes natural freshness and sincerity in his piano works, his assertion that the expressiveness and richness evident in Schubert's orchestral and chamber music is broadly absent in his piano works invites critique.<sup>771</sup> His diverse use of the instrument expanded what was considered pianistic. The rise of the virtuoso style of playing enforced the belief that the strength, speed and accuracy are aims of piano playing. However, Schubert's piano music necessitates an extremely wide range of tonal colours which are also essential in a pianist's technical toolbox. Schubert employed the regular use of a broader scope of dynamics – requiring the softest dynamics the instrument could conjure (even more so than Beethoven). Schubert's popular Impromptu in G flat Major (D.899/No.3) serves as an example here as the pianist must elicit piano, pianissimo, and pianississimo for quite large portions of the piece, while also providing some contrast with forte sections. I argue that this impromptu is pianistic to its core. Furthermore, this impromptu was written in the unusual key of G flat major, providing the pianist with the opportunity to play quite significantly on the black keys. The use of this key signature at this time was unusual. According to Fisk, the piece was amongst the first ever written in G flat major (Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven did not write a piece in this key) and it remains the only instrumental movement

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<sup>770</sup> For a detailed discussion on the influence of vocal music on Schubert's piano writing, see the recently published source: Mayer, *The Art of the Unspoken: Rhetorical Devices, Linguistic Parallels and the Influence of the Singing Voice in Classical and Romantic Piano Literature*.

<sup>771</sup> Brewerton, 'After Playing Schubert's Pianoforte Sonatas', p. 887.

by Schubert in this key.<sup>772</sup> One must be aware that when this impromptu was published for the first time, it was published in G major; thus revealing Schubert was ahead of the curve in using this key, a key that remained peculiar until some time later (this was first published in 1857). Fisk's amusing anecdote of the occasional piano student who comes in with this amended edition reveals that it 'always somewhat numbs their pleasure over the prospect of playing it' when one has to inform them Schubert set the piece in G flat major, not G major.<sup>773</sup> In the preface of Henle's edition of Schubert's impromptus and *Moments musicaux*, it is noted that this impromptu was first published 'arbitrarily' in G major.<sup>774</sup> Perhaps arbitrarily is not the most fitting word here. It is more feasible to suggest that the piece was deemed too difficult for amateurs in terms of reading the key signature and hence it was published in the seemingly easier key of G major, as well as with an altered time signature from an unusual one to a more common one (one can read an editor's markings on the original manuscript marking these amendments).<sup>775</sup> However, despite the considerable number of flats in the piece – as well as naturals/double flats due to the changing keys – the pianist's hands conform well to the five black keys – contrary to what one may think. It is in this context that Newbould, when discussing Schubert's harmonic traits, states that pianists experience a whole-tone descent which fits 'under their fingers' in this impromptu (bars 78–80).<sup>776</sup> One is reminded here of the quintessential pianistic composer Chopin, who when teaching, first taught his students scales with many black notes as he believed it more natural for the hands.<sup>777</sup> Schubert's next impromptu, set in the congenial key of A flat major, also exemplifies his understanding of the hands. The descending arpeggiated figures, peppered with black notes, fit well underneath the

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<sup>772</sup> Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (University of California Press, 2001), p. 115.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>774</sup> Franz Schubert, *Impromptus and Moments musicaux* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1974), p. 4.

<sup>775</sup> Franz Schubert, *Impromptu in G flat Major* (autograph score) <[https://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/f/f4/IMSLP462696-PMLP2062-Morgan\\_115648.pdf](https://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/f/f4/IMSLP462696-PMLP2062-Morgan_115648.pdf)> [accessed 01/08/2024], p. 13.

<sup>776</sup> Newbould, *Schubert's Workshop: Towards an Early Maturity*, I, p. 70.

<sup>777</sup> Hinson, ed., *At the Piano with Chopin*, p. 11.

hands and repetition is used to the pianist's advantage here. One method of learning this piece from a technical standpoint demonstrates the pianistic qualities of this impromptu. A didactic approach to learning this impromptu is to block these chordal figures when practicing (i.e. play them as chords), rather than play them as single notes. If one tries this out, the playability of this piece is clearly highlighted as the chords do fit underneath the hands very well. Many of the descending cascading chords allow for the same finger patterns, as essentially each figure is based solely on broken chords. While this is repetitive, Schubert keeps it harmonically intriguing as he passes through several keys in just the A section – including A flat minor, C flat major, B minor, A flat major, and D flat major (not to mention C sharp minor/major in the contrasting B section).

Schubert shows his knowledge of the instrument in this impromptu in the sonorous left-hand melody in the outer sections that begins in the lower-middle range of the piano and rises in sequence. While the extremes of Schubert's piano were not as resonant, the middle range of the piano created a full sonority. In the Grove article on 'Keyboard music', it is aptly remarked that 'the placement of tunes in the clear, singing tenor register reflect the special virtues of the pianos on which Schubert composed and performed'.<sup>778</sup> A similar case is evident in Schubert's second movement of his Piano Sonata in A Minor (D.784, bars 29–34), as further discussed in Tudor's article.<sup>779</sup> Here, the left-hand melody is in the middle range of the piano, while the right hand exploits the higher range of the piano in rising triplets set in a pianissimo dynamic. Montgomery similarly provides the same example and suggests that this right-hand passage gives the impression of 'floating away into the ether'.<sup>780</sup> This softer dynamic was easier to achieve on a period instrument, as the higher range was naturally weaker. As a result,

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<sup>778</sup> Caldwell and others, 'Keyboard music' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>779</sup> Brîndușa Tudor, 'Summary of Some Aspects of Piano Interpretation in Schubert Sonatas, According to Musical Notation' in *Review of Artistic Education*, 21 (2022), pp. 73–80 (p. 74), doi:10.2478/rae-2022-0010.

<sup>780</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 12.

contemporary pianists must skilfully adjust for this on modern pianos (on period instruments, the discrepancy occurs naturally). While the treatment of these registers demonstrates Schubert's knowledge of the instrument of the time, it poses challenges too and perhaps this feeds into the perception of his music as unpianistic. For example, Tudor provides an example of Schubert's second movement of the Piano Sonata in A flat Major (D.557), bars 65–70, in which the pianist must progress with great skill from piano to pianissimo, and even to pianisissimo within a short few bars; moreover, there is a diminuendo after this.<sup>781</sup> On the other side of the dynamic spectrum, as Bilson notes, the threshold levels of a cantabile tone differ greatly on a period instrument than on a modern instrument – the threshold level (of weight) to make the piano 'sing' was much lower on a period instrument.<sup>782</sup> Thus, the singing tone on a period instrument was achieved with a more minimal effort. Pianists performing on modern instruments must more consciously work on achieving a cantabile tone using appropriate weight (while managing the accompanimental forces) and this is another challenge of Schubert's piano music. Such a cantabile style of playing became ubiquitous as time went on e.g. with Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* and Chopin's Nocturnes.

As was the case with Beethoven who revolutionised the pedal, the opportunity of colouristic pedalling is presented to the pianist in Schubert's music. Schubert did not mark in 'pedalling' as often as Beethoven did (who did not mark it in much himself). His idol Beethoven gave direction as to when to use both the sustain and the una corda pedal; though it is reported that Beethoven, amongst others, used pedals significantly more than his notation suggests.<sup>783</sup> Czerny claims that 'Beethoven used a lot of pedal, much more than is indicated in

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<sup>781</sup> Tudor, 'Summary of Some Aspects of Piano Interpretation in Schubert Sonatas, According to Musical Notation', pp. 74–75.

<sup>782</sup> Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music and the Pianos of His Time', p. 266.

<sup>783</sup> Sandra P. Rosenblum, *Performance Practice in Classic Piano Music* (Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 118.

his works'.<sup>784</sup> I suggest that Beethoven wrote pedalling in for special effect where appropriate, but that he assumed the pianist would use their discretion when using more pedal. Schubert did not mark in much pedal a great deal (in his four-hand works this is rare, but such markings are more common in his other works with piano). Cotik notes that it tends to be for 'special moments' when Schubert writes in the pedal.<sup>785</sup> Montgomery cautions that in the cases that Schubert did write pedal, they were used for special effect, rather than to elicit a legato between tricky parts.<sup>786</sup> Though while Schubert does not mark in the pedalling, his music requires pedalling in a musical and tasteful manner and the use of sustain pedal in his piano works has become standard. A performer may consider performing Schubert's works – both solo and duets – on a historical instrument, which offers the pianist performance possibilities not attainable on a modern grand piano. For example, Rosenblum notes that in Schubert's fifth Ländler of D.790 for solo piano, bassoon stops and the janissary stops 'are used for good effect' in fortepianist Richard Burnett's recording on a Johann Fritz piano dating from approximately 1814.<sup>787</sup> The author of this current doctoral thesis notes that Burnett uses another pedal in his recording of Schubert's D.146, No.1.<sup>788</sup> Here he uses a 'cembalo' pedal, which imitates the

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<sup>784</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>785</sup> Tomas Cotik, 'Aspects of Interpretation in Franz Schubert's Music for Violin and Piano: Duo in A major, Op. posth. 162, D. 754, Rondo in B minor, Op. 70, D. 895, and Fantasia in C Major, Op. posth. 159, D. 934' (doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, 2013), p. 70.

<sup>786</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 169.

<sup>787</sup> Sandra P. Rosenblum, 'Pedaling the Piano: A Brief Survey from the Eighteenth Century to the Present', *Performance Practice Review*, 6.2 (1993), pp. 158–78 (p. 164). There are no markings indicating to use the bassoon or janissary stops in Schubert's piano music, though Gardner proposes that in theory, they could have been applied to his music, due to the presence of these pedals: Matthew Gardner, 'Schubert and the Viennese Piano', p. 98. Could Schubert have used the bassoon/janissary stops when playing? He did often play into the 'popular' in his compositions, using popular melodies, variation, and virtuosity to thrill audiences.

<sup>788</sup> Franz Schubert, *Fortepiano Recital: Burnett, Richard - HUMMEL, J.N. / CHOPIN, F. / SCHUBERT, F. / SCHUMANN, R. / CZERNY, C.*, Richard Burnett (Amon Ra, CDSAR7, 1982). The contemporary use of historical pedals in Schubert's duets is evident in the following recording of the first *Marche caractéristique* in C Major (D.968b): Franz Schubert, *Piano Duets - Fantasia in F Minor / 8 Variations on an Original Theme / Rondo in A Major / 4 Ländler*, Andreas Staier and Alexander Melnikov (Harmonia Mundi, HMM2227DIDI, 2017).

sound of the harpsichord by means of pressing leather weights on the strings. David Ward expands on the pedalling available to Schubert:

In the early years of the nineteenth century, pedals were introduced to the Viennese pianos, sometimes as many as five or six: one to raise the dampers (sustaining), one for the keyboard shift (*una corda* – with this the hammer could strike one or two out of the three strings), two for different thicknesses of moderator, and one for a ‘bassoon’ sound (parchment placed on the string to give a curious buzzing effect) or for ‘Turkish music’, imitating drums, bells and cymbals! So these instruments were rich in devices for producing different sonorities, particularly in the softer registers. This explains why Schubert employed so many piano and pianissimo markings in his keyboard music.<sup>789</sup>

Since there were up to five or six pedals on the Viennese piano in the early 1800s, composers and pianists had quite a gamut of timbres and effects to consider. The pedals were particularly useful in eliciting softer sounds. Ward notes that this is the reasoning behind Schubert utilising piano and pianissimo markings so often.<sup>790</sup> Similarly, Bilson puts forward that Schubert’s use of ‘ppp’ or the usage of the term *sordino* refers to the moderator pedal ‘at least in some instances.’<sup>791</sup> The moderator pedal consisted of a leather or cloth between the string and hammers, eliciting a soft effect. With the knowledge that Ward and Bilson’s statements are valid, this shows Schubert as a resourceful pianist. What we can deduct from the above is twofold. Firstly, Schubert was a sensitive composer to the increasingly sophisticated keyboard instrument. Secondly, the lighter touch of the Viennese piano coupled with the use of the moderator pedal, made achieving certain textures and dynamics possible with a more minimal effort; and hence his piano writing could be interpreted as unpianistic if one is thinking purely in terms of a modern grand piano (and of course, this brings up practical and interpretive

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<sup>789</sup> David Ward, ‘Keyboard’ in *A Performer’s Guide to Music of the Classical Period*, ed. by Anthony Burton (London: The Associated Board of the Royal School of Music, 2007), pp. 39–50 (p. 43).

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>791</sup> Bilson, ‘Schubert’s Piano Music and the Pianos of His Time’, p. 270.

challenges for the modern pianist).<sup>792</sup> One is reminded here of the C Minor Impromptu (D.899), when there is a ‘pp’ dynamic, with the melody in the right hand, but with tremolo chords in triplet formation in the left, which begin with a low bass note. The left hand could easily cloud the sublime melody on a modern grand piano, if the pianist is not controlling these textures skilfully.

### 3.6 Schubert as an Improvisor

In discussions of Schubert as a pianist, his ability to improvise is often left out of the equation. Perhaps this is because in today’s world, classical pianists are not expected to improvise, and less emphasis is placed on this aspect of performance. Hamilton puts this bluntly; ‘but the idea of improvising in public would now strike fear into the heart of many classical pianists’.<sup>793</sup> Similarly, Doran notes that sadly, the virtuosic ability of improvisation has been lost in classical music.<sup>794</sup> On this topic, Byrne Bodley writes that today’s understanding of improvisation is not the same as that of Schubert’s time and that Schubert as an improviser is often unacknowledged.<sup>795</sup> Byrne Bodley further probes this in her chapter titled ‘Between Society and Solitude: Schubert’s Improvisations’ in *Schubert’s Piano*.<sup>796</sup> Shortall further comments on Schubert’s improvisations in his recent article in *The Schubertian*.<sup>797</sup> I argue that when discussing Schubert’s virtuosity and Schubert as a pianist, one must consider his improvisational skills. In the Grove entry for ‘Improvisation’, it is noted that ‘improvisation

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<sup>792</sup> Breitman discusses the difficulties of playing Schubert works on a modern grand and remarks that ‘many of the difficulties simply disappeared’ when he played on a fortepiano. He also provides some suggestions on how to navigate these difficulties on a modern grand: David Breitman, *Piano-Playing Revisited: What Modern Players Can Learn from Period Instruments* (University of Rochester Press, 2021), pp. 127–30.

<sup>793</sup> Hamilton, ‘The virtuoso tradition’, p. 63.

<sup>794</sup> Doran, ed., *Liszt and Virtuosity*, p. 16.

<sup>795</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, pp. 281–82.

<sup>796</sup> Byrne Bodley, ‘Between Society and Solitude: Schubert’s Improvisations’, pp. 30–49.

<sup>797</sup> Sam Shortall, ‘Freedom and Constraint in Schubert’s Improvisatory Strategies, Part 1’, *The Schubertian*, 124 (2024), pp. 13–23.

became associated with the professional virtuoso'.<sup>798</sup> With all the bound-up connotations of improvisation to virtuosity, why is Schubert not considered a virtuoso, when we know Schubert was a skilled improviser? To further deepen this discussion, Schubert's links with improvisation lie mostly with his two-hand piano dances; a genre that has been deemed as inferior and merits more discussion in Schubertian scholarship.<sup>799</sup> In the Grove entry for Schubert, Winter remarks that his dances are 'rarely routine' and that a high number of them compare to Schubert's finest works.<sup>800</sup>

Schubert improvised from his early life. According to Schubert's brother Ferdinand, Schubert was already improvising minuets on the piano before he composed his earliest piano fantasy for piano duet (D.1).<sup>801</sup> He was later trained as a Kapellmeister by Salieri (a skilled improviser himself) – a role which requires the ability to improvise fluently. During this time, Schubert undertook partimento training, which consists of writing sketches of usually a bass line; these sketches are then used as a basis for keyboard improvisation. Furthermore, while Schubert's vocal music was rooted in the German tradition, Italian opera, of which Salieri was a leading figure, often influenced the piano composers.<sup>802</sup> Beethoven, whom Schubert revered and whose influence is present in some of his works, also became a student of Salieri's (with Salieri he studied vocal techniques and learned Italian). Thus, while the singing style in Schubert's vocal music differs to that of the Italian tradition, he certainly aimed for a singing quality in his compositions and his playing – and he possibly owes more to the Italian tradition that was previously assumed.

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<sup>798</sup> Bruno Nettl and others, 'Improvisation' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13738.

<sup>799</sup> Chusid remarks that 'surprisingly little serious study' has been given to Schubert's dances, despite the fact that Schubert wrote approximately 500 of them, of which over 200 were published during his lifetime; Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: For Family, Friends and Posterity*, p. vii.

<sup>800</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>801</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 282.

<sup>802</sup> Mayer, *The Art of the Unspoken: Rhetorical Devices, Linguistic Parallels and the Influence of the Singing Voice in Classical and Romantic Piano Literature*, p. 140.

One genre of his works that most strongly demonstrates the link between improvisation and composition is his piano dances (though, many of his songs also suggest improvisatory links, as well as some of his piano duets such as the variations). Schubert composed approximately five hundred dances. However, we can assume he must have improvised much more than this, only they were not written down. According to members of his circle, he improvised these pieces for others to dance to at social gatherings, though as Byrne Bodley states, some attendees at Schubertiads may have danced to Schubert's music in other rooms, while others may have listened more attentively to Schubert's playing.<sup>803</sup> The following letter extract by Ludwig August Frankl mentions that at a gathering, the attendees stopped preparing to dance in order to listen to Schubert's improvisations: 'Man schickte sich zum Tanzen an, da spielte und improvisierte er Walzer, man horchte auf, bat weiterzuspielen, vergass das Tanzen völlig, so ging es fort bis spät nach Mitternacht.'<sup>804</sup>

Leopold von Sonnleithner details in his memoirs that Schubert 'sometimes went to private balls at the houses of families he knew well; he never danced, but was always ready to sit down at the piano, where for hours he improvised the most beautiful waltzes; those he liked he repeated, in order to remember them and write them down afterwards'.<sup>805</sup> From this, it is clear that he repeated the improvisations he liked the most in order to remember them for writing purposes later. Nevertheless, based on an account from Eduard von Bauernfeld, we can deduce that Schubert may have found it frustrating at times to repeat such improvisations over a long period of time: 'our 'Bertl,' as he was sometimes called ingratiatingly, had to play his latest waltzes over and over again [...] so that the small, corpulent, little fellow, dripping with perspiration, was only able to regain his ease over the modest supper. No wonder that he deserted us occasionally and that, as a matter of fact, many a 'Schubertiade' had to take place

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<sup>803</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 283.

<sup>804</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert: Die Erinnerungen seiner Freunde* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1957), p. 227.

<sup>805</sup> Litschauer, 'Dance Culture in the Biedermeier Era', p. xxvi.

without Schubert, if he did not happen to be in a sociable mood'.<sup>806</sup> Though, on the whole, Schubert did enjoy the pleasure of playing dance music greatly. Upon police knocking on the door during a gathering, he remarked in jest that they do so on purpose, 'because they know I love playing dance music so much'.<sup>807</sup>

Schubert's dances by nature were functional and while Schubert may have been under certain compositional limitations due to this (such as adhering to four/eight bar phrases and two sections overall), he used dances as a form of improvisation and possibly as an outlet for compositional experimentation. Despite the momentariness the term improvisation might suggest, Maurice J.E. Brown boldly goes as far as to claim that Schubert heightened the dance, to an extent that is comparable to his contribution to the Lied.<sup>808</sup> While in form many dances were conventionally structured, Schubert's harmonic language, voice-leading, use of dissonance, chromaticism, modulations, and contrasts in his dances are worthy of attention. A high number of his dances start and end in a different key. Furthermore, Notley notes that Brown theorises that Schubert may have tested out compositional and instrumental techniques in his dances and Notley provides an example of a number of Ländler from Walzer, Ländler, und Écossais (D.145, number 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 12) to substantiate this assertion.<sup>809</sup> Similarly, Newbould puts forward that the study of Schubert's dances provide insights into his larger-scale works in terms of tonality, in particular, that of his sonata movements.<sup>810</sup> In these pieces, Schubert arranged simple harmonies in repetition, but he employed pianistic effects including octave-playing, articulations and ornamentation, and striking contrasts, both between consecutive dances and within each dance (achieved by changes of key, dynamics, register,

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<sup>806</sup> Ibid., p. xxxiii.

<sup>807</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 283.

<sup>808</sup> Brown does further remark however that the dance form itself is of a limited scope in comparison to the Lied; Brown, *Essays on Schubert*, p. 291.

<sup>809</sup> Notley, 'Schubert's social music: the "forgotten genres"', p. 140.

<sup>810</sup> Brian Newbould, 'Cornered in the Middle Eight: Dance Miniaturism vis-à-vis Sonata' in *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Practice, Analysis*, ed. by Brian Newbould (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 107–16 (p. 107).

texture, and tempo). Often the harmonies are surprising. For example, in the first bar of his No.22 dance in B major from Thirty-six Originaltänze (D.365), Schubert uses the tonic and dominant chord in an oom-pah-pah fashion. What is unexpected is the sudden oscillation in the bass from the B minor chord to B major right from the start. This destabilises the sense of key and this continues until the end of the strain – it is only by this time that the cadence establishes the key of B major. Even to a contemporary listener, this sounds odd and a little unsettling – one can only imagine how it sounded on a historical instrument in unequal temperament. Similar to Notley's chapter, Byrne Bodley's section on Schubert's dances makes one aware that Schubert used the vehicle of improvisation for experimenting in form on both micro- and macrolevels.<sup>811</sup> The fact that many of these dances had roots in Schubert extemporisations reveal him as well-rounded musician; skilled as a performer, improviser, composer, and theorist. We are lucky that Schubert was a talented improviser at the piano, for his unorthodox use of harmony and form in his compositions undoubtedly was influenced by this ability.

It is important in the discussion of Schubert as an improviser not to play into the trope of the Romantic Schubert, the natural and spontaneous, who composed works without revision. This perception was born from accounts of his prolific rate of composition, and it is illustrated in the following quote; 'he was too rich for himself,– his fancy outgrew his powers of arrangement'.<sup>812</sup> Similarly, a quote from Josef von Spaun perpetuates this myth: 'It is true that Schubert did not revise his compositions, did not subsequently polish them, and that, because of this, tedious and faulty passages crept in, but on the other hand, they have a certain originality and freshness which too much polishing very often destroys.'<sup>813</sup> This perception is further evident in a comment by music critic Richard Aldrich in 1919: 'Schubert never bothered to

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<sup>811</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, pp. 288–300.

<sup>812</sup> Haweis, 'Schubert and Chopin', p. 90.

<sup>813</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 140.

revise; he was an improviser with an improviser's wealth of ideas.'<sup>814</sup> While he was well able to improvise, some of his improvisations are less improvisatory in effect and more work-like such as number 13 from the *Valses sentimentales* (D.779). Nevertheless, it is important that scholarship takes into account Schubert's clear ability to extemporise in the reappraisal of him as a fine pianist, and not to divide Schubert as an improviser from Schubert the composer and pianist.<sup>815</sup> The co-existence of improvisation and composition and the position of both on a spectrum, as opposed to the consideration of improvising and composition as separate entities, is demonstrable in the following quote by Louis Schlösser, upon hearing Schubert's playing:

I had heard the sounds of the piano from outside and therefore opened the door very softly so as to not interrupt him; when, in spite of this, he noticed me and hurried towards me I pressed him to continue and finish the work he had begun, whereupon he immediately sat down at the instrument again and soon afterwards played me the variations of the impromptu in B flat major, 2/4 time. Much as I liked the pieces, I should not care to say for certain whether they were published exactly as he played them on this occasion from the sketch, improvising, as it were, rather than actually playing from the music. How spontaneous it sounded!<sup>816</sup>

While the inherent link between improvisation and Schubert's compositions is easily demonstrated in Schubert's dances due to the primary evidence of Schubert composing dances in such a way, it is not the only Schubertian genre that suggests improvisation. For example, Walther Dürr proposes that the omission of piano introductions to Schubert's songs suggests that the pianist improvised a Vorspiel.<sup>817</sup> This concept is strongly questioned by Montgomery, who contests this theory.<sup>818</sup> This appears to be a moot point; as Levin in turn, scrutinises

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<sup>814</sup> Richard Aldrich, 'The Heavenly Lengths in Schubert', *The New York Times*, 9 November 1919, p. 3.

<sup>815</sup> Though, some scholars make a good point for the overall divide between Schubert as a composer and pianist, such as Lindmayr-Brandl, who remarks that Schubert was 'far from being a standard model for a musician' of that era: Lindmayr-Brandl, 'Franz Schubert as a Pianist', p. 28.

<sup>816</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 330.

<sup>817</sup> Nettl and others, 'Improvisation' *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>818</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, pp. 60–63.

Montgomery's argument in 'Performance Prerogatives in Schubert'.<sup>819</sup> Byrne Bodley similarly states that it was part of performance practice at the time for some song introductions to be improvised.<sup>820</sup>

Perhaps more pertinent to this research is whether improvisation played a role in the conception of Schubert's piano duets? In Brown's *Schubert's Variations*, which addresses a wide range of Schubert's variations from his two- to four-hand piano works and his songs, the role of improvisation is overlooked.<sup>821</sup> This above question cannot be answered with certainty; it is very unlikely he extemporised duets as a shared improvisation, though it is feasible to suggest the roots of these works may have stemmed from solo improvisations at a keyboard, like he did with some dances. More recently, Byrne Bodley uses Schubert's four-hand piano variations to draw links between his variations and improvisatory elements.<sup>822</sup> It is noted that public improvisations were generally based on a theme by other composers, such as Schubert's *Variations on a French Song* (D.624) for four-hands, which he dedicated to Beethoven, a composer revered for his improvisations. It is a safe to assert that Schubert must have been satisfied enough with his *Variations on a French Song*, otherwise he would not have dedicated it to a composer whom he strongly admired. Another work in this genre is Schubert's *Variations on a Theme from Hérold's 'Marie'* for piano duet (D.908), as well as the majestic *Variations in A flat Major* (D.813), and the *Four Variations on an Original Theme and Finale* (D.968a, formerly D.603). Outside of Schubert's variations for four hands, his fantasies certainly invite a discussion on improvisation, for fantasies are often bound up with improvisatory connotations.<sup>823</sup> For example, in the Grove article on Improvisation, it is noted

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<sup>819</sup> Levin, 'Performance Prerogatives in Schubert', pp. 723–27.

<sup>820</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 299.

<sup>821</sup> Brown, *Schubert's Variations*.

<sup>822</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 285.

<sup>823</sup> Christopher D.S. Field, E. Eugene Helm and William Drabkin, 'Fantasia' in *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40048.

that in Schubert's Fantasy in F Minor, the jarring combination of F minor, F sharp minor, and F minor has its basis in improvisatory models.<sup>824</sup> A further detailed discussion of the Fantasia genre in relation to Schubert is explored by Strahan in her doctoral research.<sup>825</sup>

It is at this point it must be reiterated that improvisation was not at all unique during this period. Extemporising was in its prime in the Baroque era, though it did experience a decline in popularity thereafter in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It is in this context that Byrne Bodley notes that Schubert's friends saw keyboard improvisation as antiquated, and in a broader context, this is substantiated by some pedagogical treatises that outline the decline in improvisation.<sup>826</sup> Similarly, Montgomery posits that the teaching of improvisation became more specific to the organ and improvisation within piano became more limited to variation form and particular kinds of the fantasy.<sup>827</sup> Nonetheless, we know that improvisation was considered an important skill until at least the 1840s.<sup>828</sup> Liszt utilised improvisation more than most (thus strengthening its connotations with virtuosity), but in the 1800s, some command of this skill was expected of any performer. Czerny, a writer on the subject (in 1836), extolls the virtues of improvisation: 'It is akin to a crown of distinction for a keyboardist, particularly in private circles at the performance of solo works', and one can improvise 'by means of a suitable prelude of preparing the listeners, setting the mood, and also thereby ascertaining the qualities of the pianoforte, perhaps unfamiliar to him, in an appropriate fashion.'<sup>829</sup> To evidence the prevalence of improvisation, Moore lists that Brahms, Paganini, Chopin, Clara and Robert

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<sup>824</sup> Nettl and others, 'Improvisation' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>825</sup> Strahan, '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias'.

<sup>826</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 282.

<sup>827</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 190.

<sup>828</sup> Robin Moore, 'The Decline of Improvisation in Western Art Music: An Interpretation of Change', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 23.1 (1992), pp. 61–84 (p. 61).

<sup>829</sup> Carl Czerny, *A systematic introduction to improvisation on the pianoforte*, trans. by Alice L. Mitchell (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 6.

Schumann, Mendelssohn, Hummel, Kramer, Ries, Spohr, Joachim were skilled improvisers; Schubert is also included in his listing.<sup>830</sup>

### 3.7 A Pianist's Perspective of Schubert's Four-Hand Writing

Composing for piano duet brings its own inherent demands with it. If Schubert was accused of writing unpianistically for solo piano works, how does he fare writing for piano duet? Very skilfully, in fact. To strengthen this argument, Lubin asserts that Schubert's solo piano writing can pose challenges pianistically-speaking, particularly regarding the delivery of his piano sonatas; but then he notes that these issues seem to disappear when he writes for piano duet.<sup>831</sup> Similarly, McGraw states that Schubert appeared 'almost more comfortable' writing for piano duet than for solo piano.<sup>832</sup> I put forward that Schubert composes in a manner in which it is natural for four hands to play at one piano; something that is regularly not so with other composers. Correspondingly, Georgii observes Schubert's 'unsurpassable' compositional aptitude for scoring for four-hands.<sup>833</sup> Gál posits that one factor behind pianists relishing Schubert's piano duets is the 'comfort' in traversing around the keys easily without 'ever getting in each other's way or producing those thick couplings of sound that are otherwise one of the perils of this kind of setting, particularly in indifferent, mechanical arrangements'.<sup>834</sup> The previous remarks are noteworthy in that they recognise Schubert's aptitude for writing duets was unique – this was not necessarily the case with other composers' compositions. As an example, Lubin compares Schubert's four-hand transcription of his own *Fierrabras* with Czerny's transcription of the same work, and posits that Schubert adopts an idiomatic chamber

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<sup>830</sup> Moore, 'The Decline of Improvisation in Western Art Music: An Interpretation of Change', pp. 62–63.

<sup>831</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, pp. 37–38.

<sup>832</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 460.

<sup>833</sup> Aultman, 'Walter Georgii's Klaviermusik, Part II: a Translation and Commentary', p. 49.

<sup>834</sup> Gál, *Franz Schubert and the Essence of Melody*, p. 147.

music style, whereas Czerny feels obliged to transfer all orchestral lines to the piano.<sup>835</sup> Christensen would agree with this judgement.<sup>836</sup> Furthermore, Schubert avoids clashing of the so-called inside or middle hands, which is a common obstacle in duet-playing. For example, Do Young Kim points out specific examples of such technical difficulties in *Gazebo Dances* for four hands by John Corigliano.<sup>837</sup> Oinas states that interlocking hands are rarer in works by notable duet composers such as Schubert, Weber, Felix Mendelssohn, and Robert Schumann; Oinas elaborates by explaining that when this does occur on rare occasion in these composers' works, it is not 'accidental'.<sup>838</sup> In summary, Schubert's ability to merge his musical ideas with pianistic accessibility for both pianists is clear.

### 3.8 Conclusion

The phenomenon of transcriptions and particularly piano duet transcriptions contributed to hazing the opposites that usually are juxtaposed against one another; light vs. serious music, amateur vs. professional, and domestic performance vs. public. More importantly, the focus of quantity over quality in the composition of duets of this era contributed to negative stereotypes of duets as being a lightweight genre. The piano transcription, while essential in the dissemination of symphonic, chamber, and choral music, was not just an 'innocent' medium.<sup>839</sup> Unfortunately, some of the large number of piano duet transcriptions brought issues of agency and artistic quality into question, so much so that the artistic merit of duets as a whole was unfairly tarnished. Put bluntly but accurately, piano duet transcriptions/arrangements were

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<sup>835</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, pp. 70–71.

<sup>836</sup> Christensen, 'Schubert's Four-Hand Piano Works', p. 85.

<sup>837</sup> Do Young Kim, 'A Structural Analysis and Selected Aspects of Performance of *Gazebo Dances* for Piano Four Hands by John Corigliano' (doctoral dissertation, University of North Texas, 2008), pp. 45–53.

<sup>838</sup> Oinas points out that there are just two examples of interlocking hands in Schubert's duets: Oinas, 'From Four-Handed Monster to All-Embracing Vishnu: The Case of "Middle Hands" within a Piano Four Hands Duo', p. 5. Composer Suski elaborates on the challenges of composing for piano duet: Edgar R. Suski, 'Concerto for Piano Duet' (doctoral thesis, The University of Western Ontario, 2024), pp. 3–8.

<sup>839</sup> Christensen, 'Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception', p. 256.

‘good, bad and indifferent’.<sup>840</sup> Through the prominent role of transcriptions in domestic settings, the perception of duets as embodying a utilitarian function was re-enforced. In the *Bulletin of the American Musicological Society*, Petran insinuates that the piano duet has been a victim of association due to the majority of works being of recreational or pedagogical purpose – many of which were transcriptions/ arrangements.<sup>841</sup> Prejudice against arrangements can also stem from unlikely places. For example, while championing Schubert's original piano duets, Wetzel-Stettin draws a clear divide between original duets and arrangements. He begins by asking who even plays piano four hands today, and he refers specifically to 'not rushing through the great orchestral works and a few pieces of chamber music, in a hurry and in haste with a friend'.<sup>842</sup> It is the present author's opinion however that the piano duet transcends what in German is aptly known as the ‘Stellvertreterfunktion’ (referring to duets as a substitute/surrogate medium). It is important that one critiques this reductionist perception of duets and not to tar all duets with the same brush. Original duets are stand-alone entities, independent to arrangements and transcriptions. Newbould differentiates between the bulk of ‘utilitarian’ duets within the nineteenth century and that of Schubert's understanding of the inherent merits of the four-hand ensemble.<sup>843</sup>

While the image of Schubert as a neglected composer is an overused trope that has been often discussed, it is important to remember that during his lifetime, he had a well-established identity as a pianist. While some of his genres were neglected during his lifetime, his works involving the piano were the most popular, which increased in prevalence as he aged: the genres of dances, piano duets, and Lieder. He was one of the most published and performed composers in Vienna; Byrne Bodley remarks that reviews are consistent in referring to Schubert as a

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<sup>840</sup> Jones, ‘Piano music for concert hall and salon c.1830–1900’, p. 174.

<sup>841</sup> Petran, ‘Piano Duets’, p. 10.

<sup>842</sup> Daub, *Four-Hand Piano Playing and Nineteenth-Century Culture*, p. 69. Original source: Wetzel-Stettin, ‘Schubert's Werke für Klavier zu Vier Händen’, p. 37.

<sup>843</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 234.

popular composer in the 1820s.<sup>844</sup> However, these positive points give the false impression that these above genres experienced serious consideration throughout history, but this is not the case. Linked here is the trope that Schubert's piano writing does not fit the instrument well. While other composers seem to have composed with a more instrument-tailored approach (an example being Chopin and his études), many of the challenges posed in Schubert's writing stem from both its pianistic difficulty and its musicality. Schubert was pragmatic and keenly aware of the ever-increasing capacity of the fortepiano – while not a virtuoso, he certainly held his own. With this in mind, Brewerton's remark that Schubert lacked 'great pianistic knowledge and ability' is thrown into serious question – have misconceptions like this led to the neglect of Schubert's piano works?<sup>845</sup> A further factor in this matter is that virtuoso pianists such as Chopin and Liszt re-defined what 'pianistic' meant; pianism reflects musical priorities of the era and compositions are shaped by this. The fact that Schubert was a skilled improviser, which impacted his unique approaches to harmony and form, should also influence our judgement on him as an anti-virtuosic virtuoso. Confronting the myth of his pianistic style as being unpianistic may encourage pianists to perform Schubert's works and to understand Schubert's compositions as necessitating an intimate virtuosity – particularly in his duets – for the survival of musical works is contingent on the quantity and quality of performances. As Winter posits, while Schubert's piano writing 'was less obviously innovative' as that of Chopin, Schumann or Liszt, its impact is far from 'negligible'.<sup>846</sup> The first part of this claim does invite some questioning though. One wonders if Winter took Schubert's four-hand music into account here when making such a claim, for Schubert certainly was more authentic than any other composer in this genre.

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<sup>844</sup> Lorraine Byrne Bodley, 'A Place at the Edge: Reflections on Schubert's Late Style', *Oxford German Studies*, 44.1 (2015), pp. 18–29 (p. 20), doi:10.1179/0078719114Z.00000000072.

<sup>845</sup> Brewerton, 'After Playing Schubert's Pianoforte Sonatas', p. 888.

<sup>846</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

**—Part 2—**

**Pedagogical and Performative Insights into  
Schubert's Piano Duets**

Chapters 4–7

## Chapter 4

### *Kindermarsch* (D.928)

#### 4.1 *Kindermarsch* (D.928): Context and Suggested Level

Schubert had a keen interest in writing four-hand marches, as he wrote seventeen independent marches for the medium (see table below).<sup>847</sup> Fourteen were published during Schubert's lifetime, evidencing the ready-made market for attractive marches.<sup>848</sup> Schubert's business acumen is evident here as he tapped into both the marches and the four-hand piano market, bringing a popular form further into an artistic realm. The list of these marches along with their publication year is visible in the table below. Of all duet genres Schubert composed in, it was the march that Schubert appeared most drawn to. He did not engage in marches in his piano solo music with the exception of March in E Major (D.606). The *Kindermarsch* (D.928) however, is an outlier, not only in his four-hand marches, but in the whole body of his piano duets. I suggest the work is an exception in the complete output of his music, due to the reasoning behind its conception and intended audience, as Schubert had not written specifically for younger children before and indeed, after this.<sup>849</sup> Lubin questionably states that this march is 'almost like a footnote to the series' and McGraw goes as far as to say this work was one of his most 'perfunctory'.<sup>850</sup> Was this march written without interest or effort? *Kindermarsch* was

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<sup>847</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 22; Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone, programme notes, p. 9. Along with these works, he wrote a march as the second movement of the *Divertissement à la hongroise* (D.818), as well as the first movement of the *Divertissement sur des motifs originaux français*, which was originally published separately as *Divertissement en forme d'une marche brillante et raisonnée* (Op.63/1).

<sup>848</sup> Walburga Litschauer, 'Tänze und Märsche für Klavier' in *Schubert-Handbuch*, ed. by Walther Dürr and Andreas Krause (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1997), pp. 436–48 (p. 446).

<sup>849</sup> This lies in contrast to contemporaries, such as Diabelli (1781–1858) who wrote four-hand piano works such as *Jugendfreuden* Op.163 ('Pleasures for the Youth') with clear intent for learners to play; the primo parts are confined to five-finger positions and these pieces are suitable as teacher/student duets.

<sup>850</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 66; McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 464.

written in Schubert's later period in 1827 and it was his last march composition; but the work certainly pales in comparison to the four-hand works he composed in the coming year of 1828. Newbould suggests this march was 'overshadowed' by his preceding marches.<sup>851</sup> While Schubert's other marches are superior in artistic scope, I challenge the perceptions of the *Kindermarsch* as perfunctory, especially as the piece was cleverly written and composed as a gesture of goodwill. It is a charming piece that has many merits. It could be used as a pedagogical resource or programmed as an encore in a recital. Börner gives the work due credit; he goes as far to say that the piece combines the simple and the genius.<sup>852</sup> In literature however, the exploration of this piece seems thus far to be focused on the roots of the piece, and not necessarily the music itself.<sup>853</sup> In Arganbright and Weekley's book on Schubert's works for piano four-hands, in which the duo provides historical context and some analysis to each of Schubert's duet works, *Kindermarsch* is allocated just two sentences in terms of musical analysis and it is stated that the march's value is of no 'special significance'.<sup>854</sup> This consensus will be challenged. While the origins of the piece need to be discussed for contextualisation, the piece will also be explored from a didactic point of view, as it was intended for this function.

**Table 4.1, Schubert's Four-Hand Marches and their Publication Date**

Title of Four-Hand March	D. Number	Publication Date
<i>3 Marches héroïque</i>	602	December 1824
<i>6 Grandes marches</i>	819	May–September 1825
<i>Grande marche funèbre</i>	859	February 1826
<i>3 Marches militaires</i>	733	August 1826
<i>Grande marche héroïque</i>	885	September 1826
<i>Kindermarsch in G</i>	928	1870
<i>2 Marches caractéristiques</i>	968b	December 1829

<sup>851</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 238.

<sup>852</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 129.

<sup>853</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, pp. 147–48; McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography*, p. 286; Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 66; Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, pp. XI–XII.

<sup>854</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 68.

The difference in function of this march in comparison to his other marches and other duets, is that it was specifically composed with a child pianist in mind, hence its pedagogical value for early-stage learners. This is not to say that the body of works Schubert composed for the Esterházy daughters was not written without at least some pedagogical intention; but the *Kindermarsch* was written for a pianist in the much earlier stages of tuition. In fact, Schubert wrote this as a gift for the seven-year-old Faust Pachler, whose mother Marie Pachler was an exceptionally talented pianist. Beethoven noted he knew of nobody else who could play his works as well as she did.<sup>855</sup> Marie Pachler had requested a short duet from Schubert, one which herself and Faust would play together on 4<sup>th</sup> November for Karl Pachler's 'name day'. Marie had requested this piece from Schubert for the specific date of 4<sup>th</sup> November and a reminder was sent to Schubert in October, as the young Faust needed time to practice in advance of the performance. Upon sending the piece, Schubert wrote 'I fear I shall not earn his applause, since I do not feel that I am exactly made for this kind of composition'.<sup>856</sup> While the work is miniature in stature, Schubert does himself a disservice here in dismissing his compositional skills for younger pianists. One must bear in mind that in 1827, Schubert was far into his illness and his artistic mind was being stretched in many directions as both a composer and pianist. In the words of Gibbs, Schubert progressed himself as a composer entering a new professional and compositional stage.<sup>857</sup> Certainly, this year was a successful one for Schubert as a composer. In 1827, he wrote works such as the seminal *Winterreise* (D.911), the Fantasy in C Major for Violin and Piano (D.934), the two sets of the piano impromptus, and the two piano trios (D.898 and D.929), as well variations on a theme from Hérold's opera 'Marie' for piano duet (D.908). Schubert had the unique task of writing for an extremely skilled adult pianist and a seven-year old child. While having intentionally mismatched levels of pairing in duets is not uncommon

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<sup>855</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, p. 147.

<sup>856</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 66.

<sup>857</sup> Gibbs, "'Poor Schubert': images and legends of the composer", p. 41.

by any means, it was a unique task for Schubert. Furthermore, there is no doubt that he wished to impress Marie Pachler; he remarked on his warm stay with the Pachlers from 3–20 September 1827: ‘Above all, I shall never forget the welcoming house, with its charming hostess, the sturdy Pachleros (i.e. Karl) and little Faust, where I have spent the happiest days I have known for a long time’.<sup>858</sup>

One can draw from Schubert’s comment that he believed his talents did not lie in composing for elementary pianists; he wrote this piece as a goodwill gesture for his friend Marie Pachler. It is a mark of Schubert’s charming humanism and fondness of young children that in his limited time left along with a busy schedule, he took time to compose for a child as a gift. In contrast to a significant number of piano duets of the time, many of which were of a pedagogical ilk, this piece was not written for publication with the aim of commercial gain. It was not published until 1870. Given that a very high proportion of Schubert’s other marches were published during his lifetime – all of which are much more complex to play – it is not unlikely this work would have been readily taken on by publishers if Schubert so wished. When it was published in 1870, it was published by Viennese publishers J.P. Gotthard. The adult Faust fittingly writes the forward for this edition, and he outlines his family’s relation to Schubert, and remarks on the ‘herzlich-humoristischen Zeilen’ (heartfelt-humour) of the *Kindermarsch*.<sup>859</sup> According to Rast, *Kindermarsch* is the only surviving march in manuscript form and it is in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna.<sup>860</sup>

Even though the piece was published posthumously, it would not have been out of place had it been published during Schubert’s time, due to the extremely high demand for works aimed at amateur pianists. Such a piece would have been advantageous for Schubert to publish

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<sup>858</sup> Clive, *Schubert and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, p. 147.

<sup>859</sup> Dr Faust Pachler, *Franz Schubert, Kindermarsch D.928* (Vienna: J.P. Gotthard, 1870), p. 3 <[https://imslp.org/wiki/Kindermarsch,\\_D.928\\_\(Schubert,\\_Franz\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Kindermarsch,_D.928_(Schubert,_Franz))> [accessed 15/07/2024].

<sup>860</sup> Rast, ‘Analysis of Structure in Schubert’s Piano Duets’, p. 65.

when he was still alive, as it would be accessible for many younger learners, and hence marketable. While both primo and secondo parts are accessible to play, there is no primary evidence as to whether Faust played the primo or the secondo part. Einstein noted that ‘Faust Pachler could naturally only manage something very elementary while the adult player on the left-hand half of the keyboard – in this case his mother – undertook the lion’s share’.<sup>861</sup> Börner rates the secondo’s difficulty at level two (easy) and rates the primo at level one to two (very easy to easy).<sup>862</sup> Duo pianists Arganbright and Weekley considered the difficulty of both parts similar to one another.<sup>863</sup> In McGraw’s repertoire book, the piece is assigned an overall rating of upper elementary to lower intermediate.<sup>864</sup> Regardless of who played which part, Faust must have been well acquainted with the piano, even at his tender age of seven. From comparing the above views of pianists on the standard of both parts, it is fair to say that both parts are roughly similar in difficulty, and this befits Schubert’s compositional style for piano duets, particularly in the later years.

While the *Kindermarsch* is one of Schubert’s simplest compositions, the piece is not devoid of value or moderate technical issues. The primo part does hold most of the melodic material and in the trio, there are challenges such as fast repeated notes. In the secondo, there is less melodic material, repeated chords, and a tricky unison semiquaver passage that is not present in the primo. The secondo chords in the right-hand span to a seventh, and there are octaves in the bass. The ability for a seven-year old to extend the hands like this is not realistic, so it is logical to suggest Faust played the primo part.

Nevertheless, depending on the pianist’s physical attributes and standard, a younger pianist may be able to play both parts and reap the benefits of this little gem of a piece.

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<sup>861</sup> Einstein, *Schubert: A Musical Portrait*, p. 282.

<sup>862</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 129.

<sup>863</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 68.

<sup>864</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 464.

Regardless of who plays the primo/secondo, this is an ideal duet for a teacher and a student to play. Even for more advanced pianists, it would be a fitting duet in a concert, perhaps as an encore piece. If one were to categorise the *Kindermarsch* using Hooi Yin Boey's division of piano duets into three categories (1) concert performance (2) Music for informal settings or Hausmusik (3) Pedagogical instruction usually for beginners; *Kindermarsch* would fit the third category, but that being said, the work has great performance potential.<sup>865</sup> While considering duets as pedagogical material, one must take into account the character and appeal of a piece for a student (particularly a younger student), while also taking technical abilities that are acquired when learning a piece into account. Certainly, a charming piece titled *Kindermarsch* would appeal to a young student in its mood and character. In the guidelines for the Royal Irish Academy of Music compositional call for elementary to grade V pieces, some suggestions are made regarding what technical requirements are suitable for each grade.<sup>866</sup> Based on these guidelines, *Kindermarsch*, for both parts, would suit roughly a grade three student. Similarly, in Poppen's consideration (from an American perspective), this work is listed in works appropriate for grade two to grade four, and it is placed as one of Schubert's least difficult piano duets.<sup>867</sup> The following guidelines for grade three for the Royal Irish Academy of Music are provided:

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<sup>865</sup> Hooi Yin Boey, 'Teaching intermediate level technical and musical skills through the study and performance of selected piano duets' (doctoral dissertation, University of West Virginia, 2004), p. 1.

<sup>866</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Composition Guidelines (RIAM Exams)* <<https://www.riam.ie/riam-exams/about-our-exams/compose-for-us>> [accessed 20/10/2022].

<sup>867</sup> Poppen, 'A Survey and Analysis of Selected Four-Hand, One Keyboard, Piano Literature', p. 240.

**Table 4.2, Royal Irish Academy of Music Grade 3 Guidelines** <sup>868</sup>

Grade	Technical Milestones
<b>Grade 3</b>	(max. 60 bars): approximately two to three octave range in each hand; more rhythmic complexity, possibly triplets; wider range and subtlety in dynamics; possible introduction of basic legato pedal; simple or compound time signatures.

*Kindermarsch* consists of forty-eight bars excluding repeats, and in duration it lasts approximately three minutes including repeats. In the secondo's part, a range of three octaves and a major second present (G1–A4). In the primo there is a slightly smaller range, which is a major second away from three octaves (C sharp 4–B6). In total, the range encompasses five octaves and a major third; a relatively wide range considering the range available to Schubert at the time (approximately six octaves).<sup>869</sup> The primo would be suitable for the hands of a younger student in that there are limited excessive leaps, and chordal intervals are less demanding than that of the secondo. In fact, a student can play a large proportion of this piece in five-finger positions and with a slightly extended hand.<sup>870</sup> An example of a suggested five-finger hand position lies in the primo's last line in bar 23 as in the example below. This five-finger position here makes the execution of the semiquavers more manageable. On this point, the indicated articulation must be addressed, as this motif occurs throughout the work. In the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe (as per the first publication of this piece by J.P. Gotthard) there is an editorial slur on the first four notes of this figure – see figure 4.1. Is one to take this literally when playing and detach this from the following staccato? During Schubert's time, slurs often were influenced by string-bowing (i.e. indicating bow strokes). The slurs for this figure in the

<sup>868</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Composition Guidelines (RIAM Exams)*.

<sup>869</sup> Edwin M. Good, *Giraffes, Black Dragons, and Other Pianos* (Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 103–04. Newbould notes that the range of the late piano sonatas spans c. five and a half octaves, thus evidencing the commonplace of six-octave pianos: Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 318.

<sup>870</sup> Composing piano duet works with one part in a five-finger position is very common within the literature, and composers who used this method regularly included Diabelli, Czerny, and von Weber.

Alte Gesamtausgabe would be more pianistically suitable, as the slur ends over the following note.<sup>871</sup> A violinist would change bow stroke after the slurs ends, making it easier to provide rhythmical vitality the second beat. For pianists though, taking the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe (edited by Landon) literally here may result in disjointedness. Further accessible hand positions for a younger student appear in bars 1–4 and 17–20 of the trio section, in which the student's hand opens slightly from a five-finger position. For this sequence, the student can use mostly consistent fingering as to avoid slips. Refer to the example 4.2 below for suggested fingering. In the repeats, pianists should be encouraged to explore what they can do differently. For example, in example 4.2, the primo's right-hand holds the melody. Though, perhaps the primo could bring out the inner line in their left hand during the repeat.

**Example 4.1, Schubert, *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bar 23**<sup>872</sup>



**Example 4.2, Schubert, *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bars 1–4 of the trio section**<sup>873</sup>



<sup>871</sup> Franz Schubert, *Kindermarsch* D.928 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1888), p. 2  
<[https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/2/2d/IMSLP08973-Schubert\\_-\\_D.928\\_-\\_Children's\\_March\\_in\\_G\\_Major.pdf](https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/2/2d/IMSLP08973-Schubert_-_D.928_-_Children's_March_in_G_Major.pdf)> [accessed 26/07/2024].

<sup>872</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 124.

<sup>873</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125. Note this is suggested fingering only; other possibilities are feasible depending on the context (such as the tempo chosen and/or the pianists). For example, to avoid any repeated notes whatsoever using the

*Kindermarsch* is also an example of how skilful and versatile Schubert was in writing piano works for four hands. While technical challenges specific to duet-playing naturally appear more in his more complex duet (such as note-sharing), *Kindermarsch* is technically accessible. In general, the hands of both performers keep to themselves. There are neither hand overlaps nor explicitly shared notes; this will be a sigh of relief as any duet player knows, the sharing of notes can be challenging. On this topic, duo Weekley and Arganbright observe that in duets, ‘even the best composers seem to be oblivious to the problems they create’.<sup>874</sup> Fortunately, Schubert is not amongst these composers here. Nevertheless, there is a mild challenge that may require some negotiation in bar 11 of the trio section.<sup>875</sup> The primo’s left hand is playing part of an E major arpeggio, beginning on E4 on the first beat of the bar. On the second half of the first beat, the secondo must also play this note (see below example). The solution is for the primo to ensure their left hand’s fifth finger has moved swiftly off this note so to allow the secondo to play this note articulately thereafter. Potential clashes of the primo’s left hand and the secondo’s right hand is not uncommon in piano duets and Schubert tactfully avoids this. Another challenge in four-handed playing is the use of pedal. In this piece, excessive use of the sustain pedal would not be stylistically appropriate, given that this march is written in a conventional Classical style. Nevertheless, limited pedalling would be suitable here. Montgomery strongly recommends avoiding pedal in Schubert’s four-hand works in as far as is possible; he posits that this is necessary to bring out the various voices and articulation in Schubert’s works.<sup>876</sup> One solution in *Kindermarsch* would be to use limited pedalling in the trio only, which would add some colour; contrasting with the dryer and more regimental sound

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same fingers, 4 3 2, 4 3 2 1 in the right hand could be used for the first six notes, which a pianist may find more agreeable, particularly if playing at a faster tempo.

<sup>874</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 15.

<sup>875</sup> Shared notes occur in piano duets when the same note must be played by both primo and secondo simultaneously or within very close time proximity; in such cases it is feasible for one player to omit the note. This decision can be based on the importance of the note for that particular part, and/or based on practicalities.

<sup>876</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert’s Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 172.

of the march theme. If a performer decides to take this approach, one must keep in mind that the rests are to be adhered to and not pedalled through.

**Example 4.3, Schubert, *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bars 9–12 of the trio section <sup>877</sup>**



## 4.2 An Exploration of Tempo in *Kindermarsch*

A survey of performances of this piece reveals a wide scope of differing tempi. There are no metronome marks for this as Schubert did not assign such markings to his instrumental pieces. Brown states that it appears Schubert did not use ‘fixed’ metronome markings for his instrumental works.<sup>878</sup> In fact, neither did his publishers for the instrumental works published during his lifetime. There are approximately thirty works that Schubert did assign metronome marks for, and this consists of Lieder, music from *Alfonso and Estrella*, and his masses.<sup>879</sup> Upon examination of the list of works with metronome markings, it becomes apparent there are no markings for his piano duets. One must bear in mind however that the metronome was

<sup>877</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 125.

<sup>878</sup> Clive Brown, ‘Schubert’s Tempo Conventions’ in *Schubert Studies*, ed. by Brian Newbould (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 1–15 (pp. 2–3).

<sup>879</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert’s Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, pp. 220–23.

a relatively new invention. Arganbright and Weekley note that the metronome was ‘perfected’ in 1816; presumably as this is the year when Johann Maelzel manufactured a metronome under his own name.<sup>880</sup> Montgomery notes that Beethoven supported the invention, and Schubert’s compositional teacher Salieri did too.<sup>881</sup>

In order to make an informed decision on a suitable tempo for *Kindermarsch*, it is a useful to explore briefly the march genre. The march as a genre can differ greatly in functionality and hence marches can yield a diverse breadth of tempi. For example, Schubert wrote the *Grande marche funèbre* (D.859) on the death of Aleksander I of Russia, which contrasts to the *Grande marche héroïque* (D.885) for the coronation of Nicholas I of Russia; both works naturally differ in style and tempi. Schwandt notes that a march has a myriad of functions from coronations, victories, parades, festivities, weddings, religious ceremonies, funerals, and military events.<sup>882</sup> *Kindermarsch* is no different in that Schubert composed this march for the nameday of Karl Pachler.

Goldstone and Clemmow perform *Kindermarsch* at a lively tempo, which corresponds to approximately 102 crotchet beats per minute.<sup>883</sup> A similar tempo is adhered to by piano duos Tal and Groethuysen, and Jan Vermeulen and Veerle Peeters.<sup>884</sup> On one extreme, a recording exists with this piece being performed at a brisk (and hurried?) c. 137 crotchets per minute.<sup>885</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, Christoph Eschenbach and Justus Frantz perform this piece

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<sup>880</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 89.

<sup>881</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert’s Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 218.

<sup>882</sup> Erich Schwandt and Andrew Lamb, ‘March (Fr. marche; Ger. Marsch; It. marcia)’ in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40080.

<sup>883</sup> Franz Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets (Disc D)*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone (Divine Art, DDA21701, 2017).

<sup>884</sup> Franz Schubert, *Schubert: Piano Music for Four Hands, Vol. IV*, Yaara Tal and Andreas Groethuysen (Sony Music Entertainment, 074646824320, 1997); Franz Schubert, *Schubert: Works for Four Hands, Vol. 7*, Jan Vermeulen and Veerle Peters (Etcetra Records, KTC1507, 2015).

<sup>885</sup> Unknown pianists: BEST OF CLASSICAL MUSIC, CHILDREN MARCH - D.928 – Schubert, YouTube, 24 August 2016, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrTa6kaL7Ss>> [accessed 26/07/2024].

much slower than all the above examples, though with a little more flow in the trio section.<sup>886</sup> I favour a metronome mark of approximately 102 for this piece. It maintains the liveliness of the piece without it feeling rushed. Conversely, I would caution that anything much less than this mark would disrupt the character of the march. As Schwandt and Lamb remark, the tempo of marches has historically been reliant on its function.<sup>887</sup> A slow march's tempo range spans from approximately 60 to 80 crotchet beats per minute; while the quick march is much faster at 100 to 140 beats per minute.<sup>888</sup> Based on the *Kindermarsch* recordings above, the consensus is that the piece ideally is played at a moderate tempo. That being said, the choice of tempo is dependent on many factors, including the instrument in question, the venue, and standard of the performers. The latter may be an important factor if a developing young pianist approaches this piece. Plenty Music, an online sheet music and accompaniment resource, features *Kindermarsch* on their YouTube; the speed of the piece is played at 96 crotchet beats per minute.<sup>889</sup> On their website, recordings are available at three tempi; 96, 90, and 84 crotchet beats per minute.<sup>890</sup> While 90 is not too far from the above recordings, the 84 marking is. Perhaps a slower speed may be necessary for a learner, and they could work their way up to performance speed.

### 4.3 Interpretative Challenges of Rhythm

In *Kindermarsch*, rhythmic complexity exists in that there are many triplet figures in the primo against quavers in the secondo thus introducing the student to polyrhythm playing, without

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<sup>886</sup> Franz Schubert, *Schubert: Music for Piano Duet, Vol. 1*, Christoph Eschenbach and Justus Frantz (Warner Classics, Parlophone Records, 0094636532158, 2006).

<sup>887</sup> Schwandt and Lamb, 'March (Fr. marche; Ger. Marsch; It. marcia)' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>888</sup> Ibid.

<sup>889</sup> PlentyMusic, *Schubert Franz / Children's March in G D928 for piano duet (piano 4 hands)*, YouTube, 27 February 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbkftsthE6w>> [accessed 31/10/2022].

<sup>890</sup> PlentyMusic, *Children's March in G for Piano Duet D. 928* (2020) <<https://plentymusic.co.uk/browse/freemusicdetails/12/4122-Childrens-March-in-G-for-Piano-Duet-D928-Piano-4-Hands#>> [accessed 31/10/2022].

having to play both polyrhythms themselves. In solo playing, such a challenge may not arise until later in a student's piano studies. Interpretive challenges of rhythm in *Kindermarsch* include the issue of triplet alignment, as has been discussed in scholarship and performance practice in Schubert's music for many years.<sup>891</sup> Most recently, this issue was explored in a full chapter by Rowland in *Schubert's Piano*, whose conclusion suggests that rhythms were assimilated in the early 1800s.<sup>892</sup> In Schubert's songs for example, musicologists and performers have addressed this matter in Schubert's songs such as 'Wasserflut', in which this polyrhythm issue arises throughout.<sup>893</sup> Similarly, in Schubert's solo piano music, a prominent example in scholarship is the Impromptu in C Minor (D.899).<sup>894</sup> This issue in four-handed music has further demands than two-hand playing in that two performers must take the same approach, and often, performers may have contrasting opinions. Thus far, Weekley and Arganbright have addressed this in scholarship in Schubert's piano duets.<sup>895</sup> In *Kindermarsch*, this issue is yet to be explored. Boey does address this issue in this work briefly – she simply states there must be 'precise placing of the sixteenth notes with the triplet figures'; but this is without a discussion as to why, or how this decision fits into the broader context of Schubert performance practice and interpretation.<sup>896</sup>

The triplet alignment or assimilation issue arises when there is a triplet in one line, and a duplet dotted figure in the other – likely a dotted quaver followed by a semiquaver, as befits

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<sup>891</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, pp. 90–92; Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, pp. 88–99; Roy Howat, 'Reading Between the Lines of Tempo and Rhythm in the B Flat Sonata, D960' in *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Analysis*, ed. by Brian Newbould (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 117–37 (p. 117).

<sup>892</sup> David Rowland, 'Performing Simultaneous Triplets and Dotted Rhythms in Schubert's Piano Music' in *Schubert's Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 116–35 (p. 134).

<sup>893</sup> Ian Bostridge, *Schubert's Winter Journey: Anatomy of an Obsession* (UK: Faber & Faber, 2015), pp. 149–68.

<sup>894</sup> Heather Arden, 'What Would Schubert Do? Triplet Assimilation in the Works of Franz Schubert', *Music Teachers National Association*, 11.4 (2020), pp. 10–22 (p. 18).

<sup>895</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, pp. 90–92.

<sup>896</sup> Boey, 'Teaching intermediate level technical and musical skills through the study and performance of selected piano duets', pp. 23–24.

*Kindermarsch*. There are two differing perspectives on this. The first approach is to place the semiquaver after the last note of the triplet, thus creating polyrhythms. Contrastingly, one can align or assimilate the semiquaver with the last note of the triplet, avoiding polyrhythms. Heated debate exists on this matter; singer Bostridge notes the palpable discontent by audience members when he performed ‘Wasserflut’ without assimilating the triplets.<sup>897</sup> Contrastingly, Brendel strongly advocates for the triplet assimilation in this song (and in most cases) and argues the alternative approach is incorrect.<sup>898</sup> The triplet alignment question presents itself in the penultimate bar (bar 23 of the trio) of the *Kindermarsch*’s trio; see the below musical examples for a comparison of the score with and without triplet alignment. Interpreters must agree whether or not to align the semiquavers in both hands of the secondo with the last note of the primo’s triplet. The primo must make the interpretive decision to align or not align the left-hand semiquaver with the last note of the triplet. In the secondo, the pianist must decide whether or not to place their semiquaver with the last note of the primo’s triplets. On paper, such an issue may seem minor, but these decisions affect the overall performance. One could argue that the presence of the ‘two against three’ polyrhythm between the primo and secondo suggests Schubert wished for the triplet misalignment in this bar; surely he would have written the music to reflect an alignment if he wished for this, as per example 4.5? To support this, Weekley and Arganbright claim that since Schubert often used duplets against triplets, it seems highly likely he would also be inclined to use the rhythmic figure of a triplet ‘against’ a dotted quaver and semiquaver – the duo theorises that Schubert was well capable of writing both approaches and ‘he did not confuse the two’.<sup>899</sup> Their supporting example is bars 9 and 12 in the seventh variation of Schubert’s D.624 for four hands; here Schubert writes the two approaches in close proximity. Since the triplet issue appears in just one bar in *Kindermarsch*,

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<sup>897</sup> Bostridge, *Schubert’s Winter Journey: Anatomy of an Obsession*, pp. 154–55.

<sup>898</sup> Brendel, *Music, Sense and Nonsense: Collected Essays and Lectures*, p. 137.

<sup>899</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 92.

it is an ideal piece to introduce a student to interpretative issues in Schubertian performance practice.

**Example 4.4, Schubert, *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bars 23–24 of the trio section <sup>900</sup>**



**Example 4.5, Schubert, *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bars 23–24 of the trio section, with triplet alignment**



<sup>900</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 125.

#### **4.4 *Kindermarsch*: Form and Harmony**

Overall, the form is 8 + 16 bars for the theme and 8 + 16 bars for the trio, resulting in symmetry. Each subphrase is conventional in structure, with antecedent and consequent phrases of four bars length each. The antecedent phrase of bars 1–4 ends with an imperfect cadence (ii-V), while the consequent phrase ends with a perfect cadence (V7-1). Suddenly and in contrast to the playful G major opening, Schubert modulates to the mediant, B minor. For the consequent phrase, we arrive at a perfect cadence in B minor after the use of an attractive German augmented sixth in bar 14 (built on the submediant as is usual), which resolves to IC as expected. The third phrase sees a return to the opening key of G major, though there is a brief tonicisation in bar 19 in C major (Schubert uses the G7 chord here), before returning to the F sharps in the following bar. A C sharp seventh chord in bar 22 adds some dissonance.

The trio's form is identical to that of the march theme; it consists of three eight-bar phrases in antecedent and consequent form. The first phrase of the trio section is in C major, the subdominant key of G major, though interestingly, not for the first bar. It begins on a C7 chord which then resolves to an F major chord as expected (a subdominant tonicisation). A start using a C major chord would have been more conventional – starting the section on a dominant seventh chord is unusual. After this brief tonicisation in F major, the phrase ends in a V7-1 cadence in C major. A dominant/tonic pedal in the form of a repeated C in the secondo's left hand adds to the tension, so when the clear-cut cadence in bars 7–8 is reached, there is a sense of resolve.

Bars 9–12 of the trio see an oscillation of tonic and dominant arpeggios flowing between the primo's hands, though now we have reached the key of A minor, the relative minor of the previous phrase. This is underpinned by a repeated pedal note. In the consequent phrase in bars 13–16, the sequence is repeated but this time we shift up to the chord of A major as opposed to A minor in the second bar of the phrase. The phrase ends in a perfect cadence in E

major – that is to say, Schubert modulates from the tonic of A minor to the major dominant, E major. Similar to the second phrase of the march, these keys seemingly appear suddenly and are striking to the ear, though sudden contrasts in mood and keys are common in Schubert's works. Perhaps the most harmonically striking chord is the German augmented sixth chord in bar 11 (built on the submediant as is usual, which in the key of A minor is F), juxtaposed with the dissonant E in the secondo's left hand. As expected, it resolves to the chord of V. After this phrase, in bar 16 in the secondo's left hand, the naturals in the triplet figure anticipate the return to C major. While the phrase returns to C major, there is a brief tonicisation, which is the same as bars 1-2 of the trio. Note the tertiary relationship between C major and the previous key of E major. There is also an attractive German augmented sixth in bar 21 – conventionally resolving to IC, before the cadential IC–V7–I progression ending the trio.

The keys Schubert uses in *Kindermarsch* are conventional and the structure is to be as expected for this form. The changes of key are reached mostly through direct modulation and most peculiar is perhaps the number of modulations and tonicisations within a 48-bar piece. The keys of G major, B minor, C major, A minor, and E major are present as well as tonicisations in F major and C major. The wide variety of keys in such a small form (also noteworthy of his *Ländler*), particularly that of the minor keys, allow the performers much scope in portraying various colours and character. From the analysis of this work, one can deduce that Schubert was working with the structure of the march, though colouring it skilfully, musically, and pianistically. While Su Yin Mak discusses the concept of 'formal ambiguity' in Schubert's late instrumental music, the *Kindermarsch*, dating from this period, is an example of Schubert taking the opposite approach.<sup>901</sup> Formal clarity would be a more suitable term for

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<sup>901</sup> Su Yin Mak, 'Formal ambiguity and generic reinterpretation in the late instrumental music', pp. 282–306.

this work as it is a highly integrated work, with unity created through the structural similarity evident in both the march and trio section.

#### **4.5 A Reflective Account: A Case Study of *Kindermarsch* in a Pedagogical Context**

The purpose of this account is to highlight technical and practical issues that arise when teaching Schubert's *Kindermarsch* (D.928). This section will serve as a guideline for piano pedagogues who wish to teach this duet, and these technical and practical considerations can be applied to teaching duets in the broader sense. When deciding on a suitable student to learn this piece I had to take several considerations into account. As discussed previously, I suggest *Kindermarsch* would suit a grade three student. One must note however that there are aspects unique in playing duets that are not present or as pronounced in solo piano-playing. For this reason, Weekley and Arganbright strongly encourage the decision to choose repertoire that is a grade or two lower in difficulty than in solo works.<sup>902</sup> Hence, I chose a student who recently completed their grade four solo piano exam with the Royal Irish Academy of Music with Distinction. The *Kindermarsch* duet was to be learned and played in the student's weekly thirty-minute piano lesson. In this case, it is clear that the duet partnership will consist of a student and a teacher. Playing with a professional benefits the student greatly in that it enforces a suitable tempo, enforces pulse, and fosters a greater sense of musicality. There is some gentle accountability; both players have a heightened sense of awareness and assertiveness as neither partner wants to let down the other. For a student, playing duets with their teacher can be aurally pleasing and rewarding. Furthermore, a duet can add layers to a student's playing that otherwise may sound bare or terse, particularly if they are in the beginner stages. While a student/teacher duet partnership is one option, teachers may also designate a duet to two of their students. Scriba discussed in detail the many factors that a teacher must consider regarding forming duet

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<sup>902</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 11.

partnerships, such as the difficulty of the primo/secondo parts, their technical competence, age, gender, and personality of the duet-members.<sup>903</sup> Scheduling back-to-back lessons would be a clever solution to teaching two students the same duet, so that they receive individual and duo tuition. As recommended by Gray, the first and last twenty minutes of the hour can be for both student's individual tuition, and the twenty minutes in the middle can be designated for duet-playing.<sup>904</sup> The combined rehearsal is what Fischer would call a dyad or a partner lesson.<sup>905</sup>

To introduce the piece, a small background on Schubert was presented to the relevant student. The student was familiar with the name Schubert, but their knowledge on him was lacking. This is understandable in the broad context; it must be noted that Classical music is generally only taught to a small extent in optional secondary-school classes in Ireland. While the student could not name a particular work by Schubert, they aurally were able to recognise some of his music that was played by me on the piano. This is an ideal scenario in that the student had not played Schubert's works before, and they were not familiar with him beyond some small awareness of his popular melodies – the student was a *tabula rasa* in this aspect. *Kindermarsch* will serve as a dynamic and worthy introduction to his works, as well as to duet-playing. Following the funnel-technique, I then focused in on introducing *Kindermarsch*. Rather than playing each individual part, a video recording of the duet was played before we discussed what era of music this stems from and how can we aurally recognise this.

#### **4.6 Secondo or Primo?**

As previously mentioned, this is an area that must be considered carefully when teachers are choosing suitable repertoire. In the beginner stages, it is clear who should play which part in a

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<sup>903</sup> Scriba, 'The Piano Duet as Teaching Medium: an Overview and Selective Syllabus for the Beginner Pianist', pp. 36–40.

<sup>904</sup> Meg Gray, 'Students, Two at a Time', *Clavier*, 39.1 (2000), p. 6.

<sup>905</sup> Fisher, *Teaching Piano in Groups*, p. 20.

teacher/student duet. However, this duet is of a higher difficulty and the difference between the primo and secondo's difficulty is quite minimal. As evident from the above rankings by various piano pedagogues, both parts are roughly of the same difficulty. I thought it best to choose for my student to learn the secondo part. The demands lie within their ability, though there are some challenges such as the left-hand octave playing and the right-hand chordal playing. The semiquaver passage in bars 11–12 requires clever fingering and fully-coordinated hands (see suggested fingering in the musical example below). Furthermore, students tend to be more efficient at reading the treble clef, but most of the secondo's part is written in the bass clef here. Learning the secondo will help a student develop better bass-clef reading. Scriba lists improved bass-clef reading as a benefit of duet-playing as well as becoming familiar with clef changes at an earlier stage; both of which are present in *Kindermarsch*.<sup>906</sup>

**Example 4.6, Schubert, *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bars 10–13** <sup>907</sup>



While introducing to the student the role of primo and secondo, I realised the importance of how I expressed this. It is important teachers take care in the wording they use as students can pick up on perceptions – sometimes misconceptions – of genres. It is an oversimplification of the whole piano duet genre to claim that the primo is the more important role because the part generally plays the melody, while the secondo plays the accompaniment

<sup>906</sup> Scriba, 'The Piano Duet as Teaching Medium: an Overview and Selective Syllabus for the Beginner Pianist', p. 2.

<sup>907</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 124.

only. While there is truth to this in beginner duets, it is not true in more advanced levels. This is an often-encountered misconception as Scriba observes.<sup>908</sup> Similarly, Arganbright and Weekley refute the assumption that the primo part is the more difficult in part.<sup>909</sup> Conscious of this misconception, it was explained to the student that a duet is an equal partnership and both players have varying important roles depending on the piece. *Kindermarsch* is quite a good example to introduce a player to the concept of equal partnership; it is a march so both players must be fully synchronised, and the secondo part does contain the melody at one point, as well as providing the critical accompaniment role. I encourage teachers not to take a student's knowledge on duet-playing for granted. Knowing that this student was unfamiliar with this territory, it was necessary to cover seating positions, as it differs from solo playing. A discussion and demonstration of the positioning of the two piano stools was presented (as per the below figure). Note the two stools are placed at a slight angle to allow more comfortable elbow movement. As Weekley and Arganbright stress, the student must ensure they sit in these positions during individual practice, so they become accustomed to playing in a duet-position, thus allowing themselves better control over the range they use while also allowing their partner to be as unrestricted as possible.<sup>910</sup>

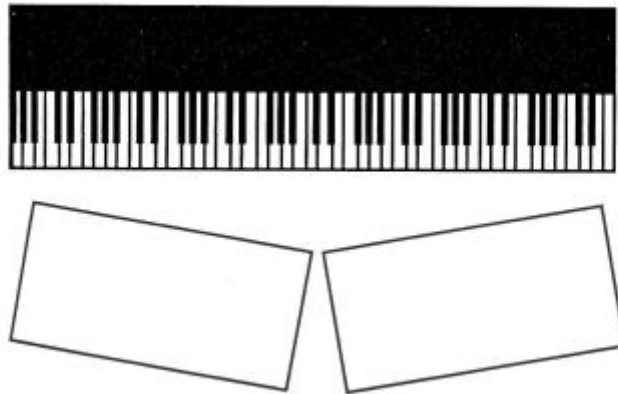
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<sup>908</sup> Scriba, 'The Piano Duet as Teaching Medium: an Overview and Selective Syllabus for the Beginner Pianist', p. 39.

<sup>909</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 7.

<sup>910</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 13.

**Figure 4.1, Seating position for piano duets <sup>911</sup>**



While it was explained that a duo consists of two equal parts, I, as the teacher, took on the leadership role. It is essential for one of the two players to take on a leadership role when playing. The leader can set the tempo to the piece, cue the entries, and time the endings. The consensus is that the primo usually takes on this role, though with a teacher/student duet, the leader is advisably the teacher (though this can be reversed when student progresses). From Weekley and Arganbright's teaching experience, total togetherness may not be achieved if there is no leader.<sup>912</sup> It is important to note here that in rehearsals, tempi, entries, endings and so on must be navigated in advance of performing to avoid conflict. Fortunately, in *Kindermarsch*, entries and endings are straight-forward in that both parts begin and end together. There is one staggered entry for the secondo, which comes in just one bar after the primo in bar 10. These are more reasons why *Kindermarsch* is an accessible duet for a young student. For beginners, Scriba recommends choosing repertoire that has simultaneous beginnings and endings (no staggered entries/endings) and no long rests – she suggests more

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<sup>911</sup> Ibid.

<sup>912</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

advanced players can manage staggered entries/endings and longer rests.<sup>913</sup> *Kindermarsch* corresponds to the former characteristics.

Following the introduction to the piece, the student was asked to sight-read hands separately. It was agreed that the student would focus on the march section for the first few lessons, before they progressed to the trio. Even through the sight-reading of the piece, it was noticeable that the student needed some time to familiarise themselves with reading in two bass clefs. The ledger lines above and below the stave in the treble/bass required some working out. Other preliminary preparation for this piece included writing in the bar numbers, indicating fingering, and highlighting any clef changes. The student was advised to practice the march section hands separately in their individual practice sessions until comfortable and then aim for a minimum of 70 crotchet beats per minute. It is essential that a strong emphasis on a consistent pulse and precise timing is enforced from the beginning stages of duets. Kwak advises against over practising a duet in individual practice; this is a valid concern as both players might develop contrasting interpretations – hearing their partner’s part can influence musical decisions.<sup>914</sup> With this knowledge in mind, I recorded the primo part at the minimum metronome mark and shared it with the student as a practice resource. Well-known contemporary pedagogue van Breeda recommends this method, so the student has an aural model for the duet as whole and is not learning their part in isolation.<sup>915</sup>

#### **4.7 Combined Rehearsal**

The next lesson took place a week after and the focus was on the march section. To begin, the student was asked to play the march section hands separately and just as a teacher would do in

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<sup>913</sup> Scriba, ‘The Piano Duet as Teaching Medium: an Overview and Selective Syllabus for the Beginner Pianist’, p. 42.

<sup>914</sup> Eun-Joo Kwak, ‘Research on the Technical and Interpretative Skills required to Play Piano Duos and Duets’ (doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, 1995), pp. 16–17.

<sup>915</sup> Van Breeda, ‘Klavier Ensembleonderrig’, p. 15.

a solo lesson, any incorrect pitches and rhythms were amended. The student had surpassed the metronome requirement and was performing at performance speed already. However, as this was their first duet that was not of an elementary level of difficulty, we pieced the piece together in small sections. Kwak suggests that the combined rehearsal begins with a run-through of the piece before dividing it into smaller sections, however in the context of some students, it may be best to work on smaller sections first as to not overwhelm them.<sup>916</sup>

Firstly, the student was occasionally not fully comfortable playing hands together, particularly because of the quick left-hand octave jumps which they had not encountered often in previous repertoire. Taking this into consideration, as a practice tool, I requested that the student play the right hand only while I played the primo part. Since the secondo's right hand consists of chords and so, the overall texture did not sound bare as the secondo's right hand provided harmonic support. Following that, as Kwak recommends, the primo plays their right hand with the secondo's left hand as these are the most important voices.<sup>917</sup> For the first few times playing through the first line, I played on an adjacent keyboard. I wanted to increase the student's challenges incrementally and ensure they were secure playing their part with just themselves seated at the piano before the added difficulties of sharing a keyboard came into play. Once the student's playing was secure, we played the first section on the same piano.

#### **4.8 Synchronicity**

When commencing playing *Kindermarsch* together, I counted an empty bar aloud. The student responded to this successfully, so it was it was discussed how to navigate beginning the piece with more subtlety. Counting out loud before playing is more suitable for early-stage learners. Scriba warns that this method is only appropriate for beginner duets players and Ferguson

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<sup>916</sup> Kwak, 'Research on the Technical and Interpretative Skills required to Play Piano Duos and Duets', p. 22.

<sup>917</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

similarly posits that counting a preliminary bar is feasible initially, but that a more suitable approach should be adopted thereafter.<sup>918</sup> Weekley and Arganbright recommend a stricter approach in that no whispered counting should be accepted.<sup>919</sup> There is not one method as to how best to signal the beginning of the piece, but rather a variety of options depending on the context. The leader, in this case, the teacher, can make a subtle movement as part of the upbeat. Weekley and Arganbright, van Breda, and Street suggest using this method.<sup>920</sup> Some may adopt a more pronounced approach, with an intake of breath on the upbeat accompanied by movement of the upper body. As is the case with a conductor's upbeat, the upbeat movement must be in tempo of the piece and in character of the piece. For example, *Kindermarsch* is a piece that requires a lively but steady tempo, and it commences on a piano dynamic; hence the introductory gesture need not be over pronounced.

#### 4.9 Technical Challenges

As discussed previously, Schubert cleverly composed this piece in a way that both primo and secondo do not come into contact, thus making this accessible in terms of practicalities. The parts do not need to cross hands or manage a simultaneous shared note. Normal fingering can be used as the inside hands are well-separated. At its closest, the trio section's chords in the secondo's right hand are a third apart from the primo's left on occasion; though this is easily navigated with good fingering in the primo's left hand (see below example). In Burney's historically-important preface to his four-hand sonatas dating from 1777, the comfort of the duettists is attributed to the hand positions of the primo's left and the secondo's right, as well

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<sup>918</sup> Scriba, 'The Piano Duet as Teaching Medium: an Overview and Selective Syllabus for the Beginner Pianist', p. 72; Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century*, p. 28.

<sup>919</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 20.

<sup>920</sup> Ibid; Claudine van Breda, 'Klavier Ensembleonderrig', *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiekonderwyser*, 126 (1995) pp. 14–16 (p. 16); Street, 'In Praise of Teaching Duets', p. 17.

as the fingering they use.<sup>921</sup> Waltz claims that such adjusted fingering in duet-playing may likely feel unnatural, but that it is essential to serve the music (while also strengthening the weaker fingers greatly).<sup>922</sup> Fortunately, for *Kindermarsch*, there are only a few amendments at most to be made in terms of the fingering. Some suggested fingering for this passage in the trio is illustrated below. Note the primo's left begins on the outer fingers, thus leaving room for the secondo's right hand:

**Example 4.7, Schubert, *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bars 1–4 of the trio section <sup>923</sup>**

However, as evident in the table below, there are three sections in which the same note is played within the same beat or in the following beat.<sup>924</sup> This is important as some isolated work on these bars will be necessary. Should the secondo not release the last right-hand chord in time in bar 4 of the trio and hold the chord over though the crotchet rest before releasing, the E4 in the primo's left hand in bar 5 will not be in a position to be struck. This was encountered while teaching *Kindermarsch*, so it was suggested that the secondo's repeated chords were

<sup>921</sup> Charles Burney, *Sonatas or Duets for Two Performers on One Piano Forte or Harpsichord* (London: Robert Bremner, 1777), preface <[https://ks15.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/8/8d/IMSLP60602-PMLP124131-Burney\\_4\\_kbd\\_duets.pdf](https://ks15.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/8/8d/IMSLP60602-PMLP124131-Burney_4_kbd_duets.pdf)> [accessed 16/12/2024].

<sup>922</sup> Howard B. Waltz, 'Duet Playing and Four-Hand Piano Music', *The American Music Teacher*, 3.4 (1954), pp. 2–3 (p. 2).

<sup>923</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 125.

<sup>924</sup> Abbreviations: SL= secondo, left hand; SR=secondo, right hand; PL=primo, left hand. PR=primo, right hand.

lightly placed and staccato, ensuring there is no overholding of notes, particularly through rests. A shared note within the same beat (also E4) is also present in bar 11 of the trio. This time it is the primo who plays this note first and there should be no problems once the note is released in time – for a student who has a tendency to glue the notes and not articulate the fingers fully, some isolated work may be required. Finally, in bars 15–16 of the march section, there is a D4 which is played first in the secondo’s right hand, and then by the primo’s left hand in the following beat, though should not present problems as the secondo’s hand will have moved down thus leaving ample space for the primo.

**Table 4.3, Graph of Ranges and Shared Notes in *Kindermarsch* (D.928)**

Specification	Notes/Bar Number
<b>Primo Range</b>	C sharp 4–B6
<b>Secondo Range</b>	G1–A4
<b>Simultaneous second intervals between primo and secondo</b>	Not applicable
<b>Same note repeated by other part within the beat or following beat</b>	PL + SR: bar 15–16 (D4) PL+ SR: bar 4–5 (E4), trio PL + SR: bar 11 (E4), trio
<b>Same note played by another part simultaneously (PL and SR)</b>	Not applicable
<b>Crossing of hands</b>	Not applicable

#### 4.10 Polyrhythms

*Kindermarsch*, as discussed in subsection 4.3, serves as a useful introduction to polyrhythms. In this case, there are triplets in the primo’s right hand against quavers in the secondo’s left. This piece works well as an introduction to such polyrhythms as the polyrhythms are between

the primo and secondo parts, rather than in each part. This makes the playing of the polyrhythms technically easier for a student who is new to them. It is likely a grade four student has encountered triplets in their solo playing but likely not in a polyrhythm form. I suggest a ‘teach the sound before the symbol’ approach here, as a mathematical explanation of such polyrhythms for a student may confuse matters initially. In teaching the *Kindermarsch*, the bars 1–4 and 17–20 of the trio were isolated. It was stressed for the student to keep the beat steady and not to be disturbed by the primo’s triplets. The student managed to keep the beat steady, and it was ensured that the primo’s triplets were fully in time, particularly focusing on the synchronisation of both parts on the second beat of the bar.

#### **4.11 Ensemble-Texture**

Synchronicity is one necessity pertaining to duets, though the overall texture of the ensemble is of equal importance. The duettists must always be aware of where their parts fit in the ensemble. While it is important to know which part has the melody and accompaniment so the duettists can adjust their dynamics, it is not as clear-cut as that. The issue of the tonal balance changing throughout pieces needs constant consideration. Pedagogue Williams rightly warns that the aspect of balance is often ‘neglected by pupils amidst the challenges of playing ever more complex pieces’.<sup>925</sup> A solo pianist does not have the same issue to the same extent as the solo pianist has control over all textures – a soloist has control over the full output of music. However, in a duet, each player can only control one of two parts of the overall texture and if active listening and adjusting is not practiced, the overall sound can be too loud or indulgent. Ferguson goes as far as to say as that the balance of parts in a duet is the issue most often ‘ignored’ in duet-playing.<sup>926</sup> For a solo piano work, it is quite natural for the pianist to project

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<sup>925</sup> Williams, *The Piano Teacher’s Survival Guide*, p. 99.

<sup>926</sup> Ferguson, *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century*, p. 30.

the melody – often in the right hand – with the bass of next importance, and the inner voices of lesser importance. Such is the case in variation one of Schubert’s Impromptu in B flat Major (D.935), for instance. As a result of these embedded soloistic instincts, it is common for an inexperienced duettist to over emphasise their right hand. However, pianists must adjust their way of playing for duets. It is likely a secondo player will have an accompaniment role in duets (as in most of *Kindermarsch*), but it is the bass notes in the left hand that must be of more importance than the secondo’s right-hand inner notes. Consequently, the pianist’s instinct to emphasise the right hand must not get in the way of the overall balance. With a primo player, the primo likely will encounter a melody doubled in octaves. The right hand likely will be at a higher range in the piano though it is important to bring out the left too, so that both voices complement each other and to avoid the melody from sounding tinny. These characteristics occur regularly in the primo and secondo in duet works overall, so much so that Ferguson claims a duettist should often think of their left hand more than their right, otherwise little will be heard outside of the top notes and the middle voices.<sup>927</sup> These traits of a doubled melody in the primo and a subdued right hand in the secondo are present in both the primo and secondo in *Kindermarsch* and are of particular importance for Schubert’s music. The sound that emanated from Schubert’s piano was much different to the modern instrument today. The sound was thinner, transparent, and less resonant overall. Hence, some extra care must be taken to avoid thick textures as it is all too easy to create this with four hands playing a modern piano. Particular care must be taken with the bass in Schubert’s four-hand music, as it can become overpowering, while on the instrument of his time, this was not the case. In *A Performer’s Guide to Music of the Classical Era*, this is also warned against in the performance of Schubert’s piano music; ‘but even here care must be taken not to force the tone and to make

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<sup>927</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

early nineteenth-century music sound like Liszt or Brahms'.<sup>928</sup> To compensate for the additional challenges of playing on a modern instrument works that were written for early nineteenth-century pianos, Weekley and Arganbright quite rightly recommend a scaling-down of dynamic range overall in Schubert's duets ('except in the later works').<sup>929</sup> Similarly, Rosenblum goes as far as to suggest when playing music from the Classical Era, the pianist could consider playing one dynamic marking lower than written; for example, the pianist should consider a forte marking to mean mezzo forte.<sup>930</sup> In teaching this piece, it was noted that for the forte section in the answering phrase in the march, the student often emphasised both hands quite strongly as they had observed the forte marking. However, this caused a harsh tone for the style, and it was not necessary; the contrast in dynamics between the two four-bar phrases at the beginning occurs quite naturally as the piece begins with two hands, before the full use of four-hands is applied for the answering phrase, including with octaves in the bass.

Arganbright and Weekley also encourage duettists to edit the dynamics depending on the parts and their roles in context.<sup>931</sup> This is a sensible approach which was incorporated into my teaching practice. For example, in *Kindermarsch* when the duettists encounter pianos and fortes, it does not necessarily mean that all four parts should be of equal dynamic. It is easy for the secondo, with a chordal right hand and octaves in the bass, to become overpowering when contrasted with the doubled melody in the primo. One is reminded swiftly of the fact that Schubert wrote this secondo part for a pianist of 'extraordinary merit', Marie Pachler, who obviously would be well able to deliver this piece fluently and musically.<sup>932</sup> For example, for a more experienced pianist encountering forte during solo playing, it is understood that the melody is still emphasised over the accompaniment and that both hands are not of equal

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<sup>928</sup> David Ward, 'Keyboard', p. 49.

<sup>929</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 84.

<sup>930</sup> Rosenblum, *Performance Practice in Classic Piano Music*, p. 55.

<sup>931</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *The Piano Duet: A Learning Guide*, p. 19.

<sup>932</sup> George Putnam Upton, *Women in Music* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1892), p. 73.

dynamic, but rather both hands together create the overall sound of forte and character. With a duet, there are four parts, which can make the task more challenging, particularly for a younger learner. In context of *Kindermarsch*, is it musical for all four parts to play forte in bars 5–8? Duettists here would fall into the trap of playing too loudly – simply because there are four hands, it does not mean duet-playing can be twice as loud. Hence, as a remedy to such dynamic/balance issues which were encountered in teaching, some dynamics were written into the score for each part to make it clearer to the student which parts to stress and/or subdue, as shown in the example below:

**Example 4.8, Schubert, *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bars 1–4, with suggested dynamics <sup>933</sup>**

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bars 1–4. The score is written for four hands (two pianos, P., and two solos, S.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo/mood is marked 'Marcia'. The piano parts (P.) are marked with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic, while the solo parts (S.) are marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piano parts feature a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The solo parts feature a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The score is divided into four measures, with the piano parts playing throughout and the solo parts entering in the third measure.

<sup>933</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 124.

**Example 4.9, Schubert, *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bars 5–8, with suggested dynamics**



Lastly, a small consideration must be upheld for the ornamentation. The ornament, which first occurs in bar 3 is written as an appoggiatura, but the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe suggests in brackets to play this as an acciaccatura or a grace note.<sup>934</sup> Arganbright and Weekley’s account corresponds with this execution of the ornament; appoggiaturas in Schubert’s music must be short and played before the principal note.<sup>935</sup> Though it must be noted here that strictly speaking, contemporary tutors are consistent in that short appoggiaturas should be played on the beat and should occur simultaneously with the other notes in the chord.<sup>936</sup> Halford similarly states that ‘there are no writers before or during Schubert’s time who show this type of short appoggiatura played before the beat’.<sup>937</sup> The example below is the ornament written out with this rule in mind, with the short appoggiatura taking half the value of the main note:

<sup>934</sup> Ibid.

<sup>935</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 89.

<sup>936</sup> Mario Aschauer, ‘Notes on Performance Practice’ in *Schubert Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen III*, trans. by J. Bradford Robinson, ed. by Walburga Litschauer and Werner Aderhold (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2013), pp. XVIII–XIX; Mario Aschauer, ‘Viennese Pianoforte Treatises as a Reflection of Schubert’s Pianistic Audience’, p. 157.

<sup>937</sup> Franz Schubert, *An Introduction to his Piano Works*, ed. by Margery Halford (USA: Alfred Music Publishing, 2003), p. 6.

**Example 4.10, Schubert, *Kindermarsch* (D.928), bar 3, with ornamentation written out**



However, the difference between both interpretations of the ornament in this instance is quite minimal and may not be perceivable when the piece is played at performance tempo. At a slower tempo, whether the pianist plays on the beat or before the beat for the ornament is much more noticeable. Furthermore, playing this ornament as an acciaccatura – as per the bracketed suggestion in the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe – might be advantageous to the clean execution of this figuration, particularly if a younger student is learning this piece. To further demonstrate validity of playing this ornament as an acciaccatura, Montgomery claims that based on Viennese tutors at the time, it is apparent that there were changes of thought taking hold, including the consideration of appoggiaturas as pre-beat ornaments.<sup>938</sup>

In the main march theme, this ornament is repeated in bar 7 in the primo. As in solo playing, the playing of each ornament must be consistent with one another, and the difficulty here is that both hands must articulate the passage clearly and be fully coordinated i.e. played at the exact same time. This challenge is further presented when the melody appears in the secondo (again, doubled), as the same ornament is present. Both players must articulate the ornament in the same manner regardless which of the above approaches they decide upon. Admittedly, this may not appear to be the most pressing issue here as there is only one ornament, though one encounters it several times with the repeats. However, such interpretative issues regarding ornaments arise more often and to greater significance in Schubert's other

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<sup>938</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 173.

piano duet music; a pertinent example being the Largo section of the Fantasy in F Minor, when the primo and secondo imitate each other with decorative trills.

#### 4.12 Conclusion

Schubert's *Kindermarsch* holds a special place in Schubert's duet repertory; there is no other duet of his quite like it – pedagogues and performers alike should take advantage that Schubert wrote this work, a work which is accessible to all levels of pianists. The symmetry afforded by the conventional form, alongside the foray through several keys – sometimes taking us by surprise – in such a miniature work makes this work an attractive piece to play and listen to. Discussing the approximate grade level of this piece as above is useful as this can serve as a guide for piano pedagogues in choosing suitable material for their students. Such a work would serve as an appealing and worthy introduction to Schubert's piano duets, and this was demonstrated in the case study taken from my teaching practice. The student had a positive response to learning this duet and the musical benefits of teaching *Kindermarsch* included:

- An increased awareness of balancing the melody and accompaniment
- More rhythmic precision
- More fluency in clef changes (in the secondo) and bass-clef reading
- Increased continuity despite minor slips
- An introduction into polyrhythms (2 against 3)
- An introduction into the triplet-alignment question in Schubert repertoire
- A heightened understanding of the learning process for the educator
- A growth of self-confidence in the student <sup>939</sup>

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<sup>939</sup> Hood's findings in her action-research project involving a music class also observe students' increased self-confidence and ownership over their learning as a result of a reflective project: Alison Hood, 'Whose

The piece is certainly amongst Schubert's most accessible for earlier-stage learners. The primo part may be more suitable for a younger learner than the secondo. Furthermore, a benefit of this distribution of parts is that the teacher can adjust to the balance much more fluently than if a student were to play the secondo. In the case of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, no Schubert duet work is featured in the 2023–2026 piano duet syllabus despite the inclusion of works by other major artists in the Western Canon such as Diabelli, Dussek, Mozart, Brahms, Schumann, Bizet, Debussy, Grieg, Satie, Dvořák, Bartok, and others.<sup>940</sup> This contrasts to the 2019–2022 syllabus, in which any one of Schubert's Ländler or *Marche militaire* No.1 were listed on the senior grade.<sup>941</sup> Perhaps in the 2027–2030 syllabus, duet works by Schubert, the most renowned of all piano duet composers, will be featured. *Kindermarsch* would act as a suitable candidate for the intermediate grade; and the piece would introduce students to Schubert's piano duets, or perhaps even Schubert's music in general. This would be a fitting time as the two-hundredth anniversary of Schubert's death arises in 2028.

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responsibility is it? Encouraging student engagement in the learning process', *Music Education Research*, 14.4 (2012), pp. 1–22 (p. 20), doi:10.1080/14613808.2012.703174.

<sup>940</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2023–2026*, pp. 50–60.

<sup>941</sup> The Royal Irish Academy of Music, *Piano Syllabus 2019–2022*, p. 60.

## Chapter 5

### Schubert's Dances for Four-Hands: *Four Ländler* (D.814)

#### 5.1 *Four Ländler* (D.814)

Schubert appears to prefer composing certain genres for the piano duet over others. For example, Schubert had an enduring appetite for composing marches for piano duets, while he wrote dances more often for the solo piano. I suggest the reasoning behind this is that Schubert improvised many of these dances at gatherings and repeated them, before later writing down the ones he liked. The medium of a piano duet is not particularly conducive to improvisation. Nevertheless, Schubert did write some dances for the piano duet medium that deserve some attention. Some musicologists from the earlier twentieth century have dismissed Schubert dances as lightweight, as previously discussed, and considering the neglect in this area of his output, it may be surprising to know how popular Schubert's dances were amongst his contemporaries. Schubert was a regular improviser at dances (comments on his pleasing improvisations are in the appendix); and others played his dances too, such as his friend Gahy. Eight dance sets were published during his lifetime and more were published posthumously. His 'Trauerwalzer' was so well-known it was popular across the continent, though its popularity may be the outcome of many arrangements (same with his first military march for four hands) and the piece was not always attributed to Schubert. Similarly, Schubert was noted in the first, second, and fourth *Atzenbrugger Deutsche* as an authority of innovative dance music and in fact, he was the first major composer to compose Viennese waltzes.<sup>942</sup> Despite this, Schubert's dances are often viewed as 'jobs on the side' with the view of financial gain, though as Mooiman quite rightly puts it, it is documented that Schubert relished composing

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<sup>942</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 292.

and playing dances.<sup>943</sup> Evidencing the lack of acknowledgement of his dances after his death, Josef Kenner bemoans that Schubert's dances were only extolled when he was alive.<sup>944</sup> Fortunately, scholars in the late twentieth century have come to the realisation that a study into these dances is overdue. Newbould remarked the need for an in-depth study of Schubert's dances in his Schubert biography in 1997.<sup>945</sup> Similarly, Baldassare notes that one should not overlook some collections of dances as some show a change in direction to the genre of dances.<sup>946</sup> There have been some valuable contributions to the genre in recent decades, such as Litschauer's *Schubert und Das Tanzvergnügen* (1997) and Martin Chusid's *Schubert's Dances: for Family Friends & Posterity* (2013).<sup>947</sup>

The categorisation of Schubert's dances in both two- and four-hand forms is complex for many reasons. Occasionally Schubert wrote solo and duet versions for the same piece; he also wrote copies for friends in which the scores have some alterations; and the titling of some pieces range from Ländler to Walzer and Deutscher depending on the publication.<sup>948</sup> To add to the confusion, Brahms (and others) transcribed some of Schubert's two-hand dances for piano duet. An example of the confusion in dating and categorising these works is evident in the case of the Sixteen German Dances and Two Écossaises – this was published for piano solo as Op.33 (D.783). Though, there are some arrangements for four-hands that Weekley and Arganbright argue were his own arrangements; though as they admit, this is not established.<sup>949</sup> The work also seems to be omitted by Börner's catalogue of Schubert's works, and it is only mentioned

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<sup>943</sup> Mooiman, 'An improvisatory approach to nineteenth-century music', p. 419.

<sup>944</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 288. Original source: Deutsch, *Schubert: Die Erinnerungen seiner Freunde*, p. 100.

<sup>945</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 239.

<sup>946</sup> Antonio Baldassare, 'The Iconographic Schubert: The Reception of Schubert in the Mirror of his Time' in *RIIM/RCMI Newsletter*, 22.2 (1997), pp. 39–52 (p. 49) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41605023>> [accessed 10/12/2022].

<sup>947</sup> Walburga Litschauer, *Schubert und das Tanzvergnügen* (Austria: Holzhausen, 1997); Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*.

<sup>948</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 49.

<sup>949</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

in the Grove article on Schubert as a solo work.<sup>950</sup> Nonetheless, the dances Schubert wrote for piano duet are minimal in number. In Kinkeldey's article on Schubert's dances, he notes that there are a small number of dances composed for piano for four hands.<sup>951</sup> Presumably, Kinkeldey is referring to some of the works below. The polonaises are not included here due to Kinkeldey's categorisation of the polonaises as a separate genre:

**Table 5.1, Schubert's Dances for Four Hands**

Title of Work	Year of Composition	Year of Publication	Publishers
<b>German Dance with 2 Trios and 2 Ländler (D.618)</b>	1818	1909	Festschrift für Hugo Riemann
<b><i>Vier Ländler</i> (D.814)</b>	1824	1869	J.P. Gotthard

The *Four Ländler* may pale in comparison to the scope of other works Schubert composed at the time. Nevertheless, they are of extreme use as pedagogical material due to their accessibility and brevity, and they have merits as items of performance too. As Magrath remarks, Schubert's dances in general are suitable for teaching purposes and for reference, Magrath lists some dances (as well as other Schubert piano works) and editions that teachers may find helpful.<sup>952</sup> Similarly, Sobaskie extolls the virtues of Schubert's dances by recommending them to be used as pedagogical resources and for music theory instruction.<sup>953</sup> The *Four Ländler* (D.814) were written in 1824, and the impetus to write this work possibly stemmed from his second appointment as music teacher to the Esterházy sisters. Though, it is

<sup>950</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, pp. 114–35; Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>951</sup> Otto Kinkeldey, 'Schubert: Dance-Composer', *The Music Quarterly*, 14.4 (1928), pp. 610–19 (p. 611).

<sup>952</sup> Jane Magrath, *Pianists Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (USA: Alfred, 1995), pp. 229–33.

<sup>953</sup> James William Sobaskie, 'Reflections and Echoes in Schubert's Waltzes' in *Schubert's Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 283–300 (p. 300).

safe to say the sisters' technical ability surpassed that needed for these Ländler. The Ländler provide an insight into Schubert's ability to create charm in miniature forms; these pieces could not be more miniature in form. A performance of the *Four Ländler* totals approximately three to four minutes. If anything – the shortness of these pieces is one of the advantages of the work. It is this exact aspect though that may have affected the reception history of such works; Gardner and Martin posit that the brevity of Schubert's dances (along with their function) may have resulted in them previously receiving 'little serious attention'.<sup>954</sup> Due to their shortness and accessibility, it is no wonder these Ländler have featured on various examination board syllabi, as previously discussed. McGraw claims that these pieces are the most accessible of Schubert's four-hand works.<sup>955</sup> That being said, the difficulty rating assigned to the Ländler in this repertoire book may come as a surprise. This is most likely due to the considerable level of sophistication and refinement needed in Schubert's dances. The *Four Ländler* (D.814) is placed at an upper elementary to a lower intermediate level.<sup>956</sup> Similar to McGraw, Börner asserts that this work belongs to the easiest of Schubert's four-hand works.<sup>957</sup> He positions this work as level one to two (very easy to easy) and suggests that beginners could try this. There is much truth to both positions; the pieces are short (so short that in the edition by Peters, the full work in both the primo and secondo is printed on just one page each) and are not taxing on note-learning as the pieces are sparse in texture, but they also require a high level of refinement.<sup>958</sup> In fact, some of the pieces could be played with two hands and could be easily arranged for two hands. Schubert did so himself in D.366/17 is the same piece as D.814/1. Though, a strength of the duet version is the natural wider use of range – and hence colour –

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<sup>954</sup> Gardner and Martin, eds, 'Introduction', p. 5.

<sup>955</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 461.

<sup>956</sup> Ibid.

<sup>957</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 124.

<sup>958</sup> Franz Schubert, *Four Ländler D.814* (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, n.d.)  
<[https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/7/7b/IMSLP157458-PMPLP21662-Schubert\\_4\\_Ländler\\_D.814\\_Pf4H.pdf](https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/7/7b/IMSLP157458-PMPLP21662-Schubert_4_Ländler_D.814_Pf4H.pdf)> [accessed 26/12/2024].

as the solo version is confined to the midrange of the piano. For those familiar with the Royal Irish Academy of Music's grading system, I would suggest these Ländler would befit grades 1/2 and encourage teachers to take into account the student hand span when choosing the primo/secondo parts. Nonetheless, the pieces in *Four Ländler* (D.814) are suitable for all ages of piano students due to their overall accessibility and brevity. All pieces are sixteen bars long as expected, except no.4 which is extended to twenty bars long. After no.2, there is a da capo returning us to Ländler no.1, and similarly, there is a da capo after Ländler no.4, returning us to no.3. Based on a survey of performances, the da capos are not necessarily adhered to. Often the four pieces are played in succession and on other occasions, the da capos are observed. Reasons behind this could be a wish to avoid more repetition, or the fact that pianists may be using editions that omit the da capos (such as the *Alte Gesamtausgabe*).<sup>959</sup>

While generally straight-forward, the pieces present some musical and technical challenges to a young student. Since they are short, the full *Four Ländler* could be covered. Conversely, a teacher might find it best to choose a selection based on a particular student's strengths and/or weaknesses. I agree with Boey that these pieces are suitable as introductions to Schubert's piano for four-hand works and are appropriate as sight-reading material.<sup>960</sup> In his section on Schubert's smaller duet pieces, Lubin asserts that these *Four Ländler* are 'as fresh and delightful as his solo dances', though he offers no further elaboration.<sup>961</sup> This following section will aid in filling this lacuna and provide some performance suggestions with the learner pianist in mind.

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<sup>959</sup> Franz Schubert, *Four Ländler D.814* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1888) <[https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/1/18/IMSLP08961-Schubert\\_-\\_D.814\\_-\\_4\\_Ländler.pdf](https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/1/18/IMSLP08961-Schubert_-_D.814_-_4_Ländler.pdf)> [accessed 14/04/2023].

<sup>960</sup> Boey, 'Teaching intermediate level technical and musical skills through the study and performance of selected piano duets', p. 82. Dohnányi further praises the virtues of sight-reading four-hand works: Ilona von Dohnányi and James A. Grymes, eds, *Ernst Von Dohnányi: A Song of Life* (Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 214–16.

<sup>961</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 67.

## 5.2 *Four Ländler, No. 1 (D.814)*

As is the case with Ländler No.2 and 3, No.1 is in the conventional form of sixteen bars, divided into two sections of eight bars. This is a typical form of a Ländler (the organisation into two eight-bar phrases is more conducive for dancing). Thus, this piece is characteristically in binary form and the piece is in E flat major. In a piano lesson, the form of the piece can be discussed. The student should be encouraged to breakdown the structure of the piece; a manageable task in this miniature form. This will encourage the student to think of the structure when playing and help them to develop skills to do so when they progress to more difficult repertoire in larger forms, such as sonatas. On first glance, as evident in the below example, the first crotchet appears to be an upbeat. However, the full harmony does not enter in bar 1 as expected, but rather in bar 2 and hence the first four crotchets can be understood as an upbeat. Newbould calls this a ‘quasi-upbeat’ for these reasons.<sup>962</sup> The use of mezzo forte and an accent on the third beat of the bar in both primo and secondo accentuates this typically weaker beat. While one would expect an upbeat to precede a four-bar phrase, Schubert only writes three more bars. Hence, while the upbeats may sound like such, bar 1 can be understood as a downbeat and can be interpreted as bar one of the four-bar phrase. Newbould states that this is an ‘illusion’ and notes that the alteration of metrical placements is a significant Schubertian device.<sup>963</sup> This is reminiscent of the theme in Schubert’s Variations in A flat Major (later discussed), in which Schubert writes in an upbeat that arguably was not necessarily necessary. In the middle section, there is a more conventional upbeat as the full harmony enters after the crotchet upbeat. Important to note also is that the secondo is not limited to a purely accompaniment role, thus demonstrating equality of the parts. This upbeat figure in thirds and with a chromatic appoggiatura in the primo, is doubled in the secondo’s right hand several times in the piece –

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<sup>962</sup> Newbould, *Schubert’s Workshop: Towards an Early Maturity*, I, p. 136.

<sup>963</sup> Ibid.

the thirds in both parts must be well-coordinated with one another. Note the use of parallel thirds for the opening of the melody; this is a common characteristic of Ländler:

**Example 5.1, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 1), bars 1–2 with upbeat <sup>964</sup>**



In the A section, the harmony oscillates between the tonic and the dominant. The bass lilt between simple tonic and dominant chords is a common method in Schubert's piano dances, with the upper parts containing the more elaborate figurations. In the B section, as is commonplace in Schubert's dances, he briefly modulates into the subdominant. One is alerted to this with a D flat in the form of an E flat seventh chord (see below example). This is chord V7 in the subdominant key (A flat). It then resolves to the chord of I in the subdominant before returning to the original key in the last four-bar phrase. While it certainly is not uncommon to modulate to the subdominant, Schubert is foreshadowing the key of the second Ländler which is in A flat major. In terms of phrasing, each phrase starts strong and can be tapered off at the end i.e. at the end of every four bars. Following the score's dynamics will aid with this. However, there are more minute and unwritten dynamics which can be explored in bars 4 and 8. The slender ending in bar 4 can be nicely shaped with a decrescendo. At the end of bar 12, pianists can take a small breath before the final four-bar phrase and this will point out the colour

<sup>964</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 176.

change due to the higher register that was not used in the Ländler heretofore. Similarly, the secondo's right hand ascends to the mid-range of the piano to the point at which a treble clef is required in bar 13. The use of the fourth, seventh and first scale degree in the melodic line (or a variation of this) is typical of cadential points in Ländler (see in figure 5.3).

**Example 5.2, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 1), bars 9–13 with upbeat <sup>965</sup>**

From a performer's perspective, the Ländler contradicts the unsubstantiated trope of Schubert's piano writing as not fitting well underneath the hands. The range of the primo spans roughly two and a half octaves from a D4 to an A flat 6. The range of the secondo spans approximately two octaves and a fourth, from an E flat 2 to an A flat 4. The total range is four octaves and a perfect fourth. A more modest range than *Kindermarsch* is present here, though this is an advantage for the young learner as there is less traversing across the keyboard. Despite a more limited range, the primo and secondo's hands keep to their own section of the keyboard. Schubert composed this in July 1824; during his second sojourn at Zselíz so one can suggest this was written for the Esterházy sisters. Schubert demonstrates his ability to write for the four-hand medium carefully, as there are few challenges in the practicality of this duet. The issue of note-sharing, whether it being simultaneous playing of the same note, or the same note

<sup>965</sup> Ibid.

being repeated in close proximity, does not arise in this duet. There are no hand crossings necessitated. At most, the primo's left hand and the secondo's right hand may be close to one another on occasion. For example, these parts are just a semitone note away in bar 15, with the primo playing an A natural 4 on the second beat while the secondo is just next-door playing an A flat 4. This also creates a false relation, which is the clash that occurs when a note in one part comes in a chromatically altered version of the note in another part, in close time proximity. The false relation occurs between the primo's hands and the secondo's right hand. Though, the A natural 4 acts as a chromatic under auxiliary note – the first four notes, in fact, spell out a turn:

**Example 5.3, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 1), bars 15–16 <sup>966</sup>**



A suitable tempo to capture the spirit of the rustic Ländler should be observed. A suggested metronome marking of approximately 140 crotchet beats per minute would be suitable here, as evident in Clemmow and Goldstone's interpretation (this duo also allows the phrases to breathe rather than keeping a metronomical tempo; they slightly push the tempo in section B to add some movement too).<sup>967</sup> A similar tempo is taken by Christian Ivaldi and Noël

<sup>966</sup> Ibid.

<sup>967</sup> Franz Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets* (Disc C), Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone (Divine Art, DDA21701, 2017).

Lee.<sup>968</sup> While the time signature is three crotchet beats per bar, the overall feel should be one beat per bar, and a lively tempo will help demonstrate this (though not too swift, as Ländler are generally slower than waltzes). As is the case with Schubert's dances, there must be a steady adherence to the tempo – dances were to be danced to after all. However, there is some small scope for some temporal freedom where appropriate. For example, when the pieces come to an end, there often is a small slowing down to conclude the piece. Pianists could also take some time before placing certain chords. For instance, pianists could take some temporal space to place the first chord in bar 13, signalling the register change in the primo and return to the home key. It is on this topic that Mooiman warns that details of rhythm in dances are difficult to notate due to conventions of the time of the composition's conception. As an example, he points out that in Viennese waltzes, the second beat comes in slightly early, despite the notation in the accompaniment containing quavers.<sup>969</sup>

### **5.3 *Four Ländler*, No. 2 (D.814)**

The second Ländler in this set is in the key of A flat major (the subdominant of the previous key of E flat major) and its form is also binary. It begins on a more clear-cut upbeat than the first Ländler. In the first section, the secondo oscillates between V7/b and I, before a small tonicisation in the key of B flat minor. The IC-V7-I cadence reestablishes the tonic at the end of the A section. Like the first Ländler, the bass has a lilting harmonic figure between the tonic to dominant, while the primo's melody – which is doubled (see figure 5.4) – suggests an improvisatory figure. Looking at the first five bars, improvisation is suggested in that there are only four notes (with one exception) based on one small descending and ascending motif; it is

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<sup>968</sup> Franz Schubert, *L'oeuvre Pour Piano À Quatre Mains de Franz Schubert Vol.1*, Christian Ivaldi and Noël Lee (Arion Music, 3325482680388, 1977) Listen at: <<https://nuim-naxosmusiclibrary-com.may.idm.oclc.org/catalogue/item.asp?cid=3325482680388>> [accessed 04/01/2023].

<sup>969</sup> Mooiman, 'An improvisatory approach to nineteenth-century music', p. 420.

quite a carefree sounding motif. In bar 5, the diminished seventh chord in the key of B flat minor is present in root position with the inclusion of A natural in the bass and two E flats (the C is omitted). The A natural in the secondo's bass, as well as in the middle voice of the right-hand chord, acts as a leading note which gives way to the chord of B flat minor, which then brings us back to the key of A flat major, with B flat minor chord being the supertonic chord. After the supertonic chord, there is a cadential progression of IC-V7-I in the tonic of A flat major.

**Example 5.4, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 1), bars 1–5 <sup>970</sup>**

While the previous tonicisation was brief, the second section elaborates more in this supertonic key, immediately providing some contrast in the mode. This contrast in key is sudden, and it lasts for four bars. In bar 9, an E flat minor chord is present, which is the subdominant chord in B flat minor. To conjure the contrast in mood, the articulation detail should be observed; the first section has a softer, lyrical quality and is legato, while the second section, the secondo's articulation suggests a dry and punctuated articulation – perhaps foreshadowing the staccato character of Ländler No.3. The melody is mezzo forte for this short minor section, before returning to the original key. Once again, dynamics play a role here as

<sup>970</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 177.

Schubert writes the then somewhat uncommon *pianissimo* direction in both primo and secondo in bars 12 and 13. The minor fourth chord in bar 13 is particularly piquant and the last bars see a V7-I cadence, though with a false relation evident. This is a similarity to the ending of the previous Ländler. This false relation consists of a non-diatonic *appoggiatura* on D natural in the primo, while the secondo has D flats as per the V7 chord. Lastly, there is a small peculiarity in bars 11 and 12 that may be recommended as avoidable in part-writing. There are contrary motion fifths between the primo and the secondo in these bars. The primo has C down to a F in unison, while the secondo has F to a B flat.

From a pianistic perspective, both parts are very approachable. For a very young student, perhaps the octaves in the secondo's right hand would not yet be of reach. Besides this, there are not many challenges. The second half of the secondo's right hand is an excellent exercise for the young student in chordal playing in the right hand, as these chords can be played in a five-finger position, or at most, a sixth interval is required. The range of the secondo spans from a D flat 2 to an A flat 4, totalling two octaves and a perfect fifth. The primo spans from a E flat 4 to an F6, totalling two octaves and a major second. The B section is the first time in the Ländler set that the secondo's bass breaks away more substantially from the legato tonic/dominant figure; the B section is marked *staccato*, and this is coupled with the *mezzo forte* dynamic as it enters the minor tonality – contrast in Schubert's Ländler is a common characteristic.

Unlike in the first Ländler in which both primo and secondo share melodic material, the melody is confined to the primo in the second Ländler. In fact, one aspect that makes the primo part very accessible for a student is the unison scoring. The previous Ländler's primo played in thirds between both hands for much of the piece; and the part's left hand often plays notes which the right hand plays one beat after (e.g. in the upbeat); thus, creating co-ordination challenges, particularly for a younger student. To overcome this, one must take up the left hand

note slightly earlier than written for the note to sound in the right hand a beat later. This must be done whilst also keeping the illusion of legato – perhaps limited use of pedal can aid with this. Interestingly, this pianistic challenge arises in the primo part, as well as the secondo (e.g. bar 1 when both parts have the same notes an octave apart). Pianistic challenges of sharing notes simultaneously or sharing notes in very close proximity between the primo and secondo regularly arises in piano duet music, though this a very infrequent issue in these Ländler. This demonstrates Schubert's understanding and sure handedness and pragmatism in composing for four hands. In contrast to Ländler No. 1 however, the technical challenges are even fewer in No. 2. Both hands in the primo are playing in unison for the majority in Ländler No.2. In fact, while a primo part playing in unison is a staple in any composer's compositional toolbox, Schubert does this less often, so for this piece to be almost all in unison for the primo is somewhat unique for Schubert. This is evident when comparing his treatment of the primo in these Ländler with one another. The last four bars of No.2 are even simpler, as the primo is reduced to just one single line in the right hand. This will aid in successfully portraying the pianissimo marking. For a young student, this makes the piece even more accessible, but the challenge with unison playing is to keep both hands fully together and even with one another. This is particularly difficult for a young learner when for example, the music for the right hand lends itself to the naturally stronger fingers, while the left hand may need to use the weaker fingers such as the fourth and fifth. To overcome this, careful fingering, listening, and adjusting is required for a successful musical outcome. The use of unison makes the note-learning less onerous on the student, but it gives the opportunity for the pianist to work on unison playing. Unison playing is frequently encountered in duets, but it is much less frequently encountered in solo playing – since the piano can provide both melody and accompaniment in various guises – and hence the student may be less accustomed to it.

#### **5.4 *Four Ländler*, No. 3 (D.814)**

The third Ländler sees a sudden change of character. In contrast to Schubert's Ländler generally being set in major keys, this Ländler is a minor key and the only minor key in the set. While the piece is also just sixteen bars in binary form, there is a wide range of musical scope for the performers to explore here. The chosen key of C minor is relevant here as it is in a mediant relationship from the previous Ländler which was in A flat major. This is a hallmark of Schubert's compositional style. This piece begins in C minor and the end of the first section ends in A flat major, the submediant. However, it is unusual here in that the primo and secondo's harmony seems to be unmatching in bar 7, thus this is not Schubert's strongest cadence (example 5.5). Taking the previous bass figures into account and cadential conventions, one might expect the bass notes here to be E flat, B flat and E flat as befits V, thus ending on a much stronger perfect cadence (example 5.6). It does sound a little awkward as Schubert wrote it. The B section is generally in C minor, though there is a brief tonicisation of A flat major – reenforcing the key of A flat major which we have heard in the previous Ländler too - the pianists can highlight by musically placing the first chord of the 6/4 cadence in bar 12, before tapering off the resolution. The pitch range in this piece shows an expansion of that used in the previous two pieces, more so in the secondo. The secondo for Ländler 1, 2, and 4 is focused closer to the mid-range of the piano, though in No.3, the lower range of the piano is explored, thus aiding the pianist in capturing the contrasting character of the piece as the staccato octaves ascend and descend in chordal leaps.

**Example 5.5, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 3), bars 6–8 <sup>971</sup>**

**Example 5.6, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 3), bars 6–8 (with amended cadence)**

The tempo certainly can be swifter than the previous Ländler due to the contrast in mood. In Clemmow and Goldstone's recording, this piece is played at approximately 180 crotchet beats per minute.<sup>972</sup> Ivaldi and Lee's recording is approximately the same tempo.<sup>973</sup> In the previous Ländler, the pianists have a small scope for a slight push and pull in the tempo with the aim of capturing the lyricism and character of improvisation – i.e. avoiding playing metronomically, while respecting that the underlying pulse must be present. Though in Ländler

<sup>971</sup> Ibid.

<sup>972</sup> Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets (Disc D)*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone.

<sup>973</sup> Schubert, *L'oeuvre Pour Piano À Quatre Mains de Franz Schubert Vol.1*, Christian Ivaldi and Noël Lee.

No.4, a consistent forward-motion should be more strictly adhered to, so that the spirited frenzy of the piece is portrayed.

Like the first Ländler, the upbeat deserves some further inspection. Typically, an upbeat is unaccented and is followed by a strong downbeat. In the corresponding Grove article, the definition of an upbeat is the following: ‘an anacrusis is in essence an initiation on a non-accent, and as such it is rhythmically unstable’.<sup>974</sup> However, the upbeat crotchet here is marked forte, has an accent, and it is the first note of a two-note slur. The following downbeat is staccato, and since it contains the second note of the slur, it should be tapered off. Schubert continues the unexpectedly placed accent on the third beat throughout the first section. There are hollow open fifths doubled in the secondo throughout the piece, giving the piece a folk-like quality. The musical effect of the above qualities is reminiscent of the highly accented Dvořák’s *Slavonic Dances*. Such off-beats and syncopations are consistent with Schubert’s other Ländler for piano.<sup>975</sup> Such examples are evident in the seventh piece in Schubert’s Eight Ländler (D.378), in which the second beat is accented. In other pieces, several beats may be emphasised; the third beat may be accented such as that in the first section of D.366, no. 7, or the second beat as in the second section.

In addition to articulation, which contrasts to the other Ländler, dynamics play an important role in creating this mood in this Ländler. While the other three Ländler range from pianissimo to forte (forte occurs just once though for two bars), the third Ländler exploits both louder and softer dynamics. Schubert’s dynamics here range from piano to fortissimo and some of these changes are sudden – the element of surprise is never far away with Schubert. There is a subito pianissimo in the last two bars, coming after a fortissimo, which brings the piece to

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<sup>974</sup> Mine Doğan, ‘Upbeat’ in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.28812.

<sup>975</sup> Richard Kurth, ‘On the Subject of Schubert’s ‘Unfinished’ Symphony: Was bedeutet die Bewegung?’, *19th-Century Music*, 23 (1999), pp. 3–32 (p. 16), doi:10.2307/746845.

its end. Upon playing the final repeat, there can be some temporal freedom so the last chord can be placed softly. Though overall, it is certainly the most raucous Ländler of the four and it is almost all marked staccato except for the two-note slurs, which must be well-shaped. This Ländler also deviates from the simple tonic/dominant lilting figure evident in the secondo's bass in the first two pieces; thus, showing Schubert's varied treatment of his Ländler accompaniments. It is also worth noting that Schubert does not at all use the 'oom-pah-pah' style of accompaniment in this Ländler, a routine characteristic of dance forms in triple time.

This Ländler poses slightly more challenges for the pianists than the previous two, in that there are some duet-specific aspects that were not encountered previously. In bar 12 (see example 5.7 below), there is a simultaneously shared E flat 4 in the primo's left and the secondo's right hand. When this happens in duet-playing, solutions must be worked out on a case-by-case basis, based on which hand has the most important line, what is practical, and what results in the most musical outcome. In this case, the E flat 4 is part of the harmony, rather than the melody, so to lift this note up slightly early to allow the secondo to play the note too is permissible. I would suggest the primo lifting the E flat 4 on the second beat, so the secondo can play as written. Alternatively, the E flat 4 in the secondo could be omitted, hence the primo can play as written. It would not make musical sense for the primo to omit this E flat 4 completely, as the figure in question is a 6/4 cadential point. It is not a bold claim to suggest Schubert was probably aware of this clash – often when composing for piano duets, composers encounter the dilemma of whether to 'play by the rules' when scoring something, or whether to write out the parts as they would need to be played. Frequently, composers decide to leave these co-ordination issues up to the performers to manage.

**Example 5.7, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 3), bar 12 <sup>976</sup>**



In bar 4 (see below), there is a shared note within the following beat. C4 is first heard in the primo's left hand and is held for two beats. On the third beat, the secondo's right hand must play this note. The primo must ensure to release the note slightly early to allow the secondo to play the note. Since the primo's right hand also contains a minim, it is advisable for both the primo's hands to release the keys at the exact same time to ensure consistency:

**Example 5.8, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 3), bars 1–4 with upbeat <sup>977</sup>**



<sup>976</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 177.

<sup>977</sup> Ibid.

### **5.5 *Four Ländler*, No. 4 (D.814)**

The final piece returns to a more wistful and reflective mood. Its C major key is in the parallel major key of the previous Ländler (C minor). In comparison to the previous pieces, its duration is extended to twenty bars, due to there being twelve bars instead of eight in the B section. The augmented section is a result of Schubert repeating a sequence twice. It is the only time in this set that he diverges from the 8 + 8 periodicity. None of the four pieces are particularly Ländler-esque, especially in comparison to the style of his earlier Ländler. For example, there are neither pedal drones nor repeated open fifths such as that of the trio section of the *Deutsche* (D.146/No.9) for solo piano, in which the bass resembles the hurdy-gurdy. There are no yodel-like arpeggiated figures typical of a Ländler, such as that of D.365/No.23 for solo piano. In comparison to his other four-hand dances, the Ländler (D.814) differ stylistically from the rustic German Dance with 2 Trios and 2 Ländler (D.618), a work which contains a hurdy-gurdy bass and repeated arpeggiated figures in the treble (as well as Schubert's inclination for modulating into tertiary-related keys; he modulates without preparation from G major into B major in the German Dance). That being said, Ländler No.4 is probably the most Ländler-esque of the set; the opening ascending arpeggio figure is a common characteristic of a Ländler – see example 5.9. Such figures are not present in the other three pieces. This ascending arpeggio figure is peppered throughout this Ländler and is based on added sixth chords to generate piquancy (e.g. in bar 1, the chord of one with the added sixth is present). This opening figure in the primo could be played with the left hand or distributed between both hands in order to avoid ulnar deviation of their right hand; it does begin on middle C, which may be awkward for the primo to reach with their right hand. The tempo can be a little more relaxed than the fast rhythmical drive of the third Ländler – though not too slow as this is a dance. Clemmow and Goldstone play this approximately 170 beats per minute, which certainly

captures the dance-like character.<sup>978</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, Eschenbach and Frantz take an alternative approach, by performing this at a considerably slower speed. The approximate tempo they take this piece is *c.* 91, which creates a sense of spaciousness.<sup>979</sup> The contrasts between these two interpretations is arresting. The second duo's rendition of this Ländler evokes a lullaby in its speed, softer dynamics, less punctuated articulation and through the lyrical quality of the melody. The former duo's approach is much more in line with what one would expect with a Ländler. Even the manner in which the duo's end the B section differs. The first duo clearly takes the crescendo more boisterously – the markings in the piece do indicate a crescendo to forte dynamic. The latter duo also adheres to the crescendo, but it is a little more subtle. Their consideration of this crescendo is more contextual, in that they are coming from a pianissimo dynamic and they avoid the forte being too loud (they keep the dynamics in context of their overall dynamic of the piece). In the repeat, this duo changes the dynamics by concluding the piece with an interpretive decrescendo. Analysing several recordings of this Ländler is a helpful exercise in exploring the multiplicity of interpretations possible for this charming piece. One is reminded on this matter of Focroulle's comment that Schubert 'gives performers plenty of possibilities' for pianists to relish.<sup>980</sup>

**Example 5.9, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 4), bar 1 <sup>981</sup>**



<sup>978</sup> Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets (Disc D)*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone.

<sup>979</sup> Franz Schubert, *Schubert: Music for Piano Duet, Vol. 2*, Christoph Eschenbach and Justus Frantz (Warner Classics, Parlophone Records, 0094636532653, 2006).

<sup>980</sup> Focroulle, 'Final thoughts? Interpretation of the first movements of Beethoven's and Schubert's last three piano sonatas', p. 152.

<sup>981</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 178.

The secondo presents some mild challenges. In the B section, contrasting articulation is required in both parts. For example, the secondo's right-hand line must be played legato, while the left-hand slurs contains staccato notes (then unusually, this articulation is reversed). Boey notes this challenge in her dissertation which briefly mentions this Ländler, but further inspection is required for a deeper understanding.<sup>982</sup> Schubert here is indicating mezzo staccato. The length of these notes must be decided during a practice session and played consistently. The fact that the portato notes all occur on the same note makes this non-legato articulation more manageable and quite organic. Nevertheless, a student may find the co-ordination of simultaneous legato and non-legato playing difficult initially (as a practice exercise, Boey recommends the student to tap out the rhythm on the fallboard first, using the correct articulation).<sup>983</sup> Portato is also found in both primo and the secondo in bars 2, 4, and 6; both parts here must decide the precise duration of these notes (i.e. when to release the notes) so they sound fully co-ordinated.

In the majority of piano-playing treatises by Schubert's mid-career, the slur above or beneath a dot indicates mezzo staccato. Cramer, in his *Practische Pianoforte-Schule* (dating from approximately 1812) notes: 'The slur over or under two dots signifies mezzo staccato (half-sharp attack). The notes should not be so sharply attacked as if they were notated as follows [here Cramer shows the staccatos and wedges]'.<sup>984</sup> The mezzo-staccato is also explained in Friedrich Starke's *Wiener Piano-forte Schule* from 1819–1821, in which a dot under a slur refers to a note which must be given 'three quarters of its written length-value'.<sup>985</sup>

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<sup>982</sup> Boey, 'Teaching intermediate level technical and musical skills through the study and performance of selected piano duets', pp. 41–42.

<sup>983</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>984</sup> Johann Baptist Cramer, *Practische Pianoforte-Schule* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, c. 1812), p. 33 <[https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/c/cb/IMSLP398904-PMLP645821-Cramer\\_-\\_Pianoforte-Schule.pdf](https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/c/cb/IMSLP398904-PMLP645821-Cramer_-_Pianoforte-Schule.pdf)> [accessed 09/02/2023]. Translation from Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 159.

<sup>985</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 159.

Along with the above suggestions in mind, performers must take into account differences they may encounter in the articulation for this piece in differing editions. There are some differing marks (whether it be additional mezzo-staccato markings or omissions) in the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe in comparison to the Alte Gesamtausgabe.<sup>986</sup> The editor of this volume of the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe has suggested additional mezzo-staccatos such as those in bars 2 and 4 in the primo's left hand, presumably to ensure more consistency in the articulation markings (these editorial suggestions match the articulation of the primo's right hand, as well as the secondo's).<sup>987</sup> Why would Schubert write mezzo-staccato for the primo's right hand and the secondo's part for this bar, but omit the marking of such in the primo's left hand? This could be a minor oversight on Schubert's part though as Montgomery warns against, it is important not to fall for the trope of Schubert being a careless writer who wrote speedily.<sup>988</sup> There is also the point that if he was writing in manuscript form (as opposed to for publication), inconsistencies due to human error are a natural occurrence, rather than a sign of carelessness. Arganbright and Weekley similarly note that the nineteenth-century perception of Schubert's writing as careless arose due to inconsistencies in the scores, but they also put forward that Schubert wrote phrase marks in more often than some of his predecessors and that inconsistent phrase marking was common generally.<sup>989</sup> A further factor may be the expectation on the composer's part for publishers to edit the work before publication. Note that in 'Selected Piano Works for Four Hands: Franz Schubert', which is a republication of the Breitkopf & Härtel Alte Gesamtausgabe, there is a misprint in the secondo's left hand in bar 14; the G sharp should

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<sup>986</sup> Schubert, *Four Ländler D.814* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1888), pp. 1–4.

<sup>987</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 178.

<sup>988</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, pp. 158–59.

<sup>989</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 84.

be a minim as opposed to a crotchet.<sup>990</sup> In the Alte Gesamtausgabe itself, this misprint is present.<sup>991</sup> It is amended in the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe.<sup>992</sup>

It has been asserted that in Schubert's Ländler for piano, one can perceive the roots of the works in string ensembles, for Schubert most definitely heard Ländler regularly for the instrumentation of two violins, a string bass, and sometimes a clarinet and percussion.<sup>993</sup> It is in this vein that Cotik posits that Schubert's piano writing often seems unpianistic, but that his writing is influenced by the string-writing idioms.<sup>994</sup> This view is not particularly surprising as Ländler are very often violinistic in their melodic shapes which are frequently moulded on arpeggiated figures and leaps. It is all the less surprising when one considers Schubert was a skilled violinist and that he so often wrote for it (including violin Ländler). Though this violinistic tendency is largely not present in this D.814 set, perhaps Schubert had this sonic world in mind when he marked the fourth Ländler with such contrasting articulation.

The 'con sordini' marking for this Ländler invites discussion. Schubert here is possibly indicating to employ use of the moderator pedal; Kramer posits that Schubert writes 'sordini' to signify this in his piano works.<sup>995</sup> Hinrichsen explains that the effect of the con sordini is to generate 'the appropriate poetic or at least atmospheric sound'.<sup>996</sup> The una corda pedal could potentially be used in this piece on a modern grand, since this pedal is the closest substitute.<sup>997</sup>

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<sup>990</sup> Franz Schubert, *Selected Piano Works for Four Hands: Franz Schubert* (USA: Dover Publications, 2020), p. 268.

<sup>991</sup> Schubert, *Four Ländler D.814*, p. 3.

<sup>992</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 178.

<sup>993</sup> Plantinga, 'Schubert, Social Music and Melancholy', p. 241.

<sup>994</sup> Cotik, 'Aspects of Interpretation in Franz Schubert's Music for Violin and Piano: Duo in A major, Op. posth. 162, D. 754, Rondo in B minor, Op. 70, D. 895, and Fantasia in C Major, Op. posth. 159, D. 934', p. 104. The influence of string-writing on Schubert's piano works is further explored in: Gonzalez, 'A Critical Reflection on the Impact of String Instruments in Piano Performance: Insight from the Pianist's Perspective'.

<sup>995</sup> Richard Kramer, 'Against the grain: the Sonata in G (D.894) and a hermeneutics of late style' in *Schubert's Late Music: History, Theory, Style*, ed. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 111–33 (p. 116).

<sup>996</sup> Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen, 'Una Corda: Beethoven's and Schubert's Exploration of the Piano's Sonority as a Structural Resource' in *Schubert's Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 219–37 (p. 232).

<sup>997</sup> For further discussion on pedalling in Schubert; see Chapter 7.

The piece's mood is consistent, as dynamics are largely set at a pianissimo level. Pianists could accordingly depress the una corda throughout. A survey of recordings reveals the sustain pedal is commonly utilised in this Ländler. It could be argued that it is essential and useful in some parts. For example, one can use slight touches of pedal in the figuration in bars 13, 15, 17, and 18 to aid the legato feel. Here, the primo's right and left hand share a note that occurs in the right hand first, and then it occurs only half a beat later in the left hand. The pianist must ensure to lift up the key enough in ample time so that the repeated note sounds. Since the right-hand melody should be legato, it may sound slightly disjointed without the use of pedal.

Harmonically, this Ländler serves as an example of Schubert's penchant for modulating to third-related keys. In the beginning of the second section, he begins unusually in the key of F major with a C7 chord (quite like that at the start of the trio of *Kindermarsch*) on the arpeggiated-sixth chord motif. In bars 13–14, this motif is shifted up into A major. This is then repeated identically in bars 15–16. Performers should note the pianissimo marking in bar 13 to highlight this unusual change in harmony. The C sharps are then naturalised and the remaining four bars return us to C Major. Note the tertiary relationship between F, A and C major (see examples 5.10, 5.11, and 5.12). This particular harmonic progression is perhaps the most striking of the whole set. Possibly Schubert used a slightly extended second section (twelve bars as opposed to eight in the previous Ländler) to provide enough space for passing through these several keys. A possible weakness from a compositional standpoint is bar 7. The first chord of bar 7 is in an unstable second inversion of a dominant chord; while strictly speaking, this chord should be the chord of ii (i.e. reaching a ii-V7-I cadence). Nevertheless, the primo's charming descending chromatic line pleases the ears with the element of surprise. At the end of this Ländler, Schubert has a ii-V7-I cadence as expected.

**Example 5.10, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 4), bars 9–10 <sup>998</sup>**

Example 5.10 shows the musical notation for bars 9–10 of Schubert's *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 4). The score is for piano (P.) and strings (S.) in 3/4 time. The piano part has two staves, and the strings part has two staves. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The strings part provides harmonic support. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'P.' (Piano). The dynamics are marked 'fp' (fortissimo piano) in both parts. The score shows two measures of music.

**Example 5.11, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 4), bars 13–14 <sup>999</sup>**

Example 5.11 shows the musical notation for bars 13–14 of Schubert's *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 4). The score is for piano (P.) and strings (S.) in 3/4 time. The piano part has two staves, and the strings part has two staves. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The strings part provides harmonic support. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'P.' (Piano). The dynamics are marked 'pp' (pianissimo) in both parts. The score shows two measures of music.

<sup>998</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 178.

<sup>999</sup> Ibid.

**Example 5.12, Schubert, *Four Ländler* (D.814, No. 4), bars 17–18 <sup>1000</sup>**



## 5.6 Conclusion

Chusid notes that the use of chromaticism is quite high in these pieces in comparison to usual Ländler and goes as far as to rate the level of chromaticism at 3.5 out of 5.<sup>1001</sup> More broadly speaking, Neumeyer posits that the use of the sixth scale degree in Schubert's Ländler was less conservative than that of his contemporaries Johann Strauss Sr and Josef Lanner, both renowned composers of dance music.<sup>1002</sup> Certainly, to modern ears, the chromaticism in this Ländler set is not particularly striking, though it possibly was for Ländler of the time, as evidenced by Chusid's study. Structurally and harmonically for the most part, Schubert is working with some of the conventions of the Ländler genre (less so melodically). In such miniature forms, it is not always feasible to explore large-scale modulations or extend sequences, however there are some noteworthy changes of key in the final Ländler. Furthermore, Schubert is colouring these pieces skilfully and musically with use of some chromaticism, dynamics, articulation, and a wide range of pitch – though the range is not

<sup>1000</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1001</sup> Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 170.

<sup>1002</sup> David Neumeyer, *Scale Degree ^6 in the 19th Century: Ländler and Waltzes from Schubert to Herbert* (University of Texas, 2016), p. 36 <<http://hdl.handle.net/2152/34172>> [accessed 14/02/2024].

particularly extreme. The dynamics and articulation add to the changes of mood, from the fiery third dance to the more intimate and gentler final dance. A desktop study of recordings reveals that a contrasting breadth of interpretations is possible. From a didactic perspective, these dances are considerably more accessible than the *Kindermarsch*, so it may be appropriate for less advanced junior students. The fact that this set is miniature, largely diatonic, and only brief tonicisations to related keys occur, makes this piece more approachable. The learner's fingers will find it easier to only traverse to related keys as opposed to unrelated. Though, the fourth piece is the most adventurous as Schubert passes through tertiary-related keys, and he avoids changing to the dominant. The pieces would work well as pedagogical material, particularly as sight-reading and they would serve as an ideal introduction to Schubert's piano duets, or perhaps his piano music in general.

As Rast argues, the study of smaller and not as well-known works provides insight into the compositional progression of a composer's masterworks.<sup>1003</sup> In this case, the keys used in these Ländler reveal potential insights into Schubert's larger compositions too. Schubert used tonal cyclicism in his larger instrumental works in the year these Ländler were written (1824) and with the E flat major, A flat major, C minor, and C major keys used in these Ländler, perhaps Schubert used such relations in these smaller pieces as templates for his larger works. One would wonder, what keys Schubert set the remaining two Ländler in – these have been lost.<sup>1004</sup> Like his piano duets, his dances contributed significantly to his popularity during his lifetime, though the perception of these works as lightweight resulted in them being overlooked in reception history. While these particular Ländler are gems in their own right, Schubert's originality and ability to develop material is more clearly evident in another form of his dances – his polonaises. In the polonaises, Schubert builds on from conventions, but creates something

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<sup>1003</sup> Rast, 'Analysis of Structure in Schubert's Piano Duets', p. 123.

<sup>1004</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. XII.

of his own, particularly in his trio sections – thus playing with genre expectations. The young Schumann commented in his diary that Schubert’s polonaises are ‘downright thunderstorms, with romantic rainbows’.<sup>1005</sup>

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<sup>1005</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 60.

## Chapter 6

### A Comparative Study of 2 Schubert Polonaises for Four Hands

#### 6.1 Polonaises: Context

Schubert's polonaises occupy a special place in Schubert's piano duet oeuvre. In fact, all ten polonaises he wrote for piano (from the sets D.599 and D.824) were scored for piano duet and notably, all ten were published during his lifetime. Outside of these ten polonaises, he wrote only one other polonaise (his first one), scored for violin and orchestra in 1817 (D.580). Like his marches, he must have felt the piano duet is an ideal medium for polonaises. These works are rich and inventive, particularly in the trio sections – also like those in his marches. They contain rhythmic drive, as well as fresh harmonies and lyrical lines. Newbould states that these works are not of 'great distinction', though perhaps this viewpoint is worth some revision.<sup>1006</sup> Lubin, at least as of 1970, states that these polonaises consist of engaging music but are 'practically unknown' due to the works being scored for piano duet.<sup>1007</sup> More recently, Strahan asserts that smaller forms, such as the polonaise, marches and Ländler have been overlooked due to the unjustified outlook of these as lesser forms and that such Schubert's works are significant contributions.<sup>1008</sup> In recent years, a growing number of pianists have become more aware of the first set of polonaises (more so than the second), as these polonaises more regularly appear in concert programmes and in recordings. A comparison of both sets of polonaises can bear insights. One can perceive a shift in Schubert's compositional style from the first set of polonaises to the second, though one must mention that the D.599 polonaises were remarkable considering they were amongst Schubert's first duet compositions after the three fantasies he

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<sup>1006</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 236.

<sup>1007</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 59.

<sup>1008</sup> Strahan, '(De)Constructing Paradigms of Genre: Aesthetics, Identity and Form in Franz Schubert's Four-Hand Fantasias', p. 62.

composed as a schoolboy.<sup>1009</sup> The difficulty for both parts in the second set of polonaises increases significantly and the pieces are more mature in style. There is more weighting on the secondo player in the second set, for example. The purpose of this section is to shine a light on his polonaises from a pedagogical standpoint, and to examine the developments that arose between his first and second set, thus showcasing the refinement and elevation of his piano duet style. The polonaises, due to requiring a greater technical facility than *Kindermarsch* or the *Four Ländler*, would suit students at intermediate levels.

## 6.2 Suggested Level

In Börner's listing of the D.599 polonaises, he rates the secondo as (1–) 2 and 2–3 for the primo.<sup>1010</sup> This is to say the secondo is considered easy (or even, very easy) while the primo is more difficult, at easy to intermediate level. Byrne Bodley goes as far as to say that the first set does not 'pretend to unity between both performers'.<sup>1011</sup> Börner rightly increases the difficulty rating for both parts in the D.824 set; the secondo is ranked at intermediate level, while the primo is rated intermediate to difficult.<sup>1012</sup> In contrast, McGraw gives an overall rating for both sets of polonaises, assigning the works as intermediate to upper intermediate level.<sup>1013</sup> In Hooi Yin Boey's research on teaching intermediate level duets, there is a list of suggested intermediate Classical piano duets.<sup>1014</sup> Schubert's *Kindermarsch*, *Four Ländler*, and German Dances and Écossaises (Op.33) are listed. However, neither set of the polonaises are present – presumably the level of difficulty surpassed the author's criteria for inclusion, especially when we consider that the much more accessible *Four Ländler* were considered of intermediate level

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<sup>1009</sup> One must be aware that there may be revised dating for these works in the results of the DRACMarkS project.

<sup>1010</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 118.

<sup>1011</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 423.

<sup>1012</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 127.

<sup>1013</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 465.

<sup>1014</sup> Boey, 'Teaching intermediate level technical and musical skills through the study and performance of selected piano duets', p. 52.

in her estimation. For those familiar with the Royal Irish Academy of Music grading system, these polonaises are suitable for pianists at approximately grade four/five level as there are quick fingerwork passages, chordal/octave figurations, and a wide scope of dynamics and articulations. The words of Ham ring true here; Schubert's piano music takes 'an unusual amount of patience and practice' for a musically satisfying and polished performance.<sup>1015</sup> This section should serve as an accurate detailed guide for any piano pedagogues using the first polonaise from D.599 in their teaching.

Some considerations must be taken into account when deciding whether or not to use the first polonaise in teaching, and if so, one must decide who is to play which part. The hand span of the secondo is certainly more demanding than that of the *Four Ländler*. In the *Four Ländler's* secondo, some octaves are required, though these are not excessive and furthermore, the tempo and rhythmic drive are not as demanding as that in this polonaise. A thicker texture is used in the polonaise; there are three- and four-note chords in the secondo's right hand (sometimes spanning an octave) and octaves in the bass. This texture is more reminiscent of the secondo in the opening of *Kindermarsch*. The secondo's range spans from G1 to A4 which is just over three octaves – a considerable range of the keyboard. A further challenge is that many of these chords and octaves are repeated. From a reading perspective, there are some accidentals hinting at modulation, as well as chromaticism in the primo. Secondo clef changes may also be a welcome challenge for a learner. The secondo's trio is more accessible, as the left hand consists mostly of single notes, not many accidentals, and the rhythm is very uniform – mostly consisting of quavers.

The primo ranges from E4 to E7, which in combination with the secondo, results in a five octave and a major sixth range overall. Schubert is making almost full use of the range

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<sup>1015</sup> Ham, 'Franz Schubert's Impromptus D.899 and D.935: An Historical and Stylistic Study', p. 18.

available to him. Unlike the secondo, the primo consists of fewer chords and more semiquaver scalar passages. The primo's hand span must also reach an octave (e.g. in bars 19 and 20), though there are not many octaves overall. The primo's main challenge is the fluidity and shaping in the passagework which acts as a decorative melody, while the secondo underpins the harmony and provides forward motion. Some fingerwork passages are hands separate such as that in bars 9–11. However, bars 13–16, are played in unison; while helpful in terms of learning purposes, the semiquaver passages in unison are still challenging as both hands must be fully coordinated. Moreover, the chromaticism present requires well thought-out fingering. The chromatic scale in bars 23 and 24 is what Ham may call a 'scrambled scale' – while the term sounds peculiar, Ham is referring to Schubert's piano writing characteristic in which he uses a combination of diatonic and chromatic scales within a scalar passage.<sup>1016</sup> Ham claims this results in awkward fingerings.<sup>1017</sup> From a student's point of view, the fingering for such passages may feel unusual if they are in the early stages of learning. It is my view however that such tricky non-diatonic scales are excellent training in preparing students for Romantic music, particularly works that require a significant amount of chromatic passagework such as those of Chopin. There is suggested fingering for this passage below. Note that the last two sets of semiquavers in the right hand are a repeat of two sets beforehand, just an octave higher. The repetition makes this passage more manageable for a student and is quite pianistic:

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<sup>1016</sup> Ham, 'Franz Schubert's Impromptus D.899 and D.935: An Historical and Stylistic Study', p. 24.

<sup>1017</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

**Example 6.1, Schubert, Polonaise in D Minor (D. 599, No. 1), bars 23–24** <sup>1018</sup>

In Börner's entry on the D.599 polonaises, it is suggested that a younger player whose hands are not yet able to reach an octave could make some small amendments by omitting the upper note in the octaves; he gives the fourth polonaise as an example.<sup>1019</sup> In this fourth polonaise, the only octaves in the secondo are in the last three bars of the polonaise section in the bass, so an omission of the top notes may be possible. However, the first polonaise in D minor requires bass octaves quite regularly in the polonaise section (and an octave chord in the right hand of bar 12), and thus omitting this important characteristic would not be feasible. Perhaps the secondo part for the fourth polonaise would be suitable for a slightly less developed player. That being said, the primo part of the D minor polonaise, while challenging in its fingerwork, does not require a large hand span. There is a leap of a minor seventh in bar 7 of the trio, which must be connected from the note before (there is a slur marking).

### 6.3 Tempo Recommendations

Assigning tempi for polonaises is a challenge since the context of each polonaise must be taken into account when choosing a tempo. Polonaises were composed for a vast array of functions

<sup>1018</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 127.

<sup>1019</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 118.

in different styles, and the oeuvre consists of a wide breadth of tempi.<sup>1020</sup> In its early days, the polonaise was a Polish dance that was largely elevated in countries outside of Poland. While its early roots lie in Polish folk music, it developed into more of a sophisticated and elaborate dance that was performed often in courtly ceremonies. It was in the 1790s when the polonaise was disseminated throughout Europe – for example, Beethoven’s finale of his Triple Concerto composed in 1803 is a polonaise. To fully encapsulate the ceremonial character, Weekley and Arganbright recommend that the polonaise should be ‘dignified’ and never ‘hurried’.<sup>1021</sup> In Goldstone and Clemmow’s recording of this D minor polonaise (D.599/No.1), the metronome mark is approximately a stately 94 crotchet beats per minute.<sup>1022</sup> As a caution, Börner suggests that in these polonaises, the players should not play into the trope of Schubert’s music as an embodiment of ‘Ländlergemütlichkeit’ and posits that if the polonaise tempo was to be taken seriously, the second set of polonaises is considerably more demanding to play than the first.<sup>1023</sup> Here, Börner is perhaps suggesting a livelier tempo. Duo Jandó and Kollár, as well as the Jussen brothers, play this ever so slightly faster than Clemmow and Goldstone, giving the piece a little more urgency.<sup>1024</sup> Based on a survey of available recordings, a fairly moderate tempo appears to be the convention.

#### 6.4 Polonaise in D Minor (D.599)

A striking aspect of Schubert’s polonaises is that a relatively high number of them were written in minor keys. Including both polonaise and trio sections, Chusid observes that six out of

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<sup>1020</sup> Stephen Downes, ‘Polonaise (Fr.)’ *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.22035.

<sup>1021</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, pp. 63–64.

<sup>1022</sup> Franz Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets (Disc F)*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone (Divine Art, DDA21701, 2017).

<sup>1023</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 127.

<sup>1024</sup> Franz Schubert, *Schubert Piano Works for Four Hands, Vol. 2*, Jenő Jandó and Zsuzsa Kollár (Naxos, 8.553441, 1998); Franz Schubert, *Schubert Impromptus*, Arthur and Lucas Jussen (Deutsche Grammophon, 00028948056453, 2016).

twenty-two sections are written in the minor key.<sup>1025</sup> What strikes at first glance is that out these six sections, half of them are in the key of D minor (with the trio of D.599, No.2 ending in D major). The table compiled below indicates minor keys that either the polonaise or the trio section is set in (not including tonicisations in other keys). To add to the discussion of tonality within these polonaises, Byrne Bodley notes that a significant number of his trios are set in quite unrelated keys to the polonaises and from the D.599 set, she cites some examples such as the third polonaise.<sup>1026</sup> Here, the polonaise is in E major, but the sudden change to D flat major when the trio begins takes the listener by surprise. This is a third-related key, but it is via the means of an enharmonic spelling.

**Table 6.1, Keys of Schubert’s Polonaises (including trio sections) in Minor Keys**

Deutsch Number	Key	Section
<b>D. 580</b> <sup>1027</sup>	G minor	Trio
<b>D. 599, No. 1</b>	D minor	Polonaise
<b>D. 599, No. 1</b>	A minor	Trio
<b>D. 599, No. 2</b>	D minor/D major	Trio
<b>D. 824, No. 1</b>	D minor	Polonaise
<b>D. 824, No. 3</b>	G minor	Trio

The No.1 polonaise (D.599) section consists of twenty-four bars and is in binary form. It is conventional in that the work is set in simple triple time. The common rhythmic motif of a quaver followed by two semiquavers is a generic trait of the polonaise present in both the primo hands in the main theme and the secondo in the B section. As is conventional in a polonaise, the first and third beats are strong beats of the bar. Schubert highlights this by marking forte and forzando in bars 1 and 2 on the first beat in both parts, as well as placing

<sup>1025</sup> Chusid, *Schubert’s Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 163.

<sup>1026</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 423.

<sup>1027</sup> Note that the first entry refers to his polonaise from 1817, which was scored for a violin and orchestra. The remaining entries are all scored for piano for four hands.

accents on the third. The higher notes of the motif also frequently occur on the first beat, strengthening its importance. Furthermore, the stress on the third beat is accentuated by the changing of chords on the third beat. On occasion though there are some rhythmical surprises in the form of stressed off-beats. For example, in the secondo, in bar 21, the first two beats are based on the submediant chord (B flat major). However, the third beat sees a dominant seventh chord in the key of G minor, which is emphasised by a *fortepiano*. The *fortepiano* is marked under the last quaver of the bar which somewhat startles the listener. The exceptions to the stress on the third beat are present in the ending of sections – such as those in bars 8, 16, and 24. These phrase endings must be delicately tapered off, indicated by *decrescendos*; note the unusual compositional technique of weak to strong in bars 8, 16 and 24. Bars 5–6 and 19–20 provide some gentle counterpoint between the primo's hands, oscillating between the tonic and dominant chord in the relative major key (Schubert used a pivot chord in bar 3 to bring the key to the relative major). There is a repeated 4-3 suspension here (bars 5–6). This is heard over the tonic and dominant seventh chord over a tonic pedal in the secondo. Pianists must ensure to conjure a colour change here with this key change to the major, observing the piano dynamic and perhaps adding a touch of pedal.

The B section begins with a winding semiquaver melody; note the entry begins on a dissonance on the weaker part of the first beat. There are some retardations, such as that in bars 10–11 in the primo, highlighted by the accent. The A' section provides some repetition, though Schubert varies the material somewhat. For example, the second strain sees the secondo's semiquaver figure on a tonic and a dominant seventh over a tonic pedal in B flat major, as opposed to the earlier key of F major. Furthermore, there is an intermusical link here between the bubbling right-hand figure of the secondo and that in the piano part of *Das Wandern* from Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* (D.795).

The polonaise section provides an engaging start to Schubert's set, and it already shows a good grasp of writing for piano duet, as well as illustrating characteristics that were to become hallmarks of his compositions. In terms of harmony, Schubert's modulations to third-related keys are evident. This polonaise sees the keys ascending in thirds: D minor, F major, and A Minor. From the A' section, the opposite is true. The keys are descending in thirds from D Minor, B flat major to G minor. A particularly striking chord is the use of the major supertonic dominant seventh in bar 22 (an E7 chord in first inversion), which one may have expected to resolve to A minor, though it returns to it, allowing the polonaise to end in the tonic key.

While the conventional polonaise rhythm occurs regularly in the polonaise section (in both parts), this rhythm is not present in the trio. Schubert often changes the character of his polonaises in the trio sections, thus defying genre expectations. The contrast between these sections is unusual in that the trio section does not necessarily give the impression of a polonaise. The key is now in the dominant; the A section begins in A minor, with a very brief tonicisation of the subdominant in bars 5–6, before ending the section in the relative major (C major). The B section continues in C major and there is a brief tonicisation in G major in bar 12 before returning to A minor. Interestingly, Landon provides the *Abschrift* (manuscript) for the last four bars, which are contrasting to the printed version.<sup>1028</sup> In the *Abschrift*, the music continues in C major, with similar figures to bars 9–12. In fact, the trio ends in C major in the *Abschrift*. Taking into account the trio began in A minor, and the polonaise section must return due to the da capo, it only makes sense to end in a closer key to D minor as in the printed version.

There are two peculiarities that are present in this section that must be highlighted. The first is the harmony in bars 4–5 (see example 6.2). The chord of V7 is left unresolved; Schubert

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<sup>1028</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 128.

quite suddenly and momentarily moves into the relative major key. Though, the key is not fully established until after the D minor tonicisation, which occurs at the end of bar 5 to 6. Secondly, Schubert's use of rhythm in bar 7 is particularly unusual. There is some gentle syncopation in the secondo (example 6.3). Considering this rhythm is not present elsewhere in the trio or the polonaise, this seems arbitrary. For example, it is not present in the corresponding seventh bar of the B section. Perhaps this was to break away from the otherwise uniform secondo figure. For those using the Alte Gesamtausgabe, note there is a note error in bar 6 in the primo's left hand.<sup>1029</sup> The last semiquaver should be an F, not an E.

**Example 6.2, Schubert, Polonaise in D Minor (D. 599, No. 1), bars 4–5 of trio section** <sup>1030</sup>



**Example 6.3, Schubert, Polonaise in D Minor (D. 599, No. 1), bar 7 of trio section** <sup>1031</sup>



<sup>1029</sup> Franz Schubert, *4 Polonaises D.599* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1884–1897), p. 4  
<[https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/0/04/IMSLP08933-Schubert\\_-\\_D.599\\_-\\_4\\_Polonaises.pdf](https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/0/04/IMSLP08933-Schubert_-_D.599_-_4_Polonaises.pdf)> [accessed 19/07/2023].

<sup>1030</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 128.

<sup>1031</sup> Ibid.

Regarding form in the trio section, Schubert uses two sections of eight bars each, the same form he used for many of his dances, but this only occurs in his polonaises once. The secondo part for the trio plays left-hand single notes and right-hand chords in repetitive quaver rhythm for the majority of this section, providing the harmonic support in a tonic-dominant fashion. The overall dynamic here is piano – which in the *Abschrift*, was unusually marked as pianississimo.<sup>1032</sup> The chords must not overpower the particularly charming melody, which is featured in both hands of the primo. In fact, both primo's hands engage in a form of imitation here. The melodic figure is introduced in the right hand first in dotted rhythms, before being answered by the left. The introduction of the dotted rhythm motif is a trait of the trio section for the primo only. There are neither dotted rhythms in the primo's polonaise, nor in the secondo's trio (with one exception in bar 8). There are only some instances of a dotted rhythm in the secondo's polonaise; when the pedal points arise. The free imitation Schubert uses in the primo's trio is imaginative and varied. Firstly, the imitation begins at a bar's distance for the first four bars (example 6.4). Thereafter, more unusually, there is imitation within the bar – either at one or two beats distance, which creates a dialogue between the hands (example 6.5). On some occasions, such as the last two bars of both the A and B sections, the primo's dialogue fittingly joins together in harmony and is uniform in rhythm. The imitation harks back to Schubert's compositional training during which he undertook imitation exercises under Salieri's tuition.

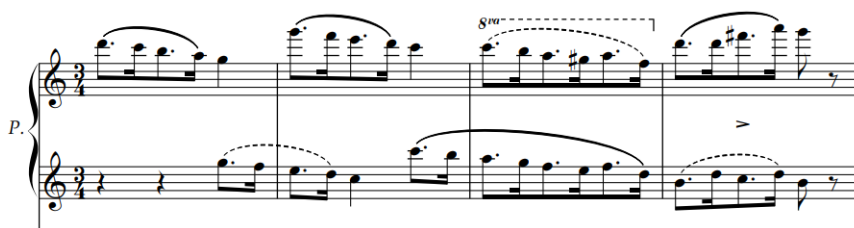
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<sup>1032</sup> Ibid.

**Example 6.4, Schubert, Polonaise in D Minor (D. 599, No. 1), bars 1–4 of trio section** <sup>1033</sup>



**Example 6.5, Schubert, Polonaise in D Minor (D. 599, No. 1), bars 9–12 of trio section** <sup>1034</sup>



Particularly striking to the ear is the dissonance that Schubert created in this section when the primo's hands enter together in bar 2; the primo's left hand commences on a D5, while the right hand is playing an E5, creating a major second dissonance. This is repeated in the fourth bar of the trio. More dissonance, more so than a major second, is present in bar 6 when the key changes to the C major (the relative minor of A minor). The primo's left hand enters the imitation on a tritone below the upper voice on the second beat – i.e. the B4 is played against an F5. The F is a harmonic seventh note of a G7 chord, which one would expect to resolve downwards. However, it remains unresolved as it leaps up a minor third, rather than resolving down a step. The repeat of the trio section allows players some scope for variation; perhaps the sustain pedal can be used more in the first round, with a dryer texture when repeated. <sup>1035</sup>

<sup>1033</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1034</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1035</sup> This is evident in Clemmow and Goldstone's recording of this work: Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets* (Disc F), Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone.

From a practical perspective, Schubert once again demonstrates his ability to write thoughtfully for the piano duet medium. Both parts' hands keep to themselves as there are no sharing of notes and there is no overlapping of hands. He does so cleverly without being musically compromised. On occasion the secondo's right hand and the primo's left are close, though with some consideration for fingering this will not be an issue. For example, in bars 1 and 2 of the polonaise, I suggest the primo uses fingers three and five in their left hand for the opening position. If it were one and three (if this were a solo, this fingering would be acceptable), the primo's left hand would be in the way of the secondo's right hand, which plays a D4. The secondo's right and the primo's right are a semitone apart together in bar 9 on the third beat; it is advisable for the primo here to cross their second finger over (2 over 1 fingering) on the G sharp momentarily, while the secondo uses one, three and five.

Schubert shows he has made small adjustments to ensure the playability of the piece. In the second section of the polonaise, the secondo plays a typical polonaise rhythm, with either four- or three-note chords. However, in bar 14 (see example 6.6 below), there is a two-note chord. This seems arbitrary amongst the full three- or four-note chords. Upon closer inspection of the parts, one notices that the primo's left hand requires this same note, on the very same beat (the second beat). This is why Schubert omits the A in the secondo. As any duet player can attest, simultaneous shared notes arise quite often in duet compositions, which can be awkward to manage. Fortunately, Schubert has avoided pianists having this situation here and this shows he is thinking from an ensemble point of view. That being said, there is a small challenge; the secondo plays the A4 in the last two semiquavers before the right hand needs the note; so, the secondo must ensure to play these chords staccato and release them in time for the primo to play the A on the second beat. The secondo will need to play A4 once again after this, so Schubert cleverly reminds the primo player to play this note staccato and thus allowing

the secondo to play the note (this also facilitates the primo's quick tenth leap). If the primo note is held too long, the secondo will not be able to depress the note in time.

**Example 6.6, Schubert, Polonaise in D Minor (D. 599, No. 1), bar 14** <sup>1036</sup>



**6.5 Polonaise in D Minor (D.824)**

Schubert returns to the key of D minor in the first polonaise of the second set. Broadly speaking, the second set of polonaises are lengthier and more adventurous than Schubert's previous set. Byrne Bodley states that in Schubert's second set of polonaises, the genre is heightened and as a result, there are similarities to that of the Polonaise Fantasy due to 'a more technical, harmonic and formal complexity' along with more equal weighting between the parts.<sup>1037</sup> Is Schubert anticipating the genre-defying Polonaise-Fantasy (Op.61) of Chopin, composed in 1846?

The first polonaise of the D.824 set serves as an example of the increasing technical facility Schubert requires from pianists in piano duets, as well as growing harmonic complexity. The polonaise section in the Polonaise in D Minor (D.824) is slightly shorter than first of D.599, totalling 22 bars, which is broken into a 10-bar section and a 12-bar section. The secondo presents two bars themselves as an introduction (the only polonaise from both sets that

<sup>1036</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 127.

<sup>1037</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 424.

has one), until the quaver upbeat entry in the primo which introduces the melody. The trio section is considerably longer, totalling 26 bars and consisting of a 10-bar and 16-bar section. There are a number of repetitions too. As is a regular occurrence in Schubert's music, the pianist should interpret the repetitions with originality, as Foccroulle quite rightly states.<sup>1038</sup> Jan Vermeulen and Veerle Peters take this concept to one extreme and incorporate some small, but noticeable ornamentation in the repeats, though this opens a whole new discussion of performance practice.<sup>1039</sup> They are not the only duo to do so in Schubert's four-hand music; it does appear to be more commonplace amongst contemporary pianists.<sup>1040</sup>

There are many similarities between the two D minor polonaises outside of the key. The quaver followed by two semiquavers figure as befits a polonaise is present in both. In fact, the rhythm in the introduction in the secondo is nearly identical to that of the primo's introduction in the first polonaise. This motif is extremely prevalent in this polonaise, including the trio section. This rhythmic motif is present in almost every bar in various parts. Not only does this polonaise rhythm occur on beat one, but it appears on beats two and three as well. Consequently, this trio section aligns more to what one would expect from a conventional polonaise, especially in comparison to the previous D minor trio section from D.599. To evidence Schubert's prevalent use of polonaise rhythms, Siemens drew up a table listing the occurrence of specific polonaise rhythms in selected composers' polonaises – Schubert's polonaises included – the results of which show the high prevalence of these rhythms in his music.<sup>1041</sup>

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<sup>1038</sup> Foccroulle, 'Final thoughts? Interpretation of the first movements of Beethoven's and Schubert's last three piano sonatas', p. 152.

<sup>1039</sup> Franz Schubert, *Schubert: Works for Four Hands, Vol. 3*, Jan Vermeulen and Veerle Peters (Etcetra Records, KTC1503, 2016).

<sup>1040</sup> Listen to the *Four Ländler* (D.814) and the *Variations in A flat Major* (D.813), during which the pianists quite regularly add voluntary ornamentation in the repeats: Franz Schubert, *Piano Duets - Fantasie in F Minor / 8 Variations on an Original Theme / Rondo in A Major / 4 Ländler*, Andreas Staier and Alexander Melnikov.

<sup>1041</sup> Barbara M. Siemens, *The Piano Genre of the Nineteenth-Century Polonaise* (master's thesis, the University of British Columbia, 1986), p. 9.

Another significant area of development evident in a comparison of the two polonaises is the treatment of the secondo player. In the D.599 polonaise, the secondo is playing the role of the accompaniment. In the D.824 polonaise however, the secondo participates in the melody too. Both primo and secondo alternate between the role of melody and accompaniment, and sometimes – perhaps most notably, this occurs simultaneously. For example, in bars 15–18 (see example 6.7 below), the secondo’s right hand and the primo’s left hand share the melody an octave apart in unison. This is worth noting as it is not particularly common for the same melody to be played in the primo and secondo part simultaneously; one would expect the melody in unison in the primo, or even the secondo. At the same time, the secondo’s left provides harmonic support, as well as the primo which has a polonaise rhythm in two- and four-note chords. Duettists must ensure that the melody is fully coordinated with one another and the balancing between the melody in the inner hands and the outer layers is musically judged.

**Example 6.7, Schubert, Polonaise in D Minor (D. 824, No. 1), bars 15–18** <sup>1042</sup>

<sup>1042</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 141.

A further development evident in the comparison of these polonaises is the heightened number of technical challenges in the primo. Such characteristics include simultaneous double thirds in unison in both hands, quick octave repetitions in polonaise rhythm, and more independence in the hands in comparison to the primo set. The simultaneous double thirds present themselves in bars 11–14. The upper notes of both hands hold the melody, which is supported by third-apart harmony in the lower notes of both hands. The pianist's task here is to bring out the top notes of the thirds so the melody is projected over the accompaniment. Clever fingering here is a must. Luckily, the articulation Schubert employs here makes this more manageable for the pianist as some of the figures are separately articulated, as opposed to all legato. It must be pointed out that in this particular section (bars 11–14), the primo and secondo hands are close together at times. In bars 11 and 12 for example, the primo's left and the secondo's right are a second apart at one point, as well as in bar 13. This closeness is manageable with some slight adjustments to aid in space and comfort for the players. The secondo in bar 11, after playing the three-note chord, can move their hand position down the keyboard so that their fifth finger is playing the A3, thus giving more space to the primo's left (see below example). Schubert is thoughtful to the player here in this regard as he makes this adjustment easier by having a two-note chord in the secondo, as he is aware the primo needs the D4 during the second beat. On first glance, given the prominence of three-note chords in the secondo's right hand, the omission of the D4 may seem arbitrary, though it is not. Schubert did the same with the previous Polonaise in D Minor (D.599) in bar 14. Such intricate details may seem insignificant on paper but as any duet player will attest, not all composers show this level of awareness in their piano duet scores (though, an argument can also be made that composers often will follow the conventions of voice-leading over practicality in duet-composing). As was evident in *Kindermarsch*, the *Ländler*, and the Polonaise in D Minor from

the first set, Schubert is skilful and mindful of the fact there are two players sharing the one keyboard. There is no overlapping of hands and hands keep to themselves overall.

**Example 6.8, Schubert, Polonaise in D Minor (D. 824, No. 1), bar 11 <sup>1043</sup>**



Further highlighting the elevated difficulty between the first and second set is the trio section. Like the trio in the D.599 polonaise, there is imitation between the hands of the primo. In the trio, the melody is presented in unison in the primo for four bars. In the next four bars (including the upbeat), Schubert introduces imitative counterpoint, beginning with the right hand. The staccato note in the left hand contrasted with the legato right hand may require some refinement. When the melody returns after the middle section, there is some development of the third bar in the form of semiquavers and then, the imitative counterpoint emerges again. Though, this time, the primo's left hand has the entry. Thus, the primo's role in this polonaise is quite diverse in comparison to that of the D.599 set. The primo plays the melody in unison as well as independently between their hands. Additionally, the primo at times must play a melody and accompaniment parts between their hands simultaneously, as well as share the melody with the secondo. This demonstrates Schubert's heightening of his piano-duet writing. Schubert's imaginative distribution of melody and accompaniment in his duet-writing counters

<sup>1043</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 4: Märsche und Tänze*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 140.

the convention of the primo consisting of melodic material only, while the secondo accompanies.

Regarding harmony, Schubert's introduction consists of repeated D minor chords in the polonaise rhythm. Rather than alternating to a simple V chord as he did in the previously discussed polonaise, he uses the dominant harmony over a tonic note in the last quavers in the secondo's bars 1–2. Bars 1–8 use conventional chords such as i, ib, V, V7 and C sharp dim7 (which resolves inwards to i as expected). There is an added seventh on the iv chord in bar 6 and this bar contains contrary motion in the secondo's outer lines. In bar 9 and 10, we pass to the dominant key (A minor). The first chord in bar 9 is best interpreted as ii7 in first inversion in A minor, which then resolves to the dominant. The section ends on a cadential point in bar 10 in A minor. The second section sees a return to D minor after which the two-bar figure is repeated a third higher in F major, the relative key. Schubert then returns to D minor for bars 15–16 – note the ascending D minor melodic scale – before we pass briefly into the F7–B flat major cadence. This hints at the key that will be used in the trio section. The remaining four bars of the polonaise return to D minor, with a Neapolitan chord in bar 21; arguably the most striking part of the polonaise harmonically (emphasised by a *fortepiano*). The chord resolves to the ic in bar 22. This is followed by a *sixte ajoutée* on the subdominant; the sixth note (E) rises to the third of the tonic as expected. A ic-V7-i cadential progression closes the polonaise section.

The trio section is set in the submediant (B flat major). The middle section passes through some fiery passages of G minor, C minor, and G minor before returning to the main theme in B flat major. There is some chromatic interest in the secondo with the chord of IV, a chromatic passing chord of IV+, iib, and a sharp fourth seventh chord in bar 5. When this returns for the last time in the penultimate bar, this progression is altered to add some variance; the chord of IV, to iib, to VI7 (the seventh note is in the primo) to iic is present. The VI7 chord

is particularly arresting. There are certainly more adventurous harmonic nuances here than that of the polonaise from the first set.

The main theme in the trio is built on a charming sequence, which contains a chromatic and non-chromatic appoggiatura. The main theme is played in unison by both the primo's hands (example 6.9). Thereafter, there is imitation at half a beat's distance, commencing with the right hand (example 6.10). Rather than repeating this identically in the A' section, Schubert takes the opportunity to provide some variance. When the imitation reoccurs, it is the primo's left hand that introduces the melody, with the right hand following half a beat later. Furthermore, there is a small development in bar 21 with the introduction of two-note slurs. When the trio's theme comes to an end, the right hand stretches that bit higher than the octave this time, presumably to provide some variation in the repetition. The leap of a tenth is not particularly unusual in that it is a chordal leap, though it certainly perks up the ears as this is quite high in pitch. The ending of the theme contains anticipation, with the repeated tonic note.

**Example 6.9, Schubert, Polonaise in D Minor (D. 824, No. 1), bars 3–4 of trio section <sup>1044</sup>**



<sup>1044</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

**Example 6.10, Schubert, Polonaise in D Minor (D. 824, No. 1), bars 7–8 of trio section** <sup>1045</sup>



## 6.6 Conclusion

The first set of polonaises were amongst Schubert's first endeavours in writing piano duets. At this early stage, he demonstrates a firm understanding of the intricacies of composing piano duets. Schubert's experience in playing duets as a youth must have been advantageous. Through this analytical section, Hutchings's remark that Schubert's polonaises are 'pretty pedestrian' is put into serious question.<sup>1046</sup> These are pianistic works that certainly demand a higher level of ability than the previous Ländler and the *Kindermarsch*. These works would fit a student at intermediate level, though with the second set of polonaises, the technical demands are greater in both primo and secondo. For example, in the second set, Schubert incorporates more melodic material in the secondo part. The primo part is also more complex; for example, in the trio of the fourth polonaise in D.824, the primo engages in imitative counterpoint between the hands, something that is not especially common for this genre. Throughout his polonaises, Schubert certainly gives a nod to the polonaise genre as there are many characteristics consistent with the genre. However, though there are certain unique characteristics through which he makes the genre his own. This is most evident in the trio sections – which play with the conventions of the genre. If one listened to some of the trio sections in isolation, the

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<sup>1045</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1046</sup> Hutchings, *Schubert, The Master Musicians*, p. 153.

polonaise may not be the first genre that comes to mind. The trio of D.599 No.2, during which the typical polonaise rhythm is completely absent, is a prime example of this. The hallmarks of Schubert's unique treatment of harmony are also evident in these polonaises – more so in the second set – including his tendency to shift to third-related keys and his use of somewhat remote keys (in the trios).

## Chapter 7

### Variations in A flat Major (D.813)

#### 7.1 Variations in A flat Major (D.813): Context

While the Ländler may suit early-stage learners and the polonaises for more intermediate pianists (particularly the second set), these variations lend themselves much more to advanced pianists. The Variations in A flat Major were composed in 1824 when Schubert taught at Zselíz for the second time, notably alongside the Sonata in C (D.812) and the majority of the *Grandes marches* (D.819). The variations form during the time was a popular genre and had commercial benefits; though, the genre did have an image crisis as it was often perceived as an inferior genre.<sup>1047</sup> Schubert may have written this work for the Esterházy sisters as pedagogical material, though Schubert pushes the boundaries of ‘didactic’ music here and likely had it mind for publication and performance. While he conforms to many of the characteristics of the variations form, this work is rich in invention and character, and it demands a very high level of technical proficiency from the pianists. It is credible to assume that his expertise as a pianist and improviser at private and semi-private gatherings influenced him in composing variations, a genre in which altered repetitions are at the core. Similar to dances, which he very often improvised, variations similarly need retention of form, while at the same time allowing for both routine and inventive surface alterations to keep the material aesthetically engaging.

The Variations in A flat Major was published in 1825, and it was a successful addition to Schubert’s output at the time according to primary sources. Schubert notes that he gave a

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<sup>1047</sup> For a detailed discussion on this see: Elaine Sisman, ‘Variations’ in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.29050.

successful recital of his variations and marches for four hands.<sup>1048</sup> Von Schwind writes in a letter: ‘These new variations for four hands are something quite extraordinary. In eight pages they are quite independently and vitally developed and yet each again seems to reveal the theme’.<sup>1049</sup> Remarkably though, this work seems to slip through the ranks in current scholarship and performance. Accordingly, Byrne Bodley remarks that this work is one of Schubert’s ‘neglected masterworks’.<sup>1050</sup> Brown (in 1954) also holds the work in extremely high regard, for he claims that not even the Sonata in C (D.812) exceeds this work out of Schubert’s piano duet masterpieces.<sup>1051</sup> The Grove article on Schubert similarly ranks this work as an ‘undisputed masterpiece’ along with the Sonata in C (D.812) and the *Grandes marches* (D.819).<sup>1052</sup> However, the scholarship on the variations clearly pales in comparison to that of the Sonata in C. Furthermore, the work is certainly not amongst the most performed Schubert piano duets. Consequently, the aim of this section is to reveal the performative potential of this overlooked work through musical analysis and to provide some performance considerations.

Firstly, one must place this work within Schubert’s output. As per the table below, Schubert wrote a number of variations for piano duet, and nearly all were published during his lifetime – similar to his marches. The *Eight Variations on a French Song* were Schubert’s first four-hand variations, which consisted of variations on *Le bon Chevalier*. Newbould observes that in this work, Schubert foreshadows the harmonic explorations of the A flat variations, which was to be composed six years later.<sup>1053</sup> The relation of Beethoven to this French set of variations – and others by Schubert – has been noted in literature. In fact, as Byrne Bodley

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<sup>1048</sup> Letter to his father and stepmother, Steyr, 25 July 1825: Deutsch, *Schubert’s Letters and Other Writings*, pp. 97–98.

<sup>1049</sup> Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 40.

<sup>1050</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 428.

<sup>1051</sup> Brown, *Schubert’s Variations*, p. 68.

<sup>1052</sup> Brown, Eric Sams and Robert Winter, ‘Schubert, Franz’ in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>1053</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 239.

notes, the piano duet often arises in relation to the Schubert-Beethoven myth.<sup>1054</sup> Schubert dedicated these French variations to Beethoven, which was an unusual act at the time, and there is an anecdote that Schubert presented these variations to Beethoven in-person. Furthermore, the Introduction and Variations on an Original Theme (formerly D.603, now D.968a) is ‘closely modelled’ on Beethoven’s Variations in A Major on a Russian Dance.<sup>1055</sup> This also strengthens the link between Beethoven and Schubert’s variation form, though one must bear the following two aspects in mind when considering the link between Beethoven and Schubert’s variations. Firstly, there have been some accounts enlivening Schubert’s biography, and it is questionable as to whether Schubert and Beethoven even met; there is no evidence for such a meeting. Secondly, Schubert explores his own territory in the form, particularly in the Variations in A flat Major, the longest variations he composed. As well as retrospectively looking at the past, Schubert anticipates the future in this work. As commented upon by Arganbright and Weekley, Brown, Lubin, the evidence of Bach is clear in this work (Schubert was playing Bach fugues that summer); but the work is also forward looking in anticipating impressionism by many years.<sup>1056</sup> Moreover, Byrne Bodley draws intermusical links in the dactylic rhythm in this variations and Schubert’s Hüttenbrenner Variations (D.576), which in turn foreshadows the alienation of the dactylic rhythm in the scherzo of Schubert’s seminal Fantasy in C Major (D.760).<sup>1057</sup>

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<sup>1054</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 427. Other literature includes: Phillip Brett, ‘Piano Four-Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire’ (Franz Schubert: Bicentenary Essays), *19th-Century Music*, 21.2 (1997), pp. 149–76; Wiley, ‘Re-Writing Composers’ Lives: Critical Historiography and Musical Biography’.

<sup>1055</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, pp. 238–39; Other literature that notes Beethovenian influences within Schubert’s variations includes: Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 124; Brown, *Schubert’s Variations*.

<sup>1056</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, pp. 48–49; Brown, *Schubert’s Variations*, p. 69; Lubin, *The Piano Duet: A Guide for Pianists*, p. 40.

<sup>1057</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 428.

**Table 7.1, Schubert's Four-Hand Variations**

Title of Work	Year of Composition	Year of Publication
<i>8 Variations on a French Song (D.624)</i>	September 1818	1822, Op.10
<b>Variations in A flat Major (D.813)</b>	Summer 1824	1825, Op.35
<b>Introduction, 4 Variations on an Original Theme and Finale, B flat Major (D.968a, formerly D.603)</b>	1824?	1860, Op.82/2
<i>Andantino varié from Divertissement sur des motifs originaux français (D.823)</i>	c. 1825	1827, op.84/1
<i>8 Variations on a Theme from Hérold's 'Marie', C Major (D.908)</i>	February 1827	1827 Op.82/1

One strong characteristic to illustrate in the A flat variations is the equal weighting of the parts. Though all his variations for piano duet are demanding, the work is much more technically demanding than the previous case studies. Consequently, this work would best suit higher-level pianists, such as third-level students or professionals. The work is certainly of concert-hall proportions – there are many colours and textures portrayed in this twenty-minute work. McGraw places this work at an upper intermediate/lower advanced level overall, while Arganbright and Weekley similarly express their belief that the parts are very close in importance.<sup>1058</sup> Börner rates this work's difficulty as level 4 out of 5 and highlights that the material is spread equally between the primo and secondo.<sup>1059</sup> It is this present author's opinion that the work is equally demanding for both parts; the work shares the musical material throughout. At various points both the primo and secondo take on melodic and accompaniment

<sup>1058</sup> McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, p. 467; Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 49.

<sup>1059</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 124.

roles in various configurations. The independent lines in polyphonic passages must be voiced appropriately and florid passagework is abundant in this work. Schubert as a colourist is also evident here; pianists must articulate the *brilliant* style passages such as that of variation eight, while also conjuring sudden changes in colour, such as that of the introspective chorale-like variation seven.

## 7.2 Theme in the Variations in A flat Major (D.813)

The theme is marked *allegretto* – though based on a surveying of the recordings, there is scope for interpretation as to what this means. Brown notes that the theme is in Schubert’s ‘*alla Marcia*’ style.<sup>1060</sup> It is not in the style of a funeral march; an overly slow tempo may give this impression. Chen remarks that a ‘peculiarity’ of Schubert’s variations themes is that they commence on three/four repeated notes in form of a dactylic motif, which is usually dotted if Schubert wishes the tempo to be somewhat faster.<sup>1061</sup> Nevertheless, a too fast tempo may mar the stately quality to the theme. The theme begins on an anacrusis on a crotchet, and then a dotted quaver followed by a semiquaver, as his *Variations on a French Song* (D.624) does. The commencement of this dotted rhythm and the prevalence of same immediately portrays and sustains the march-like character. This rhythmical motif is present in both *primo* and *secondo* simultaneously and at separate times. Consequently, consistency in the treatment of this rhythm is necessary. A peculiarity of this upbeat is that it can also be interpreted as downbeat, despite its metric placement. This is the case for all the variations. The theme could have been written out without an upbeat, and hence the ending of the four-bar phrases would be placed at the end of a bar, as opposed to mid-bar. For reference, Martinkus shows the theme written out in its

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<sup>1060</sup> Brown, *Schubert’s Variations*, p. 68.

<sup>1061</sup> Mei-Luan Chen, ‘The variation elements in the works of Franz Schubert’ (doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1991), pp. 57–58.

original form and then rewritten without an upbeat.<sup>1062</sup> The modified version looks feasible, and it would presumably be the most obvious choice if someone were to dictate this theme. Pianists must interpret this upbeat this as they see fit. A likely explanation for the inclusion of this upbeat is that Schubert had a gavotte in mind here, which typically begins with a half-bar upbeat and is played at a moderate tempo. Note that in the *Neue Schubert-Ausgabe*, the upbeat is not assigned a bar number, despite the common convention to assign a bar number to an upbeat bar in which the duration of the notes equal half the full bar's length or more.

The theme is a quiet introduction to the work, which begins in a piano dynamic. There are some momentary fortes, though each time this quietens down later in the bar or in the next bar. Careful consideration must be given to the pedalling; legato can be created through the fingers. The dotted rhythms – particularly the rhythmical anacrusis – and staccato notes will lose their crispness if pedalled. To facilitate some of the colour changes, a sprinkling of pedal is feasible, such as that in bar 14, coupled with the softer dynamic markings. The use of several keys in a small space also adds to the sonic landscape of the theme. The variation commences and concludes in A flat major, but there are several forays into different keys. The keys in addition to A flat major are the dominant key (E flat major), subdominant (D flat major), mediant (C minor) and more unusually, the supertonic key (B flat minor). There is no exploration into the related key of the relative minor. Even within the A section alone, there are several keys at play. The first short figure is in A flat major, and this figure is repeated straight after in a sequence placed in the supertonic key (B flat minor), which ends on a plagal cadence in bars 1–2. Then in bar 2, there is yet another exploration of the harmony; on the upbeat figure, the chord of IV in A flat major suddenly is altered to its minor version (a minor fourth chord), which is a typical trait of Schubert's music. The A section then concludes in the

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<sup>1062</sup> Caitlin G. Martinkus, 'The Urge to Vary: Schubert's Variation Practice from Schubertiades to Sonata Forms' (doctoral thesis, University of Toronto, 2017), p. 54.

mediant key – a well-documented trait of Schubert’s (a dominant modulation here would be more customary of the time). This analysis of the A section alone reveals Schubert’s penchant for sudden major/minor tonalities and the fact that in just eight bars he easily passes through three keys is quite striking.

There are some issues of ornamentation to be considered. What does the notation imply? Is there scope for various iterations? Firstly, ornamentation occurs in bar 1 in the primo’s right hand, which contains the melodic material. Landon provided an editorial suggestion to play this as an acciaccatura.<sup>1063</sup> Further to this, there is a small ornament in the form of a trill in bar 7, as the A section comes to a cadential close in C minor. There is leeway for various interpretations of the trill here – Viennese tutors were not always unanimous on this matter. Though, similar to the majority of German theorists, Czerny, and Starke wrote that a trill should begin on the upper auxiliary note; contrastingly, Hummel believed they should begin on the note on which the trill is marked.<sup>1064</sup> Below are two of my suggestions; the first figure is the section in question as it appears in the *Neue Schubert-Ausgabe*. The first written-out trill is based on Hummel’s rule and begins on the written note. This form of trill became more popular as time went on, and Hummel’s explanation for his divergence of thought on this matter is evidenced in his *Answeisungen* from 1828.<sup>1065</sup> If a pianist is aiming to play the trills as they would have been delivered in Schubert’s time, perhaps they could consider the last example below since the last figure begins on the upper auxiliary, and this way appears to have been the rule of thumb among German theorists at the time. I have completed both trills with a termination (*Nachschlag*). As Halford notes, a termination of the trill can be used whether this

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<sup>1063</sup> Franz Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 2*, ed. by Christa Landon (Kassel: Franz Schubert. Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke VII/1/2, Bärenreiter, 1978), p. 67.

<sup>1064</sup> Aschauer, ‘Notes on Performance Practice’, p. XIX.

<sup>1065</sup> Edward Dannreuther, *Musical Ornamentation*, II (London: Novello and Company, c. 1893), p. 145 [https://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/4/41/IMSLP173136-PMLP305782-Dannreuther\\_Musical\\_Ornamentation\\_Vol\\_2.pdf](https://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/4/41/IMSLP173136-PMLP305782-Dannreuther_Musical_Ornamentation_Vol_2.pdf) [accessed 10/10/2024].

is marked in the score or not.<sup>1066</sup> Aschauer declares that based on his investigation of a number of treatises, the views on the Nachschlag were ‘split fifty-fifty’.<sup>1067</sup>

**Example 7.1, Schubert, Variations in A flat Major (D.813, theme), bars 7–8 (as in the score, and with two iterations of the trill written out)** <sup>1068</sup>



There is a significant amount of repetition in this theme, which can act as a point of reference for the pianists. However, there are some changes one must be aware of. When the A theme returns, it does not return identically, hence it is rather A'. Harmonically speaking, note the difference between the E flat minor chord in bar 1, which in its corresponding bar in A', changes to a G flat major chord. More striking is the deceptive cadence in bar 21 into 22. One expects a perfect cadence after the V7 chord, though Schubert unexpectedly leads us to the III chord (C major).<sup>1069</sup> To conclude the theme, the melody is repeated an octave higher, with a small embellishment – something that is commonplace in Schubert's variations to bring

<sup>1066</sup> Schubert, *An Introduction to his Piano Works*, p. 7.

<sup>1067</sup> Mario Aschauer, 'Viennese Pianoforte Treatises as a Reflection of Schubert's Pianistic Audience', p. 158.

<sup>1068</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 2*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 67.

<sup>1069</sup> This shift is termed 'idiosyncratic' by Martinkus: Martinkus, 'The Urge to Vary: Schubert's Variation Practice from Schubertiades to Sonata Forms', p. 50.

the theme to a pleasing close. As opposed to a usual binary structure, the structure of the theme is three 8-bar phrases, totalling twenty-four bars (rounded binary form: A B A').<sup>1070</sup>

In comparison to the theme in Schubert's other piano duet variations, one could argue that the theme in the A flat variations is more imaginative and exploratory. There are some reasons to support this argument. Firstly, the themes in the *Eight Variations on a French Song* and the *Variations on a Theme from Hérold's 'Marie'* are based on existing melodies. Furthermore, Weekley and Arganbright suggest that the Introduction and Variations on an Original Theme is similar to the Wranitzky's ballet music from *Das Waldmädchen*.<sup>1071</sup> This corresponds to Newbould's assertion that this work is 'closely modelled' on Beethoven's Variations in A Major on a Russian Dance, which is based on the aforementioned *Das Waldmädchen*.<sup>1072</sup> Secondly, the theme in the A flat variations is more lyrical, expansive, and harmonically more adventurous than the other variations. For example, the secondo parts of the theme in the *Eight Variations on a French Song* and the *Variations on a Theme from Hérold's 'Marie'* are not particularly pianistically interesting. Brown considers the theme from the *Eight Variations on a French Song* to be 'rather old-fashioned' and 'plodding'.<sup>1073</sup> Of course, one must bear in mind that these themes were pre-existing, and Schubert had to make do with this existing melody – presumably Schubert wished to capitalise on a popular tune as many composers did. In fact, this must have done Schubert a great service; the *Variations on a Theme from Hérold's 'Marie'* found success both in Vienna and abroad.<sup>1074</sup> On initial glance, both the themes in the French variations and the variations based on *Marie* appear not to be particularly interesting – the secondo part is peppered in rests, repeated notes, pedal notes, and

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<sup>1070</sup> Chen remarks that the structure of Schubert's variation themes tend to be in binary or rounded binary form; Chen, 'The variation elements in the works of Franz Schubert', p. 56.

<sup>1071</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 48.

<sup>1072</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, pp. 238–39.

<sup>1073</sup> Brown, *Schubert's Variations*, p. 34.

<sup>1074</sup> Walburga Litschauer, Preface to *Werke für Klavier zu Vier Händen III*, trans. by J. Bradford Robinson, ed. by Walburga Litschauer and Werner Aderhold (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2013), p. XII.

tonic/dominant harmonies. Both works grow however in their complexity and virtuosity as the variations progress. In the Variations in A flat Major however, both primo and secondo parts in the theme are closer together in weighting from the start, with the secondo being as occupied as the primo, and this demonstrates Schubert's elevated treatment of the secondo part, which often was treated by composers as the accompaniment part only. The unusual addition of a canonic imitation in the B section is another example of this elevation of the secondo (on a dominant pedal point) – a characteristic that does not appear in the other themes of his pianoforte duet variations, though it appears in the B section several times in this work. The B theme's melody is played with the primo's right hand, which the secondo's right hand imitates four beats later. The secondo pianist can bring out this interplay between themselves and the primo here before reverting to the accompaniment role.

### **7.3 Variations One to Four**

The variations from theme one to four remain in the same time signature of simple quadruple time and the same key signature of A flat major. These four variations are mirroring the structure of the theme with three eight-bar phrases, totalling twenty-four bars in each variation. While the above traits have remained the same, Schubert elaborates and enlivens the theme. In variation one, the theme is diversified on incessant triplets. Repeated notes are a feature in both melodic and accompanimental roles (but mostly in the primo). Repeated notes on the piano make the percussive quality of the piano more noticeable, so pianists should shape the repeated notes for a musical outcome. Pianists encounter the triplet issue on a few occasions here (as addressed in the *Kindermarsch* discussion), such as in bars 9 and 12. An argument can be made here not to assimilate the triplets in these cases. The dotted rhythm is a strong trait of the theme's upbeat, which aids in portraying the march-like character. This quality would be lost and inconsistent if the dotted rhythms and triplets were assimilated in these occurrences. A

similar occurrence is present in other Schubert piano works, such as that of Schubert's Impromptu in C Minor (D.899), which Arden discusses. She poses the conundrum, should pianists decide on a non-assimilation approach if the dotted rhythm is present in a work's theme?<sup>1075</sup> Careful rhythmic co-ordination between the parts is required here whichever approach one takes, as well as in other bars such as in the penultimate bar, when there are polyrhythms (repeated triplets in the primo against quavers in the secondo).

In the second variation, the lines are divided between all parts. The secondo plays the first phrase with fast scalar semiquavers, which require a light touch at this tempo. All the while, the melody is in the primo. The canon in the B section of the theme makes its return. This time, the melody appears first in the secondo's right hand in the upbeat to bar 9. This melody appears in the primo afterwards. The dotted dactylic rhythm remains a constant presence in the theme, variation one, and variation two. Dotted rhythms, however, occur much more rarely in variations three and four (when they do appear, they are not used as an anacrusis as often done previously). In the bar of upbeat to bar 9 of variation three, where one would expect the dotted dactylic rhythm, there is now a crotchet and two quavers. Musically, the effect results in a more lyrical variation and a less march-like quality. The 'un poco più lento' marking adds to this change of character. As one progresses through the work, there are many contrasts in each variation, placed in a conventional design. Brown notes that such 'emotional stress and relaxation' is an emerging trait in this work, and this is a result of honing his skills in the instrumental works he wrote that year.<sup>1076</sup>

A contrapuntal technique in the form of free imitation (not identical melodies but similar) appears in the primo in variation three, with the melody commencing in the primo's left. Four-hand piano seems to be an ideal medium for counterpoint – this technique appears

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<sup>1075</sup> Arden, 'What Would Schubert Do? Triplet Assimilation in the Works of Franz Schubert', pp. 17–18.

<sup>1076</sup> Brown, *Schubert's Variations*, p. 69.

more often in Schubert's duet works than his two-hand piano works. In fact, Brown goes as far as to point out that the counterpoint in this work is 'almost unexampled' in his other piano music.<sup>1077</sup> The primo player will find their hands quite close together here and clever fingering must be considered; often, the hands are third apart. Due to the closeness of both primo's hands i.e., playing in the same close range of the piano, it is a little more challenging to bring out the lines as two independent entities. One way to achieve this is to follow the rests and the varied articulation markings attentively. For example, in bar 1, the primo's left hand is marked *legato*, while some of the right hand is marked *portato*. Another example lies in bar 6, when the left hand is slurred but there is a two-note slur in the right hand, followed by a *portato*. It is important to differentiate between these markings. The rests need precision in order to show the independence of the lines e.g. in bar 2 when the right-hand phrase is finished and resting, the left-hand phrase is beginning. The primo must take note that in bar 3 and 4, another line of melodic interest is added in the right hand.

There are shared notes between the primo's hands on occasion such as those in bars 7 and 17; the solution here is to let one hand play it. There are also some shared consecutive notes that might require some attention; in bar 4, the primo must release the A flat in the left hand a little earlier than written, so that the A flat key is released in time for the next beat. The common convention of doubling the melody an octave apart in the primo only appears twice here and fleetingly so – thus showing Schubert's creative approach to duet-scoring. The secondo assumes a more accompanimental role than the previous variation here, with the repeated tremolos in both hands reminiscent of orchestral music. The secondo (notably not the primo) is marked '*con delicatezza*' and is set in a piano dynamic. Thus, the secondo here must keep the accompaniment light so the primo's melodies are clear. Pianists must take care not to

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<sup>1077</sup> Ibid.

overpedal – which can easily happen with tremolos – and aim to focus on the transparency of the lines.

Variation four sees a return to the original tempo and a sprightly character of frivolity pervades the variation. Sparkling fingerwork is required in both the primo and the secondo. There are some tricky passages such as that in the primo in bar 14, in which there is an almost two-octave leap in the right hand in the space of a semiquaver. An alternative approach to this would be to take the last right-hand semiquaver in the left hand, thus allowing a semiquaver duration for the right hand to prepare for the leap (though either way, this leap is finicky to play). The variation concludes in a triumphant manner in fortissimo dynamic, making the dynamic change to pianissimo coupled with the key change to the tonic minor in the next variation even more arresting.

#### **7.4 Variation Five**

One method in which Schubert explores the variation form is in the use of key. Variation five sees the first change of key of the set. Schubert uses the tonic minor key here (A flat minor). While not unconventional in variations set to change to the tonic minor, the change in modality from major to minor does provide some interest. It was quite common in the eighteenth century for the same key to be utilised in each variation, with the possible exception of one variation that may be in a different mode or key. For example, in Mozart's Twelve Variations on 'Ah vous dirai-je, Maman' (K. 265/300e), the theme and variations are all in C major, with the exception of Variation 8 in C minor (the tonic minor). A similar case is evident in the more expansive 33 Variations on a Waltz by Anton Diabelli, (Op.120) composed by Beethoven. Twenty-eight of the variations are in C major. The remaining keys used are the tonic minor in variation 9, 29, 30, 31, A minor in variation 13, and the relative major key of C minor – E flat major – in the penultimate variation. In Schubert's Variations in A flat Major, Schubert works

with and plays with the expected conventions of variations in the use of keys. While the change from A flat major to A flat minor is not unexpected in a variation form, one must place this within the context of harmonic conventions in the Classical Era. The use of the A flat minor key at the time was far less common than it later became; Schubert's use of this key is foreshadowing a growing break from Classical harmony by using more remote keys, with distinctive qualities.<sup>1078</sup> The key of A flat minor is also a key that McKay pens as one of three 'dark keys' in Schubert's music: G flat major, A flat minor, and E flat minor. Though, as McKay warns, it is unknown what tuning Schubert preferred, other than that it was unequal temperament – as opposed to equal temperament of a modern piano, which became the dominant tuning system somewhat later in time. This means we do not know what sound was actually elicited from such keys, but one can be certain the keys had distinctive qualities about them. Duffin, in his *How Equal Temperament Ruined Harmony (And Why You Should Care)* laments the loss of unequal temperament, for playing in equal temperament is anachronistic in many cases.<sup>1079</sup> However, this is a point of contention in Schubertian performance practice. For example, Montgomery claims that in Schubert's music, 'with its beautiful enharmonic modulations and full range of key areas, could not have been presented successfully in anything but equal temperament'.<sup>1080</sup> Somewhat contrastingly, in the Grove article on 'Temperaments', Lindley posits that 'Schubert's piano music benefits from an unequal well-tempered tuning if the nuances are subtle enough that C–E is tempered more than half as much as in equal temperament (rendering E suitable to such melodious uses as shown in [ex.15](#)) and D $\flat$ –F is no nearer in size to a Pythagorean 3rd than to an equal-tempered one (since Schubert used very

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<sup>1078</sup> McKay, *Schubert: The Piano and Dark Keys*, p. 40.

<sup>1079</sup> Ross W. Duffin, *How Equal Temperament Ruined Harmony (And Why You Should Care)*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007).

<sup>1080</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 32.

freely the key of Db major).'<sup>1081</sup> Similarly, in van Evera's doctoral research, she puts forward the theory that Schubert exploited unequal temperament to conjure a variety of expressive colours.<sup>1082</sup> It is with this in mind that Rushton ponders whether 'the same notes sound different when spelled in a different key', referring to the change from C sharp minor to D flat major in Schubert's fourth *Moments musicaux* (D.780); he concludes that perhaps they did on Schubert's piano.<sup>1083</sup> From this, it is possible that there was discordant tension caused by the keys change from A flat major to minor, which makes the return of the A flat major key all the more satisfying. It was actually uncommon for early keyboard composers to utilise extreme flat and sharp keys – surely including A flat minor with its seven flats in the key signature – partially because the more remote keys may have sounded out of tune.<sup>1084</sup> The particular issue of Schubert and piano temperament goes beyond the scope of this thesis but as Duguay suggests, further research could be considered on temperament in Schubert's music, and I suggest that this opens interesting performance possibilities for pianists.<sup>1085</sup> For example, one could further explore playing Schubert's music, including this variation, on historic instruments with different tunings than equal temperament. Though, of course there are many barriers in this regard including the availability – or lack thereof – of period instruments, and the dearth of specialist tuners.

While one cannot say for sure what specific instruments and tuning Schubert played with, the use of distant keys must have been unsettling and more piquant to the average listener of the era, who was accustomed to a smaller range of keys. To further explore the use of key

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<sup>1081</sup> Mark Lindley, 'Temperaments' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.27643.

<sup>1082</sup> Angeline Smith van Evera, 'Rediscovering Forgotten Meanings in Schubert's Song Cycles; Towards an Understanding of Well-Temperament as an Expressive Device in the Nineteenth-Century Lied' (doctoral dissertation, the Catholic University of America, 2012).

<sup>1083</sup> Alan Rushton, 'Musical Moments in the Pandemic', *The Schubertian*, 113 (2022), pp. 16–17 (p. 17).

<sup>1084</sup> Barrie Jones, ed., 'Unequal temperament' in *The Hutchison Concise Dictionary of Music* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 690.

<sup>1085</sup> Michèle Duguay, *The Influence of Unequal Temperament on Chopin's Piano Works* (master's thesis, Schulich School of Music, McGill University, 2016), p. 102.

in this variation, Schubert does not remain in A flat minor. In fact, he transverses across several keys; including the unusual key of C flat major (which is the relative major of A flat minor), as well as A major, which is remote in the context of the overall key of the variation. There is also a brief tonicisation into E flat major by way of an Italian sixth (bar 13). His penchant for suddenly moving from minor to major is present too. For example, in bar 1, the chord of V appears, which is immediately followed by the minor version of the chord. Similarly in bar 2, the chord of four appears in both its major and minor versions. All of these compositional features, combined with the repeated semiquaver figurations in the secondo's right hand (of which there is no 'let up') suggest quasi-improvisatory figures. Some piquant harmonies are present in this variation. In the second beat of the penultimate bar, the chord of IIb appears; the uncommon chord of B double flat major. This is the Neapolitan chord in the key of A flat minor – i.e. the chord based on the lowered supertonic. Notably this is the enharmonic spelling of an A major chord, which is the key Schubert modulates to briefly and unexpectedly in bars 18–20 (highlighted to the listener by the only 'forte' marking in this variation). The unique key change from A flat minor to A major foreshadows the final movement which oscillates from A flat major to A major.

The melody in the primo – which appears hands separately and hands together – shows Schubert's penchant for composing sublime melodies. This variation so far is the most closely related to the theme, as there is less elaboration – though the dactylic rhythm is dotted no more; perhaps this elicits a more Lied-like character. There is a sense of pining in the melody here, such as that in bars 10 when the F flat resolves downwards. The secondo is much more populated than the primo for this variation. The secondo consists of a chordal accompaniment, with repeated semiquavers in the right hand throughout and broken-octave quavers in the left. It is very uniform in this manner. The dynamics for this range from pianissimo to forte, though most of the variation is set in a softer dynamic. A challenge here for the pianist is to keep the

busy accompaniment subdued in order to facilitate the clear delivery of the primo's melody. It is important though for the secondo to understand the harmony here and not let their right-hand stale and become static; there is a small amount of ebb and flow in the phrases that can be considered.

## **7.5 Variation Six**

After this Lied-like and delicate variation, Schubert returns to A flat major with a tour de force, complete with a 'maestoso' and a fortissimo marking. The equality of both pianists is especially evident here. Schubert returns to the usage of triplets as he did in variation one. Fast scalar passages are present in both hands of both players. Particular care must be taken of the coordination of these scales; both players are fully together (e.g. the C minor scale in contrary motion in bar 7). The middle section offers some contrast in dynamics with pianissimo being required; quite a task considering all four hands involved are quite busy. A light touch is required here, especially for the primo's florid passages in the right hand, which is at the top range of the piano. The secondo can bring out their right-hand upper line when the free imitation returns, upon which the primo comments.

Unlike the previous variation, both the primo's hands remain quite independent in material, rather than the common occurrence of doubling up, thus showing Schubert's varying methods of part distributions. The primo's hands are doubled an octave apart though in part of the final section, which functions as an 'arrival' point – note the *forzandos* markings and the fortissimo dynamic. The fortissimo dynamic comes somewhat suddenly from pianissimo; the crescendo marking comes in on the second beat of the bar, while the fortissimo is on the third.

Note that in the Alte Gesamtausgabe, this part is marked at the lesser dynamic of forte.<sup>1086</sup> It is important to know that the fortissimo and pianissimo dynamics in the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe are Schubert's own, and this highlights his exploit of the instrument's dynamic range. The pitch range is also quite remarkable, as it spans impressively from the lowest E flat of the piano to the highest F in this variation alone.

There is a technical challenge of double octaves in the secondo. While there are a few double octaves in the secondo in variation one, variation six is more demanding in this respect. There are double octaves with hands a third apart from bars 17 to 19. A redistribution of the hands may be necessary in the secondo in bars 20 and 22, as there is an interval of a ninth which appears twice that may be out of reach for some hands. The right-hand first finger (the thumb) is on a black key, and the fifth finger on a white key, making the interval trickier as one must move in the hand for a black note which may affect the stretch. This interval may not fit comfortably in the right hand, or at all, so this two-note chord could be broken as is convention. Alternatively, the lower notes could be redistributed to the left hand. Although, the pianist must consider the playability of this latter option, considering the lively tempo of this variation. Musically, if these two low notes were omitted in the secondo's right hand, the difference would most likely be unperceivable up tempo. What is more important here is the top line of the secondo, which contains melodic interest. The last two fortissimo chords bring the variation to a majestic end after an A flat major pianistic scale in contrary motion in all four hands appears – making the transition to pianissimo for variation seven even more effective.

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<sup>1086</sup> Franz Schubert, *Variations in A flat Major D.813* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1888), p. 14  
<[http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/a/af/IMSLP08960-Schubert\\_-\\_D.813\\_-\\_Variations\\_on\\_an\\_Original\\_Theme.pdf](http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/a/af/IMSLP08960-Schubert_-_D.813_-_Variations_on_an_Original_Theme.pdf)> [accessed 02/02/2024].

## 7.6 Variation Seven

The seventh variation of this work exemplifies many of Schubert's unique compositional qualities. While by no means the most technically demanding variation in terms of the sparkling fingerwork evident elsewhere, the pianist must conjure a wide range of tonal colours. Schubert as a colourist is relevant here; Schubert explores the many qualities of the piano. His compositional style in this variation is more intimate than previously encountered and its overall sonic realm suggests an anti-virtuosic movement, which contrasts starkly to much of the work as a whole. Schubert delves into the tonal possibilities of the piano through a myriad of compositional techniques. These include the variation's sense of wandering key ambiguity, the slight looseness in form (the twenty-four-bar form is extended for the first time in the work, by five bars), the voicing, the use of pedals, and the range of pianissimo to fortissimo dynamics. These elements, along with the inclusion of unexpected harmonies and dissonances are unique for this period and highlight Schubert's idiosyncratic and distinctive compositional style. Even to modern-day listeners, the ambiguity in the sense of key, coupled with the use of more unusual keys, is ethereal and perhaps unsettling – but one must remember that this was even more so the case for the average listener of the era, considering the unequal tuning of keyboard instruments of the time (which was elaborated upon previously). If the second set of the polonaises were described as 'sometimes surprising' and 'far-fetched', one would wonder what this reviewer would write about this variation.<sup>1087</sup>

The range of secondo is approximately three octaves (G1 to A flat 4) while the primo is more limited. The primo's range spans two octaves and a perfect fourth (B flat 3 to E flat 6). Notably, the range used is not extremely expansive, certainly not in the primo part and especially in comparison to the other variations. This results in both primo's hands in particular

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<sup>1087</sup> Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: for Family, Friends, & Posterity*, p. 171.

being quite close together for a significant portion of the piece. This puts more onus on the pianist to conjure these colour changes without relying on natural colour changes present in different ranges. There are a number of dynamics in the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe that follow the ebb and flow of the phrasing, which will help in creating the sense of direction. The hand span required in both primo and secondo parts is not onerous by any means. There are octaves in the secondo's left hand on a number of occasions. In the secondo's right hand, the largest chord is a seventh chord in the last bar and otherwise there is much less extended hand required. As written in the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe, the primo's right hand requires an octave span in bars 6 and 18. Although, the primo's hand distribution could be altered here in which the rising melody written in the right hand could be given to the left hand – if this is more comfortable for the player and results in a musical outcome (it might be easier to achieve an inner-line legato this way rather than relying on the pedal). If played as written, it may require some mindful practice on bringing out the inner fingers. Schubert is ever considerate of the pianists here as there are no shared notes nor crossing of hands needed. At times however, the primo's left hand and the secondo's right hand are in close proximity. This is a common occurrence in duet compositions. This occurs in the opening theme, for example. Careful fingering should be considered; the use of the primo's left hand outer fingers as opposed to the inner fingers is a workable solution to hands being in too close a proximity. The primo's main theme is placed in the middle of the piano and depending on the seating arrangement, the primo player might encounter some discomfort in having to put their right-hand wrist at an angle for this – resulting in ulnar deviation. As a solution, it may be worth considering redistributing the opening theme to the left hand only. It is a viable option for the primo to play the opening theme with the left hand only due to the sparse texture and the small range required.

Even the beginning of variation seven opens in an ambiguous manner. The key signature contains four flats, though there are quite a few accidentals in the score. The first

chord is a C minor chord, and the first few bars remain in this key; a mediant relationship to the work's overall key of A flat major. As an alternative reading, Newbould posits that while variation seven appears to be in C minor upon first glance, it actually is in the tonic key of A flat major, beginning on the mediant chord.<sup>1088</sup> Rather than mirroring the eighth bar of this work's main theme with the first section ending in C minor, it ends rather surprisingly and effectively in C major in a fortissimo dynamic. Rather than this being a resolution, it is in the words of Newbould, an 'ironic major'.<sup>1089</sup> Notley comments that the variation oscillates between F and C minor – and mentions that the variation ends in A flat major; but does not say the variation begins in A flat major.<sup>1090</sup> Note the tertiary relations between F, A flat, and C, a hallmark of Schubert's style. While Newbould may consider the opening to be set in A flat major, it certainly is not as clear-cut as the previous variations – it is left intentionally vague. The result is a destabilisation of the sense of key since all previous variations were clearly in the key of A flat major, or A flat minor in the case of variation five. To add to the harmonic realm, dissonances are common appearances, such as chords with added seconds, fourths, sixths, and sevenths, such as the chord on beat three in bar 3. Here, there is a B flat minor chord with an added sixth and ninth. The variation ends on an E flat seventh chord in first inversion, with the primo's right hand playing a miniature cadenza-like flourish, leading us back to the home key for the final variation. The cadenza can be played with some agogic freedom, as it suggests a touch improvisation.

While not as demanding for pianists as most of Schubert's previous variations, its challenge lies in the interpretation. From a piano teacher's point of view, perhaps this variation could be considered in tuition with the aim of the student augmenting their capabilities in eliciting different tonal effects. While the work as whole requires a very advanced student, this

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<sup>1088</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 239.

<sup>1089</sup> Newbould, *Schubert's Workshop: Towards an Early Maturity*, I, p. 106.

<sup>1090</sup> Notley, 'Schubert's social music: the "forgotten genres"', pp. 147–48.

variation could be tackled by some students at a lesser level, along with the theme. The reason for this is because the level of note-learning in the theme and this variation is not onerous. The pedagogical virtues of this variation though open up questions integral to piano tuition. What is tone colour? What tools can the pianist use to explore the tonal possibilities on the piano? How can pedalling aid this? The concept of Schubert as a colourist is relevant here, as his piano music provides fertile ground to work on this aspect of performance.

### 7.7 Schubert as a Colourist (Variation Seven)

The concept of Schubert as a colourist has been discussed in scholarship before, such as in Hatten's 'Schubert's alchemy: transformative surfaces, transfiguring depths' and in Foccroulle's doctoral research.<sup>1091</sup> Though, there could be more focus on this in discussions of Schubert's music. As Martin justly points out, the special sound quality of Schubert's late music has been noted, but it is largely ascribed to the harmonic design.<sup>1092</sup> Thus, for the purpose of this section, the performative merits of this variation in eliciting tonal colours will be discussed, as this seventh variation explores the timbres of the piano effectively. This will provide some guidance to pianists who wish to explore this variation work. Due to this work overall bursting to the brim with a myriad of colours and independent voices, it is no surprise that this work has been arranged for ensembles, as indeed, many of Schubert's works have (with the military march in D Major springing to mind). For instance, nineteenth-century

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<sup>1091</sup> Robert S. Hatten, 'Schubert's alchemy: transformative surfaces, transfiguring depths' in *Schubert's Late Music: History, Theory, Style*, ed. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 91–110; Foccroulle, 'Final thoughts? Interpretation of the first movements of Beethoven's and Schubert's last three piano sonatas', pp. 146–49.

<sup>1092</sup> Christine Martin, abstract from *Variation, Figuration und Klang in Schuberts ,später' Kammermusik mit Klavier* (Universität Tübingen: Schubert am Klavier Internationales Symposium 14.–16. November 2019), p. 13.

composer Louis Théodore Gouvy arranged this variation work for orchestra, while contemporary arranger Russ Bartoli scored this for a string quartet.<sup>1093</sup>

Firstly, the ‘più lento’ marking must be taken into consideration. For the pianist to bring out the palette of colours and arresting harmonies, this variation must never be rushed. A slower tempo certainly would do this justice in creating the timeless atmosphere for this. While a tempo too slow may drag, this ‘più lento’ marking must signify a relaxation of tempo from the previous variation, and it certainly provides some relief before the romp of the upcoming finale. The small leeway for rubato in this movement is appropriate here, while elsewhere in this work it may not be. A rigid four-square tempo must be avoided in variation seven. This aligns with the suggestions of Arganbright and Weekley, who warn against using rubato for more complex rhythmic patterns such as syncopated and siciliano rhythms, and for fast dances, marches and contrapuntal works; conversely, the duo suggests that slow sections should be played with agogic freedom.<sup>1094</sup> Taking this advice into account, this is to say that rubato would not be suitable for the final variation with its incessant siciliano rhythms, but some rubato would work effectively in the slower movements such as variation seven.

This variation marks a salient contrast from the march-like theme in the beginning of the work and the tempo is one way in which this mood is created. One must note that even though this variation is taken at a slower tempo, the element of surprise in the harmonies keeps this variation engaging. Clemmow and Goldstone take this at approximately 56 crotchet beats per minute, while allowing there to be some small breath between the phrases where appropriate.<sup>1095</sup> For example, the duo take their time playing the phrase ending in bar 16 –

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<sup>1093</sup> Both scores are available to access under the ‘Arrangements and Transcriptions’ tab on IMSLP: Franz Schubert, *Variations on an Original Theme D.813* <[https://imslp.org/wiki/8\\_Variations\\_on\\_an\\_Original\\_Theme,\\_D.813\\_\(Schubert,\\_Franz\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/8_Variations_on_an_Original_Theme,_D.813_(Schubert,_Franz))> [accessed 27/03/2024].

<sup>1094</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert’s Music for Piano Four-Hands*, pp. 88–89.

<sup>1095</sup> Schubert, *The Complete Original Piano Duets (Disc D)*, Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone.

marking the conclusion of the section – before returning to the original tempo when the theme returns. From bar 24, the tempo is slightly pushed on as the music modulates back to the original key of A flat major. The secondo's semiquavers, which appear in the secondo for the first time in this variation (save for one small occurrence in bar 23), provide impetus for this forward-motion. The element of surprise is at play here; the players suddenly push the tempo on as the German 6<sup>th</sup> chord appears, leading us into the dominant chord of A flat major. This is further marked by the accent on the syncopated chords. Daniel Barenboim and Radu Lupu perform this variation at a slightly slower tempo than this duo; in the last six bars, in contrast to the previous duo, they keep the tempo slightly more static (Clemmow and Goldstone's tempo here has a little more sense of urgency).<sup>1096</sup> In summary, the chosen tempo for this variation must embody enough space to relish the element of surprise in harmony, while simultaneously maintaining continuity in a slower tempo. Attention must be given to the voicing of the parts and overall balance, as the melody and accompaniment appear in various formats. The melodic material is shared between the primo and secondo. Sometimes, the melody is present in the primo's lower voice in the right hand and the secondo's right hand such as that in bar 6 (see example below). The same voicing is evident in bar 18. It may require some practice to bring out the line played by the inner fingers. For the relatively sudden outbursts in bars 6 and 18, there is a fortissimo dynamic; presumably present here to highlight the gripping harmonic changes. This is a relatively expansive range of dynamics, though the overall mood is subdued and melancholic despite momentary outbursts.

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<sup>1096</sup> Franz Schubert, *Grand Duo, Variations (D.813) and 3 Marches militaires*, Daniel Barenboim and Radu Lupu (Apex, 2564 68070-7, 2010, reissue of TELDEC, 1997).

**Example 7.2, Schubert, Variations in A flat Major (D.813, No. 7), bar 6**<sup>1097</sup>



### **7.8 A Colouristic Device: Pedal in Schubert (Variation Seven)**

There is a lack of evidence regarding Schubert's own use of pedalling. The absence of Schubert's works in contemporary Viennese treatises is a contributing factor here. Aschauer points out just one exception to this from 1830 – though these two Schubert Lieder were transposed into different keys than the original.<sup>1098</sup> Moreover, Hinrichsen asserts that at most, only 2–3% of instruments used in Vienna around 1800 are available today for study.<sup>1099</sup> Further complicating the matter is that broadly speaking, four to six pedals were often found on keyboards from the 1820/30s, some of which are not included in piano design today.<sup>1100</sup> This poses some challenging quests for the pianists as to how best to interpret Schubert's works. Schubert did on occasion write in pedalling. Montgomery posits that Schubert wrote in many

<sup>1097</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 2*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 81.

<sup>1098</sup> Mario Aschauer, 'Viennese Pianoforte Treatises as a Reflection of Schubert's Pianistic Audience', p. 148. Referring to: Ignaz Pleyel and Joseph Czerny, *Pleyel's Clavierschule mit besonderer Rücksicht der jetzigen Leistungen auf diesem Instrumente; bearbeitet von Joseph Czerný* (Vienna: J. Czerný, 1830), pp. 45–46.

<sup>1099</sup> Hinrichsen, 'Una Corda: Beethoven's and Schubert's Exploration of the Piano's Sonority as a Structural Resource', p. 219.

<sup>1100</sup> Matthew Gardner, 'Schubert and the Viennese Piano', p. 97.

pedalling markings for his piano works and works that include piano.<sup>1101</sup> This is somewhat of an overstatement as Haskell mentions that in the second movement of Schubert's Sonata in B flat Major (D.960), the 'con pedale' indication is one of the 'rare' times Schubert marked the pedal in.<sup>1102</sup> Hinrichsen accordingly acknowledges Schubert's 'sparse' pedalling indications.<sup>1103</sup> It is estimated there are approximately forty pedal markings in Schubert's music for piano and with piano.<sup>1104</sup> This is a small number considering the number of works involving piano.

Montgomery notes that similar to Beethoven, the use of pedal was less for technical purposes with the aim of aiding a legato effect, and more so conceived with conjuring specific effects; he gives an example of Schubert's Andante from his D.784 piano sonata, in which the use of the 'sordini' (dampers) in a 'ppp' dynamic, contrasting with the 'pp' with the sustain pedal depressed, results in a dialogue.<sup>1105</sup> It must be said here that in Schubert's four-hand works generally, including this particular variation from his Variations in A flat Major, a legato effect is feasible through legato fingering – the reasoning being that two pianists at one piano are confined to a more limited range of notes and legato happens more organically as a result. Moreover, in this variation, the primo's range spans from B flat 3 to an E flat 6, though the upper range is only used for the last eight bars, presumably to signal the new section and for textural interest. The primo player will find quite narrow spacing between their hands in general

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<sup>1101</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 169.

<sup>1102</sup> Julie Haskell, 'Notated and Implied Piano Pedalling c. 1780-1830' (doctoral thesis, the University of Adelaide, 2011), p. 90.

<sup>1103</sup> Hinrichsen, 'Una Corda: Beethoven's and Schubert's Exploration of the Piano's Sonority as a Structural Resource', p. 229.

<sup>1104</sup> Catherine Smith, 'Interpreting Schubert Pedal Indications', *Journal of the American Liszt Society*, 19 (1986), pp. 88–105 (pp. 91–92).

<sup>1105</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 169; Hinrichsen provides another example of salient contrast in dynamics and pedalling in the finale of Schubert's *Divertissement à la hongroise* (D.818): Hinrichsen, 'Una Corda: Beethoven's and Schubert's Exploration of the Piano's Sonority as a Structural Resource', p. 229.

in this variation, though this will make the finger legato much more achievable – there is quite a lot of step movement and only smaller leaps generally.

This research posits that Schubert wrote hardly any pedalling markings in for his piano for four-hand works. Montgomery and Arganbright/Weekley's findings are similar in that Montgomery notes that 'few, if any' pedalling marks are evident in Schubert's four-hand works, and Weekley and Arganbright claim that Schubert did not mark in pedalling in his four-hand works, with the exception of two pedal markings in the Sonata in C Major (D.812), though it is not specified where this occurs.<sup>1106</sup> A read-through of the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe edition of the above sonata reveals that there are no direct pedal markings inputted.<sup>1107</sup> However, perhaps Arganbright and Weekley are referring to are the inclusion of the 'legato' direction in both 1. The first movement, signifying a change to a more lyrical character (dynamics stoop as low as 'ppp' here). 2. That of the commencement of the scherzo's trio, marking the contrast from the sprightly staccato character to the intimate and chromatically intriguing trio section in a 'p' dynamic. To support this, Montgomery states that when Schubert writes 'ligato' or 'molto ligato', it does not necessarily mean to pedal explicitly, but that pedal might further elicit the mood of the section.<sup>1108</sup> In these passages, the pedal can be used for characteristic purposes rather than for technical purposes. Hinrichsen catches more examples of pedal instructions – for the sustain and moderator pedal – in four other duet works, occurring in the Variations in A flat Major (D.813), the *Divertissement à la hongroise* (D.818), *Four Ländler* (D.814), and the Allegro in A Minor (D.947).<sup>1109</sup> An inspection of these five above works with both possible and explicit pedal markings reveals Schubert utilised pedal to enhance changes

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<sup>1106</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 172; Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 86.

<sup>1107</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 2*, ed. by Christa Landon, pp. 3–66.

<sup>1108</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 170.

<sup>1109</sup> Hinrichsen, 'Una Corda: Beethoven's and Schubert's Exploration of the Piano's Sonority as a Structural Resource', pp. 232–33.

of mood and colour for certain sections, and the use of it contrasts to the current use of the sustain pedal, which is often used by default.<sup>1110</sup> These examples support my thesis that Schubert utilised the ever-increasing offering of pedals on the Viennese fortepiano to explore sonic capacities and colours. The challenge for the pianists is to interpret, on modern pianos, the limited and lack of pedal markings in Schubert's works. The lack of markings does not mean that Schubert did not intend for pedal to be used. Though, a persuasive argument can be made that there may be far fewer pedal markings in his four-hand works as it is simply less necessary; overuse of pedalling can mar the texture, individual voices, and articulation. Furthermore, pianists must be mindful of and adjust to the unique qualities of every piano and performance space.

The colours that should be elicited in this variation can be enhanced by use of the sustain pedal and the una corda pedal. However, pianists must take a judicious approach. While the sustain pedal is essential here, there are quite a number of harmonic changes and dissonances that could easily blur the transparent sound needed. As Schubert's contemporary Hummel stated 'in recent times, many have tried, when playing, to replace the natural inner feeling with a feigned one' and subsequently such pianists elicited 'an aural jingling brought forth by a constant application of the pedals'; creating 'a cloak with which to hide an impure and note-swallowing delivery'.<sup>1111</sup> That being said, Hummel progresses to say that 'the use of the raised dampers, sometimes combined with the standard piano stop [moderator], can have a pleasant

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<sup>1110</sup> Montgomery is an advocate for duos avoiding using the pedal in Schubert's duets where possible, and he recommends that scaling down the pedal a little in the Fantasy in F Minor, 'will reveal wonders': Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 172.

<sup>1111</sup> Aschauer, 'Notes on Performance Practice', p. XVII. Original source: Johann Nepomuk Hummel's *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Piano-Forte Spiel, vom ersten Elementar-Unterrichte an bis zur vollkommensten Ausbildung* (Haslinger: Vienna, 1828), pp. 417 and 437.

effect in some passages; but its use is to be recommended more in slow tempos than in fast ones and only with slow changes of harmony'.<sup>1112</sup>

The use of tasteful and judicious sustain pedalling would be appropriate for this slower movement, as it is marked 'più lento'. Furthermore, as per Hummel's recommendation, the changes of harmony are slow on occasion, though certainly not always. The use of the sustain pedal here is for special effect. The use of the sustain pedal though should not be a substitute for feigning legato; this should be done by finger legato. Considering this work is a piano duet, the range available to each pianist is more limited than in solo playing. In fact, Schubert does not use the extremes of the piano as he does in the other variations (particularly in the primo). This makes the task of playing legato with the fingers for both pianists much more manageable. From a compositional standpoint, while the variation is scored quite close together in range and limited in range, Schubert provides great interest by exploring the chromaticism within this smaller range. While on occasion there are slower changes of harmony, it must be noted that there are plenty of instances throughout in which the harmony changes quickly (and surprisingly). This does not necessarily mean the sustain pedal should be omitted completely, but rather the pianist must depress and lift the pedal frequently; often, several times within one bar. This is most clear in the opening theme, during which it is advisable for the pedal to be lifted three or even four times. This flutter pedalling is particularly recommendable to this variation on a modern grand piano, as it will prevent an overly thick texture.

The pedalling of this work becomes more complex when the 'con sordini' marking is noted – which we previously encountered in the fourth Ländler. Bilson notes that it is apparent that the use of the 'sordini' term (and 'ppp') in Schubert's music insinuates to use the moderator

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<sup>1112</sup> Ibid, p. 437.

pedal, at least in some cases.<sup>1113</sup> Hinrichsen's chapter also aligns with this.<sup>1114</sup> To further substantiate this, Rowland says that Viennese composers, such as Schubert, 'occasionally' marked in to use the moderator pedal.<sup>1115</sup> The moderator pedal was common on the Viennese piano, and it consisted of a layer of cloth or leather between the strings and hammers, thus producing muted tones (a similar mechanism is evident on some modern upright pianos as 'practice pedals'). It was a 'much-favoured' device, and Gardner notes that Graf instruments could even include a double moderator.<sup>1116</sup> It is particularly effective in softer dynamics. In her research, Haskell posits that Schubert is known to have used the moderator pedal for pianissimo sections. Though, she warns that tutor books of the time advise against using the moderator pedal indiscriminately whenever a piano dynamic arises.<sup>1117</sup>

A hard-liner of the Historically Informed Performance movement may claim that Schubert's piano works should not be performed on modern instruments. However, it is important for modern pianists to adapt to changing instruments as well. With this in mind, how does a pianist interpret the *con sordini* marking in the A flat variations? As Rosenblum states, whether the pianissimo indications sometimes implied to use either the moderator pedal or the *una corda*, is a point of contention.<sup>1118</sup> On a modern instrument however, the luxury of utilising this particular moderator pedal does not exist – though this is not necessarily true in all cases. For example, pianist Stefan Litwin recorded Schubert's music on a modern grand piano, but notably with a moderator device fitted into the instrument.<sup>1119</sup> To successfully achieve the tonal scope in variation seven, one must firstly note the work is marked pianissimo, so pianists must

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<sup>1113</sup> Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music and the Pianos of His Time', p. 270.

<sup>1114</sup> Hinrichsen, '*Una Corda*: Beethoven's and Schubert's Exploration of the Piano's Sonority as a Structural Resource' in *Schubert's Piano*, p. 232.

<sup>1115</sup> David Rowland, 'Pianos and pianists c.1770–c.1825' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, ed. by David Rowland (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 22–39 (p. 37).

<sup>1116</sup> Rosenblum, 'Pedaling the Piano: A Brief Survey from the Eighteenth Century to the Present', p. 163; Matthew Gardner, 'Schubert and the Viennese Piano', p. 97.

<sup>1117</sup> Haskell, 'Notated and Implied Piano Pedalling c. 1780-1830', p. 75.

<sup>1118</sup> Rosenblum, 'Pedaling the Piano: A Brief Survey from the Eighteenth Century to the Present', p. 163.

<sup>1119</sup> Kramer, 'Against the grain: the Sonata in G (D.894) and a hermeneutics of late style', p. 116.

respect this dynamic. However, as Montgomery warns, Schubert's treatment of pedals was not meant only in terms of dynamic, but in terms of sonority as well'.<sup>1120</sup> As a solution to modern interpretation of this marking, the una corda pedal could be considered for this variation (though the sound created from the moderator pedal is a timbre that contemporary pianists are not familiar with, as it is more delicate than the una corda). Since the con sordini marking is indicated along with pianissimo from the start, I would suggest the una corda is pressed down from the commencement of this variation.<sup>1121</sup> For the crescendo in bar 5, the una corda could be lifted, as the crescendo must reach fortissimo quite suddenly by the next bar. When the pianissimo returns, the una corda can be depressed again, and it can also be released for the corresponding fortissimo section in bar 18. It would be feasible to further depress the una corda from the pianissimo in bar 20 until the crescendo in the penultimate bar. A general rule of thumb could be that whenever the pianissimo occurs, the una corda could be depressed. However, whenever the piano dynamic is encountered, I would suggest for the una corda pedal to be lifted. This will aid in avoiding an overreliance on the pedal and assist in displaying various nuanced colours, showing that consideration has been given for the gradations of dynamics.

## 7.9 Colouristic Devices: Articulation and Phrasing (Variation Seven)

A further aspect that will facilitate in capturing and exploring the colour in this variation is the articulation and phrasing. These essential components can mark the difference between a musical and a non-musical performance. There are quite a lot of phrase markings, from slurs to portato, often with differing articulation in both hands and various voices – such as the primo

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<sup>1120</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 5.

<sup>1121</sup> As Hinrichsen suggests, the duration of the pedalling is left to the discretion of the pianists (though he lists a few exceptions); Hinrichsen, 'Una Corda: Beethoven's and Schubert's Exploration of the Piano's Sonority as a Structural Resource', p. 233.

in some of the opening bars (e.g. bar 3).<sup>1122</sup> How does a pianist interpret these? This is especially important for piano duettists, as both players must negotiate and interpret such markings consistently with one another. It is in Schubert's marked articulation that his background as a string player is evident. Schubert's slurs were influenced by string-bowing, which implies the articulation as opposed to phrasing. This was not particularly unique to Schubert – as Williams writes, phrase marks in piano music of the Classical Era did not necessarily signify a literal meaning, as they do today.<sup>1123</sup> Generally-speaking, Schubert's slurs across the board span no further than what a bow stroke could achieve. A sharp-eyed pianist will notice some small inconsistencies in the articulation in this variation. In fact, in the past there was a view of Schubert writing at speed somewhat carelessly and this perspective is evident in the following quote:

In Schubert we find a limited source of magnificent melodies, true wonders of harmonic imagination. But his carefree attitude, which had such negative consequences for his existence in general, also revealed itself in a carefree sense of musical form and often in a dull articulation.<sup>1124</sup>

On this topic, Dürr adds that Schubert has two 'strata' of notation; the first being the more substantial strand that consists of pitches, rhythms, and harmony, while the second encompasses how the music should be played (dynamics, articulation, and tempo.)<sup>1125</sup> Dürr is of the opinion that Schubert was less accurate in his noting of the second stratum; 'Its elements, whether they are written at all, are generally written more hastily, with less precision than those of the first stratum'.<sup>1126</sup> Arganbright and Weekley posit that the reasoning behind the

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<sup>1122</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 2*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 81.

<sup>1123</sup> Williams, *The Piano Teacher's Survival Guide*, p. 146.

<sup>1124</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 158. Original source: Hermann Keller, *Phrasierung und Artikulation* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1955), p. 81.

<sup>1125</sup> Walther Dürr, 'Notation and Performance' in *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Practice, Analysis*, ed. by Brian Newbould (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 37–52 (pp. 39–40). Further discussed in Walther Dürr, 'Notation und Aufführungspraxis' in *Schubert-Handbuch*, ed. by Walther Dürr and Andreas Krause (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1997), pp. 91–111.

<sup>1126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

inconsistencies in his detail are due to an expectation that the publishers would add these – or that the performer would – and in his defence, Schubert was more precise than those that came before him.<sup>1127</sup> Moreover, modern musicians expect more precise markings than was conventional at the time and hence some minor inconsistencies in Schubert's indications must not be viewed as deficiencies. Furthermore, it is only natural there may be less consistency in works that require greater instrumental forces. In this particular variation – scored for just two pianists of course – the articulation is quite meticulously marked in overall. However, performers must consider that there are some editorial suggestions in the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe concerning the articulation. From a cursory glance, a reader will notice there are a considerable number of articulations indicated in the score, as well as editorial suggestions. The editorial suggestions (depicted as broken lines for slurs and lighter-coloured staccato for staccato), are quite instinctive and are consistent with Schubert's indicated articulation. For example, let us take the example of the repeated notes, as this is a characteristic pervading the whole variation. The characteristic is evident in all four parts, but more so in the primo's right hand. The entry of the primo's right hand contains this small figure consisting of a repeated note marked portato; see example 7.3 below. The same figure is repeated (as a sequence) straight after this, though in the original score, the portato appears to be omitted. Since this omission is inconsistent, there is an editorial portato here added in the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe edition. These are notated in square brackets in the example below.

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<sup>1127</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 84.

**Example 7.3, Schubert, Variations in A flat Major (D.813, No. 7) bar 1 with upbeat <sup>1128</sup>**



When the theme returns in bar 16 though, the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe (possibly erroneously?) omits the portato articulation, despite the upbeat figure being identical to that of its previous iteration. In any case, the portato on repeated notes happens somewhat organically, as by nature, repeated notes are detached as the pianist must lift the key before depressing it again. Performance treatises of the time may give some helpful indication as to how portatos in this era are to be played. Hummel puts forward that a portato is accompanied by a crescendo: ‘Usually in cantabile pages [...] the notes [are] so to speak weighed separately with the finger [...] so that each one receives a certain gradual increase in emphasis’.<sup>1129</sup> It so happens that Schubert’s marked dynamics align with Hummel’s view. When Schubert inputs the portatos in this variation, there very often are crescendo marks accompanying them, followed by decrescendi. Sometimes these hairpin decrescendi appear as accent symbols (Schubert did not always differentiate between the two). In his treatise, Starke calls this type of marking a swell mark and explains that this is a mixture of a crescendo and decrescendo.<sup>1130</sup> In the cases in this variation, such accents often occur on very few notes, and this may initially make it more difficult to interpret; for example, the decrescendo marking in bar 1 occurs on one beat only.

<sup>1128</sup> Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 2*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 81.

<sup>1129</sup> Aschauer, ‘Notes on Performance Practice’, p. XVIII. Original source: Hummel, *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Piano-Forte Spiel, vom ersten Elementar-Unterrichte an bis zur vollkommensten Ausbildung*, p. 64.

<sup>1130</sup> Ibid. Original source: Friedrich Starke, *Wiener Piano-Forte Schule Volume 1, Op.108* (Composer: Vienna, c. 1821), p. 14.

This means the pianist must take care with the gradation of tone when the dynamics occur with not many notes at our disposal – crescendi and decrescendi can be easier to achieve over several beats with more notes to play. These brief swell markings can be interpreted as the climax of the small phrases (at the highest dynamic level, within context), before the phrase fades away, and this articulation and the dynamics are consistent throughout. The portatos occur almost always in the repeated-note figures. On paper such a discussion may sound theoretical, but pianists who observe the marked articulation inevitably will allow the sense of phrasing and ebb and flow of the sublime harmony to come to the fore. The piano as a percussive instrument is really at its most obvious when there are repeated notes, so it is important for the repeated notes not to sound stale, but for them to build up and fade away expressively.

### 7.10 Variation Eight

The final variation is a tour de force. It is energetic and animated, filled to the brim with florid passages and a real sense of sophistication in the thematic development. While in the previous variation, Schubert broke away from the 24-bar variation to a small extent, he extends the work significantly in the finale. The finale far exceeds the length of the previous variations. Here, Schubert's treatment of the primo and secondo is imaginative. Both parts are technically demanding as the pianists must manage a variety of textures in this fast-paced finale, all placed within the whole gamut of dynamics; pianississimo to fortissimo.<sup>1131</sup> For instance, the primo contains unison playing, imitation between the hands, as well as melody and accompaniment figurations. The secondo entails more accompanimental figures, but the technical demands are on par with that of the primo. The secondo has quite relentless repeated chords; made easier to execute by playing them staccato. The staccato is only marked in the beginning, but it is safe

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<sup>1131</sup> Pianississimo is marked in once the NSA (bar 43), but not in the Alte Gesamtausgabe: Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen, Band 2*, ed. by Christa Landon, p. 88 and Schubert, *Variations on an Original Theme D.813*, p. 22.

to assume this articulation continues to apply. The primo notably contains the same dotted accompaniment figure later in the work. In bars 17–21, the secondo interestingly takes the melody, which is played in imitation with the primo's part which enters in bar 16. Such contrapuntal treatment to this extent is noteworthy, and it provides a rich tapestry of layers. Pianists must ensure to keep the passagework crisp and consistent with one another. We return to the key of A flat major following the closing dominant seventh chord in variation seven. However, a sizable portion of the last variation is in the raised tonic – A major – which is a clever technique in that the new key provides harmonic interest in this lengthy variation. The A major shift alludes to the momentary change to A major in the fifth variation. A major is the enharmonic spelling of the Neapolitan key. The A flat major key has already pervaded throughout the whole work, so the shift to A major strikes the ear as unexpected, and there are several fleeting moments in C minor, E flat major, D flat major and minor, F minor and B flat minor, all of which Schubert passes through with ease and to great effect. This is the first time in the work that Schubert deviates from simple quadruple time. Although the 12/8 signature necessitates four dotted crotchet beats per bar, the sub-pulse here consists of three quaver beats. One can draw an intermusical link between this variation and Schubert's Hüttenbrenner Variations for solo piano (D.576); Byrne Bodley notes that the use of an alla Marcia which later is reconstructed into a triple time occurs in the finale of the D.576 work.<sup>1132</sup>

## 7.11 Conclusion

The purpose of this section was to bring to the fore a work that often is regarded as a masterwork in Schubert's output, but that has received little attention. Perhaps the reasoning behind this is the negative associations of the variations form (Sisman calls this an 'image

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<sup>1132</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 428.

crisis’).<sup>1133</sup> This work enjoyed success during Schubert’s lifetime. The equality of both the primo and secondo parts pervade the work, and it is testament to Schubert’s abilities and character that he performed this virtuosic work – while becoming ever more ill – with virtuoso pianist Bocklet. Certainly, this work marks a substantially increased difficulty from the *Kindermarsch*, the *Ländler*, and the polonaises, and thus far more advanced pianists are needed for performance of this work. The work surely surpasses the piano duet’s humble domestic origins, and the work would not be out of place in a concert programme. While Schubert conforms to many traits of the variations form – such as diminution, changes to minor tonality and melodic variation – there are many unique hallmarks of his compositional style evident. His use of harmony – for example, the unusual shift from A flat major to A major in the finale – and even key ambiguity at times, such as that in variation seven, is remarkable. Schubert fully utilises pianistic tools such as scales and arpeggios, while also incorporating elements of vocal and orchestral music (though there are fewer orchestral implications than in his earlier duet works), such as that in the Lied-like variation five and the chorale evocations of variation seven. There is consequently a myriad of colours and moods portrayed in this work, and thus there is an expansive scope of performance possibilities for the pianists to explore.

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<sup>1133</sup> Sisman, ‘Variations’ in *Grove Music Online*.

# Conclusion

## 8.1 Answering Research Questions

### 1. What are the reasons behind Schubert's duets and duets more broadly being cast into a 'lowly estate' and neglected in scholarship? <sup>1134</sup>

The reasons behind this are extremely manifold, though it is clear one of these reasons is not the lack of quality repertoire on Schubert's part, for his piano duets encompass an overwhelming large array of genres and are composed with great care, originality, and emotional range. Rather, this issue forces us to examine the taxonomy of piano duets as lower in the genre hierarchy. Firstly, the issue was exacerbated by the craze for transcriptions of all kinds, as piano duets were essential in the dissemination of music – in orchestral, vocal, and other forms. There certainly was an image problem in how transcriptions were viewed in reception history, and the public's appetite for transcriptions was insatiable, often leading to works of lesser quality and works that were lost – many of which were piano duets. While the piano duet often was rightly viewed as being functional in nature i.e. for experiencing repertoire in domestic settings, it is hoped that through this thesis, it is revealed how extensive and diverse the repertoire is. The little literature there is on the duets in early reception history often demeans and belittles them due to pedagogical connotations and perceived limitations associated with the genre. The view of piano duets as being musically inferior is completely reductionist, though it was a common perception that contributed to the low standing of the genre.

By extension, Schubert's contribution to the piano duet in reception history has been overlooked in the past – often it is acknowledged, but there is little literature on this in

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<sup>1134</sup> Petran, 'Piano Duets', p. 10.

comparison to his piano sonatas and impromptus, for example. The neglect can be partly assigned to Schubert's use of miniature forms and certain genres, such as dances and variations; these were considered 'popular' genres and not part of Schubert's 'serious' output. Moreover, the uncovering of his larger instrumental works overshadowed his smaller works. This is to say that Schubert was a victim of circumstances, despite the reality that through his piano duets, he so clearly demonstrated the potential for upward mobility in this genre. While a considerable number of his piano duets were published during his lifetime, there were many that were posthumously released at different points, making it quite some time before one knew the true extent to which he engaged in the genre. At this point, the dominance of the solo performer – particularly in context of the virtuoso – took hold and the common function of duets in disseminating music was later taken over by recordings. The dwindling popularity of duets at the first half of the twentieth century had a knock-on effect in that piano teachers and scholars may have incorporated fewer – or failed to include – duets in their teaching, and the printing demand for duets would have decreased. All of this put duets to the periphery, though we often forget that at one time in history, the popularity of the piano duet absolutely rivalled that of the solo piano. Fortunately, this has begun to change in more recent scholarship as more scholars are addressing Schubert's four-hand works in their assessment of Schubert.

## **2. How did Schubert elevate the genre of the piano duet?**

As demonstrated throughout this thesis, Schubert progressively heightened the genre of the piano duet by composing an extensive volume of them – totalling approximately seven/eight hours in duration. No major composer has composed original duets to this level before Schubert, and even since then. Within his short lifetime, a clear development of his pianistic writing for piano duet is unquestionable. For instance, while the orchestral effects may have been somewhat excessive in his earliest efforts in the genre, he cultivates his

style into something unique. He merges the pianistic, orchestral, and vocal in his piano duet works and writes imaginatively for the two pianists, who are now equal partners – a characteristic that develops as Schubert's career progresses (for example, in his last duet works, both primo and secondo are given their fair share of melodic/accompaniment material). He must have done so with intentional altruism. Schubert's piano duets encompass a successful melting pot of styles and genres, including polonaises, marches, sonatas, dances, variations, fantasies, overtures, rondos, divertissements, and a fugue – encompassing both 'serious' and 'entertaining' forms of music. In fact, Schubert used the piano duet medium more often than the piano solo for quite a number of genres. While he composed more sonatas, *Deutscher/Ländler*, *Allegro/Allegro moderato* & *Andante* works, and fugues for piano solo, he favoured fantasies, polonaises, marches, overtures, variations, divertissements, and rondos for piano duet. He works with the genres while also playing on genre expectations; evident for example in the lyrical trio sections of many of his polonaises. In many ways, he exceeded the expectations not only of piano duets, but of the genres for which he wrote. His understanding of the instrument, stemming from his skill as a soloist, duettist, accompanist, and improviser, played a significant part in creating such great pianistic compositions.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, the vast majority of Schubert's piano duet works were not transcriptions, they were original duets. It was primarily Schubert, alongside a few other composers, who enriched the original piano duet, which was certainly less cultivated than one would think given the popularity of four-hand piano arrangements/transcriptions. Schubert elevated the genre in the diverse array of functions he wrote for. Some of these duets were written for pedagogical purposes, but it is clear that Schubert progressed the genre far past its pedagogical roots. From his beginning efforts in the genre as a youth, to the seminal works of his last year, he develops the genre into a self-

contained entity. While in reception history, his unique modulations and freer treatment of form were often viewed as negatives, these qualities – which are peppered throughout his piano duets – are now not perceived as compositional weaknesses, but rather as integral parts to our understanding of his compositions. For example, Rosen draws out the pattern of modulations to semitone-related keys in Schubert's duets and cites the last two marches of the *Grandes marches* (D.819) and that of the second *Marches caractéristiques* (D.968b) – he also notes this characteristic is integral to the structure of the seminal Sonata in C (D.812).<sup>1135</sup> This monumental sonata indicated a watershed in his four-hand contribution and beyond. The unique handling of form and adventurous harmonic language, which pervade his piano duet works, demonstrate he viewed piano duets as artistic forms of music, and not merely as potboilers – a common critique of duets.

Schubert displays in his duet works an ability to write skilfully for a wide range of pianistic abilities too and technically, these works require a high degree of finesse across the board – not to mention well-thought-out interpretations. As the Grove article quite rightly posits, the interpretive demands of Schubert's piano music are as 'challenging' as any others in the nineteenth century.<sup>1136</sup> His piano duet works are virtuosic in many interpretations of the term, from the *brillant* style in his variations to the more intimate kind. This thesis reveals that Schubert successfully utilised duets as multifaceted entities and he explored their chameleon-like ability to fit in many settings, oscillating between private and public settings, and 'serious' and 'entertaining' music. No composer has written so extensively for original piano duet since Schubert.

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<sup>1135</sup> Charles Rosen, 'Schubert's inflections of Classical Form' in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 72–98 (pp. 79–89).

<sup>1136</sup> Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

### 3. What is Schubert's legacy and influence on subsequent piano duet literature and performance history?

Despite some valiant efforts, it must be said that no composer has reached the same heights that Schubert reached in his piano duets in scope, quality, and quantity. Hence, his legacy as the foremost representative in piano duets is cemented in history. Schubert's piano duets had an immediate impact on nineteenth-century composers. Some composers, in particular Schumann and Brahms, were directly inspired to write duets in response to Schubert's duets. An example of this is Schumann's four-hand polonaises, which were clearly inspired by Schubert's polonaises, though Schumann progresses the technical requirements of the pianists further. In the words of Börner, Schubert's harmonic influence on Schumann's polonaises is not to be overlooked.<sup>1137</sup> Schumann also later took musical material from his own polonaises and used them in his *Papillons* (Op.2). Schubert's influence also stretches into the twentieth century. Benjamin Britten adored Schubert's music and often played his songs cycles and piano duets ('with great distinction' as Newbould says).<sup>1138</sup> Britten recorded Schubert's piano duets with Richter. Following on from this, Schubert's legacy in the piano duet genre was further entrenched and bolstered by piano duos in the second half of the twentieth century, such as Nancy Arganbright and Dallas Weekley, who devoted so much of their efforts to disseminating Schubert's piano duets in both performance and recordings. While many of his duets are underperformed and are only coming into the light now, certain duets are staples in the repertoire – only a quick glance into concert programmes reveals the prevalence of Schubert's Fantasy in F Minor (D.940), a crowning achievement of not only the duet genre, but of the entire body of piano literature.

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<sup>1137</sup> Börner, *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu vier Händen an einem Instrument*, p. 152.

<sup>1138</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 238.

While this particular research question pertains to Schubert's influence on piano duet literature specifically, one must note that his contribution to the genre had far-reaching implications outside of the four-hand genre. In fact, many composers have arranged Schubert's piano duets for piano duos (that is, works for two pianos), including the Sonata in C (D.812) and the Sonata in B flat Major (D.617) by Babcock. Many of Schubert's duet works have been arranged for countless other ensembles too; the first military march (D.733) and his Sonata in C (D.812) spring promptly to mind. Though, there are many more arrangements of Schubert's piano duets that were arranged from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. This includes the orchestral arrangement of his Variations in A flat Major by Louis Théodore Gouvy from the nineteenth century, right up to the string-arrangement of the work by Russ Bartoli in 2014. Liszt is also a key figure in this discussion, as he often took direct inspiration from Schubert's duets. His *Drei Märsche von Franz Schubert* for piano solo consisted of a potpourri of several of Schubert's piano duet works. Additionally, the *Divertissement à la hongroise* was used as original source material for Liszt's *Mélodies hongroises d'après Schubert* (S.425). Furthermore, Liszt composed an arrangement of Schubert's piano duet *Divertissement à la hongroise* (D.818) for orchestra, thus strengthening his fondness for this particular Schubert work. It can be argued that this latter work foreshadows Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. Following on in his teacher's footsteps, Liszt's most distinguished pupil Karl Tausig arranged Schubert's third polonaise from the D.599 set for solo piano, as well as a solo and two-piano version of the first military march. Schubert's influence is also evident further afield; Rimsky-Korsakov orchestrated Schubert's *Grande marche héroïque* (D.885), which was conducted by Balakirev in 1868.

## 8.2 Summary

The neglect of Schubert's duets within scholarship stems from various factors, which are not due to a lack of quality in the repertoire, but rather from misconceptions of piano duets as being inferior. In the past, true appreciation of the genre was limited as duets were bound up with connotations of pedagogy, amateurism, and domesticity. The duet was consequently seen as an unassuming genre. Moreover, original duets were far outnumbered by arrangement/transcriptions, and the arrangement/transcription was often met with friction. The rise of the solo performer and the invention of recordings led to the marginalisation of duets as a whole and the genre became something antiquated in the estimation of some. Fortunately, this thesis has underscored a revitalisation of interest in duets in recent years, with more performers, pedagogues, and scholars turning their attention to them.

As time goes on, Schubert's cultivation of the duet genre is more readily appraised, but the level of space designated to this sphere of his output pales in comparison to his more recognised piano works, such as his last three solo piano sonatas. The fact many of Schubert's piano duets were published during his lifetime reveals his duets landed extremely well with audiences, though it may also create the misimpression that his duets experienced such popularity after his death. Furthermore, some of his duet works surfaced posthumously, obscuring the full extent of his contribution. Of course, some duets have enjoyed such recognition, such as his Fantasy in F Minor (D.940), which is arguably amongst the most well-known works in duet literature. That being said, he composed many other duets – approximately seven/eight hours' worth – many of which have yet to be comprehensively investigated. Schubert was a unique contributor in that he almost exclusively composed original duets and not arrangements/transcriptions. He elevated the genre of the original duet, a genre which was in its infancy. No other major composer

seemed to follow suit to the same extent, so it is Schubert who can be credited as the figure who took the original duet genre to its pinnacle, and whose legacy influenced others to compose for four hands. His development as a duet composer is evident in the increasing equality he bestows upon both primo and secondo, as demonstrated in the comparison of his polonaises. The genres he wrote in were rich in variety and imagination, showing his deep knowledge of genre conventions, though he sometimes questioned such conventions through this music. There are even some genres which he appeared to prefer to score for piano duet over piano solo, such as the march and polonaise. A selection of underexplored original four-hand works by Schubert were analysed for this thesis, with the aim of exposing their performative and pedagogical merits. The findings from this novel approach to Schubert's piano works reveal that Schubert's writing is pianistic to its core and that he was proficient at writing for an expansive range of pianistic abilities; this can be used to our advantage. This thesis uncovered his skill in writing so fluently for four hands, a genre which can bring difficulties with it, since two players are sharing one keyboard. His pianistic proficiency is often given faint praise – after all, his education did not prepare him for a career as a professional pianist – but his ability to compose so sure-handedly for four hands must have been influenced by his high level of pianistic competence as a soloist, duettist, accompanist, improviser, and an ensemble pianist. His duets exhibit a virtuosic nature, spanning from brilliant variations, such as D.813, to more intimate compositions like his Ländler (D.814). There is therefore great performance and scholarly potential in this outstanding repertoire, and the repertoire's diversity lends itself to connection with an immense breadth of audiences.

## Appendix 1: Four-Hand Works by Franz Schubert (1797–1828) <sup>1139</sup>

D	Title	Composed	Published
<b>1</b>	Fantasie, G	8 April–1 May 1810	1888
<b>1b</b>	Fantasie, G, frag.	1810 or 1811	-
<b>1c</b>	Fantasie, F, frag. 1 <sup>st</sup> movt	1810 or 1811	-
<b>9</b>	Fantasie, g	20 September 1811	1888
<b>48</b>	Fantasie in c ('Grand Sonata')	April–10 June 1813	-
	1 <sup>st</sup> version (without Finale)	-	1871
	2 <sup>nd</sup> version (complete)	-	1888
<b>592</b>	Overture, D, 'im italienischen Stile' [arr. of orch ov., 590]	December 1817	1872
<b>597</b>	Overture, C, 'im italienischen Stile' [arr. of orch ov., 591]	November or December 1817	1872
<b>599</b>	4 Polonaises, d, Bb, E, F	July 1818	1827, op.75
<b>602</b>	3 Marches héroïques, b, C, D	1818 or 1824	1824, op.27
<b>603</b>	Introduction, 4 Variations on an Original Theme and Finale [see 968a]	-	-
<b>608</b>	Rondo in D	-	-
	Version A	January 1818	-
	Version B	c. 1818	1835, op.138
<b>617</b>	Sonata in Bb	Summer–Autumn 1818	1823, op.30
<b>618</b>	Deutscher, G, with 2 trios and 2 Ländler, E	Summer–Autumn 1818	1909

<sup>1139</sup> Information taken from: Brown, Sams and Winter, 'Schubert, Franz' in *Grove Music Online*.

<b>618a</b>	Polonaise and trio, sketch [trio used in 599]	July 1818	1972
<b>624</b>	8 Variations on a French Song, e	September 1818	1822, op.10
<b>668</b>	Overture, g	October 1819	1897
<b>675</b>	Overture, F	November 1819?	1825, op.34
<b>733</b>	3 Marches militaires, D, G, Eb	Summer–Autumn 1818?	1826, op.51
<b>773</b>	Overture to Alfonso und Estrella [arr. from 732]	1823	1826; 1830 as op.69
<b>798</b>	Overture to Fierrabras [arr. from 796]	Late 1823	1897
<b>812</b>	Sonata, C, ‘Grand Duo’	June 1824	1838, op.140
<b>813</b>	8 Variations on an Original Theme, Ab	Summer 1824	1825, op.35
<b>814</b>	4 Ländler, Eb, Ab, c, C [no.1 arr. as 366 no.17, see Dances for Piano Solo]	July 1824	1869
<b>818</b>	Divertissement à l’hongroise, g	Autumn 1824?	1826, op.54
<b>819</b>	6 Grandes marches, Eb, g, b, D, eb, E	Autumn 1824?	1825, op.40
<b>823</b>	Divertissement sur des motifs originaux français, e	c. 1825	-
	1 Marche brillante	-	1826, op.63/1
	2 Andantino varié	-	1827, op.84/1
	3 Rondeau brillant	-	1827, op.84/2
<b>824</b>	6 Polonaises, d, F, Bb, D, A, E	1826	1826, op.61
<b>859</b>	Grande marche funèbre, c, on the death of Aleksander I of Russia	December 1825	1826, op.55
<b>885</b>	Grande marche héroïque, a, for the	1826	1826, op.66

	coronation of Nicholas I of Russia		
<b>886</b>	2 Marches caractéristiques [see 968b	-	-
<b>908</b>	8 Variations on a Theme from Hérold's 'Marie', C	February 1827	1827, op.82/1
<b>928</b>	March, G, 'Kindermarsch'	12 Oct 1827	1870
<b>940</b>	Fantasie, f	January–April 1828	1829, op.103
<b>947</b>	Allegro, a, 'Lebensstürme'	May 1828	1840, op.144
<b>951</b>	Rondo, A	June 1828	1828, op.107
<b>952</b>	Fugue, e, pf./org.	3 June 1828	1848, op.152
<b>968</b>	Allegro Moderato, C, and Andante, a (Sonatine)	1818?	1888
<b>968a</b>	Introduction, 4 Variations on an Original Theme and finale, B $\flat$ [originally 603]	1824?	1860, op.82/2
<b>968b</b>	2 Marches caractéristiques, C [originally 886]	1826?	1830, op.121

## Appendix 2: Four-Hand Works by Mozart (1756–1791) <sup>1140</sup>

K.	Title	Composed	Published
<b>19d (doubtful)</b>	Sonata in C	1765	
<b>358</b>	Sonata in B $\flat$	1773–1774	1783
<b>381</b>	Sonata in D	1772	1783
<b>401</b>	Fugue in g (organ or piano, later completed by Stadler)	1773	
<b>357</b>	Sonata in G (unfinished)	1786	
<b>497</b>	Sonata in F	1786	1787
<b>501</b>	Andante and Variations in G	1786	1787
<b>521</b>	Sonata in C	1787	1787
<b>594</b>	Adagio and Allegro in f (mechanical organ)	1790	
<b>608</b>	Fantasia in f minor, (mechanical organ)	1791	1791

## Appendix 3: Four-Hand Works by Beethoven (1770–1827) <sup>1141</sup>

Number	Title	Composed	Published
<b>WoO67</b>	Eight Variations on a Theme by Count Waldstein, C	1792?	1794
<b>Op.6</b>	Sonata in D	1796–1797	1797
<b>WoO74</b>	Six Variations on Beethoven's 'Ich denke dein', D	1799	1805
<b>Op.45</b>	Three Marches, C, E $\flat$ , D	1803	1804
<b>Op.134</b>	arr. of 'Grosse Fuge' op.133	1826	1827

<sup>1140</sup> Eisen and Sadie, 'Mozart, (Johann Chrysostom) Wolfgang Amadeus' in *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>1141</sup> Kerman and others, 'Beethoven, Ludwig van' in *Grove Music Online*.

## Appendix 4: Selection of Four-Hand Works by Schubert's Contemporaries

Composer	Composition
<b>Clementi, Muzio (1752–1832)</b>	c. 17 works in total including sonatas. Op.3, op.12, op.14, arr.1, arr.2 and sn. 19–23. <sup>1142</sup>
<b>Czerny, Carl (1791–1857)</b>	6 sonatas, op.10, C, op.119, G, op.120, F, op.121, f, op.178, Bb, op.331; 8 sonatinas, 2 as op.50, 3 as op.156, 3 as op.158. Concerto for 4H op.153 and other miscellaneous works. <sup>1143</sup>
<b>Hummel, Johann Nepomuk (1778–1837)</b>	Op.51, op.92, op.99 Arrangements: Op.43, op.91, op.102. <sup>1144</sup>
<b>Weber, Carl Maria von (1786–1826)</b>	Op.3, op.10 and op.60, 20 pieces in total.

## Appendix 5: Four-Hand Works by Robert Schumann (1810–1856)<sup>1145</sup>

Title of Composition	Op.	Year of Composition	Year of Publication
<b>8 Polonaises</b>	WoO 20	1828	1933
<b>Variations on a theme of Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia</b>	-	1828	Only a fragment survives
<b>Studien für den Pedal-Flügel: 6 pieces in canonic form, 3/4 hands</b>	56	1845	1845
<b>4 Skizzen für den Pedal-Flügel</b>	58	1845	1846

<sup>1142</sup> Leon Plantinga, 'Clementi, Muzio' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40033.

<sup>1143</sup> Lindeman and Barth, 'Czerny, Carl' in *Grove Music Online*. Additional works: McGraw, *Piano Duet Repertoire: Music Originally Written for One Piano, Four Hands*, pp. 105–08.

<sup>1144</sup> Joel Sachs, 'Hummel, Johann Nepomuk' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13548.

<sup>1145</sup> John Daverio and Eric Sams, 'Schumann, Robert' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (2001), doi:10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40704.

<b>Bilder aus Osten: 6 impromptus</b>	66	1848	1849
<b>12 vierhändige Clavierstücke für kleine und grosse Kinder</b>	85	1849	1850
<b>Ballscenen</b>	109	1851	1853
<b>Kinderball</b>	130	1853	1854

## Appendix 6: Four-Hand Works by Brahms (1833–1897) <sup>1146</sup>

Title of Composition	Op.	Year of Composition	Year of Publication
<b>Variations on a Theme by R. Schumann</b>	23	1861	1863
<b>Sixteen Waltzes</b>	39	1865	1866
<b>18 Liebeslieder Waltzes</b>	52a	1874	1874
<b>15 Liebeslieder Waltzes</b>	65a	1875	1877
<b>Hungarian Dances Book 1-2</b>	WoO1	1868	1869
<b>Hungarian Dances Book 3-4</b>	WoO1	1880	1880
<b>arr. of J. Joachim: Hamlet Overture, op.4</b>	Anh. Ia/3	1853–4	-
<b>arr. of 16 Ländler by Schubert</b>	Anh.Ia/6	By 1869	1869
<b>arr. of R. Schumann: Piano Quartet, op.47, Eb Anh.Ia/8</b>	Anh.Ia/8	1855	1887

<sup>1146</sup> This table excludes his own four-hand arrangements of his own works. See ‘other arrangements’ in the following source for more information: Bozarth and Frisch, ‘Brahms, Johannes’ in *Grove Music Online*.

<b>Souvenir de la Russie</b>	Anh.IV/6	By 1852	1852
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## Appendix 7: Comments on Schubert's Piano Playing

Name	Profession/Organisation and Relation to Schubert	Comment
<b>Ludwig August Frankl</b>	Writer and poet; contemporary of Schubert	'Played and improvised waltzes ... till long after midnight' <sup>1147</sup>
<b>Josef Lanz</b>	Composer; a friend of Schubert	'Schubert's piano playing was nearly that of a Kapellmeister's, only much more tender. He also didn't have suitable hands but short, thick fingers. It is out of the question that he had a beautiful finger action or even good fingering. In spite of this, his playing conveyed such clarity in the presentation of ideas, especially in his own compositions, that one would have had to have heard him oneself in order to have gained a true impression of this.' <sup>1148</sup>
<b>Ferdinand Schubert</b>	Composer; brother of Franz Schubert	'Although Schubert never represented himself as a [pianoforte] virtuoso, any connoisseur who had the chance of hearing him in private circles will nevertheless attest that he knew how to treat this instrument with mastery and in a quite peculiar (original) manner, so that a great specialist in music, to whom he once played his last sonatas, exclaimed: 'Schubert, I almost admire your

<sup>1147</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 265.

<sup>1148</sup> Rita Steblin and Frederick Stocken, 'Studying with Sechter: Newly Recovered Reminiscences about Schubert by His Forgotten Friend, the Composer Joseph Lanz', p. 237.

		playing even more than your compositions!'. <sup>1149</sup>
<b>Sophie Müller</b>	Actress, singer, and pianist, interpreter of Schubert's works	'One of our most excellent pianoforte players.' <sup>1150</sup>
<b>Stadtkonvikt</b>	The school Schubert attended	First report card for piano is marked 'gut' (good), while the remaining seven are marked 'sehr gut' (very good). <sup>1151</sup>
<b>Josef von Gahy</b>	Civil servant; friend and duet partner of Schubert	'Clear, fluent playing, the individual conception, the manner of performance, sometimes delicate and sometimes full of fire and energy.' <sup>1152</sup>
<b>Alfred Stadler</b>	School friend (three years Schubert's senior)	'To see and hear him play his own pianoforte compositions was a real pleasure. A beautiful touch, a quiet hand, clear, neat playing, full of insight and feeling. He still belonged to the old school of good pianoforte players, whose fingers had not yet begun to attack the poor keys like birds of prey.' <sup>1153</sup>
<b>Anselm Hüttenbrenner</b>	Composer; friend of Schubert	'Schubert was not an elegant pianist but he was a safe and very fluent one.' <sup>1154</sup>
<b>Ferdinand Hiller</b>	Composer, conductor and pianist; audience member of Vogl and Schubert's <i>Winterreise</i> performance	'In spite of not inconsiderable fluency, was very far from being that of a master' though his performance with Vogl was 'a revelation.' <sup>1155</sup>

<sup>1149</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, pp. 36–37.

<sup>1150</sup> Weekley and Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands*, p. 83.

<sup>1151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1152</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 90.

<sup>1153</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 146.

<sup>1154</sup> Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man*, p. 90.

<sup>1155</sup> Ibid.

		(Referring to <i>Winterreise</i> performance)
<b>Ferdinand Hiller</b>	Composer; conductor, and pianist; audience member for Vogl and Schubert's <i>Winterreise</i> performance	‘Schubert had but little technique, Vogl had but little voice, but they both had so much life and feeling, and were so completely absorbed in their performances, that the wonderful compositions could not have been interpreted with greater clarity and, at the same time, with greater vision. One thought not of piano playing nor of singing, it was as though the music needed no material sound, as though the melodies, like visions, revealed themselves to spiritualised ears.’ <sup>1156</sup>
<b>Franz Schubert (comment on his own playing)</b>	NA	‘In Upper Austria, I come across occasionally some of my own works, particularly in the St. Florian and Kremsmünster abbeys, where with the aid of a good pianist, I presented my variations and marches with a nice success. The variations from my new 2-hand sonata were especially well received; I played them myself and apparently not without an angel over my shoulder, because a few people assured me that under my hands the keys became like voices. If this is true I am really pleased, because I can't stand this damnable chopping that even quite advanced pianists indulge in. It pleases neither the ear nor the spirit.’ <sup>1157</sup>

<sup>1156</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, pp. 283–84.

<sup>1157</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, pp. 23–24.

<b>Franz Schubert</b> (referring to himself playing his ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy)	NA	‘Let the devil play the stuff!’. <sup>1158</sup>
<b>Franz Schubert</b> referring to accompanying Johann Michael Vogl	NA	‘The manner in which Vogl sings and the way I accompany, as though we were one at such a moment, is something quite new and unheard of for these people.’ <sup>1159</sup>
<b>Ignaz Schubert</b>	Teacher; brother of Franz Schubert	‘I was much astonished when, after only a few months, he informed me that he now had no further use for my teaching and would be quite able to get on b himself. And indeed he went so far in a short time that I myself had to acknowledge him as a master far surpassing me and no longer to be caught up with [by me].’ <sup>1160</sup>
<b>Louis Schlösser</b>	Violinist, composer, Capellmeister at Darmstadt; a friend of Schubert	‘How spontaneous it sounded! How his eyes shone. I listened to the sounds with indescribable excitement and yet, from the standpoint of virtuoso performance, the piano playing could not in any way compete with the world-famous Viennese master pianists. With Schubert, the expression of the emotions of the world within him obviously far outweighed his technical development.’ <sup>1161</sup>
<b>Wiener allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung (WaMZ)</b>	Music journal in Vienna	‘The triplet accompaniment sustains the life of this song throughout and at the same time imparts more unity. One might wish only that Herr Schubert had transferred the triplets

<sup>1158</sup> Schiff, ‘Schubert’s piano sonatas: thoughts about interpretation and performance’, p. 193.

<sup>1159</sup> Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, p. 458.

<sup>1160</sup> Ibid., p. 921.

<sup>1161</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 330.

		a few times to the left hand, thus making the accompaniment easier to play. Repeated striking of the same tone throughout whole measures tires the hand if one takes the pieces in the fast tempo demanded by Herr Schubert. <sup>1162</sup>
<b>Leopold von Sonnleithner</b>	Austrian lawyer and amateur singer; friend and patron of Schubert	Schubert ‘sometimes went to private balls at the houses of families he knew well; he never danced, but was always ready to sit down at the piano, where for hours he improvised the most beautiful waltzes; those he liked he repeated, in order to remember them and write them down afterwards.’ <sup>1163</sup>
<b>Leopold von Sonnleithner</b>	Austrian lawyer and amateur singer; friend and patron of Schubert	‘More than a hundred times I heard him rehearse and accompany his songs. Above all, he kept strict time, except in those few instances where he had specifically marked a ritardando, morendo, accelerando, etc. Furthermore, he permitted no excessive expression.’ <sup>1164</sup>
<b>Eduard von Bauernfeld</b>	Writer; a friend of Schubert; a competent pianist	‘our ‘Bertl,’ as he was sometimes called ingratiatingly, had to play his latest waltzes over and over again [...] so that the small, corpulent, little fellow, dripping with perspiration, so that he was only able to regain his ease over the modest supper.’ <sup>1165</sup>
<b>Eduard von Bauernfeld</b>	Writer; a friend of Schubert; also a competent pianist	‘Without being really a virtuoso, he was wholly adequate as an accompanist, and made up for

<sup>1162</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideals, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundations*, p. 27.

<sup>1163</sup> Litschauer, ‘Dance Culture in the Biedermeier Era’, p. xxvi.

<sup>1164</sup> Montgomery, ‘Franz Schubert's music in performance: a brief history of people, events, and issues’, p. 276.

<sup>1165</sup> Litschauer, ‘Dance Culture in the Biedermeier Era’, p. xxxiii.

		intelligence and feeling what he lacked in technical perfection.’ <sup>1166</sup>
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<sup>1166</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends*, p. 226.

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