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**Franz Schubert: a Pathway to Explore  
Illness and Healing in the Final Symphonies –  
A Conductor's Perspective.**

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# ABSTRACT

## Franz Schubert, a Pathway to Explore

### Illness and Healing in the Final Symphonies: A Conductor's Perspective

Generally regarded as a dark work, Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony in B minor (D. 759) was written while he was sick from syphilis, and questions abound as to why he never returned to complete this work. During a period of latency, which is part of the cycle of this illness, Schubert wrote what is generally thought of as a very positive work, and his longest symphony: the 'Great' Symphony in C major (D. 944). Did Schubert compose in a vacuum separated from his illness? Is there any correlation to be drawn between his newly found health and that of the C-major Symphony? If so, what is to be learned?

Both symphonies offer themselves as a pathway to explore issues around illness and healing. Combining my experience as a conductor with my knowledge of the philosophical works of Hans-Georg Gadamer and contemporary research in both psychology and mindbody medicine, I tackle these questions, and in doing so, challenge many received truths about Schubert. The question is not any more if Schubert's brain was affected, but how. By undertaking an analysis on how Schubert's varying states of illness and health might be seen to be represented in his music, I open up a whole new perspective in Schubertian scholarship, and demonstrate the rich and diverse ways in which music may be integrated into the health humanities.

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# Introduction

## Background to This Study

Franz Schubert most likely contracted syphilis through sexual contact in the late summer of 1822. The next five years of his life, until his untimely death in 1828 at the young age of 31, were marred by the symptoms of his illness, which would have included sores or lesions on the skin, swollen lymph nodes, sore throat, patchy hair loss, headaches, muscle aches and fever. Though the official cause of his death was typhoid fever, contemporary medical research points to neurosyphilis being a possibility.<sup>1</sup>

Schubert resounds with me in two very distinct ways: as an orchestral conductor with a strong Germanic training, and as a musician with an interest in understanding how music can be effectively harnessed as a healing tool. As a conductor steeped in the German tradition – having studied at the Franz Liszt Conservatory in Weimar and subsequently been appointed conductor of the ‘Collegium Musicum’ at the University of Heidelberg at age 26 – I have since held multiple positions with professional orchestras both in Europe and the United States.

While at the University of Heidelberg, I had the great honour of welcoming the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer to our concerts. I conducted at a celebration organised by the University for Professor Gadamer’s hundredth birthday and conducted and played at his funeral when he died at the age of 102 in 2002. Gadamer’s book *Wahrheit und Methode* (*Truth and Method*) is the backbone of my hermeneutic outlook, in terms of music, text and speech (dialogue), and this is represented in my thought process and methodology.<sup>2</sup>

Born into a family of doctors and surrounded by siblings in the healthcare profession, I have always had a strong desire to connect music and medicine. As conductor and artistic director of two professional orchestras in the United States, I found myself in a position to explore this concept in a very concrete way. In 2008, I initiated a programme to bring orchestral musicians to play in hospitals, cancer institutes and hospice settings. Realising that something very special

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<sup>1</sup> Ricardo Nitrini and others, ‘Did You Rule Out Neurosyphilis?’, *Dementia & Neuropsychologia*, 4.4 (2010), pp. 338–45, doi:10.1590/S1980-57642010DN40400014. See also: Eric Sams, ‘Schubert’s Illness Re-Examined’, *Musical Times*, 121.1643 (1980), p. 15, doi:10.2307/963189.

<sup>2</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke. 1: Hermeneutik. 1: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Mohr Siebeck, 1990) (*Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. edn (Continuum, 2003)).

was happening for not only the patients but also the musicians and healthcare staff, I began reading and researching the area of mindbody medicine.<sup>3</sup> The focus of this discipline is to study the bidirectional flow between the brain (mind), the emotions and the immune system. My experience and consequently my understanding of performing effectively in a healthcare setting has evolved enormously over the years. In 2018 this led to the founding of the American Institute for Music and Healing (AIMH), a not-for-profit organisation in the USA. At the AIMH, I collaborate with Dr Jacqueline Huntly, a physician and physician leadership coach, to develop music into a sophisticated, focused tool within the relatively new area of the ‘medical’ or ‘health humanities’.<sup>4</sup> To this end, we have developed two separate programmes for doctors, using music as a modality for enhanced, patient-centred care, as well as programmes to train musicians to work effectively in a healthcare setting.<sup>5</sup>

The cross-disciplinary experiences that I have been immersed in over the last ten years affords me a particular perspective through which to view Schubert. As an orchestral conductor who has performed both the ‘Unfinished’ and ‘Great’ C major symphonies, as well as the orchestral settings of Schubert’s songs, and as an individual who has seen first-hand the powerful effects of music being performed in healthcare settings, I am motivated to add a new dimension to contemporary Schubert scholarship and to explore how music may be integrated into the area of the health humanities.

The title page of Schubert’s ‘Unfinished’ Symphony, D. 759, is dated October 1822, at a time when Schubert was more than likely already ill.<sup>6</sup> Its character is generally regarded as dark, and musicologists have for decades debated the reasons as to why Schubert never returned to complete it.<sup>7</sup> By stark contrast, Schubert’s Ninth Symphony, D. 944, composed while Schubert was in remission from his disease, is regarded as a positive work: ‘[...] ein wahrer Strom von

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<sup>3</sup> Mind body medicine is typically written as two words: either separating ‘mind’ and ‘body’, or using a hyphen between the two words. Throughout this thesis I have chosen to use the term as one word: ‘mindbody’ (medicine). PNI pioneer Candace Pert used the term ‘bodymind’ and wrote it as one word, making the case that if we are to accept the mind and body as one interactive system, we should also write it as one word. For more see: Candace B. Pert, *Molecules of Emotion: Why You Feel the Way You Feel* (Pocket Books, 1999), pp. 17–19.

<sup>4</sup> For more on Dr Huntly visit: <https://thrivetoleadmd.com/about/>.

<sup>5</sup> For more on these programmes see: <https://www.theaimh.org>.

<sup>6</sup> For a timeline of Schubert’s illness and remission see: Lorraine Byrne Bodley, ‘A Place at the Edge: Reflections on Schubert’s Late Style’, *Oxford German Studies*, 44.1 (2015), pp. 18–29, doi:10.1179/0078719114Z.00000000072.

<sup>7</sup> John Gingerich, ‘Unfinished Considerations: Schubert’s “Unfinished” Symphony in the Context of his Beethoven Project’, *19th-Century Music*, 31.2 (2007), pp. 99–112. See also: Maynard Solomon, ‘Schubert’s “Unfinished” Symphony’, *19th-Century Music*, 21.2 (1997), pp. 111–33.

Kraft und Gesundheit'.<sup>8</sup> In the brighter key of C major, it is 'arguably the greatest of his symphonic works'.<sup>9</sup>

In his book *Schubert and the Symphony: A New Perspective*, Brian Newbould quotes Charles Osborne, who suggests that Schubert may have been reluctant to return to the symphony because 'he subsequently associated the unfinished work with events (syphilis) he preferred to forget'.<sup>10</sup> Newbould himself leaves the question open, but supports Mosco Carner's assertion that (in Newbould's words) 'Schubert's songs in B minor (of which there are 21) share with this symphony a broadly "depressive" character'.<sup>11</sup> In the 'Unfinished', Glenn Stanley hears references to *Don Giovanni*, and specifically the darker side, asserting that 'I believe were consciously composed [...] [they] convince me that death is an important topic in the 'Unfinished' symphony.'<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, Peter Gülke warns against using Schubert's illness as a possible reason for him not returning to the 'Unfinished', stating that: 'Biographica verantwortlich zu machen wie die luetische Infektion im Spätherbst, heißt das Problem bagatellisieren' ('To use biographical aspects, such as his syphilis infection in late Autumn, as reasoning [for Schubert not returning to the symphony] represents a trivialisation of the problem').<sup>13</sup> Critic Huntley Dent is more emphatic when he writes that 'we should celebrate the difference between the artist and his life, not scrape the bottom of the barrel looking for the roots of misery, discord, and disease'.<sup>14</sup> Is the polemic on whether Schubert's illness is represented in his music to be relegated to the same seemingly never-ending court of opinion as Schubert's sexuality?<sup>15</sup> Is it not timely that the polemical question as to whether Schubert's

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<sup>8</sup> Eduard Hanslick, *Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien: Aus dem Concertsaal* (Braumüller, 1870) p. 125 <[https://www.google.ie/books/edition/Geschichte\\_des\\_Concertwesens\\_in\\_Wien/JMxD36D4lcsC](https://www.google.ie/books/edition/Geschichte_des_Concertwesens_in_Wien/JMxD36D4lcsC)> [accessed 28 April 2023].

<sup>9</sup> Joshua Rifkin, 'A Note on Schubert's Great C-Major Symphony', *19th-Century Music*, 6.1 (1982), pp. 13–16.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Newbould, *Schubert and the Symphony: A New Perspective*, Symphonic Studies no. 1 (Toccata Press, 1992), p. 184.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>12</sup> Glenn Stanley, 'Schubert Hearing *Don Giovanni*: Mozartian Death Music in the "Unfinished" Symphony', in *Schubert's Late Music: History, Theory, Style*, ed. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 193. For other references to death and the 'Unfinished' see: Barbara Barry, 'A Shouting Silence: Further Thoughts about Schubert's "Unfinished"', *Musical Times*, 151.1911 (2010), pp. 39–52.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Gülke, *Franz Schubert und seine Zeit*, Grosse Komponisten und ihre Zeit (Laaber-Verlag, 1991), p. 201.

<sup>14</sup> Huntley Dent, 'Fitzwilliam String Quartet', *Fanfare Magazine*, 11 November 2020 [https://www.facebook.com/FitzQuartet/photos/a.10151714262490018/10164045402305018/?\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/FitzQuartet/photos/a.10151714262490018/10164045402305018/?_rdr) [accessed 28 April 2023].

<sup>15</sup> For differing opinions on Schubert and his sexuality, see Elizabeth Norman McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography* (Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 157; Susan McClary, 'Music and Sexuality: On the Steblin/Solomon Debate', *19th-*

illness is represented in his music be discussed and received with more openness? To understand more, and to view this through a different lens, my thesis will combine musicology into the arena of mindbody medicine.

Mindbody medicine is the study of the bidirectional flow of information from the brain to the body. It concerns itself with understanding how emotions and feelings (happiness, guilt, joy, depression, etc.) play a part in our overall mental *and* physical health.<sup>16</sup> Robert Ader pioneered this research in the 1970s and 1980s. In his seminal book *Psychoneuroimmunology* on the mind–body connection, we learn that:

Psychosocial factors do not influence disease in some mystic fashion. Rather, the psychological status of the host is altered in some way. Numerous studies over the last two decades clearly demonstrate that psychological stimuli may have a profound influence on a wide range of physiological processes in both the experimental animal and in man.<sup>17</sup>

People with chronic illness battle daily with the simplest of tasks, not solely because they are sick, but because they are exhausted and depressed *from being sick*. Few of us, other than those living daily with chronic illness, or those faced with their own imminent mortality (for example those diagnosed with a terminal illness), may be able to place themselves in Schubert's position. From this perspective then, Gülke may well be correct *by default*. Perhaps a more accurate way in articulating reasons as to why Schubert did not finish his symphony is that *we cannot discount his illness* as a reason. As I see it, mindbody medicine offers a pathway through which to explore the polemic referenced above. My research will show that Schubert's illness may indeed have affected his mind, and importantly, that his (state of) mind would have affected the trajectory of his illness.<sup>18</sup>

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*Century Music*, 17.1 (1993), pp. 83–88, doi:10.2307/746783; Kofi Agawu, 'Schubert's Sexuality: A Prescription for Analysis?' 'Schubert's Sexuality: A Prescription for Analysis?', *19th-Century Music*, 17.1 (1993), pp. 79–82, doi:10.2307/746782; Lawrence Kramer, *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song*, Cambridge Studies in Music Theory and Analysis 13 (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Bessel A. Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (Penguin Books, 2015). See also: Gabor Maté, *When the Body Says No: The Cost of Hidden Stress* (Vermillion, 2019) See also: Emeran A. Mayer, *The Mind-Gut Connection: How the Hidden Conversation within our Bodies Impacts our Mood, our Choices, and our Overall Health* (Harper Wave, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> *Psychoneuroimmunology*, ed. by Robert Ader, Behavioral Medicine (Academic Press, 1984), p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Gailen D. Marshall, 'The Adverse Effects of Psychological Stress on Immunoregulatory Balance: Applications to Human Inflammatory Diseases', *Immunology and Allergy Clinics of North America*, 31.1 (2011), pp. 133–40, doi:10.1016/j.iac.2010.09.013.

As such, Schubert himself offers us a new lens through which to view illness and healing. Work in this area has already begun. Sterling Lambert draws attention to that fact that Schubert composed multiple settings of the same song (poem) and aligns himself with Lorraine Byrne Bodley's suggestion that Schubert's lived experience with syphilis contributed to a much different interpretation in his second setting of the poem 'Heiß mich nicht reden'.<sup>19</sup> Byrne Bodley originally asks if 'Schubert's final works exhibit a sudden "lateness", as distinct from maturity, beyond his situation' and if his later works and the new maturity they exhibit are 'the result of a composer faced with his own mortality'.<sup>20</sup> Can Schubert's music inform us in other areas outside musicology? Is there a different and perhaps new way of listening to Schubert's music that can help us to understand illness and healing?

To contemplate such questions is at the heart of health humanities, an area of growing influence in medicine and medical education. Previously referred to as the 'medical humanities', this area of research now embraces other areas such as palliative care and therefore carries the broader, more inclusive title of 'health humanities'. This movement evolved after recognising that the traditional 'bedside manner', for which the best doctors were valued, began to be eroded. The 'patient-centred care' model, where both the doctor and the patient were a part of the treatment discussion, was seen to be replaced by a 'colder', largely science-based approach, focused on machine diagnosis (MRI, etc.) and the ever-pervasive 'double-blind' studies.<sup>21</sup> This slow but steady detachment of the clinician from the holistic needs of the patient was studied and found to be true. Medical students already in year three of training score less on scales measuring compassion and empathy than in their first year.<sup>22</sup> Further investigation shows that the issue is predominantly with the healthcare system model itself. A newer area called 'moral injury' has come to the fore, showing that healthcare professionals' core values, such as wanting to care for others and doing this in a compassionate,

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<sup>19</sup> Sterling Lambert, 'Schubert, Mignon, and her Secret', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 27.4 (2008), pp. 307–33, doi:10.1080/01411890802384359; Lorraine Byrne Bodley, *Schubert's Goethe Settings* (Routledge, 2017), p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> Byrne Bodley, 'A Place at the Edge', p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas A. Lang and Donna F. Stroup, 'Who Knew? The Misleading Specificity of "Double-Blind" and What to Do about It', *Trials*, 21.1 (2020), p. 697, doi:10.1186/s13063-020-04607-5.

<sup>22</sup> Mohammadreza Hojat and others, 'The Devil Is in the Third Year: A Longitudinal Study of Erosion of Empathy in Medical School', *Academic Medicine*, 84.9 (2009), pp. 1182–91, doi:10.1097/ACM.0b013e3181b17e55. See also: Edward Krupat and others, 'Can Changes in the Principal Clinical Year Prevent the Erosion of Students' Patient-Centered Beliefs?', *Academic Medicine*, 84.5 (2009), pp. 582–86, doi:10.1097/ACM.0b013e31819fa92d.

caring way, are being undermined and eroded by healthcare systems, causing doctors and carers enormous distress, which is leading to an exodus from the profession.<sup>23</sup>

Research on empathy shows how empathy and compassion not only benefit the patient, but also the physician. It is many-faceted: 'Physician empathy is associated with multiple beneficial outcomes for both the patient and physician, including increased patient adherence to treatment, fewer malpractice complaints, and increased physician health, wellbeing, and professional satisfaction along with decreased burnout, personal distress, depression, and anxiety.'<sup>24</sup> The health humanities may have potential to reverse this course, incorporating methodologies that embrace areas such as perspective change, ambiguity and uncertainty, listening skills, compassionate care and self-care, embracing a culture where the doctor should treat all aspects of the patient's lived experience, rather than take the reductionist view of 'patient = illness'.

Potentially, the medical humanities do not simply add value to medical education by shifting an instrumental training into a values-oriented education, but, incorporated into the curriculum as core and integrated study, they can represent a critical rejoinder to a potentially reductive biomedicine that treats isolated symptoms rather than the person in context.<sup>25</sup>

This thesis comprises of six chapters, each of which evolve from issues researched in the previous chapter. Chapter one sets the stage for subsequent chapters by highlighting key methodological stances taken in my research, such as my background as a conductor and the challenges facing classical music that I have engaged with as conductor and artistic director of various professional orchestras in the US. The philosophical hermeneutics that have shaped so much of my thought are highlighted here and provide an important bedrock for methodology used in the following chapters. This chapter will then present research from the area of mindbody medicine, showing why it is an important tool for gaining a better understanding of Schubert's music, before then showing how Schubert's music has an important role to play in

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<sup>23</sup> Sarah Rabin and others, 'Moral Injuries in Healthcare Workers: What Causes Them and What to Do about Them?', *Journal of Healthcare Leadership*, 15 (2023), pp. 153–60, doi:10.2147/JHL.S396659. See also: Anto Čartolovni and others, 'Moral Injury in Healthcare Professionals: A Scoping Review and Discussion', *Nursing Ethics*, 28.5 (2021), pp. 590–602, doi:10.1177/0969733020966776.

<sup>24</sup> K. E. Smith, G. J. Norman, J. Decety, 'The complexity of empathy during medical school training: evidence for positive changes', *Medical education*, 51(11), (2017), pp. 1146–1159, doi.org/10.1111/medu.13398.

<sup>25</sup> Alan Bleakley, 'When I Say... The Medical Humanities in Medical Education', *Medical Education*, 49.10 (2015), p. 959, doi:10.1111/medu.12769.

the health humanities. Chapter two 'Schubert the Connector' begins by highlighting research on the importance of social connection for humans. Complementary rhythm as a compositional tool is the focus of this chapter, and I undertake various analyses of Schubert's music from this perspective, showing how it differs from Beethoven's motivic approach. Chapter three 'Schubert and Compassion' begins by defining and explaining the subject and why it is a central part of our lives. I use the psychotherapeutic model 'Compassion Focused Therapy' as a modality to explore issues such as compassion, guilt and shame in Schubert's music, and the issue of self-compassion, before showing how Schubert's life and music may contribute to a better understanding of this topical theme. Chapter four focuses on resilience and the ever-increasing literature and research on this subject. Schubert's ability to compose despite his lived experience with illness would have required an immense resilience, and as such he represents an opportunity to illustrate more concretely contemporary thinking around this subject. Using concepts taken from the research literature on resilience I task myself with finding resilience in Schubert's score. Doing so not only represents the possibility to gain a better understanding of Schubert and his music, but of resilience itself. Schubert's compositions have long been touted as a cathartic act for the composer: this chapter places concrete examples on the musicological table for consideration and debate, examples which I have explored both as scholar and conductor. Chapter five 'Schubert and Catharsis' explores various forms of catharsis from research in psychology and seeks to identify these concepts in the score. Particularly in this chapter, Gadamer's hermeneutical approach plays a methodological role central to my approach. Chapter six 'Schubert, Death and Acceptance' embraces the subject of death so prevalent in Schubertian scholarship. Schubert's music, in particular his 'Winterreise' and late works have long been used as a lens to study death. This chapter begins with key writings in musicology, before using both the writings of Irish doctor palliative care specialist Dr Michael Kearney and Schubert's music as a pathway to view death.

## Aims of the Study

There are three aims to this work. The first aim of this thesis is to investigate, through the lens of contemporary mindbody research, ways in which Schubert may have been affected by his

illness, over and beyond the purely physical symptoms of his disease (rash, headaches, muscle soreness, etc.).

Based on the hypothesis that Schubert's illness affected his emotions, which would have found its way into his compositions, the second aim is to analyse Schubert's 'Unfinished' and 'Great' C-major symphonies from the perspective of illness and healing. In this context 'illness' and 'healing' are treated broadly, with aspects such as shame, guilt and suffering falling under the umbrella of 'illness', and elements such as compassion, social connection and end of life falling under the umbrella of 'healing'. My analysis of Schubert's music under these subheadings (social connection, compassion, etc.) will be backed up by research from psychology and mindbody medicine in these areas, and will serve as a lens to offer a new perspective on Schubert's music.

Consequently, the third aim of this study is to present Schubert (a man who despite his suffering managed to compose beautiful music) as one possible pathway towards placing music in a stronger position within the health humanities. This has in the past proven to be difficult and even elusive. Narrative medicine, the use of painting, and theatre studies occupy a central role within the health humanities, while music remains on the periphery. When used in the health humanities, music is largely understood in the context of performing music or listening to music, and is used primarily as a way to improve mood or as a calming tool: 'Music can generate fantastic "feel good" [...] basically because it's so good at creating within us powerful images and feelings and emotions.'<sup>26</sup> Notwithstanding the benefits that such music-making or listening to music may bring, the full potential of music within the medical or health humanities remains unfulfilled. Aside from the ability of music to help patients, music could, *and should*, prove to be a helpful tool for healthcare professionals to view *their own relationship with pain and suffering*, which may lead to a better doctor–patient relationship.<sup>27</sup> Used in the context that I envision, Schubert's life and music will be presented in such a way as to gain a new perspective on the universality of suffering, and embrace the 'full catastrophe of living'.<sup>28</sup> For

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<sup>26</sup> Lucy McLellan and others, 'Music and Health: Phenomenological Investigation of a Medical Humanity', *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 18.2 (2013), pp. 167–79, doi:10.1007/s10459-012-9359-y.

<sup>27</sup> Fan Wang and others, 'Medical Humanities Play an Important Role in Improving the Doctor-Patient Relationship', *BioScience Trends*, 11.2 (2017), pp. 134–37, doi:10.5582/bst.2017.01087.

<sup>28</sup> Jon Kabat-Zinn has written brilliantly in his book *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*, rev. edn (Bantam Books, 2013).



those suffering from issues such as chronic pain, shame, depression, or those facing their own death, taking back ownership of their illness through an understanding of Schubert's life and music may be seen as a most poignant way of realising those 'fairer hopes'<sup>29</sup> that Grillparzer (and all of us) had wished for.

## Research Questions

A central and fundamental research question centres around how mindbody research can inform us as to how Schubert's mind might have been influenced by his illness in such a way as to have had an effect on his compositional style. Two sub-questions in my research stem from this, the first of which is obvious: what might illness and healing look like in music?

The second sub-question is more complex and multi-faceted. Narrative medicine and arts practices such as drawing/painting occupy a central role in the health humanities, yet music remains very much an 'outsider'.<sup>30</sup> Why is this? Music plays a role in most people's lives, yet most people do not write essays, or draw or paint. What is the difficulty integrating music into this discipline? After addressing these issues, I ask a final question: what significant role might Franz Schubert's music play within the area of the health humanities?

## Rationale for the Study

Notwithstanding the in-depth research done in musicology relating aspects of Schubert's illness to his compositions (referenced above), there remains, at best, a reticence within Schubert scholarship to accept that Schubert's illness may have affected his compositional style, and at worst, it is considered charlatanism.<sup>31</sup>

Schubert's music has been used to bring elements such as suffering, pain, trauma and death into musicology. Michael Spitzer writes on fear in Schubert, tracking, as he sees it, elements of

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<sup>29</sup> The inscription on Schubert's grave (written by Schubert's friend and dramatist Franz Grillparzer) reads 'The art of music here interred a rich possession, but still far fairer hopes'.

<sup>30</sup> Daisy Fancourt, 'An Introduction to the Psychoneuroimmunology of Music: History, Future Collaboration and a Research Agenda', *Psychology of Music*, 44.2 (2016), pp. 168–82, doi:10.1177/0305735614558901.

<sup>31</sup> Dent, 'Fitzwilliam String Quartet'.

fear within the 'Unfinished' Symphony and 'Erlkönig'.<sup>32</sup> Building on musicology such as this, I propose to extend such analyses into the health humanities, in an effort to demonstrate how music may be seen as a unique modality through which to view illness and healing. This cross-pollination of research is considered necessary, though challenges remain:

Janet Mills's question on whether non-musicians can study musical settings alerted us to the strengths and weaknesses of outsiders and insiders. From my own experience, insiders, like the fish not able to note the water, can miss the obvious in taking it for granted. Outsiders are in danger of not knowing what they don't know. Here is where collaboration becomes necessary and generative. This is particularly true when we look for dissonances and places of discrepancy as sources to understand, from our respective positions, the complexity of what we study.<sup>33</sup>

While musicology is not necessarily 'like the fish not able to note the water' or guilty of 'taking it for granted', Liora Bresler may be correct in her support of Janet Mills's position questioning 'whether non-musicians can study musical settings'. Practically, in terms of how music is embraced or understood within the health humanities, this holds true. For instance, despite presenting valuable insights into the important role of the humanities in medical training, not a single chapter in their eleven-chapter book titled *Health Humanities in Postgraduate Medical Education: A Handbook to the Heart of Medicine* is dedicated to music by editors Peterkin and Skorzevska.<sup>34</sup> To bridge this gap, it is my hope that my experience in both areas represents an opportunity to help fill this void.

## Methodology

My Germanic education in conducting brings with it a strong interest in rhetoric in music. As a conductor I was taught to show the music through gesture; however, by necessity, as conductors who engage our musicians through speech, I am also vocal in interpreting musical content and importantly, musical *intent* to my players. Using words to interpret music beyond

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<sup>32</sup> Michael Spitzer, 'Mapping the Human Heart: A Holistic Analysis of Fear in Schubert', *Music Analysis*, 29.1–3 (2010), pp. 149–213, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2249.2011.00329.x.

<sup>33</sup> Liora Bresler, 'What Musicianship Can Teach Educational Research', *Music Education Research*, 7.2 (2005), pp. 169–83, doi:10.1080/14613800500169399.

<sup>34</sup> *Health Humanities in Postgraduate Medical Education: A Handbook to the Heart of Medicine*, ed. by Allan Peterkin and Anna Skorzevska (Oxford University Press, 2018).

the notes on the page represents both an opportunity and a threat. As a conductor, any break in play represents a break in flow for the players, and must be warranted. While there is a language of conducting gesture, oftentimes that language is not enough, and so we turn to words. In an effort to secure an understanding of language and communication, Hans-Georg Gadamer plays a central role in my methodology. Gadamer tells us that what we understand, text or otherwise, is never purely an objective exercise. By definition, our understanding is based on our own place or position in the world. To understand a text, we therefore read a part of ourselves into the text. Art (and music) has a particular role to play. Gadamer writes that 'we learn to understand ourselves in and through [art], and this means that we sublimate [aufheben] the discontinuity and atomism of isolated experiences in the continuity of our own existence'.<sup>35</sup>

My desire and ambition to connect music to healing may be considered a double-edged sword, and I am aware of the challenges that this represents. My readings of Schubert are highly inductive and open to criticism. I am aware of my biases in this area. However, incorporating mindbody research should prove a welcome but also necessary tool, acting as a litmus test to shape and inform my reading of Schubert when analysing his compositions. Part of the contentiousness of the Schubert debate stems from an 'either/or' approach to his sexuality, his illness diagnosis and how this is reflected (or not) in his music. Here it was important to me that I present my research within the context of another nuanced methodology, being especially careful to offer my findings as part of a broader approach that seeks to offer a different perspective, rather than a definitive answer. It is my hope that this approach should not be considered a weakness, and indeed it is my hope that it be regarded as a strength. In keeping with Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, such an openness allows for new connections to be made, and heard.

A new understanding of the positive impact that Schubert's life and works could play within the health humanities is important. Lorraine Byrne Bodley in her article poses the question 'was the unearthly serenity that permeates this work ['Die Taubenpost'] an escape from the fierce weather of the mind?'<sup>36</sup> This kind of open questioning invites rather than demands. In keeping with Gadamerian hermeneutical philosophy, that we all bring a part of ourselves into all understanding, there can be many truths. It is from these combined perspectives that I

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<sup>35</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 97.

<sup>36</sup> Byrne Bodley, 'A Place at the Edge', p. 28.

approach an analysis of Schubert's 'Unfinished' and 'Great' C-major symphonies from the perspective of illness and healing.

## Delimitations of the Study

This study focuses on only two of Schubert's nine (completed) symphonies, both of which I have conducted. While some of Schubert's songs appear in my study, they are used only as reference points for the symphonies. The study is limited as it does not consider his other genres (for example opera, piano music, chamber works). In addition, healing and illness are used in a broader sense, and elements such as 'compassion' or 'catharsis' are not to be found literally in the score, but are treated metaphorically. Thus, in reference to my analysis of illness and healing in Schubert's music, I am not concretely saying that a certain passage or phrase is what I determine it to be. This may be considered by some as a limitation. I present it as a strength.

In keeping with the above, this study will not involve playing or listening to Schubert in a healthcare setting, or 'testing' my hypothesis with patients or healthcare professionals (or any other cohort) to evaluate responses. My work in this thesis combining these different disciplines has been rewarding, but I also recognise that this work demands an enormous depth of thought. There may indeed in the future be a format to play different aspects of Schubert's music to solicit different responses in a healthcare setting. As a professional and deeply-engaged orchestral conductor, and also full-time researcher, I decided I need time for the crystallisation of these concepts before sharing with patients and healthcare professionals.

## Literature Overview

The cross-disciplinary nature of my thesis involves three principal but diverse areas of research, Schubert studies, mindbody medicine and the health humanities, each of these disciplines boasting their own exhaustive bibliography.

My thesis will analyse elements of the 'Unfinished' Symphony from the perspective of 'illness', and the 'Great' C-major, written while the composer was in remission from his illness,

from the perspective of ‘healing’.<sup>37</sup> There is no shortage of ideas regarding why Schubert did not return to his ‘Unfinished’.<sup>38</sup>

John Gingerich, in his ‘Unfinished Considerations: Schubert’s “Unfinished” Symphony in the Context of his Beethoven Project’, joins those (including myself) that are not willing to state with certainty that Schubert’s decision not to return to the ‘Unfinished’ lies outside that of his illness: ‘Why did he abandon the work at that stage instead of completing a four-movement symphony? Did he abandon the symphony and suppress the finished movements because they laid bare something too painful to face?’<sup>39</sup> Gingerich’s article, however, focuses on what he perceives to be the true reason the ‘Unfinished’ was left uncompleted, namely, that Schubert wanted to embark on putting together a concert programme such as Beethoven did with his Ninth Symphony. Beyond references to the ‘Unfinished’ as a dark or mysterious work, Glenn Stanley points to what he sees as references to death within the development section of the first movement.<sup>40</sup> However, prominent Schubertian Peter Gülke is convinced that ‘Biographica verantwortlich zu machen wie die luetische Infektion im Spätherbst, heißt das Problem bagatellisieren’ (To use biographical aspects, such as his syphilis infection in late Autumn, as being responsible [for Schubert not returning to the symphony], represents a trivialisation of the problem).<sup>41</sup>

Aside from the polemic surrounding the ‘Unfinished’, there exists a general disagreement in Schubert scholarship as to whether his illness affected his compositional style. Eric Sams asserts that Schubert’s ‘mind and work could hardly have failed to be afflicted and modified’ by his illness.<sup>42</sup> In her biography, Elizabeth Norman McKay assigns a complete chapter titled ‘Fight with Illness’ to the subject.<sup>43</sup> On the face of it, this is a promising proposal. In it, she maps out a (possible) timeframe for his progressing illness and the works composed during that time, as well as the composer’s varying states of mind. However, aside from the perspective of volume,

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<sup>37</sup> Lorraine Byrne Bodley describes Schubert’s ‘feelings of restored health, perhaps even a belief he was cured’ in ‘Schubert’s Sommerreise’ in: Lorraine Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer* (Yale University Press, 2023), pp. 441–53.

<sup>38</sup> For an overview of these different opinions, see *ibid.*, pp. 382–92.

<sup>39</sup> Gingerich, ‘Unfinished Considerations’, p. 99.

<sup>40</sup> Stanley, ‘Schubert Hearing *Don Giovanni*’.

<sup>41</sup> Translated from the German; Gülke, *Franz Schubert und seine Zeit*, p. 201.

<sup>42</sup> Sams, ‘Schubert’s Illness Re-Examined’, p. 21.

<sup>43</sup> McKay, *Franz Schubert*.

i.e. how much music the composer was generating at any specific time, McKay does not consider the possibility that his illness might have found its way into the content of his compositions. What she does offer, however, is a diagnosis of cyclothymia, a rare mood disorder, which is at once a hugely problematic ethical issue, particularly because it is 'diagnosed' by a non-medical professional and obviously diagnosed posthumously. Susan Wollenberg seems to concur with this opinion, and adds to it her own diagnosis of bipolar disorder: 'The musical phenomena to be discussed in this chapter certainly correspond to McKay's notion of Schubert's "two natures", and they display the destructiveness and extremes of mood characteristic of the bipolar self.'<sup>44</sup> Thus, as if the difficulty and pain of his syphilis, combined with the prospect of terminal illness were not enough, Schubert's list of illnesses seems to grow, even from beyond the grave. Hugh MacDonald's much cited article maps areas of Schubert's music that according to MacDonald demonstrate Schubert's 'volcanic temper'.<sup>45</sup> Lorraine Byrne Bodley finds a connection between Schubert's compositions and his illness but by contrast offers a more compassionate approach, choosing to see a connection between the composer's sickness and his productive creativity.<sup>46</sup> Peter Gilroy Bevan, in his 'Adversity: Schubert's Illnesses and their Background', offers a valuable and insightful chapter on the composer's illness.<sup>47</sup> Brian Newbould also comments on syphilis and Schubert in *Schubert and the Symphony*.<sup>48</sup>

Engagement in research around Schubert's illness, including other diverse aspects of his life that may have played a role in his compositions (such as the possible trauma he may have suffered as a child) and how this may be represented in his music, has been comprehensive. Peter Pesic draws parallels between the structure of 'Mein Traum' and the first movement of the Bb-major Piano Sonata, D. 960.<sup>49</sup> Pesic describes what he terms 'double banishment',

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<sup>44</sup> Susan Wollenberg, *Schubert's Fingerprints: Studies in the Instrumental Works* (Routledge, 2016), p. 167.

<sup>45</sup> Hugh MacDonald, 'Schubert's Volcanic Temper', *Musical Times*, 119.1629 (1978), p. 949, doi:10.2307/960118.

<sup>46</sup> For more on the connection between illness, creativity and humanity see: Byrne Bodley, *Schubert A Musical Wayfarer*, p.380

<sup>47</sup> Peter Gilroy Bevan, 'Adversity: Schubert's Illnesses and their Background', in *Schubert Studies*, ed. by Brian Newbould (Ashgate, 1998), pp.244–266.

<sup>48</sup> Newbould, *Schubert and the Symphony*, p. 184.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Pesic, 'Schubert's Dream', *19th-Century Music*, 23.2 (1999), pp. 136–44. See also Charles Fisk's book *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas*, California Studies in 19th Century Music 11 (University of California Press, 2001) for a similar analysis. For more on Schubert and perceived childhood trauma see Maynard Solomon, 'Franz Schubert's "My Dream"', *American Imago*, 38.2 (1981), pp. 137–54.

drawing parallels from Schubert's childhood (and the (perceived) trauma that Pesic associates with Schubert's relationship to his father) to his use of 'parallel structure of two shifts around a circle of sixths'. Leo Black draws parallels between Schubert's use of the tonic and 'foreign' tonalities to Schubert's home life (tonic) and what Black terms 'somewhere else' (foreign tonalities).<sup>50</sup> Other literature using either emotions or elements related to illness are to be found in contemporary Schubert scholarship, and these elements are used to offer a new perspective to Schubert's music. To that end, Lawrence Kramer uses the image of the 'wound' in Schubert, asking 'what does it mean to keep a wound open?', and though he also mentions the word 'healing', both words are used only in the context of (unrequited) love.<sup>51</sup> Thus, despite using words such as 'healing' and 'wound', there is no effort made by Kramer to relate any of this to Schubert's illness, drawing as he does on Schubert's 'Erster Verlust' as the genesis of his thought. Similarly, Michael Spitzer, in his article 'Mapping the Human Heart: A Holistic Analysis of Fear in Schubert', acknowledges in his first paragraph that emotions change behaviours.<sup>52</sup> However, despite this promising recognition, Spitzer doesn't draw any parallels to anything in the composer's life (for example fear of death, or fear of illness).

There are parallels to be drawn between the existing debate on the legitimacy of introducing Schubert's illness into his compositions and the jaded back-and-forth debate on Schubert's sexuality.<sup>53</sup> At times this blinkered focus has managed to side-step or even bypass the composer, losing sight of the music and the gifts it holds. For evidence of this one need only look at Philip Brett's article, which suggests that more gay and lesbian scholars should join the (sexuality) debate, asserting that not only scholars like Steblin, but 'so many members of the straight "classical" music world are so interested in projecting "Schubert" in their (and the canon's) own image, disallowing him (and it) even what might be considered the open human possibility of

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<sup>50</sup> Leo Black, 'Schubert: The Complete Voice', *Musical Times*, 138.1858 (1997), p. 11, doi:10.2307/1004052.

<sup>51</sup> For more, read 'The Wound as Voice' in Kramer, *Franz Schubert*, p. 20.

<sup>52</sup> Spitzer, 'Mapping the Human Heart'. See also Barbara Barry's article as an example of how Schubert can be used as a lens in which to view confrontation: Barbara Barry, 'Schubert's "Quartettsatz": A Case Study', *Musical Times*, 155.1928 (2014), pp. 31–49.

<sup>53</sup> For more see Maynard Solomon, 'Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini', *19th-Century Music*, 12.3 (1989), pp. 193–206, and Susan McClary's 'Constructions of Subjectivity in Franz Schubert's Music' in *Queering the Pitch*, ed. by Brett, Wood and Thomas (Routledge, 1994), articles which draw parallels between Schubert's compositional style and his supposed homosexuality, sparking much debate.

sexual activity of various kinds'.<sup>54</sup> Such opinions, however, have also been challenged by others.<sup>55</sup> Research has endeavoured, then, to 'rethink' Schubert,<sup>56</sup> particularly avoiding the pitfalls around Schubert's sexuality.<sup>57</sup> In an effort to answer the question as to whether Schubert's illness affected his music, an area of research that was just emerging when Eric Sams penned his intuitively correct article in 1980 may provide a welcome insight.<sup>58</sup>

## Literature Overview in Mindbody Medicine and Health Humanities

Mindbody medicine tracks the strong connection between the emotions and the body. Psychoneuroimmunology, a subdiscipline of mindbody medicine, is a cross-disciplinary approach combining psychology, neurology and immunology.<sup>59</sup> For decades researchers believed the immune system and the brain function independently of each other.<sup>60</sup> There is a growing amount of research now in this area, and the link between mental health and physical wellbeing has advanced dramatically beyond the area of psychosomatic medicine:

Negative emotions can intensify a variety of health threats. We provide a broad framework relating negative emotions to a range of diseases whose onset and course may be influenced by the immune system; inflammation has been linked to a spectrum of conditions associated with aging, including cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, arthritis, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, Alzheimer's disease, frailty and functional decline, and periodontal disease.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Philip Brett, 'Piano Four-Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire', *19th-Century Music*, 21.2 (1997), pp. 149–76, doi:10.2307/746896.

<sup>55</sup> Kofi Agawu has challenged this movement in his article 'Schubert's Sexuality: A Prescription for Analysis?', *19th-Century Music*, 17.1 (1993), pp. 79–82. Elizabeth Norman McKay in her biography writes that 'the possibility that Schubert was homosexual [...] has been exhaustively aired.' (Mc Kay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography* (Clarendon Press, 1996, p.157.))

<sup>56</sup> *Rethinking Schubert*, ed. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>57</sup> For more read *Drama in the Music of Franz Schubert*, ed. by Joe Davies and James William Sobaskie (Boydell & Brewer, 2019), doi:10.2307/j.ctv6jm9rg.

<sup>58</sup> Sams, 'Schubert's Illness Re-Examined'.

<sup>59</sup> Francisco Tausk, Ilia Elenkov and Jan Moynihan, 'Psychoneuroimmunology', *Dermatologic Therapy*, 21.1 (2008), pp. 22–31, doi:10.1111/j.1529-8019.2008.00166.x.

<sup>60</sup> In 1975, Robert Ader and Nicholas Cohen at the University of Rochester were able to condition rats to make themselves ill simply by making them drink sugar water. Previously the rats had been fed the sugar water laced with a nausea-inducing drug cytoxin. When the rats were fed the sugar water later without the drug, they still became sick.

<sup>61</sup> Janice K. Kiecolt-Glaser and others, 'Emotions, Morbidity, and Mortality: New Perspectives from Psychoneuroimmunology', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53.1 (2002), p. 83, doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135217.



Conversely, positive emotions can strengthen the immune response and thus promote health: 'Resources such as close personal relationships that diminish negative emotions enhance health in part through their positive impact on immune and endocrine regulation.'<sup>62</sup> Though Sams's question was a rhetorical one, one senses he wanted to answer with the affirmative. We can now, on hand of this research, say that Schubert was indeed affected by his illness. On hand of this research I will be exploring the possibility that Schubert's chronic illness found its way into his work.

Consequently, I will address how this illness (and healing) may be 'found' in Schubert's music. What value does such an analysis have? Kofi Agawu's well-posed question within the sexuality debate 'what can Schubert's sexuality have to do with the analysis of his music?' may well be asked of my analysis from the perspective of illness and healing.<sup>63</sup> While my work will show that Schubert's work may well have been affected by his illness, I will not be able to prove how, or where. The analysis is highly inductive and subjective, and therefore Agawu's question would apply equally to my work. Not taking sides in the debate, Agawu answers his own question later in the article (correctly) stating that 'the proof of the pudding is in the analysis'. It is my belief that an analysis from the perspective of illness and healing is timely.

The health humanities use 'methods, concepts, and content from one or more of the humanities disciplines to investigate illness [...] suffering, healing [...]. They employ these methods, concepts [...] in teaching health professionals and students how to better understand and critically reflect on their professions with the intention of becoming more self-aware and humane practitioners. Their activities are interdisciplinary in theory and practice and necessarily nurture collaboration among scholars, healers, and patients.'<sup>64</sup>

As an example of this 'content [...]to investigate illness [...] [to teach] health professionals and students how to better understand and critically reflect on their professions', one can look to Lorraine Byrne Bodley's work. She writes that the years where Schubert's compositional style matured went hand in hand with the realisation that he was very ill. Importantly, she affords us an additional perspective: that of a composer contemplating his own mortality through his

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Agawu, 'Schubert's Sexuality', p. 79.

<sup>64</sup> Johanna Shapiro and others, 'Medical Humanities and their Discontents: Definitions, Critiques, and Implications', *Academic Medicine*, 84.2 (2009), pp. 192–98, doi:10.1097/ACM.0b013e3181938bca.

music: 'This essential awareness, this newfound knowledge of who he was, was concomitant with Schubert's entry into full artistic maturity and influenced the music of his final years. In his letters to friends, most especially that to Kupelwieser, the composer's awareness of the real situation is evident.'<sup>65</sup> This is new. Pitfalls such as diagnoses à la McKay are avoided here, and Schubert serves as a lens not only through which to view illness or chronic disease or death, but through which to question ourselves (or healthcare professionals to question themselves) and our own perspectives. Byrne Bodley is careful to leave avenues open in a way that invites discovery rather than 'taking sides' (as in the sexuality debate), all of which tends to close down rather than open other possibilities.<sup>66</sup> Such a reading of Schubert's music may not only advance the cause of music within the health humanities, it may also lead to better patient outcomes:

There is a body of evidence indicating that the humanities offer a superb mechanism for the delivery of democratic values [...] In an age of patient-centred, interprofessional clinical teamwork performed in fluid contexts, medicine must become collaborative; there is evidence that more democratic clinical teams generate better patient outcomes and practitioner work satisfaction.<sup>67</sup>

While literature and painting have been successfully integrated within this area, music represents an area of untapped potential:

I suggest that learning to hear, reaching beyond objects and concrete states, cultivates sensitivities that are essential to the conduct of educational research. This is not self-evident. Ours is acknowledged as a 'visual culture', now a major ideological and curricular orientation in the theory and practice of art education. Similarly, in visual art education research, the emerging field of (visual) art-based inquiry is assuming a prominent place, whereas the role of aural and musical sensibilities in inquiry is uncharted.<sup>68</sup>

While the prospect of entering 'uncharted' territory is daunting, it may also prove hugely rewarding. With mindbody research as a pathway to inform how illness may affect the mind,

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<sup>65</sup> Byrne Bodley, 'A Place at the Edge', p. 24.

<sup>66</sup> Byrne Bodley chooses an example from Schubert's Tenth Symphony as a representation of the composer transcending death. Also in her review of the 2014 book *Schubert: Interpretationen* by Ivana Rentsch and Klaus Pietschmann, Byrne Bodley understands the importance of keeping this possibility open when she writes that 'one of the great virtues of this volume is that it does not presume to create too trim a fit between the man who suffered and the mind that created'. Ivana Rentsch and Klaus Pietschmann, *Schubert: Interpretationen* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014).

<sup>67</sup> Bleakley, 'When I Say...', p. 960.

<sup>68</sup> Bresler, 'What Musicianship Can Teach Educational Research', p. 170.

and with the methodology of both Gadamer and that of the health humanities to bolster my thesis, a map has been identified.

Schubert's 'An die Musik' tells of the power of music to offer comfort and help overcome the difficulties that life presents us ('in wieviel grauen Stunden, Wo mich des Lebens wilder Kreis umstrickt [...] Hast mich in eine beßre Welt entrückt'). It is my hope that this work may provide a new insight into how we can harness Schubert's music as a way to understand illness, and ultimately afford us a new, deeper sense of healing.

# Chapter 1. Schubert, Illness and Healing

This chapter serves to explore and develop further concepts raised in the Introduction. This is a thesis on Schubert and musicology, but the approach I have taken is one grounded in my own holistic experience as a professional orchestral conductor. As such, it includes all those aspects that have informed my perspective over thirty years. It is multi-disciplinary in approach, drawing from philosophy, psychology, mindbody medicine and the health humanities.

To begin with, I will highlight some of the challenges facing classical music today, for example in the area of repertoire choices, and how to make classical music relevant to a changing audience. I will then explain how the philosophy of Hans Georg Gadamer has shaped me as a conductor, and in particular Gadamer's insistence on the fundamental role of language as a basis for all understanding. I will discuss the subject of conducting and embodiment, a theme I will explore throughout this thesis. I will outline current research in mindbody medicine, and show why it has an important role to play in understanding Schubert. Finally, I will pinpoint what the health humanities can learn from Gadamer's philosophical approach, and how the health humanities have much to learn from Schubert and his music.

## 1.1 A New Lens through Which to View Schubert

At age 25, Franz Schubert began his journey with chronic illness, which ended his life at age 31. Despite his illness, or maybe because of it, Schubert left us with some of the most powerful and beautiful music of the Romantic era. Schubertian scholarship has analysed so many aspects of Schubert's musical output, from his prolific Lieder output through to his chamber music, his opera projects and symphonies. Indeed, musicology has also embraced every aspect of Schubert's own personal life, from his early childhood, beginning with his schooling at the Stadtkonvikt school under his father, the loss of his mother at age 15 and continuing with his bohemian lifestyle, including his much-debated sexuality, through to his contraction of syphilis and subsequent death. Inevitably, Schubertian scholarship has also linked aspects of his personal life to his compositional style, none more so than that made between his sexuality and compositional style. Like Newton's third law of motion telling us that for each and every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, with every position taken in regard to Schubert,

one can be sure that someone else is stating the opposite.<sup>69</sup> While an open discourse and dialectic is healthy, Kofi Agawu said it best when he warned that:

If, however, in the next decade or so, the matter of Schubert's homosexuality has not progressed beyond the programmatic and symbolic, then we will be fully justified not only in contesting its validity but also in reading an opportunistic and perhaps mischievous intent on the part of its advocates. As always, the proof of the pudding is in the analysis.<sup>70</sup>

If Schubertian scholarship is not to come across as 'opportunistic' and/or pushing its own agenda, then the pudding, to use Agawu's chosen idiom, should offer some opportunity for growth, learning or understanding that can be achieved by a specific approach or methodology linked to the analysis.

As I see it, Schubert's life and music offer us such an approach: a new and unique opportunity to delve into the world of illness and healing. These two elements, illness and healing, are fundamental to us as humans, linked to our own wellbeing, mortality and survival. Like two powerful rivers, they offer a myriad of tributaries, opportunities to delve into tangential issues, yet ones that are profoundly universal: issues such as guilt, pain, compassion, social connection and resilience.

Schubert's music has long been associated with death. Is there a way to tap into this wealth of suffering and healing through his music in a way that allows us to hear him in a different way, a way that may help our own attitude towards death? As I see it, Schubert offers us all of this, and more. If issues such as burnout, resilience and social anxiety are the zeitgeist of today, then so too are their antidotes: mindfulness, self-compassion and resilience. Schubert's music has the power to not only complement such antidotes, but to be such an antidote. His life and music not only deserve such a reading, they are resources that need to be understood for their inherent potential to play a much bigger role in all forms of healing.

Moreover, at a time where less and less audiences are attending classical concerts, Schubert can play yet another important role. Highlighting the incredible resilience that Schubert demonstrated while suffering from a debilitating chronic illness (that he knew would end his

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<sup>69</sup> The Steblin/Solomon debate on Schubert's sexuality has continued to draw commentary from others. For more, see McClary, 'Music and Sexuality'. See also Agawu, 'Schubert's Sexuality'.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

life) can only help capture the interest of audiences and motivate audiences to attend concerts. Once in the concert hall, it is his music that will capture their hearts.

### 1.2.1 Classical Music Reception Today

As an orchestral conductor in the USA, where donor dollars subsidise classical concert tickets to the tune of 60 per cent or more, I have for fifteen years constantly had to advocate for the legitimacy and survival of classical music in our culture today. While it is an ongoing battle, it is not a new one. One is reminded of Charles Rosen's tongue-in-cheek quote, 'the death of classical music is perhaps its oldest continuing tradition'.<sup>71</sup> In short, classical music has been 'out of time' for a long time. Is this now just 'business as usual' or something truly different post the Covid-19 pandemic? It is true that the global pandemic focused new concern on what was generally seen by its critics as an out-of-date, out-of-touch, male-dominated, elitist, elderly, white 'art form' that was out of touch with 'what the people really want'.

Published in 2007, Lawrence Kramer's *Why Classical Music Still Matters* drew attention to the precarious 'condition' of classical music. Like a sick patient awaiting triage in an emergency room, he noted that 'for more than a decade the drumbeat of its funeral march has been steady'.<sup>72</sup> In 2011, the provocative title of Julian Johnson's book *Who Needs Classical Music?* demonstrates in his very first sentences that Johnson is clear in his agenda to defend classical music's role in society: 'This book is about the value of classical music. More apparently, it is about its apparent devaluation in society today and the consequences of its legitimization crisis.'<sup>73</sup> Michael Beckerman and Paul Boghossian's *Classical Music: New Perspectives and Challenges* addresses issues that I, as a conductor, living and working at the helm of multiple professional symphony orchestras for over fifteen years, know only too well.<sup>74</sup> Beckerman and others, in a specially compiled think tank, tackled important questions, such as 'what would be lost if we could no longer enjoy live concert

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<sup>71</sup> Charles Rosen, *Critical Entertainments: Music Old and New* (Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 295.

<sup>72</sup> Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (University of California Press, 2007), p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Julian Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 14.

<sup>74</sup> *Classical Music: Contemporary Perspectives and Challenges*, ed. by Michael Beckerman and Paul Boghossian, (Open Book Publishers, 2021). For more on the challenges of professional symphony orchestras, see Robert J. Flanagan, *The Perilous Life of Symphony Orchestras: Artistic Triumphs and Economic Challenges* (Yale University Press, 2012).

experiences?’ and ‘to what extent are the business model, and governance and labor structures [...] responsible for their current problems, and what might be done about them?’<sup>75</sup> Such questions, we are told in the book, proved difficult to answer, or rather, the answers as to how to remedy the problems were too diverse. The contents of the book are, then, not an answer to these questions, but a series of independent articles written around these questions. The findings are important reading for all those in the business of promoting or understanding classical music in our world today.

On the face of it, perhaps Schubert, and classical music in general, may seem rather far away from being able to provide or offer any solution to this ‘problem’. On the face of it, Schubert (and classical music in general) is the problem. Or, as the findings of the first survey at the New World Symphony in Miami worded it: ‘Repertoire from the Western canon does not attract new audiences even when played at the highest levels of excellence.’<sup>76</sup>

## 1.2.2 Classical Music Today: A Conductor’s Perspective

As a professional orchestral conductor I have sat through hundreds of artistic advisory meetings, attended many orchestral conferences and symposiums, and listened to as many of the ‘problems’ facing classical music as I have solutions: ‘How do we engage the African American community and/or make our concerts more attractive to a diverse audience?’ ‘How can we attract more young people to our concerts?’

Firstly, it is hugely important to recognise that not all of the problems lie with the classical repertoire in and of itself. Indeed, one of the overlooked problems facing symphony orchestras in the USA today is their governance. This is the responsibility of the board of directors. The board’s function is to act as the checks and balances for both the executive director and the artistic director, who is usually also the conductor (only in much larger organisations are these positions divided), and keep a keen eye on the finances and the mission of the symphony. In Chapter 7 of *Classical Music: New Perspectives and Challenges*, titled ‘The Serious Business of the Arts: Good Governance in Twenty-First-Century America’, experienced and much-

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<sup>75</sup> *Classical Music*, ed. by Beckerman and Boghossian, p. xxvii.

<sup>76</sup> Herring, Howard, Hall, Craig, ‘Expanding Audiences in Miami: The New World Symphony’s New Audiences Initiative’ in *Classical Music*, ed. by Beckerman and Boghossian, p.123

respected executive director of the New York Philharmonic Deborah Borda warns of the difficulties that an organisation can face under poor board leadership and tells one tale of woe:

The board of a major American orchestra exercised a controversial form of responsibility when it declared bankruptcy and then withdrew from the musicians' pension plan for pennies on the dollar. The legal fees to process the bankruptcy were close to \$10,000,000, and more than six years later, the orchestra's recovery plan is still not 'recovered' [...] These are dramatic examples, but on a smaller scale, such events have increased, and there is concern that they are harbingers of a diminished future for classical music. Critical questions must be asked.<sup>77</sup>

Borda also warns against what she calls 'telescoping', where a small group of board members such as the executive committee lack transparency in reporting to the full board. In a misguided effort to solve the problems of classical music, oftentimes the loudest voices in the boardroom are not always the most informed. Opinions voiced with certainty often stymie real change and growth. Where boards become too involved in the day-to-day running of the organisation, real problems can occur to affect the artistic product. At the time of writing, revered conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen is entering into his final year with the San Francisco Symphony, having resigned due to differences in artistic direction with the board. Local media commented: 'In the flyer and a press release distributed on Monday, orchestra musicians criticized the board's decision to cancel the orchestra's European tour and make cuts to its digital projects, educational initiatives and its nightclub-environment series, "SoundBox." They added that the cancellations and cuts raise "serious questions about the future of the Symphony."' <sup>78</sup>

There is an essential difference between for-profit organisations and not-for-profit organisations (tax exempt organisations have the designation 501(c)(3)) that is particularly important to understand when one sits on a non-profit board. For-profit organisations are guided by their bottom line. If it doesn't sell, or is underperforming, it gets cut. *A not-for-profit is guided by its mission statement.* For most orchestras in the United States, their mission statement will contain language around 'bringing quality orchestral music to the community'. Board members who cry 'we need to run this like a business' miss a critical point. *Both are*

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<sup>77</sup> Deborah Borda, 'The Serious Business of the Arts: Good Governance in Twenty-First-Century America', in *Classical Music*, ed. by Beckerman and Boghossian, p. 57.

<sup>78</sup> Gabe Meline, 'San Francisco Symphony Musicians Urge Leadership to Keep Esa-Pekka Salonen' <<https://www.kqed.org/arts/13954297/san-francisco-symphony-musicians-urge-leadership-to-keep-esa-pekka-salonen>>.



*business models, but fundamentally different.* The *how* in how boards go about supporting the mission is existentially important, yet all too often misunderstood.

That all said, the painful fact is that there are many issues that hinder the success of classical music concerts today. The model of segregating the symphony season into classical and pops concerts (very typical of most orchestras in the USA) in effect pits the pops repertoire ‘against’ classical concerts, and in effect segregates audiences. This is often a combined artistic- and executive-director decision and goes largely unquestioned because it is the norm. Certainly cross-over concerts (a mix of classical and pops) are part of the answer, but again, *how* one goes about this is of existential importance. Suffice to say that there is enough blame to go around, between boards, executive and artistic leadership, and the marketing and branding teams as to why audiences are dwindling in many orchestras.

As numerous as the problems facing organisations are, so too are the (possible) solutions. Because there is no silver bullet solution, organisations need to be diligent about polling their audiences and being creative in finding solutions. However, despite my use of the previous quote ‘repertoire from the Western canon does not attract new audiences even when played at the highest levels of excellence’, classical repertoire is not the problem. What I have learned from my own experience is that the problem is not the product, but rather *how we go about relating the product to our audiences*. This is what Aubrey Bergauer found in her time as CEO of the California Symphony. She writes that:

Whenever the discussion gets to the art itself, the emotion expressed by virtually everyone in the room is awe. ‘The artists were GREAT.’ ‘I liked the splendor of how it all comes together.’ ‘Seeing it live was so different than TikTok.’ ‘It was weirdly cool to not have to focus on other things’ [...] ‘Complete awe.’

Ultimately, the problem isn’t the product; it’s the packaging. The art is what we do best. If we want to grow our audiences, the customer experience surrounding the art is where we stand to improve the most.<sup>79</sup>

I have found this to be true time and again in my interactions with audience members after concerts. In a recent concert featuring Michael Tippett’s Fourth Symphony (on the face of it, an incredibly complex and difficult contemporary piece), the audience response was

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<sup>79</sup> Aubrey Bergauer, *Run It Like a Business: Strategies for Arts Organizations to Increase Audiences, Remain Relevant, and Multiply Money – without Losing the Art* (BenBella Books, 2024), p. 15.

overwhelmingly positive, with a desire to learn more.<sup>80</sup> What made the piece so memorable and enjoyable *was the talk before*, explaining about the piece and what they as audience members could take away from this work. Because I had focused the pre-concert talk (a short ten minutes) around the subject matter of the symphony (the beginnings of life, the struggle and beauty of life, and ultimately, our death), everyone in the concert hall was in a position (once invited) to forge their own meaning from the work. In essence, if audience members are helped and invited to find meaning in the works they listen to, the work takes on a new significance for them. In this (Gadamerian) way, the work speaks to them in a way that transcends the work itself (though of course it is central to the whole process!). This understanding that the art, in and of itself, is not the problem, *but the way we present the art*, is something missed by even the very finest symphonic organisations. Bergauer confirms this when she writes that:

Nationwide, 90 percent of first-time orchestra attendees never return. That means almost everyone who gives the symphony a try decides it's not for them. [...] Half or more of all ticket buyers are first-time bookers. The issue isn't getting people to come to the arts; it's getting people to come *back*. And the art itself is not what's keeping first-timers from returning. It's everything tangential to the art – the user experience.<sup>81</sup>

Chapter 12 of *Classical Music: New Perspectives and Challenges* is particularly interesting when it comes to what the essential ingredients are in making one form 'work' over another. 'Expanding Audiences in Miami: The New World Symphony New Audiences Initiative' focuses on a series of surveys and feedback compiled in 2008 by the New World Symphony (NWS) in Miami under conductor Michael Tilson Thomas. Though somewhat dated now, nonetheless the findings were similar: there is no one silver bullet solution, and more particularly, no one particular reason why audiences don't attend concerts like they used to. The answer is not that the music is boring or old-fashioned or such like. This is an important lesson when programming classical music, because the classical repertoire is often identified incorrectly as the problem. Like Aubergauer's experience, the NWS found the following: 'Based on survey results, NWS learned that contextualization of the music was important to both the new and returning

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<sup>80</sup> Tippett's Fourth Symphony was played by the Jackson Symphony under my direction, in a concert titled 'Classic Edge' on Saturday 9 March 2024.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

audience members.’<sup>82</sup> Their concert series ‘Pulse – Late Night at the New World Symphony’ begins with a DJ and nightclub atmosphere. At 9.45pm, however, the orchestra takes centre stage and plays ‘twenty to thirty minutes of edgy, often contemporary music’, again proving that how the music is presented is hugely important to younger audiences. The project worked so well that ‘after eight years, it continues to be one of the hottest tickets in Miami. Dynamic pricing – which increases the ticket cost as the date of the event approaches – carries the \$25 ticket price to \$60.’ Rather than identify classical music as the scapegoat problem child of all symphonies, we should embrace the repertoire, and challenge ourselves to find new innovative ways to present this music. One of these final points listed in the NWS survey tells us all we (should) need to know: ‘The center point of each alternate format must be an excellent performance of serious music.’<sup>83</sup>

### 1.3 Audiences, Social Connection and Health

Building classical music audiences not only represents a positive impact on the health of classical music today, it should be recognised as a pathway to better physical and mental health for society in general. In May 2023, the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services website issued the following for immediate release: ‘New Surgeon General Advisory Raises Alarm about the Devastating Impact of the Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation in the United States.’<sup>84</sup> What followed was a new and impactful message about the importance of social connection. Issued as a health warning, and one of epidemic proportions, the United States was officially recognising the consequences of the lack of social connection not just as loneliness or feelings of not being connected, but as something much more severe. Our mental and physical health is being affected, and it is literally killing us:

Today, United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released a new Surgeon General Advisory calling attention to the public health crisis of loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection in our country. Even before the onset of the Covid-19

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<sup>82</sup> Howard Herring and Craig Hall, ‘Expanding Audiences in Miami: The New World Symphony New Audiences Initiative’ in *Classical Music*, ed. by Beckerman and Boghossian, p. 134.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>84</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, ‘New Surgeon General Advisory Raises Alarm about the Devastating Impact of the Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation in the United States’ <<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/03/new-surgeon-general-advisory-raises-alarm-about-devastating-impact-epidemic-loneliness-isolation-united-states.html>> [accessed 15 May 2024].

pandemic, approximately half of U.S. adults reported experiencing measurable levels of loneliness. Disconnection fundamentally affects our mental, physical, and societal health. In fact, loneliness and isolation increase the risk for individuals to develop mental health challenges in their lives, and lacking connection can increase the risk for premature death to levels comparable to smoking daily.<sup>85</sup>

In his book *Together*, Dr Murthy provides insights around the feedback he received while traveling the United States and talking with its citizens, which prompted the elevation of loneliness to an epidemic. He notes that loneliness ‘ran like a dark thread through many of the more obvious issues that people brought to my attention, like addiction, violence, anxiety, and depression’.<sup>86</sup> The lack of social connection is having an impact at every level in modern culture. The opioid crisis of the 1990s in the USA was devastating and continues to ruin families today. In a book published in 2017 on opioid use, the severity of the epidemic was brought clearly to light:

Not since the HIV/AIDS epidemic has the United States faced as devastating and lethal a health problem as the current crisis of opioid misuse and overdose and opioid use disorder (OUD). Current national trends indicate that each year more people die of overdoses – the majority of which involve opioid drugs – than died in the entirety of the Vietnam War, the Korean War, or any armed conflict since the end of World War II. Each day 90 Americans die prematurely from an overdose that involves an opioid (Rudd et al., 2016b), leaving families and friends bereft. The opioid epidemic’s toll is felt across the life span and in every sociodemographic group, but more heavily burdens vulnerable populations, such as those in economically depressed areas of the country.<sup>87</sup>

Murthy points out the stark reality that national health problems such as the opioid epidemic, and illnesses such as depression and anxiety, are all most likely to stem from a larger, overarching problem: the lack of social connection. While the opioid crisis in the USA affected every socioeconomic level, there was and still is a concentration in America’s rust belt. Murthy drew attention to the fact that people from all backgrounds suffered from loneliness and that ‘many were embarrassed to admit how alone they felt. This shame was particularly acute in professional cultures, like law and medicine, that promote self-reliance as a virtue.’ Murthy

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Vivek H. Murthy, *Together: Loneliness, Health and What Happens When We Find Connection* (Harper Collins, 2020), p. xix.

<sup>87</sup> Bonnie, Richard J., *Pain Management and the Opioid Epidemic: Balancing Societal and Individual Benefits and Risks of Prescription Opioid Use* (The National Academies Press, 2017), p. 187.

identifies the ‘simple’ solution: ‘The irony is that the antidote to loneliness, human connection, is also a universal condition. In fact, we are hardwired for connection [...]’.<sup>88</sup> What is lost by not addressing the importance of social connection cannot be overstated. Schubert’s music has always connected audiences and performers. But it is Schubert’s lived experience with illness that represents a pathway to explore these issues in a new, deeper way.

### 1.4.1 A Conductor’s Journey: Music and Healing

As both the conductor and the artistic director of a professional symphony orchestra in the USA, one is tasked not only with musical excellence, but with the oversight of all outreach and educational projects of the orchestra. As the artistic director, one is also responsible for creating a vision for projects outside the concert hall. This is of growing importance. While most organisations have an educational element which can often be ‘cookie-cutter’ (children’s concerts with an educational element, etc.) other so-called ‘outreach’ projects and ways of ‘giving back’ to the community can be invaluable. In short, engaging audiences also happens outside the concert hall. However, the opportunity to engage people outside the concert hall should not only be seen as a way to bring in new audiences, but as a way to grow the essential narrative as to why a symphony orchestra is an important asset to a community. Deborah Borda understands this concept only too well:

While older generations supported arts and culture, a major trend has emerged among donors – both the old guard and newly wealthy – towards supporting social service or related organizations that can offer a clear, evidence-based demonstration of their impact. As philanthropy is increasingly cast as an ‘investment’ in social change, questions are being posed to orchestras and opera companies that were never imagined in the past.<sup>89</sup>

As the son of a physician and surrounded by siblings in the healthcare business in Ireland, I was curious about the role of music in a healthcare environment and thinking continuously about how to develop this. With help from the CEO of the local hospital in Savannah, Georgia, and with support from philanthropists who had funded the building of a cancer institute at the hospital, I was able to bring musicians to play for patients receiving chemotherapy at the Curtis

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<sup>88</sup> Vivek H. Murthy, *Together*, p. xxiv.

<sup>89</sup> Borda, ‘The Serious Business’, in *Classical Music*, ed. by Beckerman and Boghossian, p. 59.

and Elizabeth Anderson Cancer Institute in Savannah, Georgia.<sup>90</sup> This proved transformative for all involved. Building on this, I began a collaboration together with Dr Jacqueline Huntly, a physician with a strong background in mindbody medicine, whose work resounded strongly with me.<sup>91</sup> Together we developed a programme to both train musicians to work effectively in such a setting and executed the programme for musicians of the Savannah Philharmonic.<sup>92</sup> A second programme we developed uses music as a modality to help healthcare professionals with the challenges of their profession, which is rife with burnout and moral injury.<sup>93</sup>

Sometime later I was surprised when I was told by the executive director of the Savannah Philharmonic that we had received a donation of \$10,000 from a lady who was not known to us, but who had asked to meet with me. Without knowing why, I met the lady, who told me about her husband, who had received chemotherapy and heard the musicians play. She had never been to a concert. This was my first initiation in understanding the power of the project I had created. In the light of the financial challenges that many orchestral organisations in the USA face, this type of engagement is becoming more and more important for the bottom line:

They are asking for what might be termed an institution's 'value proposition': what is the social value of the artistic product, and what is the ultimate impact of a donor's giving on the community? This is especially true of younger philanthropists who are looking to make impactful social investments and demand quantifiable return on investment (ROI) for their contributions. Indeed, many major foundations have also moved away from support of the arts unless it is directly linked to community development. Operating support and core artistic funding is harder and harder to come by. Art for pure art's sake may be viewed by some as an outdated concept.<sup>94</sup>

On being appointed artistic director and conductor of my second U. S. orchestra, The Jackson Symphony in Tennessee in 2014, I began a similar programme at the Kirkland Cancer Center.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Memorial Health Anderson Cancer Institute <<https://memorialhealth.com/locations/memorial-health-anderson-cancer-institute/>>. [accessed 17 December, 2024]

<sup>91</sup> Jacqueline Huntly, 'Athasmed', *Thrivetoleadmd* <<https://thrivetoleadmd.com>>. [accessed 17 December, 2024]

<sup>92</sup> Peter Shannon, 'American Institute for Music and Healing' <<https://www.theaimh.org/programs/awakening-the-inner-gift>>. [accessed 17 December, 2024]

<sup>93</sup> Peter Shannon, 'American Institute for Music and Healing' <<https://www.theaimh.org/programs/nuturing-the-inner-healer>>. [accessed 17 December, 2024]

<sup>94</sup> Borda in *Classical Music*, ed. by Beckerman and Boghossian, p. 60.

<sup>95</sup> 'Alice and Carl Kirkland Cancer Center' <<https://www.westtennesseehhealthcare.org/page/pages/?locationId=kirkland&campaignId=45bcf227-b464-46c2-af9f-3b3917b28dfc&vendorCampaignId=a8aba386-1620-4527-9923-6e17aab8f465&gbraid>>.

Donations were constant, and both the narrative the orchestra was afforded and the stories we were able to share were powerful. On account of this programme, The Jackson Symphony in 2022 received a single donation of \$330,000, the largest in the sixty-plus-year history of the organisation.

### 1.4.2 A Conductor's Engagement with the Health Humanities

Working together with Dr Huntly on how to integrate music, and in particular conducting, as a modality to allow for perspective change in healthcare professionals was hugely motivational for both of us. The area of the medical humanities (which has in the last few years been adapted and become known as the 'health humanities' to be inclusive of others, such as social workers and pastors) has as its core a desire to use the humanities as a modality to explore issues within healthcare, such as burnout, empathy, compassion fatigue and self-leadership. As a way to showcase our work and share this with others, I founded the American Institute for Music and Healing as a non-profit organisation in the USA.<sup>96</sup> On the strength of my work in this area, in 2022, I was appointed Adjunct Professor of Bioethics and Medical Humanities in the Department of Medicine at Mercer University (Georgia, USA).<sup>97</sup> Subsequently, in 2024 I was invited as a Visiting Instructor at Stanford University for a period of four months to continue my work at the Center for Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) under Professor James Doty, founder of CCARE and Adjunct Professor of Neurosurgery.<sup>98</sup>

### 1.4.3 Gadamer and Heidelberg

At age 26 I was appointed Music Director to the Collegium Musicum Orchestra at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. There is no doubt that my time in Heidelberg shaped my conducting in a very considerable way. Weekly rehearsals with an auditioned full-size symphony orchestra of circa ninety to one hundred players, formed from students, staff from all faculties, as well as professional musicians from local and regional ensembles, was a luxury for me as a young

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<sup>96</sup> For more on the AIMH and the programmes, visit <[www.theAIMH.org](http://www.theAIMH.org)>.

<sup>97</sup> For more on the Mercer School of Medicine, visit <<https://medicine.mercer.edu/bioethics-and-medical-humanities/>>.

<sup>98</sup> For more on CCARE visit <<https://ccare.stanford.edu>>.

apprentice conductor. This weekly resource, to rehearse and try out musical concepts and technical issues (such as various types of bowing, or structuring rehearsals differently to rehearse with only woodwind and brass), allowed me to accrue a wealth of knowledge that would not have been possible with a professional symphony orchestra, where rehearsal time is so expensive and precious. Indeed, it was this knowledge, garnered in Heidelberg, that shaped and honed my rehearsal skills to allow me to be so focused and productive when I took the helm of the Savannah Philharmonic in the USA and as a guest conductor at the Halle State Opera House in Germany and elsewhere in the USA and in Europe. While at the University of Heidelberg and as a postgraduate conducting student at the Hochschule für Musik in Karlsruhe, I became very interested in the performance practice of classical music, in particular that of Nardini and Stamitz and their influence on Mozart. My attention was drawn to the use of rhetoric in music and its beginnings in Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (1788). On account of my keen interest in researching semantics and meaning in music, it was suggested to me by colleagues at the university that I read Hans-Georg Gadamer's works. Gadamer had been professor of philosophy in Heidelberg (1949–68) and had written *Wahrheit und Methode* (*Truth and Method*) in 1960, a textbook that had become synonymous with Heidelberg. I was aware of Professor Gadamer because he was a regular attendee of the semester concerts of the orchestra. Gadamer was also present at numerous events where the orchestra was tasked with the 'musikalische Umrahmungen' (playing at the beginning and end of important university events, literally meaning 'musical framing') of university events, particularly those put on by the president of the university (Rektor) or the office of the Rektorat. The orchestra and I had the great honour of playing for Gadamer's hundredth birthday celebration, a huge international event at the aula of the university which was attended by all living German presidents, as well as the elite from the world of philosophy. It was only two years later that I played and conducted for Professor Gadamer's funeral commemoration at the university, when he died at the age of 102 in 2002. During this time I became absorbed in Gadamer's philosophy on hermeneutics and his thoughts on language and meaning, and I had the great pleasure of conversing with him on multiple occasions. I remember his intense eyes and how he seemed to give his undivided attention to me when I talked. This interest in the other, and this commitment to understanding the other, is something that influenced me deeply and is at the core of my own musical philosophy. It has shaped my own personal culture in how to treat



music and how to listen: to listen to what the music is ‘saying’ or trying to say, and how to listen to people.

### 1.4.4 The Language of Conducting: Embodiment and Hermeneutics

While studying at the Franz Liszt Hochschule für Musik in Weimar we followed the ‘golden rule’ of ‘zeigen, nicht reden!’ (Show (the music), don’t talk!). I was taught that any break in play initiated by the conductor represented a break in flow for the players and should be avoided. We were to show the music, not talk about it.

My philosophy on conducting has been hugely influenced by Gadamer’s hermeneutical philosophy. In my own experience of teaching conducting, I have found it incredibly important to know from the student what he/she is trying to express, what he/she thinks and what he/she feels about the music. Only then can I truly help them express their vision through gesture. After decades of reflection, perhaps a better maxim for teaching conducting might be ‘denken, reden, dann zeigen’, or ‘think, *talk (about what you want to show)*, then show’.

Movement is essential to producing sound, but it may also be more important than we realise. There is much research to show that *how we hold ourselves* not only affects the sound we produce, but how our movements as musicians can influence audience responses.<sup>99</sup> From singers to violinists to trombone players, all musicians in their education have at some stage been educated in the importance of how they hold themselves and how this affects the sound they produce.

The importance of embodiment in performance, and indeed, *the elusiveness* of embodiment, is visible in a YouTube excerpt from a trombone masterclass by Berlin Philharmonic principal trombone Thomas Leyendecker.<sup>100</sup> The world-class trombone player

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<sup>99</sup> David Ackermann and others, ‘The Acoustical Effect of Musicians’ Movements during Musical Performances’, *Acta Acustica United with Acustica*, 105.2 (2019), pp. 356–67, doi:10.3813/AAA.919319. See also: Nádia Moura and others, ‘Increased Body Movement Equals Better Performance? Not Always! Musical Style Determines Motion Degree Perceived as Optimal in Music Performance’, *Psychological Research*, 88.4 (2024), pp. 1314–30, doi:10.1007/s00426-024-01928-x.

<sup>100</sup> Carnegie Hall Trombone Master Class: Wagner’s Ride of the Valkyries. Berlin Philharmonic principal trombone player Thomas Leyendecker coaches Carson King-Fournier on Wagner’s Ride of the Valkyries <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRWIHRvaDcQ>> [accessed 28 May 2024].

coaches a talented player in an orchestral excerpt from Wagner's 'Ride of the Valkyries'. Despite the wonderful sound the student produces, Leyendecker senses something is not as it should be. In short, the sound is wonderful, but the body of the younger player is not involved enough. Leyendecker advises, but the results are not forthcoming. Ultimately, Leyendecker resorts to the following: 'Could you make an angrier face or something? That looks not involved enough for me....' One can see how Leyendecker's physical approach to the passage is different than that of his student's, but the younger player is not able to embody what the experienced player is looking for. In the student's defence, Leyendecker isn't much help to him, as he struggles to express what is missing. However, he tries again: 'It's much too nice for me... It's not funny... and you still look... too enjoying... it's really, really evil... it has nothing to do with playing loud or whatever... it needs a kind of seriousness... it should be darker somehow....' The fact that Leyendecker acknowledges that it has nothing to do with playing (loud) is hugely telling.

Perhaps no other performer is as reliant on his body as the conductor. *Conducting is literally the embodiment of sound*. The importance of being able to embody the music and communicate this clearly with gesture (i.e. manually, with our hands) stems from the Germanic tradition of the Kapellmeister, who was often, at the last minute, tasked with standing in for the 'Generalmusikdirektor' (chief conductor) to conduct an opera that he studied but never rehearsed or conducted. This tradition continues to this day. In 2005, Liora Bresler wrote the following:

Music is produced by physical movement – the voice or an instrument which functions as the extension of the body, where the performer unites with the instrument to produce sound. Performance heightens an embodied state. Cusick [...] describes performance as a form of thinking through one's body, arguing that there is a fundamentally different manner of being in performance than in other forms of musical activity in that the music is experienced, not as something given to the body, but as something done through and with the body. Sound penetrates us, engaging us on a bodily level in fundamentally different ways than the visual, for example.<sup>101</sup>

The preoccupation with how to communicate through gesture was a central focus in my training in Weimar at the Franz Liszt Hochschule für Musik and at the Hochschule für Musik in

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<sup>101</sup> Bresler, 'What Musicianship Can Teach Educational Research', pp. 176–77.

Karlsruhe. This was fundamentally an exercise in embodiment, but also simultaneously an exercise in (musical) hermeneutics. At the time, however, I was neither aware nor in any way concerned with either. It was my job to show the music, and my teachers focused on clarity of technique and economy of gesture. We were, however, also constantly challenged in a way that was similar to the experience of the trombone student in Leyendecker's masterclass. What is my *intent* for this musical passage? Only when the *intent* is clear can the *content* be shown. The ability to embody a sound ideal is, and always has been, for me, primarily language-based. Of course the conductor must communicate in concert to the musicians (and the audience) without words. But in rehearsal and in preparation for rehearsal, words, thought-through and well conceptualised, are invaluable. It was in my time as conductor of the Collegium Musicum at Heidelberg University, on coming into contact with Emeritus Professor of Philosophy Hans-Georg Gadamer, that I began to understand the *fundamentality of language as the basis for all communication*.

## 1.5 Schubert through the Prism of Hans-Georg Gadamer

My time with the texts of Gadamer while at Heidelberg, and my direct personal connection with him – in an often musical setting such as at a concert where I was conducting – had a huge impact on my methodology and philosophy around understanding music, understanding hermeneutics and, as Gadamer would say, 'understanding understanding' itself. As I grappled with the concepts of *Truth and Method*, I became aware of how important this work was going to be for me, as a musician but also as a thinking person.

*Wahrheit und Methode* begins with a historic overview of the human sciences and their place next to the natural sciences. Historically, and through to today, Gadamer shows us how natural science has always had the upper hand over the human sciences because it uses an inductive method, and has an interest in establishing similarities and proving itself. However, due to their very nature, the human sciences don't allow for the same parameters as, say, a physics experiment. Gadamer uses the example of meteorology to make his point:

So arbeite die Meteorologie methodisch genauso wie die Physik, nur daß ihre Daten lückenhafter und deshalb ihre Voraussagen unsicherer seien. Dasselbe gelte auf dem Gebiete der moralischen und gesellschaftlichen Erscheinungen. Der Gebrauch der induktiven Methode sei auch dort von allen metaphysischen

Annahmen frei und bleibe gänzlich unabhängig davon, wie man sich das Zustandekommen der Erscheinungen denkt, die man beobachtet.<sup>102</sup>

(Thus the method of meteorology is just the same as that of physics, but its data is incomplete and therefore its predictions are more uncertain. The same is true in the field of moral and social phenomena. The use of the inductive method is also free from all metaphysical assumptions and remains perfectly independent of how one conceives of the phenomena that one is observing).<sup>103</sup>

The 'problem' that the human sciences face, is that they don't fit the 'yardstick' (as Gadamer calls it) of the natural sciences. Towards a better understanding of the human sciences, Gadamer evokes Kant, who, in his *Critique of Judgement*, talks of the fine arts as 'the product of genius'. But it is also true that Kant sees the artist, or the person who can invoke 'genius', as somehow detached from the work he is creating, as if 'genius' cannot be explained or understood. The artist is somehow then the receiver of 'genius', someone who quasi through some sort of other-worldly intervention 'creates' without having any knowledge or sense of where his genius came from, and as someone who isn't in a position to explain his genius. As a musician, I know only too well of the *perspiration*, rather than the *inspiration*, that goes into understanding a score. Gadamer refutes Kant with the following:

Es bestätigt sich darin, daß der Begriff des Genies im Grunde vom Betrachter aus konzipiert ist. Nicht dem schaffenden, sondern dem beurteilenden Geiste bietet sich dieser antike Begriff als überzeugend dar. Was sich dem Betrachter als ein Wunder darstellt, von dem man nicht begreifen kann, wie einer so etwas kann, wird in das Wundersame einer Schöpfung durch geniale Inspiration hinausgespiegelt. Die Schaffenden mögen dann, sofern sie sich selber zuschauen, sich der gleichen Auffassungsformen bedienen können, und so ist der Geniekult des 18. Jahrhunderts gewiß auch von den Schaffenden genährt worden! Aber sie sind in der Selbstapothese nie so weit gegangen, wie ihnen die bürgerliche Gesellschaft zugestand. Das Selbstverständnis des Schaffenden bleibt weit nüchterner. Er sieht auch dort Möglichkeiten des Machens und Könnens und Fragen der 'Technik', wo der Betrachter Eingebung, Geheimnis und tiefere Bedeutung sucht.<sup>104</sup>

(The fact that to the observer the work seems to be a miracle, something inconceivable for anyone to make, is reflected as a miraculousness of creation by inspired genius. Those who create then use these same categories in regard to themselves, and thus the genius cult of the eighteenth century was certainly

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<sup>102</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 10.

<sup>103</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 99.

nourished by artists too. But they have never gone as far in self-apotheosis as bourgeois society would have allowed them to. The self-knowledge of the artist remains far more down to earth. He sees possibilities of making and doing, and questions of 'technique', where the observer seeks inspiration, mystery, and deeper meaning.)<sup>105</sup>

This is precisely what we as musicians encounter around a concert, where the singer is praised for 'having a lovely voice' rather than a work ethic or anything else. It is as if the music suddenly appears. At a recent rehearsal where members of the public were invited to attend, I rehearsed the orchestra through Shostakovich's first Cello Concerto. An amazed member of the board commented how he 'never realised that the rehearsal would be so much work'. When questioned on this, he remarked, 'I just assumed that the orchestra would play perfectly and you would just praise them, but instead you were really working!'

One of Gadamer's word constructions, 'aesthetic differentiation', explains how a work of art can 'lose' its place in the world. An example of this would be a small chamber work, originally designed to be played in a small intimate setting, that might today be performed in a two-thousand-seater concert hall. Gadamer uses the example of the modern-day museum, where a painting or icon finds itself hanging next to other works of art on a white wall, devoid of the purpose for which it was originally designed, and by doing so, it 'loses' something:

Was wir ein Kunstwerk nennen und ästhetisch erleben, beruht somit auf einer Leistung der Abstraktion. Indem von allem abgesehen wird, worin ein Werk als seinem ursprünglichen Lebenszusammenhang wurzelt, von aller religiösen oder profanen Funktion, in der es stand und in der es seine Bedeutung besaß, wird es als das 'reine Kunstwerk' sichtbar. Die Abstraktion des ästhetischen Bewußtseins vollbringt insofern eine für es selbst positive Leistung. Sie läßt sehen und für sich sein, was das reine Kunstwerk ist. Ich nenne diese seine Leistung die 'ästhetische Unterscheidung'.<sup>106</sup>

(What we call a work of art and experience aesthetically depends on a process of abstraction. By disregarding everything in which a work is rooted (its original context of life, and the religious or secular function that gave it significance), it becomes visible as the 'pure work of art'. In performing this abstraction, aesthetic consciousness performs a task that is positive in itself. It shows what a pure work of art is, and allows it to exist in its own right. I call this 'aesthetic differentiation').<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 93.

<sup>106</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 91.

<sup>107</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 85.

This reads as if such an act, being 'positive', might convince us that an artwork which undergoes this act of aesthetic differentiation has in some way been improved, or its role and placement has been improved. But, by allowing it to live 'in its own right', it achieves something over and beyond what it was originally constructed or designed to do. Gadamer, always firmly grounded in the teachings of the ancient Greek philosophers, and using his wealth of knowledge of German Romantic philosophers, employs a thesis – antithesis – synthesis approach, typical of Hegel and his dialectic formula. Gadamer continues with the following:

Die 'ästhetische Unterscheidung', die es als ästhetisches Bewußtsein betätigt, schafft sich auch ein eigenes äußeres Dasein. Sie beweist ihre Produktivität, indem sie der Simultaneität ihre Stätten bereitet: die 'Universalbibliothek' im Bereiche der Literatur, das Museum, das stehende Theater, den Konzertsaal usw. Man mache sich den Unterschied dessen, was nun eintritt, gegenüber Älterem recht klar: das Museum z.B. ist nicht einfach eine öffentlich gewordene Sammlung. Vielmehr spiegeln die alten Sammlungen (der Höfe wie der Städte) die Wahl eines bestimmten Geschmacks und enthielten vorwiegend die Arbeiten der gleichen, als vorbildlich empfundenen 'Schule'. Das Museum dagegen ist die Sammlung solcher Sammlungen und findet bezeichnenderweise seine Perfektion darin, sein eigenes Wachstum aus solchen Sammlungen zu verhüllen, sei es durch die historische Neuordnung des Ganzen, sei es durch die Ergänzung ins möglichst Umfassende. Ähnlich ließe sich am stehend werdenden Theater oder dem Konzertbetrieb des letzten Jahrhunderts zeigen, wie der Spielplan sich mehr und mehr vom zeitgenössischen Schaffen entfernt und dem Bedürfnis nach Selbstbestätigung anpaßt, das für die diese Einrichtung tragende Bildungsgesellschaft charakteristisch ist. Selbst Kunstformen, die sich der Simultaneität des ästhetischen Erlebnisses so zu widersetzen scheinen wie die Baukunst, werden in sie hineingezogen, sei es durch die moderne Reproduktionstechnik, welche Bauten in Bilder, sei es durch den modernen Tourismus, der das Reisen in das Blättern von Bilderbüchern verwandelt.

So verliert durch die 'ästhetische Unterscheidung' das Werk seinen Ort und die Welt, zu der es gehört, indem es dem ästhetischen Bewußtsein zugehörig wird. Dem entspricht auf der anderen Seite, daß auch der Künstler seinen Ort in der Welt verliert.<sup>108</sup>

(The 'aesthetic differentiation' performed by aesthetic consciousness also creates an external existence for itself. It proves its productivity by reserving special sites for simultaneity: the 'universal library' in the sphere of literature, the museum, the theater, the concert hall, etc. It is important to see how this differs from what came before. The museum, for example, is not simply a collection that has been made public. Rather, the older collections (of courts no less than of towns) reflected the choice of a particular taste and contained primarily the works of the same 'school,'

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<sup>108</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 92.

which was considered exemplary. A museum, however, is a collection of such collections and characteristically finds its perfection in concealing the fact that it grew out of such collections, either by historically rearranging the whole or by expanding it to be as comprehensive as possible. Similarly, in the case of permanently established theaters or concert halls over the last century, one could show how the programs have moved further and further away from contemporary work and have adapted themselves to the need for self-confirmation characteristic of the cultured society that supports these institutions. Even art forms such as architecture that seem opposed to it are drawn into the simultaneity of aesthetic experience, either through the modern techniques of reproduction, which turn buildings into pictures, or through modern tourism, which turns travelling into browsing through picture books.

Thus through 'aesthetic differentiation' the work loses its place and the world to which it belongs insofar as it belongs instead to aesthetic consciousness. Correlatively, the artist too loses his place in the world.)<sup>109</sup>

This understanding of art for art's sake is particularly important when we consider a concert experience and certainly shapes my approach and interaction, not only when I study a symphony for performance but in how I approach the rehearsal with my orchestral players. How important is it to appreciate that Schubert never heard his Ninth Symphony, when we have the luxury of rehearsing and playing it? And what of the fact that in our performances we have an orchestra of 75 musicians or even more? How should we approach the need for more musicians to fill a hall of two thousand seats, when Schubert himself would have heard his works played by a handful of musicians?

By now it is clear that despite any benefit an artwork might achieve by the act of aesthetic differentiation, the overall act causes the artist and the artwork to be moved outside their originally designed purpose or place, and thus for both artist and artwork to lose their true meaning. This is thought provoking, but Gadamer has yet to point us towards not only a synthesis, but a resolution as to how we 'view' an artwork. He offers the following to point the way forward:

Nun ist das 'ästhetische' Sehen gewiß dadurch ausgezeichnet, daß es den Anblick nicht eilends auf ein Allgemeines, die gewußte Bedeutung, den geplanten Zweck oder dergleichen bezieht, sondern bei dem Anblick als ästhetischem verweilt. Aber wir hören doch deshalb nicht auf, im Sehen derart zu beziehen, z.B. diese weiße Erscheinung, die wir ästhetisch bewundern, dennoch als einen Menschen zu

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<sup>109</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 86–87.

sehen. Unser Wahrnehmen ist eben niemals eine einfache Abspiegelung dessen, was den Sinnen gegeben ist.<sup>110</sup>

(Now, 'aesthetic' vision is certainly characterized by not hurrying to relate what one sees to a universal, the known significance, the intended purpose, etc., but by dwelling on it as something aesthetic. But that still does not stop us from seeing relationships – e.g., recognizing that this white phenomenon which we admire aesthetically is in fact a man. Thus, our perception is never a simple reflection of what is given to the senses.)<sup>111</sup>

Gadamer is moving towards one of the most important lessons in *Wahrheit und Methode* and one of the founding tenets of his hermeneutical outlook. Simply put, there is no objectivity. An object, a text, a symphony, is never understood 'as is'. Indeed, *even if we could be objective*, or distanced in our analysis, it would not constitute real understanding. Real understanding comes when we project ourselves into what we are seeking to understand. Moreover, it is a requirement, a prerequisite to truly understanding something. Gadamer explains:

Dazu kommt aber ein zweites. Auch die als adäquat gedachte Wahrnehmung würde niemals ein einfaches Abspiegeln dessen sein, was ist. Denn sie bliebe immer ein Auffassen als etwas. Jedes Auffassen als [...] artikuliert das, was da ist, indem es wegsieht von [...] hinsieht auf [...], zusammensieht als [...] – und all das kann wiederum im Zentrum einer Beachtung stehen oder am Rande und im Hintergrunde bloß 'mitgesehen' werden. So ist es kein Zweifel, daß das Sehen als ein artikulierendes Lesen dessen, was da ist, vieles, was da ist, gleichsam wegsieht, so daß es für das Sehen eben nicht mehr da ist; ebenso aber auch, daß es von seinen Antizipationen geleitet 'hineinsieht', was gar nicht da ist.<sup>112</sup>

(There is a second point, however. Even perception conceived as an adequate response to a stimulus would never be a mere mirroring of what is there. For it would always remain an understanding of something as something. All understanding-as is an articulation of what is there, in that it looks-away-from, looks-at, sees-together-as. All of this can occupy the center of an observation or can merely 'accompany' seeing, at its edge or in the background. Thus, there is no doubt that, as an articulating reading of what is there, vision disregards much of what is there, so that for sight, it is simply not there anymore. So too expectations lead it to 'read in' what is not there at all.)<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 96.

<sup>111</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 90.

<sup>112</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 96.

<sup>113</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 90.



As I see it, this acknowledgement that all understanding is ‘me-centric’ is at once both liberating and simultaneously a cautionary signal as to how we go about interpreting what we see, read and hear. In the case of reading a score, analysing a Schubert symphony or any other piece of music, it is important to allow for our creativity to be a pathway for meaning, while simultaneously being aware of how we go about this process.

Allowing for this inductive process while simultaneously being open to new possibilities arises in Chapter 5 of this thesis, ‘Schubert and Resilience’ (see Section 5.5, ‘Neutral Expression: An Analytical Dilemma’) in reference to Charles Rosen’s claim that Lawrence Kramer is too inductive in his readings of music. In his book ‘Why Classical Music Still Matters’ Kramer has a strong point to make:

Suffice it for now to say that although becoming absorbed in the logic and play, the movement and the texture, of this music offers extraordinary possibilities of pleasure, this absorption does not involve ignoring everything but the music. It does not foster what has sometimes been called ‘structural listening’, either as an ideal or as a practical likelihood. We always listen with worldly ears, enveloped with fragments of language, imagery, memory, and fantasy that embed this music, and any music, in the very world from which we’ve been told to think of it as abstracted and told we’re not listening well unless we think so.<sup>114</sup>

This has tremendous relevance within classical music appreciation and acceptance today. Kramer is of course right: part of the problem I see myself with classical concert attendance is that audience members feel they are disenfranchised and regularly express to me that they ‘don’t understand the music because it is too highbrow’ for them. *This is one of the greatest disservices that we as classical music practitioners are guilty of.* If we can’t find a way to relate this music, which we all love and understand on *every level* (viscerally, emotionally, structurally, historically, aesthetically) to others and communicate a relevance of some sort to others, then we need not complain of the demise of classical music. In Kramer’s opinion, classical music reception has changed dramatically:

For most of the nineteenth century, classical music gave most of its listeners what felt like open access to the life of feeling. For part of the twentieth century, it continued to do so to ever-widening audiences created by the development of radio and sound recording – which, however, also created the mass audience for popular music. Caught out by a formidable rival on one hand and a loss of participants on the other, classical music lost part of its emotional transparency as

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<sup>114</sup> Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters*, p. 15.

the century progressed. Music that once seemed utterly available now seemed to harbor secrets. [...] Listening to it gradually turned from something that anyone could do enjoyably into a disciplined procedure that required training by experts.<sup>115</sup>

There was of course a time when Schubert's dance music was the pop music of its day. The fact that popular music gained so much ground on 'older' classical music is hardly surprising. The simple reality is that *classical music is more complex* than the 'three-chord trick' of pop music. While Kramer may be correct in stating that classical music 'came to seem [...] out of touch', Kramer may himself be a little out of touch when he writes about hearing a girl playing a Bach solo sonata on the violin on a subway platform in New York:

The music asks its instrument to transcend itself. The listener is invited to bear witness. Note here follows note in a continuous current, intense, energetic, disciplined, unrelenting, a process as perceptible in the motions of the player's bow arm as it is in the sound the bow draws from the strings.<sup>116</sup>

There is nothing wrong with what Kramer says. But one can't help but think that Kramer's brilliance is with words, rather than solutions. That said, it would be unfair of me to criticise Kramer by cherry-picking from his book as it is of Kramer to do the same with Julian Johnson's. The very valid point put forward by Kramer is in line with Gadamer's. If we are to get something (anything!) out of classical music, then we must be allowed to make it relevant. *We need to make it our own*. Gadamer is careful not to pass judgement on how we understand, to say there is a right or wrong way to go about understanding. When Gadamer writes that 'so too expectations lead it to "read in" what is not there at all', it is important to recognise that he is not saying that 'reading in [...] what is not there at all' is negative per se. It is purely an acknowledgement of how we all go about understanding. Gadamer concentrates on the significance of how much of our 'self' goes into our understanding. He uses the example of the trick picture, where two images exist in one, and depending on how we see the picture, one image will become apparent and the other, second image may take a little longer to see: 'Nur wenn wir das Dargestellte 'erkennen', vermögen wir ein Bild zu 'lesen', ja, nur dann ist es im Grunde ein Bild. Sehen heißt aufgliedern' ('Only if we "recognize" what is represented are we

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., pp. 207–08

able to “read” a picture; in fact, that is what ultimately makes it a picture. Seeing means articulating’).<sup>117</sup> Rosen is missing something else also if we look from a Gadamerian perspective:

Eine jede Zeit wird einen überlieferten Text auf ihre Weise verstehen müssen, denn er gehört in das Ganze der Überlieferung, an der sie ein sachliches Interesse nimmt und in der sie sich selbst zu verstehen sucht. [...] Nicht nur gelegentlich, sondern immer übertrifft der Sinn eines Textes seinen Autor. Daher ist Verstehen kein nur reproduktives, sondern stets auch ein produktives Verhalten. Es ist vielleicht nicht richtig, für dieses produktive Moment, das im Verstehen liegt, von Besserverstehen zu reden. [...] Verstehen ist in Wahrheit kein Besserverstehen, weder im Sinne des sachlichen Besserwissens durch deutlichere Begriffe, noch im Sinne der grundsätzlichen Überlegenheit, die das Bewußte über das Unbewußte der Produktion besitzt. Es genügt zu sagen, daß man anders versteht, wenn man überhaupt versteht.<sup>118</sup>

(Every age has to understand a transmitted text in its own way, for the text belongs to the whole tradition whose content interests the age and in which it seeks to understand itself. [...] Not just occasionally but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a reproductive but also a productive activity as well. Perhaps it is not correct to refer to this productive element in understanding as ‘better understanding’. [...] Understanding is not, in fact, understanding better, either in the sense of superior knowledge of the subject because of clearer ideas or in the sense of fundamental superiority of conscious over unconscious production. It is enough that we understand in a *different way*, if we understand at all.)<sup>119</sup>

This has again huge parallels when we transpose them onto classical music and Schubert reception. Gadamer’s recognition that each era must understand in its own way is significant when it comes to a reading of Schubert from the perspective of illness and healing. It is not, as Gadamer says, a ‘better understanding’, but it is one rooted in the zeitgeist of now. Where many are struggling with the negative effects of loneliness, lack of social connection and the anxieties and illnesses it inevitably produces, such an approach would also allow us to recognise the inherent ability of Schubert to effect change in classical music reception.

In all of Gadamer’s books, including his many essays, there are very few direct references to music. When he does write on music, he is particularly careful, guarded even, in his approach, leaving much to interpretation. While this is oftentimes purposeful by Gadamer in an effort to

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<sup>117</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 97; *Truth and Method*, p. 91.

<sup>118</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, pp. 301–02

<sup>119</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 296.

evoke dialogue (the whole ethos of his philosophy on hermeneutics) when it comes to music, it seems Gadamer is less comfortable. It is, nonetheless, compelling:

Selbst wenn wir etwa absolute Musik hören, müssen wir sie 'verstehen'. Und nur, wenn wir sie verstehen, wenn sie uns 'klar' ist, ist sie für uns als künstlerisches Gebilde da. Obwohl also absolute Musik eine reine Formbewegtheit als solche, eine Art klingender Mathematik ist und es keine gegenständlich bedeutungshaften Inhalte gibt, die wir darin gewahren, behält das Verstehen dennoch einen Bezug zum Bedeutungshaften. Die Unbestimmtheit dieses Bezuges ist es, die die spezifische Bedeutungsbeziehung solcher Musik ist.<sup>120</sup>

(Even in listening to absolute music we must 'understand' it. And only when we understand it, when it is 'clear' to us, does it exist as an artistic creation for us. Thus, although absolute music is a pure movement of form as such, a kind of auditory mathematics where there is no content with an objective meaning that we can discern, understanding it nevertheless involves entering into a relation with what is meaningful. It is the indefiniteness of this relation that marks such music's specific relation to meaning.)<sup>121</sup>

There is of course a musical semantics that has content and contains objective meaning. But it would be unfair to challenge Gadamer because his point lies elsewhere and is well made: we must enter into a relationship, a conversation, a to-and-fro with everything we seek to understand. What we put into this conversation *is always ourselves*. Gadamer has already addressed the aesthetic differentiation that occurs when an artwork is allowed to exist as an artwork, claiming that, without this *reading in of ourselves*, it loses its place in the world. With the use of 'for us' at the end of these sentences, Gadamer secures a strategic position for his argument. So too with Gadamer's stance on music. Gadamer tells us that to glean understanding (meaning) from absolute music, we engage that part of our self that seeks meaning. In his beautifully crafted final sentence, 'It is the indefiniteness of this relation that marks such music's specific relation to meaning', Gadamer performs a prestidigitation, a clever sleight of hand that one may argue could be used as a solution to decades of dialectic back and forward regarding content and meaning in music. The essence of his point here is that the very nature of truly understanding music involves *putting ourselves into the music*, which, by its very nature, is a subjective relationship, thus making it more meaningful to us. In a footnote on the

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<sup>120</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 97.

<sup>121</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 91.

same page, Gadamer references Greek musicologist Thrasybulos Georgios Georgiades, and continues by stating:

Die zeitgenössische Diskussion über die abstrakte Kunst ist m. E. im Begriff, sich in eine abstrakte Entgegensetzung von 'gegenständlich' und 'ungegenständlich' zu verrennen. Auf dem Begriff der Abstraktheit liegt in Wahrheit ein polemischer Akzent. Polemik aber setzt immer Gemeinsamkeit voraus. So löst sich die abstrakte Kunst von dem Bezug auf Gegenständlichkeit nicht schlechthin, sondern hält ihn in der Form der Privation fest. Darüber kann es gar nicht hinausgehen, sofern unser Sehen ein Gegenstandsehen ist und bleibt; es kann nur im Absehen von den Gewohnheiten des praktisch gerichteten Sehens von 'Gegenständen' ein ästhetisches Sehen geben – und wovon man absieht, das muß man sehen, ja, im Auge behalten.<sup>122</sup>

(Contemporary discussion about abstract art is, in my view, about to run itself into an abstract opposition of 'representational' and 'non-representational'. Actually, the idea of abstraction strikes a polemic note; but polemics always presupposes something in common. Thus, abstract art does not simply detach itself from the relation to 'objectivity', but maintains it in the form of a privation. Beyond this it cannot go, insofar as our seeing is always seeing of objects. Only by disregarding the habits of the practically directed seeing of 'objects' can such a thing as aesthetic vision exist – and what one disregards, one cannot help seeing; one must keep one's eye on it.)<sup>123</sup>

Gadamer, in this footnote, reinforces his theory that understanding is never an objective 'seeing as' but rather a 'reading into'. It is interesting that Gadamer chooses a footnote to make an important statement regarding the polemic of 'representational' music versus 'non-representational' music, describing it 'an abstract opposition'. If we are in any doubt as to where Gadamer stands in regard to music and meaning, then the following sentence should, for musicians (and others in their disciplines who are focused on interpretation and meaning), be adopted as a clear way forward:

Das bloße Sehen, das bloße Hören sind dogmatische Abstraktionen, die die Phänomene künstlich reduzieren. Wahrnehmung erfaßt immer Bedeutung. Es ist daher ein verkehrter Formalismus, der sich überdies nicht auf Kant berufen darf, die Einheit des ästhetischen Gebildes im Gegensatz zu seinem Inhalt allein in seiner Form zu suchen.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 97.

<sup>123</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 91.

<sup>124</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 97.

(Pure seeing and pure hearing are dogmatic abstractions that artificially reduce phenomena. Perception always includes meaning. Thus, to seek the unity of the work of art solely in its form as opposed to its content is a perverse formalism [...].)<sup>125</sup>

This is a strong signal to those who would see music as an aesthetic exercise. Gadamer's view that this strict approach is untenable does not stop there. Going further, Gadamer is clear that this 'dogmatic abstraction' is not only something that is not possible but represents a *reduction of the phenomena*, in our case music. In essence what he is saying is that if one chooses to view music as an objective art form devoid of meaning, this very act points to a devaluing of the art form itself. This is precisely what we have allowed to happen to classical music in our world today. Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy has significance when approaching audiences today, and particularly those who claim not to understand classical music. The fact that the editors of *Classical Music: Contemporary Perspectives and Challenges* made the decision to publish their book as open access is telling. This challenges the view that classical music is only for the musical elite in a very concrete way, allowing everyone access to this knowledge. As Beckerman and Boghossian's timely research shows, the reasons why classical music audiences are dwindling are hugely varied, and include everything from ticket price to venue to marketing. But there is no doubt that one of the main reasons for the lack of audience members is that audiences simply *don't feel the music has anything to say to them*.<sup>126</sup> To paraphrase Gadamer: it doesn't speak to them. The hermeneutic possibilities that all art affords us is endless and boundless. We learn about ourselves through art. Art is a tool for self-understanding. How we do that is of course also a problem, *but it is ours, as musicians, to solve*.

## 1.6 Reflections on Conducting after Reading Hans-Georg Gadamer

There is no doubt that the world of the conductor is language-based. The expressivity of our hands to show what we as conductors want is a craft that is constantly evolving and maturing. But all conductors speak with their players. This begins with directives such as 'too loud' or

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<sup>125</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 91.

<sup>126</sup> For an interesting essay on survey results of what works and does not work for audiences, read Herring and Hall, 'Expanding Audiences in Miami' in *Classical Music*, ed. by Beckerman and Boghossian.

‘more vibrato’, but of course continues on to explanations about atmosphere, emotion, a story or a metaphor as a modality to evoke an image, any and all of which, from the conductor’s standpoint, has the best chance of getting the orchestra to collectively deliver on his ideal for the music. Thus, the world of the conductor is one inextricably linked to language. This process for me begins already when I am learning a score. Questions like ‘what is the atmosphere here and how can I best communicate this?’ have long become standard in my methodology of learning scores. Gadamer’s concept that we must be open to dialogue, and aware of our own biases and the possible biases of the other with whom we are ‘talking’ (in my case the orchestra), has often helped me in rehearsal. A concept that I wished to share with the musicians very suddenly can disappear and a new, better concept can take its place when one is open to the conversation. This occurrence is more usual than one might think, happening typically at least once in any rehearsal cycle. In this moment it is clear to me that I have been ‘schooled’ by the orchestra, by their interpretation, and that this has influenced my understanding of a particular phrase or passage, or something new and more relevant has come to light. This is undoubtedly one of the most rewarding aspects of conducting for me: when I realise that through my awareness of the sound, *and of the musicians*, I have gained a new understanding. To hear this new understanding come out of my own mouth, only seconds after I have become aware of it, is the to-and-fro that Gadamer tells us constitutes true understanding. It can only come about, as Gadamer would say, when we are open to the to-and-fro, and are open to the possibility that the opinion of the other is valid, and in some cases, more valid than our own. This ‘being open to the conversation’ is central to Gadamerian hermeneutics as an important step in what Gadamer terms a ‘fusion of horizons’ (*Horizontversmeltzung*). It is only when I combine my horizon with that of others that a fundamentally clearer picture can be seen, and this clearer picture allows for us, if we are open, to adjust our view.<sup>127</sup> I can also say that these moments of awareness of self and others typically comes across as something hugely positive, a kind of combined ‘aha’ moment, which motivates me as a conductor and serves the orchestra as well as the music. The result of this new understanding inevitably leads to my trying to formulate this to the orchestra, and this expression is always a verbal one. Later I may find a way to embody this concept in some manual

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<sup>127</sup> For more on ‘horizon’ see Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 302.

way, but first and foremost, the articulation is verbal. Musician and musicologist Susan McClary describes something similar:

I began my own interrogation of music and narrative long before I had read any literary theory, back in the mid-1960s when I worked as a chamber-music coach. When I played the piano by myself, I intuited certain ways of ‘making sense’ in music, and it was only when I encountered others whose performances sounded inert that I started devising verbal strategies for explaining scores. I was repeatedly flabbergasted when good technical musicians failed to notice struggle or miraculous arrivals or anything other than just [...] notes on the page, and I understood my job as pointing up these events and explicating the contexts (formal, expressive, historical, cultural) within which they became significant.<sup>128</sup>

A pianist does not have to verbalise how they have come to a certain interpretation; however, Gadamer is quite right when he states that:

Die Interpretation, die Musik oder Dichtung finden, indem sie aufgeführt werden, ist nicht grundsätzlich verschieden von dem Verstehen eines Textes beim Lesen: Verstehen enthält immer Auslegung. Was der Philologe betreibt, besteht ebenso darin, Texte lesbar und verständlich zu machen, bzw. das rechte Verständnis eines Textes gegen Mißverständnisse zu sichern. Dann besteht also kein prinzipieller Unterschied zwischen der Auslegung, die ein Werk durch seine Reproduktion erfährt, und derjenigen, die der Philologe leistet. Ein reproduzierender Künstler mag die Rechtfertigung seiner Auslegung in Wort und Rede noch so sehr als sekundär empfinden und als unkünstlerisch ablehnen – daß die reproduktive Interpretation einer solchen Rechenschaft grundsätzlich fähig ist, kann er nicht leugnen wollen. Auch er muß wollen, daß die Auffassung, die er hat, richtig und überzeugend ist, und es wird ihm nicht einfallen, etwa die Bindung an den Text, der ihm vorliegt, abzustreiten.<sup>129</sup>

(Interpreting music or a play by performing it is not basically different from understanding a text by reading it: understanding always includes interpretation. The work of the philologist too consists in making texts readable and intelligible – i.e., safeguarding a text against misunderstandings. There is no essential difference between the interpretation that a work undergoes in being performed and that which the scholar produces. A performing artist may feel that justifying his interpretation in words is very secondary, rejecting it as inartistic, but he cannot want to deny that such an account can be given of his reproductive interpretation. He too must want his interpretation to be correct and convincing, and it will not occur to him that it is tied to the text he has before him.)<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Susan McClary, ‘The Impromptu That Trod on a Loaf: Or How Music Tells Stories’, *Narrative*, 5. 1 (1997), pp. 20–35, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107098>> [accessed 30 May 2024].

<sup>129</sup> Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 403.

<sup>130</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 399.



The seminal point that Gadamer offers us as musicians is that everything we understand has language as its source. *Everything that we say we understand is language-based*. Bernstein's quote that 'music can name the unnameable and communicate the unknowable' is at once both an indictment against language as well as proof that Gadamer is right. Perhaps for now, the best representation of Gadamerian philosophy in music is represented in Victor Hugo's words: 'Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.'

## 1.7 Mindbody Medicine and Psychoneuroimmunology: An Introduction

Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) represents a scientifically grounded approach to the age-old belief (Greeks) that the human body is a holistic entity, where all systems work in close synchronicity with each other. In more modern terms, PNI can be defined as an integrative, scientifically based discipline concerned with how mood, emotion and mental processes influence the immune system and, reciprocally, how immunological function can affect the mind.<sup>131</sup> Until the 1970s, immunologists believed that the immune system was self-regulated, that it operated independently from other systems like the nervous system, the brain or any other part of the body.

One of the most important pioneers of PNI was Candace Pert, a neuroscientist and researcher. Her research led her to discover that the endocrine system and the immune system were cross-talking, communicating vital information to each other, and that the immune system was in communication with the nervous system and the brain through proteins (peptides). Her groundbreaking work was at the time ridiculed:

Did the brain communicate with the immune system? And did this have implications for cancer-growth spread or for antitumor immune responses? Now, it was barely acceptable to suggest that the body influenced the mind, but to even hint that the mind might influence the body – well, that reeked too much of mind-

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<sup>131</sup> PNI is an amalgamation of the words psychology, neurology and immunology. Candace Pert thought the word should include endocrinology and thus be called psychoendoneuroimmunology. Others chose the more complicated psychoneuroendocrinoimmunology. PNI represents a discipline that also includes mood, emotions and social factors, and should be thought of as an integrative discipline factoring in all aspects of the human experience that might influence the immune system and vice versa.

over-matter, and only wild-eyed Californians and out-of-print Russians dared do that, at least in 1984!<sup>132</sup>

In 1975, two of the founders of PNI, Robert Ader and Nicolas Cohen, a psychologist and immunologist respectively, fed rats water sweetened with sugar but laced with cytoxin, an immunosuppressant drug that also causes nausea. Through classical conditioning, the rats learned to avoid the water that contained saccharin because it made them sick. But when Ader and Cohen began to force feed the rats the saccharin solution *without* the nausea drug, the rats still became sick. The rat mind was telling the immune system, which protects us from disease, how to behave. This experiment alone represented a radical re-shifting of how the medical community saw the immune system. Most recently, Robert Dantzer, in a 2018 article in *Physiological Reviews* from the American Physiological Society, presents his finding based on rigorous research:

Not only does the immune system have a considerable impact on neural functions, but conversely the somatosensory and autonomic nervous systems play an active role in the coordination of the organism's defense to infection and injury via positive and negative modulation of immune responses.<sup>133</sup>

Leaving aside the whole issue of whether Schubert's syphilis had developed into neurosyphilis, which would obviously have affected his brain, research in psychoneuroimmunology and mindbody medicine shifts my musicological question from *whether* Schubert's brain was affected (or not) to *how* his brain was affected, and how this may find representation in his music.

We know Schubert's childhood contained trauma. His relationship to his father was a difficult one, and Schubert also lost his mother when he was 15.<sup>134</sup> Psychologist Gabor Maté, in his book *When the Body Says No*, writes that:

Parental love is not simply a warm and pleasant emotional experience, it is a biological condition essential for healthy physiological and psychological development. Parental love and attention drive the optimal maturation of the circuitry of the brain, of the PNI system and of the HPA axis. The disruption of attachment relationships in infancy and childhood may have long term

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<sup>132</sup> Pert, *Molecules of Emotion*, p. 172.

<sup>133</sup> Robert Dantzer, 'Neuroimmune Interactions: From the Brain to the Immune System and Vice Versa', *Physiological Reviews*, 98.1 (2018), pp. 477–504, doi:10.1152/physrev.00039.2016.

<sup>134</sup> Byrne Bodley paints the scene perfectly: 'How must it have felt to have returned home to see his mother laid out? What must it have meant to a fifteen-year-old boy [...]?'; *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, pp. 52–55.

consequences for the brain's stress-response apparatus and for the immune system.<sup>135</sup>

As I argue in Chapter 5, 'Schubert and Catharsis', Schubert's compositions aren't just expressive works, they are escapism. And they are even more: they are cathartic acts, wholly necessary for the composer, which can be interpreted and read in relation to trauma, disease and, perhaps most importantly, healing. While it is dangerous and naïve to suggest that Schubert (or any other composer) only composed happy music when happy, or only sad music when feeling sad, it is equally dangerous to negate the very obvious effect that illness has on mood. Schubert's now infamous letter to Kupelwieser on 31 March 1824 shows him to be 'the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world. Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and who in sheer despair over this ever makes things worse and worse.'<sup>136</sup> PNI research argues for a clear connection between emotions, illness, the immune system and thus the person as a whole.<sup>137</sup> PNI researchers continually and consistently point to the delicate interplay of these systems. Together they represent not only psychological and physiological changes, but changes to us *on a molecular level*, and as such, *change at the very essence of our being*. This is true of all of us, and true of Schubert.

## 1.8 The Role of the Health Humanities

The health humanities offer the arts a unique modality through which to explore issues that may be of help to those within the healthcare profession. The introduction of modules utilising the arts in postgraduate medical education is becoming increasingly popular as a unique way for healthcare professionals to explore their own profession and consider and address the challenges within their profession. Burnout is a critical issue within healthcare today. While its

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<sup>135</sup> Maté, *When the Body Says No*, p. 204.

<sup>136</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography – Being an English Version of Franz Schubert: Die Dokumente seines Lebens* (Da Capo Press, 1977), p. 339.

<sup>137</sup> Lennart Seizer and others, 'Emotional States Predict Cellular Immune System Activity under Conditions of Life as It Is Lived: A Multivariate Time-Series Analysis Approach', *PLOS ONE*, 18.11 (2023), p. e0290032, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0290032. See also: Janice K. Kiecolt-Glaser, 'Psychoneuroimmunology: Psychology's Gateway to the Biomedical Future', *Perspectives on Psychological Science: A Journal of the Association for Psychological Science*, 4.4 (2009), pp. 367–69, doi:10.1111/j.1745-6924.2009.01139.x.

main victim is the healthcare professional, much like severe illness itself, it ends up affecting others collaterally. In an article of the *Irish Medical Journal*, we learn that:

There is widespread agreement that clinician burnout leads to significant morbidity for the affected individual. It impacts on fellow healthcare workers and also interferes in patient care. The reduction in effective clinical activity reduces hospital throughput. Awareness of the condition and the institution of preventative measures can be very beneficial.<sup>138</sup>

There is little doubt that such burnout leads to depression in healthcare professionals and can be traced to the high instances of suicide in physicians.<sup>139</sup> But it is also true that it interferes with patient cases. This may be one of the reasons that a decline in empathy for patients has been documented in various studies:

Medical education which focused more on science than humanities and trainee distress are thought to lower empathy levels. Work experience and work environment could either positively or negatively influence empathy levels while stress and burnout have been shown to lower empathy levels.<sup>140</sup>

While it is interesting that this report recognises the potential benefits that the humanities may offer in combating lower empathy levels and burnout, it also recognises something else. One might imagine that doctors who have experienced more suffering than their colleagues might have a heightened sense of compassion. Sadly, this article claims that the opposite is true:

Despite extensive efforts to promote empathy through education, a decline in empathy has been observed among medical students, especially when they have spent more time interacting with patients. This decline persists throughout residency and into their practice. Residents have been found to be less empathic and humanistic, and more cynical over time, while physicians from different specialties are at risk of compassion fatigue.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> J. F. A. Murphy, 'Burnout in Doctors', *Irish Medical Journal* <https://imj.ie/burnout-in-doctors> [accessed 17 December, 2024]

<sup>139</sup> Emer Ryan and others, 'The Relationship between Physician Burnout and Depression, Anxiety, Suicidality and Substance Abuse: A Mixed Methods Systematic Review', *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11 (2023), p. 1–21, doi:10.3389/fpubh.2023.1133484.

<sup>140</sup> Chou Chuen Yu and others, 'The Development of Empathy in the Healthcare Setting: A Qualitative Approach', *BMC Medical Education*, 22.1 (2022), p. 245, doi:10.1186/s12909-022-03312-y.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. For more on compassion fatigue, see Debbie L. Stoewen, 'Moving from Compassion Fatigue to Compassion Resilience. Part 4: Signs and Consequences of Compassion Fatigue', *The Canadian Veterinary Journal = La Revue Veterinaire Canadienne*, 61.11 (2020), pp. 1207–09.

The medical humanities have been identified as one way to enhance patient-centred care by affording the doctor or healthcare professional unique training based on the humanities. However, it has also been identified as an important tool in the prevention of burnout for doctors themselves:

In summary, our study empirically confirms what many have intuitively suspected for years: exposure to the humanities is associated with both important personal qualities and prevention of burnout. In fact, one could argue that some of the qualities we measured (tolerance for ambiguity, empathy, emotional appraisal of self and others, resilience) are, together with wisdom, fundamental components of professionalism. Hence, if we wish to create wiser, more tolerant, empathetic, and resilient physicians, we might want to reintegrate the humanities in medical education.<sup>142</sup>

Incorporating the health humanities into medical training has been identified as an important need moving forward. Art offers a unique pathway to explore our own shared humanity in a way that may well contribute to a better understanding of suffering in self and in others. As such, the health humanities should be given serious consideration for its ability to enhance the doctor–patient dynamic.

## 1.9 Music within the Health Humanities

Narrative medicine, the practice of writing about one’s own lived experience, is the most popular use of the humanities in the health humanities. And yet, of all the art forms, music is the most ubiquitous. The following quote shows (at least the beginning of) a recognition within the medical community that music may have an important role to play in medical education:

I strongly suspect that the consolations of music are more apparent, and to overwhelmingly more people, than are those of any other form of art. This is reflected in the fact that in daily life one is vastly more aware of people voluntarily and habitually accessing music than any other art form. Then why is music so overwhelmingly popular? The explanation is, I suspect, less a matter of neuroscience, evolutionary theory or paleo-anthropology than of a partly-philosophical account of human nature. The relevance of this to health and illness

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<sup>142</sup> Salvatore Mangione and others, ‘Medical Students’ Exposure to the Humanities Correlates with Positive Personal Qualities and Reduced Burnout: A Multi-Institutional U.S. Survey’, *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 33.5 (2018), pp. 628–34, doi:10.1007/s11606-017-4275-8.

might not immediately be apparent but [...] both [...] are actually important for clinical medicine.<sup>143</sup>

While much is true of Evans's observations above, and I have no argument with his opinion, he fails to mention that *music is a physical thing*, based upon the physics of the harmonic series, and thus a natural way of representing tension and release, a fundamental ability of music over other art forms. As our own breathing is a series of in- and out-breaths, music's ability to activate parasympathetic nervous system activity or invigorate vagal tone is hugely central to music's ability to heal.<sup>144</sup> One would imagine that because of the proven success of music within a healthcare setting (hospitals, cancer centres, hospices), it might also find itself centrally placed within the area of the health humanities as a modality to explore challenging issues that healthcare professionals, either in their education and training or later in real-life situations at work, face. However, this is patently not the case:

Although there are indications that doctors use and are interested in music, there is surprisingly little mention of music in the field of medical education. Despite there being increasing interest in the medical humanities and the use of art in medical teaching, there are only passing mentions of music in recent papers.<sup>145</sup>

In some ways, this is of course understandable. While it is true that listening to music is universal, it is also true that it is easier to task a medical student with writing an essay or expressing themselves through painting or drawing than asking them to play an instrument or analyse a chord progression. Research on music in a healthcare setting finds something similar. Despite its popularity, knowledge on how to effectively incorporate music in a healthcare setting has been problematic. Oftentimes music is treated in a far too general way, with little comment of research into salient elements, such as what instruments are used in playing, the level or standard of the musician (professional/amateur) and whether or not the patient gets to choose their own music repertoire:

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<sup>143</sup> H. M. Evans, 'Music, Medicine, and Embodiment', *The Lancet*, 375.9718 (2010), p. 886, doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)60376-5.

<sup>144</sup> Atiyeh Sadat Hasani Helm and Mahdi Ramezani, 'The Effect of Music and Vagus Nerve to Improve Various Diseases', *Pakistan Journal of Medical and Health Sciences*, 15.6 (2021), pp. 1854–57, doi:10.53350/pjmhs211561854.

<sup>145</sup> Trevor Gibbs, 'Referee Report. For: "A Huge Part of My Life": Exploring Links between Music, Medical Education, and Students' Developing Identities as Doctors [Version 1; Peer Review: Awaiting Peer Review]' (2018), p.3, doi:10.21956/MEP.19666.R29359

Consequently, the insight into ‘music’ has been minimal. In fact, in the majority of the studies undertaken, music has been treated as a single conceptual entity with little interrogation into the kinds of physical, social, cultural and personal effects it has had on participants.<sup>146</sup>

In a recently published excellent book on the health humanities titled *Health Humanities in Postgraduate Medical Education*, it is telling that out of the eleven chapters in the book, not a single chapter is dedicated to music. As is the case with music in a healthcare setting, knowledge around music as a discipline is sparse. Professor of Psychobiology and Epidemiology at University College London Daisy Fancourt makes a case as to why this is so:

First, the majority of the studies have been carried out by medicine, psychology or immunology departments. While researchers within these departments might have a keen interest or good knowledge of music, it is relatively rare that they are also experienced music psychology researchers.<sup>147</sup>

## 1.10 Why Is Music Ideal for the Health Humanities?

It is my own experience as an orchestral musician, combined with the powerful experiences I have witnessed in healthcare settings where I have brought musicians to play in cancer centres, hospitals and hospices, that have shaped my understanding as to the undeniable ability of music to help alleviate suffering in a healthcare setting. Through the programmes of the AIMH I have also witnessed the power of music as a modality to help healthcare professionals. Liora Bresler recognised the ability of music in educational research, a position that also holds true for research within the area of the health humanities:

I suggest that learning to hear, reaching beyond objects and concrete states, cultivates sensitivities that are essential to the conduct of educational research. This is not self-evident. Ours is acknowledged as a ‘visual culture’, now a major ideological and curricular orientation in the theory and practice of art education. Similarly, in visual art education research, the emerging field of (visual) art-based inquiry is assuming a prominent place, whereas the role of aural and musical sensibilities in inquiry is uncharted. Both the personal and cultural dimensions of lived experience can be better understood by drawing on musical experiences, addressing important dimensions of qualitative inquiry that have not been explored. Involvement in music as creators, performers and listeners requires that

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<sup>146</sup> Fancourt, Daisy, ‘An introduction to the psychoneuroimmunology of music: History, future collaboration and a research agenda’, *Psychology of Music*, 44.2, (2016) p. 171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735614558901>

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

we engage with the evanescent aspects of world, aspects essential for research in the human sciences.<sup>148</sup>

If music is to thrive within the area of the health humanities, it is imperative that this work be cross-disciplinary. The following short example may illustrate how the role of the orchestral conductor may provide a new perspective to trainee doctors.

I have found that the skills of a conductor may be a pathway to consider one's role as a doctor. The conductor stands *above* the orchestra, dictating *what* the musicians should play, *when* and *how*. Indeed the outsider might easily fall into the trap of thinking that this job has more in common with an army general than a doctor. However, if a student doctor is tasked with reflecting on the fact that the conductor is *the only one on stage not making music*, things look different. Decades of experience on the podium have taught me one very important thing: that while one may attain a certain *sound* from the players with a dictatorial approach, *music* can only be made when one relinquishes control for the benefit of the whole. *When the doctor acknowledges the patient as a fundamental in the equation, healing can take place, sometimes even when a cure is not available.* Creating new pathways such as this, and using such examples as a way to gain new perspectives, is, I would argue, essential to all leadership, and may be valuable to those in the healthcare profession.

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<sup>148</sup> Bresler, 'What Musicianship Can Teach Educational Research', p. 170.



## Chapter 2. Schubert the Connector

This chapter explores issues around social connection, in particular Schubert's lived experience with illness, and his music as the modality to do so. I will begin by highlighting the science and evidence-based approach to social connection. I demonstrate how complementary rhythm can be used as a lens to explore connection and highlight how Schubert's use of this compositional method is distinct and original, drawing examples from Beethoven's symphonies as a comparison. Later in this chapter I explore disconnection in Schubert's music and how it may be used as a pathway to explore illness.

### 2.1 The Centrality of Connection in Human Life and in Schubert's Music

From the very outset of his compositional life, beginning with the success of 'Erlkönig', Franz Schubert has been responsible for connecting audiences, performers and listeners, not only to his music, but more importantly, to each other.<sup>149</sup> While 'connection' is used in this chapter in the broadest terms, it is more than just a metaphor. As a gifted pianist, Schubert, through his Schubertiades, physically connected people, bringing them together through the medium of music to spend time with each other. In the context of Schubert as a 'connector', his unique focus was on the Lied, an art form which through his unique development is particularly noteworthy. *Schubert demanded a new kind of connection between two musicians that was not present before.* The connection that happens between musicians in a string quartet playing 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' is truly intense, made all the more so because of the quartet's inevitable link to the dramatic music (and musical images) of the song which inspired it. One could go a step further and say that this connection must happen if the narrative, the intent of the music, is to be served. Connection of course is synonymous with music. But with a piece like 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' or 'Erlkönig', connection is not just something that 'happens', but is a prerequisite for a true reading of Schubert's music. One should of course argue that connection is important for any performance. Schubert does not own a monopoly on intensity in music,

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<sup>149</sup> Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl, 'Jenseits der Klischees', Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (1 April 2022), an interview in which Lindmayr-Brandl describes her research 'Schubert the Successful', offering a counterbalance to the stereotypical image of an impoverished Schubert, demonstrating how successful he was. <<https://www.oeaw.ac.at/news/schubert-jenseits-der-klischees>> [accessed 4 July 2023].

but he is an excellent vehicle *as we consider connection in a many-faceted way*. At the end of Schubert's 'Great' C-major Symphony, we are united with excitement and joy, while songs such as 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' or 'Erlkönig' unite us in a very different way. In the case of the C-major Symphony, we are connected in a very positive way, and respond simultaneously with elation and applause. In the case of 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' or 'Erlkönig', we are connected through silence, a silence, however, that is brought about through an intensity perhaps more powerful than the outward excitement following the C-major Symphony ending. This space is very special and unique. There is a physicality in this silence, wondering, as we do, when or who will break the silence. Here is connection again, but in a very different way, through a 'suspended' applause. What must Schubert have felt like on finishing these works, knowing that they carried a power and weight that could change any person, any audience that heard them? We will see how this innate ability to connect played an essential role in Schubert's establishment of the German Lied, and how this ability to connect can be traced through his two final symphonies.

## 2.2. The Science of Connection

As musicians, we connect people. As a conductor, I connect musicians to the composer by sharing what I believe is the intent of the composer. During a performance, together with the orchestra, we forge a connection to the audience and connect the audience to the composer. In turn, the individual audience member will connect with his/her own emotions, which may well involve further connection to experiences or events outside of the music. Connection through music can be forged in a myriad of ways. As musicians, this is simply what we do. What we may not be aware of is that *there is a science of connection*. Before considering how Schubert's music connects us, it is worth looking at that science, of what happens when we connect with others, or alternatively, what happens when we are deprived of that connection.

### 2.2.1 The Importance of Connection

To turn to that *science of connection* and extract some examples which will deepen an understanding of how we connect to each other and the fundamental need for each of us to connect, I offer the 'still face' experiment of American psychologist Dr Edward Tronick. This

experiment, first performed in 1975, resonated deeply with me because it demonstrates an *evolutionary need* (more than desire) for connection. Dr Tronick's experiment showed overwhelmingly that previously held beliefs that infants cannot engage in social interaction were incorrect. Proving the contrary in his experiment, Tronick videotaped a responsive mother interacting in a healthy way with her child, engaging her child and being responsive to the child's vocal sounds and gestures. The experiment then requires the mother to turn away for a short few seconds, but when the mother faces the baby again, she is tasked with putting on a 'still face', showing no emotion, and is told not to respond in any way, positively or negatively, to the child. When this happens, the infant tries to establish the usual social interaction with the mother, pointing, reaching out, etc., in an effort to solicit a positive response from the mother. When the mother doesn't reciprocate that connection, Tronick notes that 'they [the child] react with negative emotions [...] they turn away [...] they feel the stress of it. In less than two minutes, the child has become distressed.'<sup>150</sup> What Tronick's experiment showed is that social connection begins at a very early age and that without it, children become extremely stressed within a few minutes. Other studies have demonstrated just how hugely important connection (such as eye contact) is to our development as infants.<sup>151</sup>

Believing that more citizens would lead to more financial growth, Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime in Romania adopted a pro-natality policy whereby contraception and abortion were banned. Romania saw not only a huge surge in births, but also a surge in children abandoned and left for adoption to the state. Though fed and cleaned, these children were deprived of the contact and social connection that a child would normally receive from a parent, such as being picked up and held by a caring person. The results were staggering:

In summary, children exposed to early social deprivation show long-term cognitive and behavioral deficits, associated with dysfunction (indicated by decreased

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<sup>150</sup> Edward Tronick, 'Tronick's Still Face Experiment', Save the Children's Resource Centre (27 July 2022), <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1Jw0-LExyc>> [accessed 21 March 2023]. For further literature on the topic of human connection, see: Paul J. Eslinger and others, 'The Neuroscience of Social Feelings: Mechanisms of Adaptive Social Functioning', *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 128 (2021), pp. 592–620, doi:10.1016/j.neubiorev.2021.05.028, and Julianne Holt-Lunstad, 'Why Social Relationships Are Important for Physical Health: A Systems Approach to Understanding and Modifying Risk and Protection', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 69.1 (2018), pp. 437–58, doi:10.1146/annurev-psych-122216-011902.

<sup>151</sup> Stefanie Hoehl and others, 'Eye Contact during Live Social Interaction Modulates Infants' Oscillatory Brain Activity', *Social Neuroscience*, 9.3 (2014), pp. 300–08, doi:10.1080/17470919.2014.884982. See also: Robert Winston and Rebecca Chicot, 'The Importance of Early Bonding on the Long-Term Mental Health and Resilience of Children', *London Journal of Primary Care*, 8.1 (2016), pp. 12–14, doi:10.1080/17571472.2015.1133012.

glucose utilization) in a group of limbic brain regions known to be activated by stress and damaged by prolonged stress. We suggest that chronic stress endured in the Romanian orphanages during infancy in these children resulted in altered development of these limbic structures and that altered functional connections in these circuits may represent the mechanism underlying persistent behavioral disturbances in the Romanian orphans.<sup>152</sup>

Studies on these orphans showed a distinct correlation between depriving these children of connection (in this case, the lack of positive hormone release that results when bonding with a parent, such as oxytocin, etc.) and the development of severe cognitive and physical problems. In a separate follow-up study involving MRI scanning carried out when the children were older, the following was found:

In the new study, the team scanned the brains of 74 of the Bucharest children, now ages 8 to 11, using magnetic resonance imaging. What they found was striking: brains of children who had remained in institutions had less white matter – the type of tissue that connects different regions of the brain – than orphans who were in foster care or children living with their own families. Reductions in white matter have been found in numerous neurological and psychiatric conditions, including autism, schizophrenia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD [...] Children in institutions had less electrical activity in their brains – a kind known as ‘alpha power’ – than those who had gone to foster homes. ‘If a normal kid is like a 100-watt light bulb, these kids were a 40-watt light bulb,’ Nelson said. The observed brain differences seem to parallel some of the behavioral differences seen in the different groups of children – notably, higher rates of depression and anxiety disorders in kids who remained in institutions, Nelson said.<sup>153</sup>

While it makes sense that social connection is important to our wellbeing and development as children, one may be tempted to believe that this connection is less important as we mature and grow older. However, contemporary research also shows that we cannot simply expect to grow out of this. Research in this area confirms that social connection is hugely important to us throughout our lives, and that a lack of social connection can be harmful for us as adults. Leading trauma psychologist Gabor Maté writes:

A large number of animal experiments have established a powerful connection between early attachment disturbances and unbalanced stress-response capacities in the adult. The crux of this research is that disrupted attachment in infancy leads to exaggerated physiological stress responses in the adult. Obversely,

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<sup>152</sup> Harry T. Chugani and others, ‘Local Brain Functional Activity Following Early Deprivation: A Study of Postinstitutionalized Romanian Orphans’, *NeuroImage*, 14.6 (2001), p. 1300, doi:10.1006/nimg.2001.0917.

<sup>153</sup> Jon Bardin, ‘Social Deprivation Hurts Child Brain Development, Study Finds’, *Los Angeles Times* (24 July 2012) <<https://www.latimes.com/science/la-xpm-2012-jul-24-la-sci-orphan-brains-20120724-story.html>>.

nurturing attachment interactions in infancy provide for better modulated biological stress reactions in the adult.<sup>154</sup>

The purpose of this research is to show the universal importance of social connection for all of us.

Much has been written on Schubert's childhood trauma, either surrounding his father or the fact that he lost his mother at age 15.<sup>155</sup> On hand of this research presented here and elsewhere in this work, there may well be a case to be made for attributing the trajectory of Schubert's illness, at least in part, to his childhood trauma. The fact is that there is increasing evidence that these 'early attachment disturbances' can last into adulthood. From today's perspective, Tronick's findings may appear self-evident. But this is only because of the enormous research completed since then in the areas of evolutionary science, psychology and trauma management. The responsibility of contemporary society to understand the importance of social connection for our health later in life cannot be overstated. While a single traumatic event can understandably affect our health, research available to us explaining how simple day-to-day interactions can also have a negative or positive effect on us is eye-opening:

Interactions with the world program our physiological and psychological development. Emotional contact is as important as physical contact. The two are quite analogous, as we recognize when we speak of the emotional experience of feeling touched [...] Social-emotional interactions decisively influence the development of the human brain. From the moment of birth, they regulate the tone, activity, and development of the psychoneuroimmunoendocrine (PNI) super-system. Our characteristic modes of handling psychic and physical stress are set in our earliest years.<sup>156</sup>

It is important to know that in keeping with psychology and mindbody medicine research, emotional scars, emotional upheavals or other trauma have their expression in the soma, the body. The immune system is not fully developed when we are born, but develops as we grow. Trauma can in fact be tracked to show that there may well be a negative immune response after a child suffers from one or more traumatic events.<sup>157</sup> Schubert's short life was filled with music. His brilliance as an accompanist and improviser at the piano was a catalyst for

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<sup>154</sup> Maté, *When the Body Says No*, p. 207.

<sup>155</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, pp. 52–55.

<sup>156</sup> Maté, *When the Body Says No*, p. 203.

<sup>157</sup> Andrea Danese and Stephanie J Lewis, 'Psychoneuroimmunology of Early-Life Stress: The Hidden Wounds of Childhood Trauma?', *Neuropsychopharmacology*, 42.1 (2017), pp. 99–114, doi:10.1038/npp.2016.198.

connection, as was his music. There can be no doubt that the connection that his playing brought about, either in his Schubertiades or elsewhere, should be understood as capable of having a healing effect. Before exploring Schubert's symphonies for elements of connection, it is worth reflecting on how Schubert's innate sense for connection might well be considered the *Ursprung* for his transformative approach to the Lied.

## 2.3 The Lied as *Ursprung*

There is no question that Schubert is generally acknowledged as the first composer to give as equal weight to the piano as the singer in the Lied. Lorraine Byrne Bodley positions Schubert as the composer who recognised the Lied as a yet-underdeveloped medium, a medium that would lead to an advanced connection between singer and pianist:

If Schubert was not the first composer to set Goethe's poems to music – that distinction belongs to Bernhard Theodor Breitkopf (1747–1820) alone – then he was the first composer to elevate the Lied to a major musical genre by writing with an artistry that demonstrated what an exacting and many-layered medium song could be.<sup>158</sup>

For Schubert the connector, this step in the evolution of the Lied was a completely natural one. The interplay and exchange, the conversation, if you will, was as natural to him as his melodic gift. Byrne Bodley's observation that Schubert 'elevated' the Lied, rather than 'developed' it, takes on significant meaning. To elevate is to move up, breaking ties with what lies below. With Schubert then, the Lied has a new, more musically satisfying role, where, both metaphorically and physically, Schubert connects pairs. As a performer, the pianist must now take on a new role of importance, with his/her newly found voice. For the Lied to now work at this new elevation, the pianist must enter into a new, 'elevated' dialogue with the singer. And the connection does not stop here: then true connection is by definition an equal sharing between two constituents. *The singer's role has also changed*. She/he too must not only allow the pianist space within this new conversation; the singer must now listen, and be an active listener. This listening on behalf of the singer is required for the Lied to function. This is not a lessening of the role of the singer; quite the opposite. The more actively the singer listens, and is seen to

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<sup>158</sup> Lorraine Byrne Bodley, 'The Poetic Muse: Goethe, Schubert and the Art of Song', *The Schubert Project: Bringing Schubert's Vienna to Oxford*, Oxford Lieder Festival, 2014, p. 1.

listen by the audience, the more the Lied ‘works’.<sup>159</sup> A passive singer at the beginning of ‘Erlkönig’ is impossible to imagine. It is only when the singer joins in the emotion of the hammered triplets and left-hand minor-key run-up to the minor sixth of the scale (the minor sixth almost always associated with tension, and here with pain), followed by the dissonance and eerie crescendo–diminuendo in measures 6 and 7, that the full emotional weight of the song comes to bear. In a video recording of the song with singer Jessye Norman, complete with a special installation by Peter Kogler, the singer’s expressive face shows that the song has begun for her long before she sings.<sup>160</sup> I invite the reader to listen *and watch* this extraordinary, powerful demonstration of the power of Schubert’s music (in the right hands) to hold all of us spellbound.

### 2.3.1 Gesture and Embodiment as Communication

The power and importance of this active listening is significant. Gesture has been an area of interest in music since the *ars oratoria* of Cicero and Quintilian of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>161</sup> The last element of the *ars oratoria*, the *elocutio*, was considered an important element in elevating a good speech to a great one.<sup>162</sup> So too in the music. *Musical Gestures: Sound, Movement, and Meaning* classifies gestures in musical performance as ‘sound producing gestures (responsible for the sounding note); communicative gestures (intended for communication with others)’. These ‘communicative gestures’ are apparent in an orchestral setting also:

Gesture and non-verbal communication clearly plays a role in the management of performance: manual gestures, nods, and winks are all important, as are musicians’

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<sup>159</sup> For more on the effect of gesture on an audience read: Aleksandar Kodela, ‘The Effect of Musical Gestures on an Audience: Exaggerated or Deadpan Gestures’, *Facta Universitatis, Series: Visual Arts and Music*, 2021, pp. 53–64, doi:10.22190/FUVAM2101053K.

<sup>160</sup> ‘Jessye Norman – A Portrait – Erlkönig (Schubert)’, dir. by Jessye Norman, 2008 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8noeFpdfWcQ>. [accessed 17 December 2024]

<sup>161</sup> Hans-Heinrich Unger, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Musik und Rhetorik im 16.–18. Jahrhundert* (Olms, Zürich, 2015), p. 11.

<sup>162</sup> Jon Hall, ‘Cicero and Quintilian on the Oratorical Use of Hand Gestures’, *The Classical Quarterly*, 54.1 (2004), pp. 143–60, doi:10.1093/cq/54.1.143.

posture and attitudes. For instance, by turning towards a co-performer and looking at her face, a musician opens up the possibility of eye contact.<sup>163</sup>

It is worth reflecting on the fact that Schubert's most popular choice of musical genre, the Lied, is based primarily on the power of the spoken word. The drama and storytelling of Schiller, Goethe, Müller and Heine, and over one hundred other poets that Schubert set to song, found new expression under Schubert. Schubert's choice of poems with a story, often containing dialogue between two parties and often with high drama, play to Schubert's strengths as the quasi-'narrator of the narrator'. Byrne Bodley recognises the uniqueness of Schubert's compositional style in his *Lieder*:

That Schubert developed Goethe's poetry 'in his own way' is evident from his very first Goethe settings and what is new in these songs is Schubert's unexpected handling of the unknown. When he wrote 'Gretchen am Spinnrade' on 19 October 1814, Schubert could count on listeners holding certain expectations and because they recognized the spinning songs as a topos, the song's extraordinary features could not have escaped them. Similarly in 'Erlkönig', he employed the traditional use of recitative in order to gain a singular result: at the end of the song, the narrator's voice fails, as if moved by a tragic death of the child, a strategy that draws in and actively involves the listener in a moment of dramatic climax. In both songs the keyboard part is not merely sound painting; it symbolizes the poetic self. Gretchen stops spinning when lost in reverie about Faust; the hammered triplets convey the mounting terror of the child.<sup>164</sup>

With this, Byrne Bodley expresses precisely what we have seen: Schubert was an innate connector. But she also notices something special in Schubert that is interesting and noteworthy. She tells us that he knows what his audience will expect, which demonstrates to me his innate sense for connection. As Byrne Bodley recognises, it is a 'strategy', one that 'draws in and actively involves the listener'. Again, *Schubert shows himself to be a master of connection*.

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<sup>163</sup> Rolf Inge Godøy and Marc Leman, *Musical Gestures: Sound, Movement, and Meaning* (Routledge, 2010), pp. 36–37.

<sup>164</sup> Byrne Bodley, 'The Poetic Muse'.



### 2.3.2 Schubert and Connection beyond the Lied

Schubert the connector, Schubert in the salon and Schubert the elevator of the Lied; all have a concrete expression also in his orchestral writing. One could say that in his orchestral writing, it is possible to see the Lied (duet) expand or dilate into a larger ensemble setting. But again, all music has connection inherent in it, so how is Schubert's music any different from, say, Beethoven's? Is it possible to identify a type of connection in his music that is not present in Beethoven's compositional style?

In an attempt to answer this, in the following section I will show how Schubert's use of complementary rhythm is indeed different to Beethoven's or any other composer of his time. One would have to look much later, to Dvorak (1844–1904), to find a composer whose use of complementary rhythm would match the creative genius of Schubert.<sup>165</sup> Here, my analysis of complementary rhythm in Schubert's music serves not only to demonstrate his extraordinary use of this compositional technique, but is used more holistically as a metaphor for connection, and by extension, health. That connection, on hand of contemporary research presented here, *is essential to our mental and physical health.*

After the Covid-19 pandemic, the vital importance of social connection found a new audience, as literature and research in this area was brought into sharper focus to a world eager to understand and contextualise the shared negative experiences around isolation.<sup>166</sup> Many of these experiences surfaced through shared narratives of anxiety, heightened fear and depression. Only when these narratives and stories were shared did people realise that they were not alone in their suffering. Thus began a new understanding of the legitimacy of these feelings and the *importance of the shared experience as a tool for healing.*

## 2.4 Complementary Rhythm as an Expression of Connection

Perhaps one of the simplest ways to express social connection in musical form is through the sharing of rhythmic cells and of complementary rhythms, where a cell or motif is created, or

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<sup>165</sup> It is not surprising that Dvorak held Schubert in great esteem. For more insight, read Michael Beckerman, 'Dvořák's American Schubert', *Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University*, 49.35, (2000), pp. 65–71. <https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/sites/default/files/pdf/112084.pdf> [accessed 17 December 2024]

<sup>166</sup> Murthy, *Together*.

manifests itself as a fragment (or fragments) of a melody or phrase that is changed in some way and shared between instruments equally. As the name suggests, complementary rhythm, by its very nature, demands that both rhythms are shaped into existence only in connection with the other.

If one were tasked to mention a piece of music that is synonymous with this compositional technique, a piece that might come to mind quickly is the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. The opening of this work is surely the best-known example of how a rhythmic cell can be shared throughout a whole ensemble to terrific effect. Yet even with the insistence of the 'fate' cell, which Beethoven later uses in combination with the second theme in invertible counterpoint, we will see a stark difference to Schubert's treatment of pairs.

## 2.5 Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Complementary Rhythm

In the world of orchestral conducting, the beginning of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony enjoys a singular place, particularly when it comes to ensemble and playing together. How to begin the piece? One sharp downbeat? Too little, surely, to ensure the whole orchestra plays together. A preparatory beat, and then the downbeat? Too pedantic or academic, as it will surely take away from the explosive effect that Beethoven is trying to express! No, *it has to be one downbeat*.

There is an aura of mystery around this first entrance of the orchestra, all of whom are focused on the conductor, who, *somehow*, must ensure that a single downbeat is sufficiently clear for sixty to ninety musicians to all play four notes quickly and (exactly) together in unison. There is hardly a conducting student in the world who has not battled with which gestures to use for this almost mythic beginning. It is true that the conductor is hugely important for this opening. However, for the subsequent passage to work, and for the ensemble to be seamless, in practical terms, the orchestral players need to focus on only one thing – *and it's not the conductor*. The tempo has been set by the conductor (and the orchestra) in the first two measures, so now what is important is for the musicians in the various string groups to listen *and follow* each other. Once the second violins have played their eighth-note figure, everyone (and consequently everything) falls into line. This beginning is an ideal place to understand complementary rhythm not only as a metaphor for connection, but also as a physical representation of connection within the orchestral players. The physicality required to begin

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is enormous. Such physicality is essential not only to keep the ensemble together, but to afford the weight and drama that this music requires, or rather, *demands*.

Example 2.1 Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor (opus 67/i), measures 1–16

Allegro con brio.  $\text{♩} = 104$

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Bassoon

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

Cl.

Bsn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

## 2.5.1 Beethoven and the ‘Singular’ Mindset

While one may say that the beginning of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is exciting and dramatic, it is also possible to see how it represents threat. This is of course the drama that Beethoven intends to create. There is nothing inherently negative in this. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the survival of the ‘next group’ of instruments is contingent on the previous group or section doing ‘their job’. It is not unfair to say that this creates a singular ‘me-centric’ mindset. We will see later in the music of Schubert how this is fundamentally different.

Acknowledging this ‘singular’ mindset when it comes to motives, but also how commenting on how it differs from Schubert’s style, Brian Black writes that:

Beethoven’s style has long been considered the perfect embodiment of what Schoenberg referred to as ‘developing variation’ – the successive alteration of a motive across a movement. What is particularly characteristic of Beethoven’s developing variation is its emphasis on fragmentation, in which increasingly shorter motivic units drive the music forward. As has often been pointed out, Schubert’s music has a less dramatic character.<sup>167</sup>

Is Black correct in his assessment that ‘Schubert’s music has a less dramatic character’?<sup>168</sup> What could be more dramatic than the ending of ‘Erlkönig’? Regardless, to create this ‘dramatic character’, Beethoven is purposefully sparse in his treatment of the other instruments, and one could easily argue that if Beethoven had added more instrumentation, he would have lessened the effect of the cell. What it does show is Beethoven’s rather focused mindset, which we will see is different to that of Schubert: Beethoven’s concentration is always *on the singular*, while that of Schubert is more *towards the pair*.

After the bold *unisono* statement of the beginning, Beethoven shares the fate motif throughout the strings, connecting the second violins to the violas and then the first violins (marked as ‘A’ in Example 2.1). It is interesting that Beethoven chooses the second violins to begin the phrase, the group most subservient to the first violin section. Perhaps he did so because he wanted the first violin section to have the last ‘hearing’ of the motif in measures 8 and 12 (see Example 2.1). Whatever the reasoning behind it was, Beethoven’s reversal of the

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<sup>167</sup> Brian Black, ‘The Sensuous as a Constructive Force in Schubert’s Late Works’, in *Rethinking Schubert*, ed. by Byrne Bodley and Horton, pp. 77–108 (p. 77), doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190200107.003.0006.

<sup>168</sup> The assumption that Schubert is less dramatic than other composers is expertly addressed and challenged in: *Drama in the Music of Franz Schubert*, ed. by Davies and Sobaskie.

leadership role from the first violins to the seconds is an interesting one, particularly in such a vulnerable and open passage. Could this be seen as empowering the second violin section? Certainly. But in my experience conducting this piece at least a dozen times with numerous ensembles in different countries, one thing remains a constant: the second violin section is forced out of their comfort zone, as the responsibility for the success of the subsequent group is shifted to a group known for their excellence in listening and following.

Also noticeable is that Beethoven's treatment or 'sharing' of the second theme (marked 'D' in Example 2.2), first heard in the first violins in measure 63, is rather sparse. Beethoven sees no need to connect this new theme in any other way than a sounding throughout the different instruments of the orchestra in turn. Even that sounding is devoid of any further complementary rhythm or contrapuntal writing (no dovetailing or themes in inversion, etc.). The theme (beginning in measure 63) moves almost coldly or pro forma to the next instrument, the clarinet (measure 67), followed in turn by both first violins and flute (measure 71). All entries are on the beat, with no stretto entries or fragmented elements to create dialogue with each other.

Example 2.2 Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor (opus 67/i), measures 59–82

59 Allegro con brio  $\text{♩} = 108$

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Bassoon

Horn in Eb

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello & Contrabass

A1

a. 2.

ff

f

p

D

E

p

p dolce

E

E

p

p

The fate motive ('A') sounds now in Eb major, played *unisono* in the horns, and although that is now extended ('A1'), it is only used once at the outset, ending on a dominant pedal. The accompanying half-note figure ('E') receives no treatment or development at any stage, leaving the tied half note at the end of A1 almost dead, devoid of connection. When there *is* development, it is a simple diminution of 'D', in the form of 'D1', and it too is purely linear, remaining for an extended period only in the first violins. Could 'E' be possibly regarded as a complementary rhythm? Probably, but it is more a 'filling in of the harmonies' than anything else. It remains statically in the bassoons, second violins and violas, without any attempt to be shared with other instruments. After playing 'D', each instrument is in turn rendered silent, even redundant, a strong counter-metaphor when discussing connection in music. Comparing Beethoven to Schubert, William Kinderman, while recognising Beethoven's immense lyric ability (such as in the slow movement of the Ninth Symphony) references, as he sees it, Beethoven's 'more directional, forward-driven aesthetic'.<sup>169</sup> Beethoven's singular focus is referenced in Kinderman's description of the end of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. He writes that 'the rhythmic tension acts so forcefully that the harmonic-melodic syntax is flattened with no fewer than twenty-nine closing bars filled with C major chords without any harmonic alteration'.<sup>170</sup> Kinderman's choice of wording ('flattened') reflects what I have shown here. As

<sup>169</sup> William Kinderman, 'Franz Schubert's "New Style" and the Legacy of Beethoven', in *Rethinking Schubert*, ed. by Byrne Bodley and Horton, pp. 41–60 (p. 42), doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190200107.003.0004.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

dramatic as Beethoven's music may be, one cannot help but realise that the 'singular mindset' is forged to the detriment of something else, namely connection.

## 2.6 Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: A Different Approach?

Further analysis of Beethoven's symphonies from my own perspective and experience, having conducted all the Beethoven symphonies, has shown me the same. Perhaps I pause slightly with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. This is worth consideration, not only because it was a notable influence and inspiration for the younger Schubert, but because it is Beethoven at his most mature. Here, in a much later work, might one expect to see a more developed use of complementary rhythm?

Like Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the opening is striking and dramatic in nature. From the very outset (Example 2.3), the pairing of *pp* sextuplets at the opening (between the second violin and cellos) and the shared thirty-second-note, quarter-note cell (beginning in measure 3 through 4 in the first violin and finished by the double basses in measure 5) creates a striking effect. The A – E open fifth (heard in the horns) in the first measure is taken over by the first clarinet (sounding A) in measure 5, and subsequently by the other woodwinds (the first oboe adds the fifth, E, in measure 9, followed by the second flute entry on A in measure 11, etc.). Though there is a greater sense of 'sharing' than the Fifth Symphony, that sharing is again rather stark, created more out of a sense of *affekt*, or drama, rather than a 'collegial exchange' between instrumental groups or players. When the thirty-second-note, quarter-note cell is further fragmented between different instrumental groups in measures 11 through 15 to a first climax in measure 17, it is, at the very latest in measure 16, quasi-*overtaken* by the cell, with no sharing back and forth. Though the effect/affect is undoubtedly dramatic, powerful and compelling, it again bears little resemblance to Schubert's more 'connectional' use of rhythmic cells.

Example 2.3 Beethoven, Symphony no. 9 in D minor (opus 125/i), measures 1–18

**Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso** ♩=88

The musical score for measures 1–18 of Beethoven's Symphony no. 9 in D minor (opus 125/i) is presented in two systems. The first system includes woodwinds (Flute I & II, Oboe I & II, Clarinet in Bb I & II, Bassoon I & II), brass (Horn in D, Bb Basso Horn, Trumpet in D), and timpani. The second system includes strings (Violin I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass). The tempo is **Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso**, with a metronome marking of ♩=88. The woodwinds and strings play in D minor, while the brass instruments are in D major. The score includes various dynamics such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *sotto voce* (under voice).

**Woodwinds:** Flute I & II, Oboe I & II, Clarinet in Bb I & II, Bassoon I & II. Dynamics: *pp*.

**Brass:** Horn in D, Bb Basso Horn, Trumpet in D. Dynamics: *pp*.

**Timpani:** Timpani (D and A).

**Strings:** Violin I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass. Dynamics: *pp*, *sotto voce*, *sempre pp*.



11

Fl. *p cresc.* *ff*

Fl. *p cresc.* *ff*

Ob. *cresc.* *ff*

Ob. *cresc.* *ff*

Cl. *cresc.* *ff*

Cl. *cresc.* *ff*

Bsn. *cresc.* *ff*

Bsn. *cresc.* *ff*

D Hn. *cresc.* *ff*

Bb B. Hn. *cresc.* *ff*

D Tpt. *ff*

Timp. *ff*

Vln. I *cresc.* *ff*

Vln. II *cresc.* *ff*

Vla. *cresc.* *ff*

Vc. *cresc.* *ff*

Cb. *cresc.* *ff*

As with my example from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, perhaps taking a passage from the development section of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony might allow for us to find more connectional development.

Example 2.4 shows the development section of the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. There are a number of complementary rhythms here: 'a', an eighth-note ostinato with the last eighth note tied over the measure in the flutes, bassoons and first violins; 'b', a syncopated dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, again tied across the measure, in the oboes and clarinets; 'c', another syncopation, similar to 'b' except that it is always a leap, rather than the step of 'b'. We also have 'd', presented in the trumpets and timpani. It is a short fanfare-like figure in the form of two fast sixteenth notes leading to an eighth note. We also have 'e', a continuous sixteenth-note passage in the lower strings, and 'f', a continuing sixteenth-note figure in triplets in the second violins, which offsets the strict sixteenth notes of the violas', cellos' and basses' 'e'.

Though there is a marked variety in the rhythms being presented here, all of which complement each other in some way, we again note that Beethoven never 'shares' any of these motifs in dialogue between different instruments. Each motif, once presented, stays in that instrument. Beethoven could have, for example, taken 'a' to create a dialogue between the flutes and the bassoons, or between the first violins and woodwinds. Had he, for example, released the bassoons from their figure, he could have shared the short trumpet figure with the bassoons, which would have allowed for more conversation or connection within the orchestra. All that said, is Schubert really any different?

### 2.6.1 Schubert and Sharing: A Comparison

Example 2.5, taken from the first movement of Schubert's Ninth Symphony, shows a striking difference. Here, and elsewhere in this Ninth Symphony, Schubert's use of complementary rhythms may well be seen from the perspective of his lifelong commitment to counterpoint, but it also showcases the composer as a master connector. Schubert's ability to connect by breaking down themes and submotivic relationships is something that musicologist Walther Dürr identifies as an area of importance for compositional structure:

Example 2.4 Beethoven, Symphony no. 9 in D minor (opus 125), measures 243–49

*Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso, ♩=88*

243

Flute I

Flute II

Oboe I

Oboe II

Clarinet in B $\flat$  I

Clarinet in B $\flat$  II

Bassoon I

Bassoon II

Horn in D

B $\flat$  Bass Horn

Trumpet in D

Timpani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

a

b

c

d

e

f

sf

247

Fl. I  
Fl. II  
Ob. I  
Ob. II  
Cl. I  
Cl. II  
Bsn. I  
Bsn. II  
D Hn.  
B♭ Hn.  
D Tpt.  
Timp.  
Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.  
Cb.

Three areas in particular seem to indicate the new directions: first, Schubert shows an increased interest in contrapuntal techniques; secondly, he pays more attention to thematic, especially motivic and submotivic relationships; and thirdly, we encounter a new kind of sonority. These areas, of course, are not really new, but their emphasis amounts to a new assessment of their importance for compositional structure.<sup>171</sup>

Dürr's analysis is not only fully aligned with my own reading of Schubert, he also acknowledges two important aspects that I believe are important. Schubert should not just be seen as a master of counterpoint, but as one who 'pays more attention to [...] relationships'. I also appreciate Dürr's acknowledgement that this is of course 'not really new'. He is of course right. But they are noteworthy because of the new angle or 'emphasis' that Schubert brings to this technique. We see how Schubert's use of complementary rhythm may be understood as a vehicle for connection from both an analytical aspect (in that one can identify it in the score), but also from a physical perspective, allowing 'real-time' connection between musicians in concert or rehearsal. Dürr uses the word 'relationships' in the context of course of motifs and themes, etc., and that is quite right, but how wonderful for us as musicians that *this compositional mastery also has a physical representation beyond the music on the page*.

## 2.7 Schubert the Connector at Work in the 'Great' C-major Symphony

Schubert was as much a performer as he was a composer. A deeply sensitive accompanist at the piano, he undoubtedly had a huge understanding of the connection that occurs between singer and accompanist.<sup>172</sup> His chamber music compositions attest to a deep understanding of connection between musicians. The following analysis is an excellent example of his ability to connect people through his symphonies.

In the first movement of Schubert's Ninth Symphony, beginning with the upbeat to measure 200, Schubert allocates the main melody to all three trombones to be played *unisono*. This in and of itself is noteworthy. First of all, Schubert's choice of the trombones to carry the melody

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<sup>171</sup> Walther Dürr, 'Compositional Strategies in Schubert's Late Music', in *Rethinking Schubert*, ed. by Byrne Bodley and Horton, pp. 29–40 (pp. 29–30), doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190200107.003.0003.

<sup>172</sup> For a comprehensive report on Schubert's engagement with the piano, see *Schubert's Piano*, ed. by Matthew Gardner and Christine Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2024), doi:10.1017/9781009022767.

is most unusual. As a comparison, in all of Beethoven's symphonies there is not a single such allocation of a lyrical melody to the trombone. What is all the more interesting is that Schubert allocates the melody to all three together. The whole passage is marked *pianissimo*, so why all three on the same melody? One would have certainly been enough. The sonority that this brings is beautifully rich, but it also represents connection. While rehearsing this myself for a performance, one of the trombone players in the orchestra remarked to me how they as a group were looking forward to this very passage, commenting 'we never get to play a melody all together'.

Around the trombones, already within the first few measures, Schubert has built three sets of complementary rhythms, or cells. In Example 2.5, I have marked how Schubert expertly dovetails the various motifs in a way that allows different instrumental groups to connect with each other, all the while serving the common goal of supporting the *unisono* three solo trombones. In the woodwinds, Schubert chooses a quarter note, followed by a dotted half-note motif to alternate between flutes/oboes and clarinets/bassoons/horn ('x'), a three-note pizzicato motif alternating between the first violins and double bass ('y') and a cell of seven eighth notes ('q') shared between the second violins and violas.

Of particular note is that each of these cells ('x', 'y' and 'q') is shared with another instrumental section: 'y' shared between the first violins and basses, etc. That Schubert has the compositional technique to do this is not unusual, particularly when we consider his lifelong fascination with counterpoint. But that he takes it upon himself to share *each and every one* of these three motifs with another group is a wonderful expression of his sensitivity towards connecting people, in this case, of course, the musicians themselves. This expert dovetailing, however, has a more Beethoven-esque beginning.

### 2.7.1 Beethoven-esque Beginnings

Beginning at measure 186 (Example 2.6), and leading up to the trombones in the upbeat to measure 200 (Example 2.5), Schubert introduces a two-measure cell, repeated four times (2x4), after which follows a two-measure diminuendo (194 and 195), ending in a four-measure phrase where Schubert fragments the material (196–199 inclusive) in preparation for the trombone

passage. Looking at the structure of Example 2.6, even visually on the page of the score, it looks more like Beethoven than Schubert. The passage is ‘Beethoven-esque’ in that the presentation

Example 2.5 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/i), measures 200–08

The musical score is for Schubert's Symphony no. 8, measures 200-208. The score is for a full orchestra and includes woodwinds, brass, and strings. Measures 200-201 are marked with 'X' and 'Y'. Measures 202-203 are marked with 'Q'. The score includes dynamic markings like [pp] and [pizz.] and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

**Woodwinds:**

- Flute: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp].
- Oboe: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp].
- Clarinet in A: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp].
- Bassoon: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp].

**Brass:**

- Horn in D: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp].
- Alto Trombone & Tenor Trombone: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp].
- Bass Trombone: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp].

**Strings:**

- Violin I: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp], [pizz.].
- Violin II: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp].
- Viola: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp].
- Violoncello: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp], a 2.
- Contrabass: Measures 200-201 (X), 202-203 (Y), 204-205 (Q). Dynamic: [pp], [pizz.].

205

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

A. Tbn.  
& T. Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 205 through 208. The woodwind section (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon) has several measures of rests, with specific notes boxed in measures 206 and 207. The brass section (Horn, Trumpets, Trombones) plays sustained notes. The string section (Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass) features more active parts, with some passages circled or bracketed. The score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats.



of the complementary rhythms here, from measure 186 to 193 (inclusive), is straightlaced, static even. This is as good an example as any to demonstrate how Schubert can be, *and is*, as forceful as Beethoven when he wants to be. The passage contains all the material that will be heard later and which I have analysed in Example 2.5.

I have analysed Schubert's use of material in Example 2.5. The measures here in Example 2.6 precede the music of Example 2.5. But without the knowledge of what Schubert intends to do with this material later (in Example 2.5), the material presented in Example 2.6 is too condensed to take in or fully appreciate. It is difficult to know what motive came from where, or what the actual cell is. *Only later (Example 2.5) does it become clear.*

By way of explanation: on first sight 'xy' (Example 2.6) looks perfectly convincing as a cell. It is of course, as we will hear later (and as we have seen in Example 2.5), made up of *two* fragments: 'x' and 'y'. There is of course nothing particularly brilliant about this, yet. At the same time, however, Schubert offers us 'xq'. Again, we have seen in Example 2.5 that this is indeed two cells, where 'q' is a series of eighth notes, complementary to 'y'. As I see it, with the dissipating structure, beginning in 194, *Beethoven becomes Schubert*. The previous forceful juxtaposition of forte versus piano doesn't suddenly stop, *it morphs*. The vehicle for this metamorphosis is 'q' extended (see Example 2.6). When the cloud is lifted and we arrive at 198, we have essentially arrived at the analysis I have offered in Example 2.5.

When I compare both these sections of score, I am struck by the incredible genius of Schubert. His ability to fragment and dovetail his motifs is all the more awe-inspiring when we see how Schubert has made each element interchangeable and versatile. Consider the following: looking at measure 188, 'xy' and 'xq' begin with an upbeat strong figure 'x' followed by a more passive 'y' or 'q'. 'y' and 'q' are passive for two reasons: firstly, because they are marked piano, and secondly, because they immediately follow 'x'. But look at the violas, cellos and basses at measure 188, and the subsequent entry at 190. Is this the 'passive' 'y', sounding as forceful, *and at the same time* as its more dominant 'x'? Were you to ask a cellist which the more dominant cell is, they would play you 'y'. If you asked a flute, oboe or clarinet player, they would tell you the very opposite. As a conductor I am sometimes struck by the genius of the composer, so much so that I have a keen desire to share this with the orchestra. It is of course difficult in a rehearsal setting to explain 'x' or 'y' and ask this instrument to play that motif and ask others to listen. *But it is worth doing.* In my professional experience, there is a new

Example 2.6 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/i), measures 186–99

[illegible]

Musical score for a symphony orchestra, measures 1-4. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horns (C Hrn.), Trumpets (C Tpt.), Trombones (Tbn.), Timpani (Timp.), Violins I & II (Vln. I, Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.).

Annotations and markings include:

- A box labeled **y** above the Flute staff in measure 3.
- A box labeled **x** above the Oboe staff in measure 4.
- A box labeled **q extended** above the Violin I staff in measure 1.
- Dynamics: *p* (piano), *f* (forte), and *pp* (pianissimo).
- Articulation: *decresc.* (decrescendo).
- Other markings: *ff* (fortissimo), *sf* (sforzando), and *pp* (pianissimo).

185

Fl. *pp*

Ob. *pp*

Cl.

Bsn.

C Hrn.

C Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn.

Timp.

Vln. I *pp pizz* *q*

Vln. II *pp* *arco*

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

motivation in the orchestra after such interactions. Those players I have mentioned (flute, oboe or clarinet pitted ‘against’ the violas, cellos and basses) will never approach that passage the same. And though Schubert has pitted them against each other structurally on the page, physically in the concert hall, he has brought them together.

## 2.8 Chamber Music in a Symphonic Setting

In Example 2.5, we have seen the unusual scoring of the main melody for the trombones, allowing them an opportunity to have their own intimate ensemble, while simultaneously leading the whole orchestra. But there is one other group that Schubert ‘allows’ to act independently of the others. In measure 196 (see Example 2.6) we are presented with yet another opportunity to see connection in Schubert that is different and unique, as the cellos are allowed their own more intimate connection, or conversation if you will, or chamber music in a symphonic setting.

Of course the cello line fits seamlessly within the passage, and it too could be considered a complementary rhythm, except that it has no other group or instrument paired up with it, as is the case with the other rhythms discussed here. This detail is significant, I believe, and adds beautifully to the narrative of Schubert’s commitment to pairs. It is worthwhile reflecting on why he did this and what this achieves, particularly from the perspective of connection and healing.

Schubert could well have involved the cellos in the pizzicato exchange of the strings, following on from the bass entry, and carrying on through the first violins, which would have worked out perfectly. The harmonies required to fill the chord on beat one of each measure are already present between the woodwind and the strings, meaning that the cello half note and preceding quarter notes are not strictly required or needed. It is here, then, in the celli, that we see the true genius of Schubert, both in terms of his musical and social connection. The fact that they are independent of other instruments could be likened to Beethoven’s ‘not sharing’ but for the fact that *Schubert writes for two lines*, not one, allowing them *their own intimate duet*, staged, however, within the framework of connection within the whole ensemble.

The Neue Schubert Ausgabe (NSA) editor Werner Aderhold has deemed the cello marking ‘due violoncelli’ a mistake, not to be played by two individual players, but rather *divisi* within the group.<sup>173</sup> Here, Aderhold writes in a footnote that ‘Schuberts Aufführungsanweisung ist hier zweifellos gleichbedeutend mit “divisi”’ (‘Schubert’s performance instruction here is surely equivalent to *divisi*’). The German editor’s use of the word ‘zweifellos’ (literally: ‘without doubt’) is more definitive than the English translation the NSA editor uses, ‘surely’, and thus seemingly quite adamant that this be played *divisi* within the whole section. While I don’t disagree with this, it is interesting to track Aderhold’s instructions for other similar places, as there seems to be some discrepancies in approach. While doing so it is worth considering Schubert’s motivation behind these markings at these specific places, and as they are for two players, it represents another opportunity to reflect on connection.

In all, there are three instances in this symphony where Schubert uses the specification ‘due violoncelli’: two in this movement (here at measure 196, and a previous passage in this movement beginning at measure 17) and one in the second movement at measure 148. Quite sure of the need for *divisi* in the editorial footnotes for the passage at measure 196 (‘zweifellos’), for the passage beginning in measure 17, the editor chooses the word ‘vermutlich’ (‘probably’, ‘presumably’ or ‘likely’). Why is this deemed different by the editor? In any case, it at least offers the possibility for the passage to be played by two solo players: ‘Schubert meint mit der Angabe [...] vermutlich die Ausführung “divisi” in 2 chorischen Gruppen, nicht etwas durch zwei Soloinstrumente’ (‘With this instruction Schubert [...] probably wanted the instruments to play *divisi* in two separate groups rather than as two solo instruments’).<sup>174</sup> In the second movement at measure 148, the editor is even more open to a different interpretation: ‘Schubert’s Ausführungsanweisung ist hier sicherlich als “divisi” zu verstehen, dass er die Ausführung durch 2 Solo-Celli meint, ist unwahrscheinlich, jedoch nicht ganz auszuschließen’ (‘Here Schubert’s performance instruction must surely be understood as *divisi*. It is unlikely, though not inconceivable, that he wanted the passage played by two solo cellos’).<sup>175</sup> Beginning with this third example and working back to the first, it is worth noting

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<sup>173</sup> Schubert, Symphony Number 8 in C Major, D. 944 (Kassel, Bärenreiter, 2003) ed. by Werner Aderhold, ISMN M-006-49713-3, p. 29.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

that there is no acoustical reason why any of the three passages would not be audible if the passage were to be played by only two players. Here in the second movement (see Example 2.7), it would seem to me that *this is the most unlikely* of the three places that Schubert would have wanted two solo players.

Example 2.7 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/ii), measures 145–55

The musical score for measures 145–55 of Schubert's Symphony no. 8 in C major, second movement, is presented. The score includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in A, Bassoon, Horn in C, Trumpet in A, Tenor Trombone, Bass Trombone, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The music is marked pianissimo (pp) throughout. A box labeled "Fragmented" highlights a passage in measures 145–150, showing the interaction between the woodwinds and strings. The woodwinds play a melodic line, while the strings provide a harmonic foundation. The violins and violas have a "dim." (diminuendo) marking, and the violoncello and contrabass have a "pp" marking. The horn in C has a "a 2" marking.

Looking at the passage, the string group is divided into an antiphonal chord shared between the basses and cellos simultaneously and answered by the violins and violas. Here again, acoustics are not an issue, as the whole passage is marked pianissimo in all parts. The cello are



complemented by the bass group, who offer the tonic bass note, with the celli filling in the seventh chord, and these notes in turn are repeated in the next measure by the first and second violins (*tutti*). While two solo cellos would be easily heard in a concert setting, the fact that Schubert does not write a similar indication that only one bass player should play, or that only one violin each of the first and second violins should respond to the celli, is justification enough that the NSA's assertion is the correct one. Why would Schubert want a simple chord to be played by two players while the whole bass or violin section plays their single note? And yet, while I don't disagree with the editor that it should be *divisi*, here one should indeed be open to a different reading by two solo players.

The first example of Schubert writing for two players is to be found in measure 17 of the first movement (see Example 2.8) and is perhaps the example most worthy of attention, particularly when it comes to the subject of connection. Of all the three passages listed 'a 2' by the composer, I see this passage as the most unlikely that Schubert would have isolated to two players, *were it not for one other marking*: the violas also bear a similar marking, 'due viole'. For me, this changes everything. Here, the melody proper is in the violas and cellos, and the *accompagnato* figure in the other strings (first violins, second violins and bass) is a simple but also complementary rhythm. The rhythm of the first and second violins is the same, while a counterpoint is presented in the basses, all *pizzicato*. It is one of the most beautiful passages in the whole symphony. Coming as it does after two hearings of the main melody, the passage is well and truly in our ears, so that Schubert can now stretch his wings, and decorate and embellish what we already know. It is hugely comforting and is a breath of fresh air. Without a doubt, it is a wonderful opportunity to showcase healing in music. I will consider this whole passage in more detail in Chapter 6 under 6.4.1, 'Repetition Compulsion Theory in Schubert's "Great" C-major Symphony'.

As regards the editor's instructions for the celli and violas, it is worth considering just how intimate and personal an atmosphere this reading would create if it were played as written: two members of the violas and two members of the cellos, each with their own line, intertwined with Schubert's contrapuntal writing, with the full (*tutti*) 'support' of their colleagues from the

Example 2.8 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/i), measures 17–23

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

17

*pizz.*

*simile*

*p*

due viole

due violoncelli

*p*

*simile*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

21

other string instruments. Were the markings from Schubert only in the cellos and not also in the violas I would wholeheartedly agree with the editor. Yet here, the intimacy of the duet is now expanded into two duets, and represents connection not seen before in his symphonies.

For now, suffice to say that, played either way, as *divisi* within the section or played by two solo musicians, Schubert manages to create a rich harmonic texture between the cellos and their nearest partners, the violas. Though much here is doubled (in measures 19 and 20, the two violas are united in one, offering yet another example of healing connection), there is always free movement between the parts. This rich harmonic texture *also* enhances connection. Orchestral players relish the chance to feed off each other through such close textural writing. Here, the first two measures (17 and 18) have the first violas and the first cellos doubling on the same line, the principal melody, while the seconds in violas and cellos also share their own line. After that initial connection, Schubert allows them to take flight. There is an added 'benefit' for the second players. They provide a clever counterpoint to the melody, with ties across the measure, and the tension and release afforded them (for example by the suspension (4-3) in measure 18) offers much for them to relish in.

This rich harmonic writing has been referenced by Schubert scholars in different ways, particularly in his late works. Brian Black refers to a 'sensuousness' in Schubert's compositions, and comments also on the uniqueness of this style:

Schubert's acute sensitivity to the purely sensuous quality of sound and its expressive potential is a feature of his style that sets his music apart from that of virtually all of his contemporaries. It lies at the heart of his innovative use of harmony, his affecting modulations, and his intense lyricism. And out of this sensitivity flows a unique dramatic process that brings to his music a powerful concentration and unity, evident above all in the works of his last years.<sup>176</sup>

Though 'lyricism' might be a more conventional way to describe Schubert's writing, the word 'sensuous' conjures up images of intimate connection that certainly fit here. It is, however, not 'purely sensuous', which could be understood as sensuous for its own sake. *That is never the case with Schubert*, and articulated in stronger terms, is actually foreign to him. As I see it, Schubert is allowing for these players to make their own chamber music within the symphonic setting, facilitating connection with each other (in most orchestral settings, the violas and cellos

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<sup>176</sup> Brian Black, 'The Sensuous as a Constructive Force', p. 77.

are sitting next to each other), something that is rare, and as such, is a moment that orchestral players cherish. However, as ‘sensuous’ as it may sound, my belief is that the motivation for this is borne on the back of his commitment to ‘the other’. The passage is in essence a development of the theme which we have heard twice. As Brian Black identifies, ‘both the effect and the mechanics of Schubert’s development processes are thus radically different from his predecessors’.<sup>177</sup>

From the perspective of connection and healing in this music, there are parallels to be drawn between Schubert’s ‘radically different’ developments and his establishment of the Lied as a true art form. As unique and powerful as this truly is, this newness, as I see it, does not stem from some extraordinary effort to be either different, or to ‘challenge’ Beethoven, or any other composer. Rather, it is Schubert *sui generis*, and as such, Schubert in his most natural state. Simply put, Schubert finds more pathways for connection in his music than any of his contemporaries.

### 2.8.1 Chamber Music in a Symphonic Setting: Beethoven

Remembering that Beethoven was also an excellent pianist, one might question why his music avoids the kind of connection that Schubert clearly endorses. Is this evaluation even fair? In the second movement of Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony, he also writes for two instruments within the orchestral setting. Indeed, the marking is strikingly like Schubert’s (see Example 2.9). So what, if any, is the difference?

In fact, *the scoring could hardly be any more different than Schubert’s*. First to the mutes. What does Beethoven hope to achieve with this instruction? Less sound? Less volume? Perhaps a new sonority? As a conductor, while such passages are interesting, they are, at the end of the day, academic. Scored for only two players with mutes, the reality is that no one will hear this. In reflecting on this as a comparison to Schubert, notice that here this is a doubling of the second violin and viola line, and not an independent line as in the Schubert examples. Yes, it is written for two solo players, but there the similarity with Schubert begins and ends.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

Example 2.9 Beethoven, Symphony no. 6 ('Pastoral') in F major (opus 68/ii), measures 1–4

**Andante molto moto** ♩ = 50

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Bassoon

Horn in Bb

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Two solo Violoncelli with mutes

Tutti Violoncelli and Contrabass

*p*

*pizz*

*p*

3

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Bassoon

Horn in Bb

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Two solo Violoncelli with mutes

Tutti Violoncelli and Contrabass

## 2.9 Disconnection and Illness in Music: An Analysis of the ‘Unfinished’

‘So hatte eine Sinfonie nie begonnen: mit einem orakelhaft raunenden Unisono der Celli und Bässe [...] Nach acht Takten prallt sie auf ein Hindernis, setzt neu an [...] ohne ein eigenes Ende gefunden zu haben’ (‘No symphony ever began like this: with an oracle-like whispering *unisono* of the cellos and basses [...] after eight measures it hits a new hurdle, tries again [...] without finding a suitable end’).<sup>178</sup> In writing this, Peter Gülke acknowledges not only the uniqueness of

<sup>178</sup> Gülke, *Franz Schubert und seine Zeit*, p. 197.

this opening, but also the underlying frustration within. Having seen how passages of the Eighth Symphony represent connection and in turn healing, we turn now to Schubert's 'Unfinished' as a pathway to explore disconnection, and ultimately illness.

The first examples of disconnection are already apparent in the opening measures of the work. Though important from a motivic standpoint throughout the symphony, this opening (Example 2.10) is detached for a number of reasons. As it stands, scored for just cellos and double basses, at the lower end of their register, and barely audible (complete with a *pp* dynamic marking), it is difficult not to regard the full string entry (measure 9) or subsequent oboe appearance (measure 13) as the true beginning, thus making this eight-measure cello/bass opening an atmospheric 'prelude' of sorts.

Though this 'prelude' is broken down into 'parts' by Schubert for motivic development later, this opening passage, as presented here, is not repeated as one might expect. Yes, the opening appears again much later, in measure 328, but this is purely a 're-hearing' of the beginning, without any development, structural, instrumental, or otherwise. There, at the end of this movement, the *real* function of this opening becomes apparent, and that is to make us painfully aware that any development of previously heard themes (first and second subject) has been in vain and are to remain overshadowed by this detached theme. Musicologist Xavier Hascher comes to a similar conclusion, referring to the theme as 'O':

Mysterious subterranean levels link up with more or less distant events, and we realise that instead of advancing, as we thought, we are in fact in the same place. The 'O' theme, we have seen, does not progress. It is obsessive, and all elements emerging from it are devoid of a sense of 'becoming'.<sup>179</sup>

This emotional detachment, an unwillingness or indeed *inability* to connect with others, has long been an area of interest for psychologists, particularly those in the area of trauma management. Outside the well know 'Flight/Flight' model, psychologist Steven Porges writes of *a third way of coping with trauma*, namely 'freeze'. This most extreme form of detachment is the body's evolutionary way of protecting itself: 'Under conditions of inescapable danger even fight or flight breaks down, which leads to immobilization, with a resulting behavioral shutdown

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<sup>179</sup> Xavier Hascher, 'Narrative Dislocations in the First Movement of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony', in *Rethinking Schubert*, ed. by Byrne Bodley and Horton, p. 142.

[...].<sup>180</sup> This sense of immobilisation is also seen from the outset of the symphony. Consider the following: the opening eight-measure phrase begins with Schubert's phrasing (and subsequently the bowing) of two measures followed by another two measures (see Example 2.10). All this seems very straightforward and standard. However, because measure 3 is a return to the tonic, despite Schubert's bowing (or phrasing), our ear processes that first grouping as a three-measure phrase. The subsequent measure (measure 4) is the only measure with a constant quarter-note movement, and this contributes to it being processed as

Example 2.10 Schubert, Symphony no. 7 in B minor (D. 759/i), measures 1–23

The musical score for Schubert's Symphony no. 7 in B minor, measures 1–23, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1–8) includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The Violoncello and Contrabass parts begin with a half note G2, followed by a quarter note G2, and then a series of quarter notes: A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The second system (measures 9–23) includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The Violin I and II parts play a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass parts play a continuous eighth-note pattern, with the Violoncello and Contrabass parts marked 'pizz.' (pizzicato).

<sup>180</sup> Stephen W. Porges, *The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-Regulation*, The Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology (W. W. Norton, 2011), p. xiv.



12

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

D Hn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

*pp*

*pp*

16

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

D Hn.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

The musical score for measures 16-19 is as follows:

- Measure 16:** Oboe and Clarinet play a melodic line starting on G4 (F#4 in the key signature). Bassoon, D Horn, Trumpet, and Baritone Trumpet have whole rests. Violin I and II play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- Measure 17:** Oboe and Clarinet continue their melodic line. Bassoon, D Horn, Trumpet, and Baritone Trumpet have whole rests. Violin I and II continue their rhythmic pattern. Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass continue their rhythmic pattern.
- Measure 18:** Oboe and Clarinet have whole rests. Bassoon, D Horn, Trumpet, and Baritone Trumpet have whole rests. Violin I and II continue their rhythmic pattern. Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass continue their rhythmic pattern.
- Measure 19:** Oboe and Clarinet have whole rests. Bassoon, D Horn, Trumpet, and Baritone Trumpet have whole rests. Violin I and II continue their rhythmic pattern. Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass continue their rhythmic pattern.

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something new, and as such, the beginning of a new phrase. Even if the bass section tries to help the sense of a two-measure coupling by a slight accent on measure 3, or a slight breath between measures 2 and 3, it is difficult to fight the sense of a 3-measure grouping here. Therefore, what we actually hear is a phrase broken into 3+2+3 (see Example 2.10). Because Schubert convinces our ear to hear a clear two-measure grouping between measures 4 and 5, this is also what our ear expects in measures 6 and 7. So what our ear *wants to hear* and what *Schubert is setting us up to hear* is 3+2+2. What we get of course, is a longer, rather unnatural lengthening of this first phrase: an F sharp tied across three measures, having settled on the dominant. The result is not just a 'time out' on the dominant F sharp, but an unexpected and uncomfortable pause in expectation of the next phrase. I have myself witnessed the effect that this has on our brain. In a rehearsal of the Jackson Symphony Youth Orchestra (JSYO), an educational outreach programme of the professional orchestra where I was Artistic Director and Conductor, the young, talented conductor began the piece with great stealth. On reaching the dominant, the conductor, conducting from memory, beat two measures (not the written three!) and cued the (unprepared) violas and violins. I am sure it was not the first time this has happened in the world of orchestral music, nor will it be the last. It certainly wasn't a surprise for me, and I explained to the conductor and the orchestra how Schubert lulls us into a false sense of security, disturbing our sense of pulse. This unnatural lengthening is processed by our brains as something unsettling, an effect that Schubert exploits here to add to the sense of helplessness and abandonment of this bleak opening.

Looking at the bass part, all of measure 5 is unplayable on a four-string (classical) bass. Schubert could have easily avoided these notes by writing them an octave higher. Why did he not relent? The sound produced by the lower C string, particularly as it drops from the D to the C sharp, is recognised immediately due to its lower frequency. The low E string of the double bass goes to 41Hz, but the five-string bass can register 31 Hz. At the very end of its register, this recognition of the C sharp *is felt* rather than heard. It is our ear that constructs the connection to the tone, due to the fact that the celli are doubling on the line an octave higher. *It is the effect that is the music here*, and that effect is unsettling. Psychologist Stephen Porges describes how:

Low-frequency sounds are profound signals to a neuroception of danger and life threat [...] we want our clinical rooms, our consultation rooms [...] to be quiet

because the nervous system is going to be detecting these low-frequency sounds as if there is impending doom – as if something bad is going to happen.<sup>181</sup>

In the practical setting of professional orchestras, most players will have a five-string bass (or a C extension), but some favour a four-string bass. Here, then, is an actual physical example of disconnection in Schubert. Oftentimes the conductor will direct the basses not to double on the cello line for the D–C sharp (reasoning that a doubling of the cello line in their register would impact the sound negatively), meaning that the four-string bass player is, already after only four measures of playing, *required to stop playing*. Having written the line solely for the basses and cellos, it's not unreasonable that these instruments have a certain ownership, or connection to the opening: it is after all *their* opening, written for them. Schubert could certainly have offered a solution. But to purposefully not offer an alternative (such as to play an octave higher) represents disconnection *not only in the metaphorical sense, but also a physical disconnection for the musician*. As such the player is de facto disconnected to the music, disconnected to his own playing... and disconnected with his fellow players.

This disconnection continues after the first opening. As soon as measure 20 Schubert creates disruption and disconnection within a phrase (Example 2.10). Led by the first horn, and accompanied by both bassoons and, very unusually, the bass trombone, we can either consider this entry a commentary of sorts on the preceding phrase or a bold interruption. Either way, it is the vehicle of choice for Schubert to interrupt the next presentation of the main theme in oboe and clarinet. We note Schubert's use of the minor sixth (the interval most associated with conveying pain) in the principal horn part. In actual fact the G-natural to F-sharp movement repeated here is a well-known trope, the 'seufzer' or sighing motif. It not only represents venting or frustration, *it is separation*, interrupting and delaying the main theme, which returns two measures later in measure 22.

Measures 36 and 37 are further examples of disconnection in this movement (see Example 2.11). Here, Schubert's aim is not to move the narrative forward, but to vent frustration at the lack of resolution. While measures 36 and 37 *do* have a resolution (of sorts) in the form of a cadence to B minor in measure 38, the static, even pedantic nature of the passage provides no expectancy or hope. Consider the following: were, for example, these measures to be extended

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<sup>181</sup> Stephen W. Porges, *The Pocket Guide to Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2017), p. 188.

Example 2.11 Schubert, Symphony no. 7 in B minor (D. 759/i), measures 36–38

36

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in A

Bassoon

Horn in E

Trumpet in E

Alto Trombone & Tenor Trombone

Bass Trombone

Timpani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

*f<sup>s</sup>*

*f<sup>s</sup>*

*f<sup>s</sup>*

*f<sup>s</sup>*

*f<sup>s</sup>*

*f<sup>p</sup>*

*f<sup>p</sup>*

*f<sup>z</sup>*

*f<sup>z</sup>*

*f<sup>z</sup>*

*f<sup>z</sup>*

*f<sup>z</sup>*

*f<sup>z</sup>*

*f<sup>z</sup>*

*f<sup>z</sup>*

*f<sup>z</sup>*

by one further measure, the effect would be the same. That is to say, there is a timelessness here at play, and it is negative in nature. To bring this potency and sense of timelessness to bear in performance, the conductor must be careful to ensure that the eighth-note upbeat to the quarter note loses its upbeat nature. The orchestra should be encouraged not to play the eighth note as an upbeat to the quarter note, *but rather to accentuate both*. When this is done well, the listener's sense of a bar line, or where we are in the measure, is obscured. Reminiscent of a needle getting stuck on a vinyl record, we should be left without any sense of whether, *or if at all*, Schubert will allow for the stylus to move past this obstacle. The eighth-note, quarter-note motive is rigid, transcending the bar line with three iterations of the eighth-note, quarter-note motive, before Schubert forces a pedantic conclusion using the final two eighth notes to drive the cadence into B minor. This is followed by an accentuated entry on the second beat of the measure by the bassoons and horns (measure 38), which should arrive 'late', avoiding any allusion to where the beat actually is, and should offer no clues as to how the piece is to continue. Schubert, writing only a single sustained note, tied across the measure, leaves us hanging, devoid of rhythm, displaced and, ultimately, disconnected.

Though not untypical for Schubert, this transition passage is not only one of the shortest in the symphonic repertoire. Of the four measures, *three of them are one note*, tied over the bar line in yet another act of defiance to connection to the bar line or any other instrumental group. In essence, it is a written-out general pause or fermata, and while my school of conducting demands that each new measure be shown by a downbeat, the conductor should be careful here *not to beat time*.<sup>182</sup> The whole point of the passage is that we are out of time, *without time*, and that sense of detachment and disconnection must be embodied by the conductor. Ideally of course, he/she should highlight this disconnection. While one may give a downbeat to show the 'empty' measures, it must be done very subtly. Gesture is everything here. The conductor must emphasise the accent on beat two, being careful to 'hide' the downbeat of the right when it occurs, three times! The left hand is careful to show only a single line or arc, being

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<sup>182</sup> At the Franz Liszt Hochschule in Weimar, where I first trained, the degree was called 'Kapellmeister Ausbildung' or 'Opera House Director degree' (it was subsequently changed to follow the European norms of B.A., M.A., etc). When conducting opera it is essential that all measures be clearly shown (particularly the 'empty' measures where perhaps a singer is singing but no one is playing) to avoid incorrect entries from individual orchestral players. In the German opera house tradition, where numerous operas, operettas and musicals are scheduled in every season, it is quite normal for a player to be called to play last minute, who may, or may not, have any previous experience playing the piece. Hence the importance of clear hand gestures and signals.

careful *not to beat time* or show the individual beats of the measures. The orchestra will ‘find’ the bar count in the single ‘illicit’ downbeat of the right hand, before the bassoons and horns are cued to continue to their dominant-seventh cadence in measure 42 (Example 2.12). Thus, it is up to the conductor to embody that sense of being lost and disconnected.

The beautifully constructed second theme appears at measure 44. It would be an excellent example of healing, were it not for what Schubert does *after* the healing passage is heard. In Example 2.11 we have seen to great effect how Schubert’s use of syncopation can create disconnection. Here in Example 2.12, we recognise that Schubert’s use of syncopation is as many-faceted as it is masterful. In his hands, syncopation is a multi-edged tool. He can use it either to add tension to a phrase or to instil a sense of calm and rest. In measures 71 and 72 Schubert’s simultaneous use of syncopation as both a modus for tension *and* release is as brilliant as it is simple. Measures 71 and 72 absorb the negative energy of the preceding passage and dissolve it, yet the figure still contains some residual tension, even despite the decrescendo. Only with the subsequent piano entry in 73, a fugato fragmentation of the second theme, does Schubert change the syncopations to long held-out notes, allowing for a short period of calm. In measure 42, however, syncopation is used to create a much different effect. Here, syncopation is used to instil a sense of calm. While the dynamic marking of piano helps create a sense of calm, Schubert uses a combination of three other elements that relax us. The instrumentation of violas and clarinets is warm, allowing for a ‘neuroception’ of acceptance and comfort.<sup>183</sup> The register in which they are placed, in a rich, warm register for both instruments, also contributes to this sense of being safe and connected (compare this, for example, to measure 71, where the bassoons are scored very high in their register, creating the opposite effect). Most importantly, Schubert creates a ‘one’ on the first beat of each measure, stabilising the passage. We note that Schubert asks for it to be played only by the basses, and pizzicato. This simple tonic–dominant note exchange at the beginning of each measure here and later throughout the second theme is essential in creating a sense of calm and warmth. Without it, the passage would *not* be grounded because we would not know where the ‘one’ is. Without the pizzicato, the passage would have a much less calming effect and in fact create

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<sup>183</sup> Psychologist Stephen Porges (*Polyvagal Theory*) explains that ‘neuroception’ is a more primitive form of perception. Difficult to override, it is our instinctual response to whether we perceive a person or situation as either threatening or safe. For more see *The Pocket Guide to The Polyvagal Theory*, p.19.



Example 2.12 Schubert, Symphony no. 7 in B minor (D. 759/i), measures 42–72

42

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in A

Bassoon

Trumpet in D

Horn in D

Trombone

Trombone

Timpani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pizz.*

*pp*

49

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

*pp*

Tpt.

*pp*

Hn.

Tbn. I & II

Tbn. III

Timp.

Vln. I

*pp*

Vln. II

*pp*

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

107

65

Fl. *fz* *fz* *fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz*

Ob. *fz* *fz* *fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz*

Cl. *fz* *fz* *fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz*

Bsn. *fz* *fz* *fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz*

Tpt. *fz* *fz* *fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz*

Hn. *fz*

Tbn. I & II *fz* *fz* *fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz*

Tbn. III *fz* *fz* *fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz fz fz* *fz*

Timp.

Vln. I *fz* *fz* *cresc.* *fz*

Vln. II *fz* *fz* *cresc.* *fz*

Vla. *fz* *fz* *cresc.* *fz*

Vc. *fz* *fz* *cresc.* *fz*

Cb. *fz* *fz* *cresc.* *fz*

that sense of disconnection (to the bar line) that Schubert utilises elsewhere. In this way, I contend that even before we hear the second theme passage, Schubert has created a musical representation of healing. Before the presentation of the second theme in the cellos in measure 44, Schubert scores a gently pulsating *louré* bowing for the viola on the tonic in thirds in measures 42 and 43. The *louré* bowing would have been instantly recognisable to the players of the day as a *figura rhetorica* from the Baroque. As such it would have received a throbbing *messa di voce* (slight crescendo followed by diminuendo) execution from the players. The syncopation in this setting would have been understood simultaneously as a calming tool, but also a modus to create anticipation for the melody two measures later. This is a calming anticipation, all the while healing, and the perfect introduction or invitation for Schubert on which to build his second theme.

The second theme, entering in the cellos at measure 44, is nine measures in length. Though the standard 4+4-measure phrase is popular with Schubert, in stark contrast to Beethoven, his use of nine-measure and even seven-measure phrases is not at all unusual.<sup>184</sup> Certainly Beethoven uses irregular phrases, but rarely in his main themes. In Beethoven they are usually found in either recapitulations as extensions of regular phrases, or in a repetitive figure, designed to cause tension.<sup>185</sup> In Schubert's case here, the phrase is divided 4+5, the first four-measure phrase being followed by a variation of the first, but including a one-measure extension.

Looking at the construction of the first four measures of the second theme (44 to 47), it is apparent that measure 3 of the melody is a decoration of measure 2 (dominant harmonisation) and that measures 1 and 4 are also related, being almost identical. This repetition is important as a soothing tool, made all the more so by the gently undulating tonic–dominant exchange in the first and fourth measures. Repetition is a tool that Schubert also uses to great effect at the beginning of the Ninth Symphony, to be analysed later in Chapter 6 (see Example 6.2). Here, the dotted quarter-note lengthening in the first measure and the dotted eighth-note lengthening on beat two of the second measure add a 'laissez-faire' or casual informality to the

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<sup>184</sup> The first theme of the second movement of the 'Great' C-major is seven measures for example, as is the lamenting cello theme in the same movement at measure 253.

<sup>185</sup> Measures 16 to 24 (inclusive) at the beginning of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony ('Pastoral') is a good example of this: a repetitive nine-measure phrase divided 4+5.

passage. In the repetition phrase, Schubert begins as he did, but in the next measure (measure 49) he introduces G sharp for a modulation to A minor. While this half tone does of course raise the tension, it is more to be understood as a ‘raising of interest’, creating a sense of positive expectancy rather than outright tension in any negative sense. In keeping with the passage, it is gentle, all the more so because in the subsequent measures, Schubert brings us back through the dominant of the home key (D major), and one measure after that, to the tonic G major, where Schubert connects the cello theme to the first and second violins, who offer us an exact replication of the cello phrase, without any surprises. The first and second violins are scored in octaves in a warm register, and their dynamic marking is pianissimo.

Every element of Schubert’s compositional process here, from structure through to register, musical tropes and semantics, all contribute to evoke a deep sense of calm and healing.<sup>186</sup> The healing that Schubert creates here is not simply on the page. Tropes and musical semantics as well as the tonic–dominant exchanges and other elements utilised here calm and heal us as listeners. There is a physical healing in passages such as this. Just as sympathetic nervous system activity releases stress hormones which can harm our health, the self-soothing that occurs in musical passages such as this activate and stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system in a positive way, and release positive hormones from the endocrine system. It is within this context that I see Schubert’s ability to heal us, and to heal himself.

In measure 53 the healing second-theme melody moves from the cellos to the first and second violins and is repeated without variation. What happens next is unusual. The second subject simply ends, without a cadence into silence in measure 62, raising a neuroception of threat. There is no sudden Beethoven-esque fortissimo ‘surprise’ (think of measure 9 in Beethoven’s ‘Egmont’ Overture) to shock us, or disconnect us abruptly from the calm of the second subject. On further analysis, what is perhaps most disturbing is *the manner in which Schubert brings us to this silence*. There are signs of a slow detachment in a kind of tapering off, both in terms of instrumentation (the horns drop out two measures before the end) and dynamic. Most notably, the melody doesn’t just stop after a full presentation of the theme, nor is it subjected to a two-measure or even one-measure shortening. *Instead, it is left hanging on the penultimate note of the phrase*. This is particularly cruel. Thus, one of the most healing and

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<sup>186</sup> For more on music and perception see Erkki Huovinen and Anna-Kaisa Kaila, ‘The Semantics of Musical Topoi’, *Music Perception*, 33.2 (2015), pp. 217–43, doi:10.1525/mp.2015.33.2.217.

soothing melodies of this work (and one which we have now heard almost four times in a row), is simply left unfinished. In measure 61, we are left hanging on the F-sharp leading note (dominant D major), with no connection back to the tonic (G major).

After the tapering off into a full measure of silence, how Schubert proceeds is again telling. After the disconnection, we are confronted by a sudden fortissimo sforzando chord of C minor. We are expecting G major. This, then, is not only completely unexpected, but also confusing. We would have to say, however, that it is not written with any element of surprise, aimed at shocking the audience. We are presented with not only one sforzando measure, but with three (Example 2.12, measures 63–64, 65–66 and 67–68). The chord progression is a musical representation of disconnection: C minor, followed by D minor, followed by Eb major. None of these chords exist of course in the home key of G major. Schubert presents the dominant as a minor chord, and adds a chord built upon the minor sixth of the scale (Eb), the minor sixth being a well-known trope used to represent pain. Yes, Schubert's ubiquitous use of chordal progressions involving thirds can add a sense of calm (for example, used to great effect in 'Der Neugierige' (Ab major to E major)), but here it is different. Additionally, none of the chords resolve, but rest on a final quarter note of the same chord.

The culmination of the passage is a pedantic rising tremolo in the strings (Example 2.12, measures 67–70 inclusive). All of this ends in frustration three full measures later, with no change in the chord make-up, except that Schubert moves the E flat to E natural in the bass, creating a diminished seventh chord. If anything, this diminished chord only adds to the sense of disconnection. Every note in the woodwinds and brass is marked by Schubert with a renewed sforzando, making this pedanticism *visible in the score*.

As a conductor, I am struck by the fact that there are no timpani here. The sole reason is of course the usual one: tuning. It is not present here or in other parallel passages where this 'frustration chord' appears, because the timpani could not have re-tuned as they do today. There is no doubt in my mind that Schubert, had the other notes been available to him, would have scored for that. For example, later, in measure 86 (see Example 5.2), the timpani are glaringly missing where a C is required. The conductor should consider asking the timpanist to play at this 'missing measure' using a C tuning, or in the case of Example 2.12, perhaps even ask the timpani to play from measure 63 on to 70, after which there is also time to tune to the E natural for the cadence.

## 2.10 Qualifying the Schubert/Beethoven Comparison

In light of comparisons I have made between Schubert and Beethoven in their use of complementary rhythm, some further commentary on other differences between the composers is timely. These last examples taken from the ‘Unfinished’ highlighting disconnection point to an altogether different narrative than that which I have presented of Schubert as a connector. Noticeable in this last excerpt (Example 2.12 in measures 67 to 70, utilising all the instruments of the orchestra and taking on an altogether more forceful role, the passage is more akin to what we might expect from Beethoven. Is it fair to portray a Schubert that can be heroic like Beethoven (to use the stereotype) when he wants to be, while Beethoven *can only be* Beethoven? Musicologists have of course commented at great length on the differences between Schubert and Beethoven.<sup>187</sup> Schumann’s musings on Schubert, often flowery and full of metaphors, are perhaps more interesting and valuable to us for what they tell us about Schumann rather than Beethoven or Schubert. John Daverio, in his article “‘One More Beautiful Memory of Schubert’: Schumann’s Critique of the Impromptus, D. 935’, suggests that Schubert’s approach to composing may indeed be more nuanced or many-faceted, while Beethoven shows ‘drive’ and is ‘heroic’:

I would like to suggest that Schumann was acutely aware of what might be called the temporality of pastness in Schubert’s music and its bearing on the composer’s handling of large-scale temporal spans. Or, to put it in terms of a comparison: whereas Beethoven, especially in the symphonic works of his ‘heroic’ phase, drives headlong from the present into the future, thus emulating the teleological thrust of drama, Schubert treats the present as a pretext for summoning up or mulling over the past, tending as he does toward epic breadth and lyric introspection.<sup>188</sup>

Is there then a grain of truth to the stereotype of Beethoven as heroic and Schubert as ‘lyric’ and introspective? Beethoven: the heroic architect, with single-minded determination,

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<sup>187</sup> Maynard Solomon, ‘Schubert and Beethoven’, *19th-Century Music*, 3.2 (1979), pp. 114–25, doi:10.2307/746283. See also: James Webster, ‘Music, Pathology, Sexuality, Beethoven, Schubert’, *19th-Century Music*, 17.1 (1993), pp. 89–93. JSTOR, doi.org/10.2307/746784; John M. Gingerich, *Schubert’s Beethoven Project* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), doi:10.1017/CBO9781139032193; J. Daverio, “‘One More Beautiful Memory of Schubert’: Schumann’s Critique of the Impromptus, D. 935’, *The Musical Quarterly*, 84.4 (2000), pp. 604–18, doi:10.1093/mq/84.4.604

<sup>188</sup> John Daverio, “‘One More Beautiful Memory of Schubert’: Schumann’s Critique of the Impromptus, D. 935.” *The Musical Quarterly*, 84. 4 (2000), p 605. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/742598>. [Accessed 18 Dec. 2024]



constantly on the edge. Schubert, by contrast: the wandering dreamer, surrounding himself with friends and in need of affirmation, constantly measuring himself against Beethoven. Beethoven's music is classed as 'heroic', while Schubert's is 'sensuous'.

As I see it, there *is* a grain of truth in the stereotype. I myself in the examples I have chosen have contributed to this same narrative. As with all stereotypes, there are many exceptions, and the reality is much more nuanced. If Schubert is the dreamer, *it is Beethoven* who wanders around aimlessly in the slow movement of the Ninth Symphony. There is *nothing* in Beethoven's Eighth Symphony that is heroic. Full of humour, it borders on farce. There are other passages of his earlier symphonies (both the introduction of the first movement of his First Symphony, the whole finale of his Second Symphony, and the beginning of the Fourth Symphony are musical jokes) that follow suit. None of this music could possibly contribute to the stereotypical image of Beethoven as a brooding loner, isolated in his apartment, taking out his frustration in the score. Commenting on the difference between Beethoven and Schubert, the pianist Alfred Brendel's thoughts resound with me for a few varied reasons:

In an article I wrote a few years ago, I found a formula for myself: Beethoven the architect and Schubert the sleepwalker. Which meant to say that Beethoven in his works keeps you always informed where he is and justifies every step. He builds as a good architect would build to produce something secure and lasting. Schubert doesn't give one that sense of security or inevitability. This may be one of the reasons why his music has been taken up in a big way in our times along with Mahler's symphonies. They correspond with our feeling of not being masters but victims of life.<sup>189</sup>

Consider Brendel's choice of words here: 'a formula for myself'. In keeping with Gadamerian hermeneutics, this was how Brendel found a way, for him, to allow both Beethoven and Schubert's music to speak to him. Seeing Beethoven as an 'architect' and Schubert as a 'sleepwalker' doesn't have to mean that all compositions fit this model. The image of Schubert as a sleepwalker represents one more circle of understanding for Brendel, in alignment with Gadamer's concept of the hermeneutic circle: concentric circles that grow as our understanding of a subject grows. If it helped Brendel to get a better sense of both composers, and a way for him to separate their different styles, then it is a good thing. As with any stereotype, it is a generalisation, and yet a generalisation that can help us. I concur with

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<sup>189</sup> Alfred Brendel, 'Schubert's Last Three Piano Sonatas', *RSA Journal*, 137.5395 (1989), pp. 401–11.

Brendel's choice to view. As he sees it, the insecurity in Schubert's music is not a weakness *but a human trait*. In Schubert, we are allowed (if we choose) an insight to not only his world, but our own, a shared humanity that I will discuss at length later in my final chapter, 'Schubert, Death and Acceptance'.

Schubert's own words on his perceived future as a composer, particularly in relation to Beethoven, are telling. But is Paul Reid, former chairman of the Schubert Institute (UK), correct when he writes that:

Spaun reports that Schubert developed serious ambitions as a composer, nourished and encouraged in part by Beethoven's music, but felt that he would never be able to compete on equal terms with the great man: 'Er sagte dann ganz kleinlaut: Heimlich im Stillen hoffe ich wohl selbst noch etwas aus mir machen zu können, aber wer vermag nach Beethoven noch etwas zu machen?' (Then he added in an undertone: Secretly I still really hope to be able to make something of myself, but who can do anything now after Beethoven?). Any composer in Vienna in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was, of course, working more or less in the shadow of Beethoven, who gradually acquired the status of a living legend, but the young Schubert, who was already able to appreciate the nature and scope of Beethoven's genius while yet lacking the technical skill to emulate the older man, would have felt his inadequacy particularly keenly.<sup>190</sup>

If we are to believe Spaun, a mostly reliable witness, that Schubert's words were uttered *kleinlaut*, then this is an interesting clue. The translation 'undertone', however, does not capture the essence of this word. *Kleinlaut* in English is not just 'undertone' or 'hushed'. *Kleinlaut* is a cowering hush, and carries within it an inherent atmosphere of self-doubt. Also, a person can be described as *kleinlaut* when he/she expresses an opinion in an overconfident and brash way and is subsequently proven to be wrong, and is rendered powerless. Was Schubert rendered powerless in the face of Beethoven? There are numerous other examples of Schubert's deep ingrained respect for the twenty-seven-year-old Beethoven.<sup>191</sup> Again, I question whether Paul Reid is correct when he questions the depth of respect (subservience even?) involved:

When Schubert published his first substantial instrumental composition, the Variations on a French Theme for Piano Duet, op. 10 (D 624) in 1822, it was dedicated to Beethoven from his 'worshipper and admirer Franz Schubert'. This is

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<sup>190</sup> Paul Reid, 'The Unheard Beethoven', *Beethoven and Schubert*, 2013  
<https://unheardbeethoven.org/beethoven-and-schubert-2/> [accessed 18 December, 2024]

<sup>191</sup> The song 'Auf dem Strom' opens with a literal quote from the slow movement of Beethoven's 'Eroica'.

strong phraseology even for a dedication. Beethoven is said to have played Schubert's Variations with his nephew Karl and to have enjoyed them. Presumably Schubert, either directly or through his publishers Cappi and Diabelli, had obtained Beethoven's permission to dedicate the work to him. In making this dedication, Schubert was also passing up the chance to receive the gratuity he would have expected from a noble dedicatee. The act of homage to the older composer was clearly more important to him than financial considerations.<sup>192</sup>

The German dedication is: 'Zugeeignet von seinem Verehrer und Bewunderer Franz Schubert'.

While 'worship' is actual a good translation for the verb *verehren*, the verb *ehren* is best translated as 'honour'. When used to address someone, *Verehrter* was actually quite standard. Even today, instead of addressing someone in the outdated 'Sehr verehrter Herr X', one still uses 'Sehr geehrter Herr X'. Thus, even by contemporary standards, the word *ehren* plays a role in addressing someone. Reid is not correct when he states that it is 'strong phraseology'. In Reid's defence, Schubert's own words do show that he had a great deal of respect for Beethoven. At the end of his life, we also know that Schubert asked for his body to be buried next to that of Beethoven's. Hardly the words of someone who 'would have felt his inadequacy particularly keenly'. No, there is simply too much in Schubert's compositional process to show that he was not only a master of his craft, but also *his own master*. This will become more apparent as my analysis proceeds.

## 2.11 Schubert and the Singular Mindset

Consider the following: what other composer of the day would quote another living composer in the final movement of his biggest and best symphony to date, as Schubert did when quoting Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in his own 'Great' C-major Ninth Symphony? Rather than see this homage to Beethoven as a sign of Schubert's subservience, it should be seen as one of positive dedication. If he was so preoccupied with the older Beethoven's compositions, then arguably Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, the 'Pastoral' (and not Beethoven's Ninth), would, and should, have had a marked effect on him. The 'Pastoral' is utterly extraordinary in both form and content. And yet there is no sign that the work influenced Schubert. Viewed another way, if we did not know of his deep respect for Beethoven, then Schubert's transition passages, his

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<sup>192</sup> Reid, 'The Unheard Beethoven'.

modulations and his choice of architecture could all conceivably be construed *as a denial of the Beethoven model*! They are not that, of course. They are a different mode of composition. Comparisons with Beethoven are impossible to avoid, made all the more difficult by the fact that they were contemporaries living in the same city and both knew of each other.<sup>193</sup> As I see it, Schubert's direct quote in the final movement of his Ninth is anything but a sign of weakness. The strength of conviction to choose a theme from the hand of Beethoven is for me categorical proof of, if not at least self-confidence, then of huge inner strength. Here Schubert is announcing to the world his respect for Beethoven, while simultaneously 'framing' or 'presenting' the quote in a style that bears nothing in common with him. This quote in particular, from Beethoven's Ninth to Schubert's Ninth, is both an act of respect towards Beethoven, as well as a mark of Schubert's confidence in his own style and abilities, unhindered as it clearly is, from the influence of others. Just how Schubert's quote of Beethoven can be interpreted as an act of strength will be shown later in Section 4.8, 'Resilience in the Schubert/Beethoven Debate'.

## 2.12 Postlude and Introduction

We have seen Schubert's unique ability to demonstrate both (positive) connection and (negative) disconnection in his symphonies. While one may choose to argue that Schubert's use of complementary rhythms stems from his love of counterpoint, the fact remains that his use of complementary pairs, and the connection that this brings about, is readily apparent and unique.

It is of course possible to find examples of connection in any symphony. Music is, in and of itself, a living connector, and so it makes sense that there are elements of connection within every composition. There is little that can be argued against an attack that any analysis that is focused on finding connection (as this one is) can and will find it. However, my analysis of Schubert is not simply to be understood as a metaphor for connection. The concrete connection that occurs between musicians while playing these passages is real: whether the tight-knit family of three trombones trusted with their own passage, the cellos with their

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<sup>193</sup> For more on comparisons between the two composers, see Richard Kramer, *From the Ruins of Enlightenment: Beethoven and Schubert in their Solitude* (University of Chicago Press, 2023).

‘sensuous’ phrase, or the back and forth between the woodwinds or a dialogue within the strings. Also, and most importantly, in regards to this analysis, *a more holistic and broader perspective must be taken*. The analyses presented here of Schubert and connection are to be understood as a pathway for exploring illness and healing. Schubert does not have a monopoly on illness, which is part of the human condition and something that connects us all.

And yet, in Schubert, we are offered a unique pathway. Here, we have a young man facing massive uncertainty regarding his illness. Mindbody medicine and research applied here serves to centre our opinions, thoughts and even beliefs surrounding the composer. It reminds us how every part of Schubert, from the mental, physical, spiritual or otherwise, was affected by his illness. Ultimately, this analysis serves as one opportunity to contemplate connection, illness and healing in our own lives. Again, mindbody research is a powerful reminder that social connection is not simply a ‘feel good’ moment. It has repercussions for our mental and physical health. American psychologist Barbara Fredrickson has studied the positive effects of what she calls ‘micro moments of positivity resonance’, describing even short everyday interactions where we share a moment of connection with another person, sometimes complete strangers, that improves our mood or makes us smile. In line with psychoneuroimmunology research, Fredrickson’s research shows a clear link between positive changes in mood and changes within the biology of the person:

As you move through your day, these biological characters – your brain, your oxytocin, and your vagus nerve – are ever responsive to set changes. As you interact with one person after another, they gently nudge you to attend to these others more closely and forge connections when possible. They shape your motives and behaviours in subtle ways, yet ultimately, their actions serve to strengthen your relationships and knit you in closer to the social fabric of life.<sup>194</sup>

Knowing as we do that lack of connection causes negative suffering on different levels, it is fitting, then, that Fredrickson’s research shows that positive interaction or connection is linked to positive changes within the body. By extension, the concept that positive interaction within the score of Schubert’s Ninth Symphony might not just bring about a positive mood (either through the social interaction between musicians and/or musicians and audience, together with the topoi or musical semantics that represent healing) but a positive *physical response* is

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<sup>194</sup> Barbara Fredrickson, *Love 2.0: Creating Happiness and Health in Moments of Connection* (Plume, 2014), pp. 40–41.

not only plausible, it is highly likely and continually proven in the performance of this work. If we are to offer a musical example in dialogue with Fredrickson's research and that of her colleagues, then even short examples of connection in his music can elicit a positive response. In relation to the beginning of the 'Unfinished', the application of psychologist Steven Porges's research demonstrates that low-frequency sounds cause our bodies to become stressed. Additionally, his research on the vagus nerve, the tenth cranial nerve of the body, has been seminal in tracking how our sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems cause our bodies to have negative and positive immune responses. Social connection means we are safe, and feeling safe is a pathway for healing. While objectively we may be safe, for example in an airport surrounded by detection machines and officers with guns, we don't 'feel safe'. Feeling safe is instinctual:

Feeling safe functions as a subjective index of a neural platform that supports both sociality and the homeostatic processes optimizing health, growth, and restoration. Operationally, feeling safe is our subjective interpretation of internal bodily feelings that are being conveyed via bi-directional neural pathways between our bodily organs and our brain. Feelings of safety are not equivalent to an objective measurement of safety, which may pragmatically be defined as the removal of threat. Feeling safe is more akin to a felt sense as described by Gendlin (1997). Although Gendlin, as a philosopher and psychologist, was not physiologically oriented, he described a "felt sense" not as a mental experience, but as a physical one.<sup>195</sup>

The analyses presented above, demonstrating connection through complementary rhythm within the score, and how players performing such passages will inevitably experience this connection (and ultimately, safety), are presented for consideration from a mindbody perspective. And yet we realise that the source for such connection is Schubert himself. The impetus to write passages of connection or disconnection stems from within the composer himself, and it is that dynamic that is of interest here. When we consider Schubert as the source of this connection or disconnection, we need to be open to the possibility not only that his music was *felt* by the composer (would anyone argue otherwise?), but that these different emotions would have had a physical presentation for him, both positive and negative. In line

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<sup>195</sup> Stephen. W. Porges, 'Polyvagal Theory: A Science of Safety', *Frontiers in Integrative Neuroscience*, 16. 871227 (2022), p. 2, doi.org/10.3389/fnint.2022.871227 [accessed 18 December 2024]

with Porges's research, *there is a clear and strong case to be made that Schubert would have, through his compositions, had a direct effect on his own health.*

The title of this section, 'Postlude and Introduction', may seem incongruous, but the following may serve to explain. 'Postlude' refers to the summary presented here on the importance of social connection for us all, and as an appeal to recognise that both the music and person of Franz Schubert is a vehicle to explore this. 'Introduction' refers to my strong sense that as we further peel back the layers of Schubert's brilliant use of pairs, we recognise a more fundamental or elemental source.

What lies at the core of social connection? While researching the link between social connection and compassion, the following quote from a 2013 article titled 'Social Connection and Compassion: Important Predictors of Health and Well-being' confirmed my approach. Research in these different subfields of psychology demonstrated that social connectedness has distinct antecedents.<sup>196</sup> Social connection only works *when the source is well meaning*. Connection for connection's sake does not have the same effect on the body as connection where empathy or compassion is present:

Social connection is linked to health, well-being, social competence, and increased survival as well as a prosocial orientation toward the world, helping to create a highly beneficial and mutually reinforcing set of variables. Lack of social connection, on the other hand, is linked to psychological distress, dysfunctional interpersonal behaviour, accelerated mortality, and antisocial tendencies in a deleterious and mutually reinforcing set of variables. In view of the rapid rate of the decline of social connection in today's world, further understanding of how to increase social connection is crucial and urgent. Active ingredients such as subjective perception of connection, affection, and emotion regulation provide clues to appropriate interventions. The cultivation of compassion appears to be an important intervention that can help increase social connection.<sup>197</sup>

Compassion is the prerequisite for real social connection, connection that is healing. In following this line of investigation or exploration, there are clear parallels between Schubert's emphatic use of pairs and the world of Compassion Focused Therapy, the psychotherapeutic model developed by psychologist Paul Gilbert:

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<sup>196</sup> Emma Seppala, Timothy Rossomando and James Robert Doty, 'Social Connection and Compassion: Important Predictors of Health and Well-being', *Social Research*, 80.2 (2013), pp. 411–430, doi:10.1353/sor.2013.0027.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p.430.

We are all born with the need to connect to other minds and feel cared for. This blossoms into desires to socially connect in one's group; to find acceptance and social belonging to facilitate helpful relationships; to be wanted, appreciated and valued (Gilbert, 1989; Hardy, 2009). If we achieve this then our worlds are much safer (and our threat systems settle) in contrast to not being valued or wanted, rejected or struggling alone. Helpful relationships are physiologically regulating (Baumeister & Leary 1995).<sup>198</sup>

In moving forward with this analysis, I wish to consider the further possibilities that Schubert's last symphonies might offer us by moving beyond connection, or perhaps by *moving back* to that prerequisite for true connection: compassion. If it is possible to track compassion in Schubert, and couple this with research in the area of psychology and neurology on the effects of compassion, then an even more convincing case could be made for linking Schubert's late symphonies to illness and healing.

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<sup>198</sup> Paul Gilbert, *Compassion Focused Therapy: Distinctive Features* (Routledge, 2010), p.83.



## Chapter 3. Schubert and Compassion

In this chapter I use Schubert's music and reception history as a pathway to probe the subject of compassion. I will begin by defining compassion and introducing recent research in the field of psychology, focusing on the psychotherapeutic model 'Compassion Focused Therapy' as a modality to explore Schubert's music. Subsequently, I will analyze Schubert's setting of 'Erlkönig' as an example of how compassion can be explored in music. I will then demonstrate how elements of Schubert's life, from his friendships, his prolific ability (and perhaps need?) to compose, through to his illness, may be viewed from a compassion focused therapy perspective. I will take issue with musicologist Hugh MacDonald's approach to Schubert's music in his much-cited article 'Schubert's Volcanic Temper' (1978), and offer, I believe, a much-needed alternative reading. I will then cover the important issue of self-compassion, using it to gain new insights into both Schubert's music and his illness. I will conclude the chapter with a holistic view of compassion, explaining how it is part of our evolution, and confirming its importance for all of us.

### 3.1 Compassion and Compassion Focused Therapy as a Pathway to Understanding Schubert

Words such as empathy, sympathy and compassion are, for many, interchangeable. While one might more easily describe the difference between sympathy and empathy (describing sympathy as a more 'feeling sorry for' another's pain, and empathy as a 'sharing in another's pain'), the differentiation between empathy and compassion is generally less self-evident. His Holiness the Dalai Lama offers a definition of compassion as 'compassion, through acting, helping, serving, or at least restraining from harming others, that is the practice of compassion'.<sup>199</sup> Psychologist Paul Gilbert is recognised as one of the leading psychologists in compassion and self-compassion. Gilbert's definition of compassion is that 'compassion is a sensitivity to suffering in self and others with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it'.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *The Practice of Compassion* (2015), <<https://youtu.be/hpuUUIkMTYU>> [accessed 16 April 2023].

<sup>200</sup> The Compassionate Mind Foundation (2022) <<https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk/about>> [accessed 16 April 2023].

According to Gilbert, compassion always has an element of action inherent in it. For that reason, in the absence of action, we exercise ‘empathy’. We are empathetic with someone’s situation, we sense their pain, and maybe even feel their pain, but do nothing to help. When we do something to help alleviate this suffering, we are demonstrating ‘compassion’. Gilbert’s definition of compassion as being action-led aligns well with that of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who spoke of ‘helping’ and ‘serving’ as important elements within compassion.

In this chapter, I will be using Paul Gilbert’s psychotherapeutic model, Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT), as a guide and reference point, showing how seminal elements of CFT can be shown to have direct (and indirect) parallels within Schubert’s music. Key research findings taken from Gilbert’s Compassion Focused Therapy research, and from other research on compassion, will be used here as a pathway to guide my analysis of Schubert’s music, with the hopes of offering not only a new perspective on Schubert, but on compassion itself.

## 3.2 Why Compassion?

Why is compassion important? Compassion, beyond being touted as a ‘soft skill’, is essential to a healthy life: ‘Cross-sectional studies have reported associations of compassion with better mental health (greater happiness and wellbeing) and physical health (lower cardiovascular risk and decreased inflammation).’<sup>201</sup>

At Stanford University, prominent neuroscientist Professor James Doty founded the Center for Compassion and Altruism and Research Education (CCARE) to share important scientific research on the benefits of compassion. Reporting in a study titled ‘Investigating the Behavioral and Neural Mechanisms of Compassion Training’, CCARE reported on their findings of individuals who completed the Stanford training programme ‘Compassion Cultivation Training’ (CCT):

With regard to individuals who completed CCT, there was significant improvement from pre- to post-CCT in multiple psychological domains. In the domain of compassion/empathy/mindfulness (targets of CCT), there were significant increases in compassion for others and for self and also in ease with being the target of others’ compassion, empathy for others, mindfulness skills, and

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<sup>201</sup> Ellen E. Lee and others, ‘Compassion toward Others and Self-Compassion Predict Mental and Physical Well-Being: A 5-Year Longitudinal Study of 1090 Community-Dwelling Adults across the Lifespan’, *Translational Psychiatry*, 11.1 (2021), p. 397, doi:10.1038/s41398-021-01491-8.

decentering from the contents of awareness. There was also evidence of improved emotional processing as indexed by greater frequency and self-efficacy in cognitive reappraisal of emotion, as well as lesser psychiatric symptoms, social anxiety, and depression symptoms. In the domain of wellbeing, there were significant increases in global self-esteem and satisfaction with life, as well as lesser worry, rumination, and loneliness.<sup>202</sup>

In line with mindbody research, compassion and compassion training are valuable tools in healing and facilitating self-healing. Social anxiety, depression, worry and loneliness are all factors that affect our physical health and longevity. The CCARE website answers the question posed at the beginning of this paragraph eloquently:

While science has made great strides in treating pathologies of the human mind, far less research exists to date on positive qualities of the human mind including compassion, altruism and empathy. Yet these prosocial traits are innate to us and lie at the very centerpiece of our common humanity. Our capacity to feel compassion has ensured the survival and thriving of our species over millennia.<sup>203</sup>

The reasons why I believe Franz Schubert is an excellent lens through which to explore issues around compassion, which, as Doty reminds us, ‘lie at the very centerpiece of our common humanity’, will be answered in the next paragraph.

### 3.3 Schubert and Compassion: A Pioneer

Building on the findings of the previous chapter, ‘Schubert the Connector’, where the composer was shown to connect equals, here I take the position that the source of Schubert’s willingness or ability to connect with others comes from an even more elemental nature: a strong sense of compassion.

As the staple of his compositional life, the Lieder of Franz Schubert act as a ‘Wegweiser’ or compass. But they are more than just a reference point for a hugely prolific career. They are the life-map of the man. Worthy of his place in history as the composer who brought the Lied to a fully developed art form, my own sense is that at the very heart of this achievement is Schubert’s innate (and therefore arguably unconscious) *commitment to the other*. Schubert’s

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<sup>202</sup> The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, ‘Current Research’, <<https://ccare.stanford.edu/research/current-research/>> [accessed 18 June 2024].

<sup>203</sup> The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, ‘CCARE Mission & Vision’, <<https://ccare.stanford.edu/about/mission-vision/>>.

Lieder demonstrate not only a brilliant ability to connect pianist and singer; in the context of compassion, they demonstrate again and again an active support of the vocal line. This is more than connection. 'Connection' may be identified in the mirroring of a vocal line in the piano part. In Schubert's Lieder, in line with compassion, one can identify elements which can be seen as 'offering support' in a different, more active way. Knowing and understanding that compassion is always action-based, I believe that Schubert's development of the Lied is inextricably linked to his innate sense of compassion. Consequently, I also believe that Schubert's compassion can be read into his orchestral writing.

With compassion taking such a central role in this chapter, it offers an opportunity to revisit older analyses of Schubert, particularly those that have viewed the composer through a less compassionate lens. From my own perspective, Hugh MacDonald's reading of Schubert and his music as 'violence [that] is sometimes like a child's uncontrolled bad temper' will undergo a much different approach, one that is grounded in compassion.<sup>204</sup>

Anxiety, shame, guilt and depression are universal themes that we all struggle with at some time or other. Schubert's life-debilitating illness, which ended his life at age 31, was filled with struggle. But it was also filled with beautiful music. It is only fair that we approach the man who gave us such beautiful music from a compassionate perspective. In doing so, we share in his music, his illness and his healing. Perhaps it will allow us to reflect on our own ability to be compassionate, to others and to ourselves.

### 3.4 'Erlkönig' through the Lens of Compassion

In the previous chapter on connection, I have referenced Schubert's 'Erlkönig', and so it is fitting to use it again here as a pathway to explore compassion. It offers an excellent opportunity to witness how Schubert's sense of compassion spills over into his setting of the song. He brilliantly communicates to us just how worried and frightened the child is, how oblivious the father is, and how devious and evil the Erlkönig is. And yet, in all of this, I identify Schubert's innate sense of suffering in others. In keeping with compassion, despite the shocking and brutal ending of the song, I also see how Schubert's song is action-based and attempts to alleviate this suffering.

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<sup>204</sup> Macdonald, 'Schubert's Volcanic Temper', p. 950.

The opening seconds of the piano part of 'Erlkönig' paint a frantic, hectic scene. The atmosphere changes back and forward from worry (child) to passive response (father), and from cunning evil (Erlkönig) to sheer terror (child). Schubert's setting brilliantly demonstrates how musical tropes, structure and chord progressions, dynamic markings and colour all contribute to make the poem more than it is. In this regard I agree wholeheartedly with Christopher Gibbs, who writes that:

Schubert's uncanny realization provides a powerful reading of Goethe's poem. By conflating reality and the supernatural, sexuality and death, and by presenting the sweet promises of the terrifying Erlking, Schubert fearlessly explores Goethe's anxious implications. He reveals the disturbing uncanniness of the conflicts in the poem, which, set to music, become even more seductive, disturbing, irresistible [...] The reception of Erlkönig points to the paradoxical capacity of a musical work to be more realistic than a literary one, while at the same time being unable to convey unequivocal meaning.<sup>205</sup>

The 'paradoxical capacity of a musical work to be more realistic than a literary one' is a brilliant recognition by Gibbs. Schubert's ability to tap into all our emotions is, for me, based firmly in his compassion. As for the beginning, the drama and terror are immediately evident through the forte hammered repeated octave triplets in the right hand. The stark left-hand scalic run from the tonic of G minor up to the minor sixth (semantically, the minor sixth being a representation of tension or pain) and then back through the D, Bb, G open return to the tonic underpins and reinforces the hectic beginning, all of which prepare the listener in advance of the singer/narrator. The mood has been set, and maybe more than that. Lorraine Byrne Bodley recognises this beginning as a prophetic acknowledgement of what is to come: 'This outcome is already augured in the piano introduction where the kinetic image of the horse [...] is associated with the boy's destiny – the inevitable destination is, of course, death.'<sup>206</sup> When we arrive at the end of the song, the piano part takes on a particular, singular function, and though the song ends tragically, Schubert's nuanced writing, both in the vocal and the piano part, offer, as I see it, an opportunity to highlight Schubert's innate sense of compassion. By adding this new dimension we arrive, as Gibbs has suggested, with the end result that Schubert's setting is made more powerful than that of the poet's himself. The words of Goethe's poem 'In

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<sup>205</sup> Christopher H. Gibbs, "'Komm, geh' mit mir": Schubert's Uncanny *Erlkönig*', *19th-Century Music*, 19.2 (1995), pp. 115–35 (p. 133), doi:10.2307/746658.

<sup>206</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 169.

seinen Armen das Kind war tot', despite being horribly tragic and shocking, are left completely devoid of any specific dynamic marking by Schubert. That is of course not to say that they are devoid of emotional content; quite the opposite.

In Italian verismo opera, Rodolpho's gut-wrenching cry of 'Mimi' at the end of *La Bohème*, when Rodolpho recognises that Mimi is dead, has a fundamentally different aesthetic value than the otherwise bel canto vocal line. For the passage to have any real significance, and to achieve Puccini's intended effect, it is essential to purposefully sacrifice the vocal line to attain the dramatic aesthetic of verismo. My experience conducting the opera has been that one has to work unusually hard to get the true sense of verismo across. One must motivate the singer to produce *a real cry* and not a falsely sounding, simulated one. As most cries are not synonymous with beauty, it requires the singer to produce a sound that, by its nature, must be upsetting. In essence, they need to find an ugly sound, which of course goes against all their training. In many ways, at the end of 'Erlkönig', the performer has the same problem as the one in *Bohème*, albeit that it happens to be the exact reverse of what is required in *Bohème*.

In 'Erlkönig', the vocal line attains its dramatic effect by a purposeful disconnection from the text. In a kind of paradox, it is a brilliant demonstration by Schubert of how powerful an ending can be by purposefully *avoiding* drama. *Dramatic in its avoidance of drama*, if you will. While in *Bohème* it may be difficult for the singer to create an ugly sound, conversely one can understand, how, in the case of 'Erlkönig', it would be challenging for the singer to avoid a dramatic performance of the text. It is worth commenting here that it is the narrator that sings the last words of the song, not the protagonists (father and child) or antagonist (Erlking). Done well, the vocal line is chilling because Schubert renders the narrator numb, unable, even as a third party looking on to the scene, to yet process the death of the young child.

### 3.4.1 Singing 'Erlkönig' and Embodiment

In a masterclass where German baritone Thomas Quastoff is coaching a young baritone in 'Erlkönig', one can witness first hand just how difficult it is for the younger singer to avoid singing in a dramatic fashion at the end of the song.<sup>207</sup> The words in question are again: 'In

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<sup>207</sup> 'Quastoff: How to End Schubert's Erlkönig', The Masterclass Media Foundation, 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WpHQ2Kbu9g> [accessed 18 December 2024]

seinen Armen das Kind war tot.’ The death of a child must count as one of the most traumatic events that can be thrown at us. When the masterclass participant instinctively dramatises the final words, Quastoff is immediate in his disapproval and subsequent correction. What follows is a demonstration by the master baritone as to the ‘correct’ solution. Offering the masterclass participant a much less cultivated sound, he asks for a more direct, forward sound. It is raw, without polish and, most importantly, *almost* devoid of feeling. ‘Almost’ because the ‘feeling’ that the singer must bring across is one of numbness. Again, paradoxically, numbness is by its very nature devoid of feeling. We say that we ‘feel’ numb. But surely the point is that numbness means *you can’t feel anything*. And yet when our arm goes numb, we know it is numb. Perhaps it is a philosophical conundrum to argue for or against. *What matters is that Schubert has tapped into a very human emotion*. It is primeval. Numbness is associated with the first stage of grief, ‘a natural protection when facing any kind of trauma’, a detachment ‘from the reality of the loss’.<sup>208</sup>

Our autonomic nervous system response to huge stress or trauma is commonly known as ‘fight or flight’, but there is also a third option, ‘freeze’, and it is that which Schubert has tapped into here. Freeze is when our body senses that to fight would bring us nothing, and we are not able to flee. Understanding the nature of ‘freeze’ (tonic immobility) as an evolutionary response of the autonomic nervous system can be helpful for victims of rape and other physical trauma, who may for many years harbour feelings of guilt for not ‘fighting back’ against their aggressor.<sup>209</sup>

Lawrence Kramer has recognised something similar at the end of the song, something that is unsettling. He questions why the narrator chooses ‘to return only with [the] news of death – news announced with a neutrality so toneless that it is brutal’.<sup>210</sup> One might substitute Kramer’s use of the word ‘toneless’ with ‘numbness’; the effect would be the same, and I certainly agree with his reading of the passage as ‘brutal’. The reason why there is no feeling (and thus no

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<sup>208</sup> Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D., MD, ‘The Shock of Loss’, *Hospice Foundation of America* <https://hospicefoundation.org/End-of-Life-Support-and-Resources/Grief-Support/Journeys-with-Grief-Articles/The-Shock-of-Loss> [accessed 18 December 2024]

<sup>209</sup> Norman B. Schmidt, J Anthony Richey, Michael J. Zvolensky, Jon K. Maner, ‘Exploring Human Freeze Responses to a Threat Stressor’, *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 39.3 (2007), pp. 292–304, doi: 10.1016/j.jbtep.2007.08.002 [accessed 4 January, 2025]

<sup>210</sup> Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (University of California Press, 1986), p. 157.

drama) is because *there is no understanding as to what has just happened*. We are confronted with deep, inexplicable trauma. Nothing else (yet). When Quastoff himself sings the ending, the effect is chilling. He demonstrates this by singing the passage in a disconnected way, purposefully cold, devoid of feeling. Though the masterclass is in German, Quastoff follows his demonstration with a quick English commentary, offering the words ‘That’s it... not more’, expressing his ideal that for this ending to work as Schubert composed it, one must be careful how one ‘participates’ in the drama. The narrator is traumatised, and as such, Quastoff’s ‘detached’ singing of the passage is hugely appropriate. *It is here at this moment that the piano part takes on its singular role*, and it is here where I wish to begin my analysis.

After Schubert renders the singer numb and powerless when confronted by the child’s death, it is the piano part that takes on the role of active (compassionate) support here. The diminished seventh chord in the final measures of the song (C sharp, Bb, E natural, G) (Example 3.1) has been heard before. Five measures before the ending of the song, it appears in the context of a Neapolitan sixth chord over a pedal Ab (enharmonically here it appears as Db, Fb, Example 3.1 Schubert, ‘Erlkönig’ (D. 328), measures 143–48

143

-reicht den Hof mit Müh' und Not;

146 Recit. Andante

In sei-nen Ar-men das Kind war tot.

pp

f

decresc.

G, Bb), before moving on to Ab major proper. When it is heard again only two measures before the end, it acts as an important connector. The obvious role of the chord is to prepare us to return to G minor, for the final V–I cadence at the end of the song. But in the context of compassion, it may be seen to take on another role.



As I see it, the piano acts here in a supportive role to the singer. It is the singer (narrator) that is traumatised. The piano's role is one that offers support, connection and compassion. Notably, Schubert notates the chord after an eighth-note rest (see Example 3.1, measure 147). Why not on the second beat? The passage is marked to be played and sung like a recitative, without a tempo or pulse. In light of this, is the rest length not purely academic on Schubert's part? The answer is a strong no.

All speech has a natural rhythm, and here, Schubert's notation lengths capture the speech rhythm perfectly: 'In seinen' is fast, and passive, while 'Arm-' of 'Armen' is active or accentuated, and '-men' of 'Armen' is, just as one would speak it in German, more passive. The 'Betonung' or accent could also fall on 'sei-' of 'seinen', accentuating that it was in 'his' arms that the child died. But Schubert clearly chooses the former. *There is a rhythm inherent in the words.* This is the essence of what recitative is. Schubert's choice of rhythm shows his compassion. This is true of the eighth-note rest and subsequent piano entry also. Written after only an eighth-note rest, Schubert intends for the chord to follow on quicker than may be naturally expected, almost interrupting the word 'Kind'. To put it another way: *it should be played like an intake of breath*, the same intake of breath that one instinctively takes when one has just heard bad news. The effect of this chord adds drama and heightens the suspense. However, in the context of compassion, and remembering that *compassion always means taking action*, I read it as a musical gesture of compassionate support for the singer. For it to have its intended effect, the pianist must be careful not to wait too long before playing the chord.

We notice that Schubert breaks off the narrator mid-sentence, and there is good reason for this. For Schubert, *his narrator can't continue*. Goethe's poem is harrowing. But the last sentence of the poem is as follows: 'In seinen Armen das Kind war tot.' *The musical comma placed by Schubert after 'Kind' is not present in the original.* By stopping before the final acknowledgement, 'war tot', Schubert changes the whole atmosphere of the poem.

Even shortened to 'das Kind war tot', Goethe's text is, in and of itself, a sentence that makes grammatical sense: 'The child was dead.' However, from a compassion perspective, Schubert's version is perfectly aligned with that of the trauma that he is trying to express. In Schubert's version, 'it', *both the sentence and the passing of the child*, simply doesn't make sense. Just as 'In seinen Armen das Kind' is an unfinished sentence, so too Schubert's chord after 'Kind' is

unfinished (harmonically). It leaves us hanging in dreadful anticipation. Again, this is not anticipation in the sense of not knowing, *but anticipation in the sense of not wanting to know*. For now it is a case of not wanting to continue, *or not being able to continue*. This is the freeze response, then, which as we have seen can indeed be the case with trauma. *The narrator knows the fate of the child*. He just can't bring himself to finish the sentence.

In reflecting on the above, we must acknowledge more than we have before, and that is that the foundation of Schubert's compositional brilliance is facilitated here (and in other places which I will visit later) by his extraordinary capacity for compassion. It is little wonder that the song was an incredible success for Schubert throughout his lifetime. His innate understanding of compassion is one of the key aspects that makes this so special and speaks to all of us. It connects us with, and allows us to share, not only in the awful fate of the child, but in that of the narrator. This nuanced gift, Schubert's ability to find a way to not only tell the story (as set out in the poem), but to represent both the trauma (the breaking off mid-sentence of the singer/narrator), and simultaneously demonstrate compassion (by the quick entry of the piano chord on the offbeat) represents for me an unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate compassion in Schubert's music. In his chapter 'Warmth' in *Compassion Focused Therapy*, Paul Gilbert explains that:

Warmth appears to have at least three key attributes. First, warmth provides verbal and nonverbal signals of interest, caring and kindness that are soothing. Second, warmth can involve a sharing of positive affect between individuals that stimulates liking, affection and feelings of connectedness (in contrast to indifference, withdrawing or attacking). Third, warmth is more likely when individuals feel safe with each other and are trusting. Individuals who are easily threatened and become defensive may struggle to feel or express warmth. Warmth underpins the positive feelings of soothing, calming and being soothed. It moderates defensive emotions (anger, anxiety, sadness) and behaviours (e.g., aggression and fight), and can also turn off seeking, doing, achieving and acquiring.<sup>211</sup>

Gilbert's reference to 'nonverbal signs of interest' has of course a double parallel here in 'Erlkönig' when it comes to the piano. As an exercise, if one were to substitute the words 'warmth' in this passage with 'the piano entrance after the eighth-note rest', almost all of this paragraph makes sense! Though it is the singer who tells us what is happening, the piano (non-verbal) has importance beyond that of a 'commentator' or accompanist. In line with Gilbert's

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<sup>211</sup> Gilbert, *Compassion Focused Therapy*, p. 54.

definition of compassion, the piano demonstrates action and support to the singer. But it also shows warmth. It is not too much to say that the piano chord is an effort to soothe the narrator, or at the very least, to share in his pain. Both are active in telling the story, but the piano, by the very fact that it is non-verbal, carries with it the possibility to act as ‘signals of interest, caring and kindness that are soothing’.

The singer’s final notes (C sharp, D) offer another opportunity for a compassion-based analysis. Left alone, the chords look like a cadence in the dominant D major, not returning us to the home key, as if the singer or narrator still cannot bring him/herself to acknowledge the death of the child. The acknowledgement of death is left to the piano. Despite the loud dynamic marking, or maybe even because of it, I choose to see it as an act of compassion. The two final piano chords (non-verbal) are as terrifying as they are simple: a dominant-seventh chord resolving to the tonic key of G minor. An added harshness is expressed by Schubert in the notation of the penultimate chord: it is written as an eighth note, followed by an eighth-note rest. Schubert’s intention is clear: direct, loud, short, even hard. Perhaps the piano is expressing shock? Perhaps these chords even act to sever us from the moment, ending abruptly as they do? CFT offers another possibility.

Compassion is generally equated with gentleness. If compassion were a dynamic marking, we would not choose the dynamic ‘forte’. We might choose pianissimo, or piano. However, Gilbert tells us that compassion is:

[...] not about submissive ‘niceness’ – it can be tough, setting boundaries, being honest and not giving clients what they want but what they need. An alcoholic wants another drink – that is not what they need; many people want to avoid pain and may try to do so in a variety of ways – but (kind) clarity, exposure and acceptance may be what actually facilitates change and growth (Siegel, 2010).<sup>212</sup>

Hugely relevant for the final cadence in ‘Erlkönig’, Gilbert shows us that ‘there are compassionate (and non-compassionate) ways to engage with painful experiences, frightening feelings or traumatic memories. CFT is not about avoidance of the painful, or trying to “soothe it away”, but rather is a way of engaging with the painful.’<sup>213</sup> A warning shout or scream to a child about to put its hand near a hot stove or boiling water is another description of what

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

Gilbert would classify as compassion-based, but it falls outside what might generally be understood as a compassionate act. So too with the final piano chord. Taken out of context, it is final, loud and abrupt. And yet, with the two final piano chords, *Schubert removes the narrator/singer as the centre of attention, protecting him*, one might say, from having to speak any further.

Gilbert explains that:

Many people have a complex mixture of feelings that may be difficult to understand and of which they may be fearful (Leahy, 2002, 2005). They may cope with these via avoidance, denial, dissociation or by replacing one feeling with another. Social referencing, being listened to and empathic validation are important experiences of ‘what is going on in the mind of the other’ that help a person come to terms with, and understand, their own feelings. Client and therapist work together on the ‘basic feeling issues’ and help the person be aware of and address emotional memories, unmet needs or key fears that might make feelings frightening (see Gilbert & Leahy, 2007).<sup>214</sup>

Trying to process the death of the child, the singer/narrator is facing a ‘complex mixture of feelings that may be difficult to understand and of which they may be fearful’, and thus, musically, we are left in the dominant key. Knowing ‘what is going on in the mind of the other’, *it is the piano that returns us to the tonic*, a fitting compassionate act that helps in some way to validate our suffering.

### 3.5 Gilbert’s Affect Regulation Systems Model and Schubert

At the heart of Paul Gilbert’s psychotherapeutic model Compassion Focused Therapy lies what Gilbert refers to as the Affect Regulation Systems Model. A powerful tool, it identifies three centres that each of us have in common. Ideally, these three centres should co-exist in a healthy way. The reality, unfortunately, is that for most of us, one or even more of these regulation systems are out of balance. When this happens, it results in a less-than-ideal mental health state, that we also know has a hugely negative effect on our overall health.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

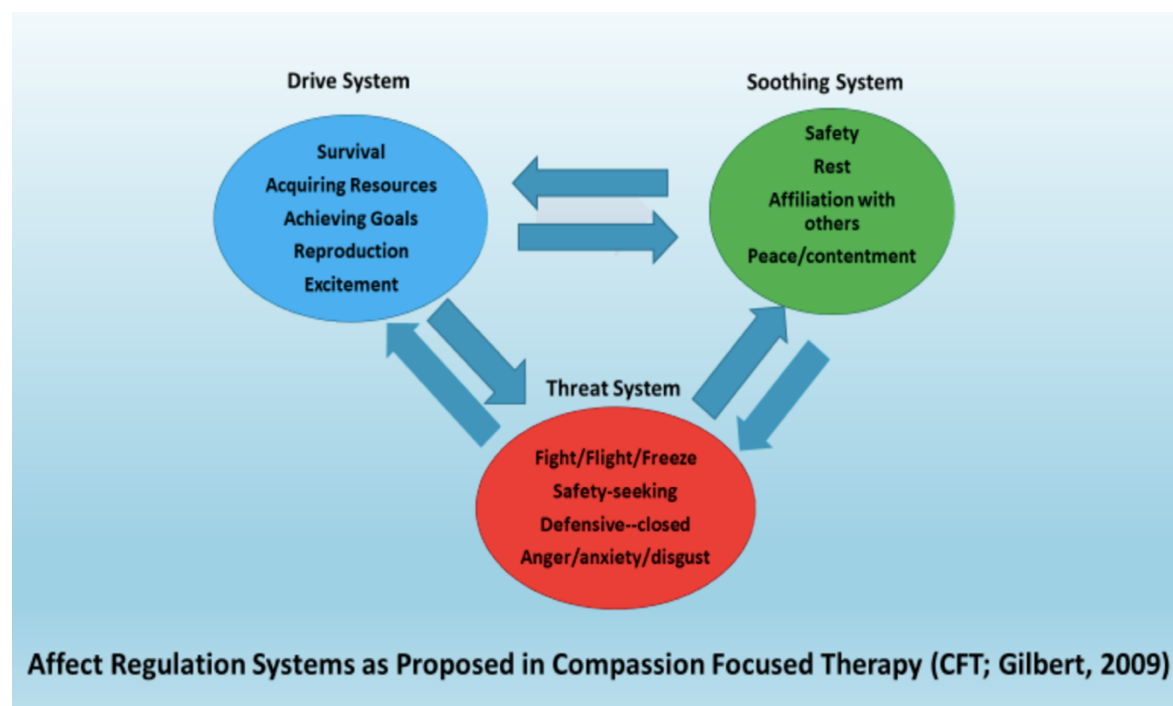
<sup>215</sup> National Institute of Mental Health, ‘Understanding the Link between Chronic Disease and Depression’ <<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/chronic-illness-mental-health>>; ‘Chronic Illness and Depression’ <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/9288-chronic-illness-and-depression> [accessed 18 December 2024]

In the next section, I propose to look at elements of Schubert’s own life under the lens of these regulation systems, a venture that invites us to take a new and somewhat nuanced perspective on the composer’s life. This will pave the way to an analysis of Schubert’s final symphonies from a compassion perspective.

### 3.6 The Threat System and Schubert

Gilbert identifies the first of his three Affect Regulation Systems (see Figure 3.1) as the ‘threat system’. Known more popularly as ‘fight/flight/freeze’, it is an innate and fundamental part of our human make-up. The amygdala is its primary processor, a part of the brain that processes fear. Gilbert tells us that ‘the function of this system is to pick up on threats quickly and then give us bursts of feelings such as anxiety, anger or disgust’.<sup>216</sup> To what extent this threat system may have been activated in Schubert is worth consideration. A system that is under constant threat, whether real or perceived, is not compatible with good health.

Figure 3.1 Paul Gilbert’s Affect Regulation Systems diagram



<sup>216</sup> Paul Gilbert, *The Compassionate Mind: A New Approach to Life's Challenges* (Constable, 2010), p. 25.

The precious little correspondence we have from Schubert's own hand, or written about Schubert from his contemporaries, carry an oftentimes inordinate weight with it. As such, we forage it from every angle for knowledge and insight. As is the way with any hermeneutic exercise, we oftentimes come away with radically different understandings. Additionally, we may take a step back and consider *what has not been written* and why.<sup>217</sup> While there are references to Schubert being sick and the symptoms he suffered from, there is no use of the word syphilis in any of his letters. While he wrote about being miserable and alone, Schubert doesn't specifically state what the source of his suffering was.<sup>218</sup> Might Schubert have suffered from shame or guilt around his illness? What role, if any, might shame have played in his illness?

### 3.7 Schubert, Shame and Stigma within the Threat System

There is consensus that the reason Schubert remained at home was directly related to the shame regarding his appearance.<sup>219</sup> John Gingerich writes that 'Schubert's illness affected his career directly. Prolonged periods of bed rest, unsightly, socially stigmatizing sores, and a weakened and fragile state of health even when he was feeling best, kept him from socializing with all but close friends for the better part of 1823.'<sup>220</sup> Gingerich covers much ground here in this short quote, recognising not only that Schubert's career was affected by his illness and how he reacted to it, but also the social stigma attached to his illness. As with any sexually transmitted disease, guilt, taboos, shame and otherwise deeply negative feelings abound.<sup>221</sup>

Ruth Solie in her reflections on Biedermeier Vienna and Schubert quotes literature professor Virgil Nemoianu on the difference between the terms 'Romanticism' and 'Biedermeier', as he

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<sup>217</sup> This point is also mentioned by John Gingerich in Chapter 2, 'The Year of Crisis, 1823', regarding Schubert's letter to Kupelwieser (31 March 1824): 'in spite of Schubert's unusual candor it omits as much as it explains'; *Schubert's Beethoven Project*, p. 41.

<sup>218</sup> Schubert's 31 March 1824 letter to Kupelwieser where he mentions being the most miserable man in the world is ample evidence that Schubert suffered from depression, and his poem 'Mein Traum', showing childhood trauma, has often been analysed for its possible autobiographic content.

<sup>219</sup> Schwind writes to Kupelwieser and Schober on the 10th and 14th of April 1824 respectively to say that Schubert is confined to his house due to illness. *Schubert: Die Dokumente seines Lebens*, ed. by Otto Erich Deutsch, (Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996), p. 237.

<sup>220</sup> Gingerich, *Schubert's Beethoven Project*, p.44.

<sup>221</sup> Emily Scheinfeld, 'Shame and STIs: An Exploration of Emerging Adult Students' Felt Shame and Stigma towards Getting Tested for and Disclosing Sexually Transmitted Infections', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18.13 (2021), p. 7179, doi:10.3390/ijerph18137179.

describes not only the domesticity of the period but also an ‘inclination toward morality’.<sup>222</sup> This inclination towards morality might help explain the lack of any overt reference to Schubert’s illness in his writings. The stigma attached to his illness in Biedermeier Vienna would have been enough to quash any mention of his illness. Can contemporary research in mindbody medicine and CFT inform this discussion around shame or stigma?

The fact remains that we have distanced ourselves temporally from Schubert’s syphilis by two hundred years. One may well question how *any* contemporary research might play a role in understanding the zeitgeist of the time, much less the higher demand to understand the man, his illness and, ultimately, his music. In the absence of any first-hand account from Schubert himself on his illness, is it not pure conjecture to suggest that because syphilis was socially unacceptable it would have led to increased anxiety, representing a further attack on his immune response?

Research on people with AIDS confirms that anxiety around illness leads to further illness:

Patients suffer not only from the physical effects of the disease, but also from the disgraceful consequences of the disease. HIV/AIDS is usually associated with avoidable behaviors that are not socially acceptable, such as unhealthy sexual relations and drug abuse: So the patients are usually held guilty for their illness. On the other hand, the issue of disease stigma in the community is the cause of rejection and isolation of these patients, and in health care centers is a major obstacle to providing services to these patients. Studies show that HIV/AIDS stigma has a completely negative effect on the quality of life of these patients. Criminal attitudes towards these patients and disappointing behavior by family, community, and medical staff cause blame and discrimination in patients. HIV/AIDS stigma is prevalent among diseases, making concealment a major problem in this behavioural disease. The stigma comes in two forms: a negative inner feeling and a negative feeling that other people in the community have towards the patient.<sup>223</sup>

The continuously changing condition of his illness, the need to hide this from the public eye, exacerbated by feelings of guilt, shame or both, would have activated his threat system. That is to say, the social and personal stigma attached to his illness would have, *in and of itself*, increased his suffering. An interesting article published in 2016 explains the important

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<sup>222</sup> See Chapter 4, ‘Biedermeier Domesticity and the Schubert Circle: A Rereading’ by Ruth Solie, *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (University of California Press, 2004), doi:10.1525/california/9780520238459.001.0001.

<sup>223</sup> Behzad Imani and others, ‘The Lived Experience of HIV-Infected Patients in the Face of a Positive Diagnosis of the Disease: A Phenomenological Study’, *AIDS Research and Therapy*, 18.1 (2021), p. 95, doi:10.1186/s12981-021-00421-4.

difference between shame and stigma. They do of course have something in common, but one of these commonalities is that *they are both linked to ill health*:

People living with HIV (PLWH) are at increased risk for mental health problems such as depression and anxiety [...] We propose that the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS leads to increased distress, in part, through shame.

While shame and stigma are related, important distinctions exist. Shame is a private albeit sometimes visible emotion whereas stigma generally refers to a public action (Lewis, 1995). Despite the potential importance of shame to adjustment, research has focused on the effects of stigma among PLWH [...] The purpose of the current review is to examine the potential role of shame in the mental and physical health of PLWH. In so doing, we distinguish shame from internalized stigma, and examine the extent to which shame is related to health outcomes among PLWH [...] As defined by Goffman (1963), stigma reduces one 'from a whole ... person to a tainted, discounted one.' Stigma may be present when people are labeled as different due to undesirable characteristics and subsequently experience status loss and discrimination (Link & Phelan, 2001). Stigma among PLWH stems in part from the association of HIV with AIDS, whose transmission is often perceived to be from controllable behaviors that are not sanctioned by societal, religious, and moral codes.<sup>224</sup>

Important parallels can *and should* be drawn between contemporary research findings on the illness trajectory of people with HIV and those who had syphilis in the time of Schubert. As the above research explains, even if one were to doubt that Schubert suffered from any personal shame due to his illness (I would argue that Schubert did indeed suffer from shame), the social stigma of the illness in Biedermeier nineteenth-century Vienna would have been enough to affect his illness in a negative way. Schubert is often described as a shy character. It is therefore relevant (and saddening) to note research done in 2003 that *HIV-positive men that identify as being shy are at greater risk of illness*.<sup>225</sup> It is therefore timely to consider the presence of shame and stigma in Schubert's life and the degree to which it might have exacerbated his illness, leading to his untimely death.

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<sup>224</sup> David S. Bennett and others, 'Shame among People Living with HIV: A Literature Review', *AIDS Care*, 28.1 (2016), p. 87, doi:10.1080/09540121.2015.1066749.

<sup>225</sup> Steve W. Cole and others, 'Psychological Risk Factors for HIV Pathogenesis: Mediation by the Autonomic Nervous System', *Biological Psychiatry*, 54.12 (2003), pp. 1444–56, doi:10.1016/S0006-3223(02)01888-7.



### 3.8 The Drive System and Schubert

The second system that Gilbert identifies is the ‘incentive and resource-seeking, drive-excitement system’. Gilbert describes this system as the drive or ‘go-getting’ part of our make-up. He writes that:

The function of this system is to give us positive feelings that guide, motivate and encourage us to seek out resources that we (and those we love and care about) will need in order to survive and prosper (Depue & Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005). We are motivated and pleased by seeking out, consuming and achieving nice things (e.g., food, sex, comforts, friendships, status and recognition). If we win a competition, pass an exam or get to go out with a desired person, we can have feelings of excitement and pleasure. If you win the lottery and become a millionaire you might feel a mild hypomania – feel so energized that it may be difficult to sleep, your mind will be racing and you may want to party all the time: the drive-excitement system gets out of balance. People with manic depression can have problems with this system because it can shift from too high to too low activation. When balanced with the other two systems, this system guides us towards important life goals. When blocks to our wants and goals become ‘a threat’, the threat system kicks in with anxiety or frustration-anger.<sup>226</sup>

Schubert’s artistic output in his short life is nothing short of eye-watering. There could be no argument made to suggest anything other than that he was utterly dedicated to his music and that his artistic drive was second to none.

From an early age Schubert was accustomed to recognition of his talent. Already in 1818 his name is to be found in a concert by the most prestigious concert promoter of the day, the Vienna Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. As Otto Biba points out in his research, ‘Schubert was the very first Viennese composer to live solely from his compositions, and I can well imagine that to some of his contemporaries this was viewed as anti-bourgeois and irresponsible.’<sup>227</sup> Schubert’s incredible productivity in his relatively short life is proof enough that music was an everyday part of his life. This was of course his choice, but the fact remains that he turned down secure employment under his father (which would have still allowed him to compose on the side and still lead a musical life) and chose a much more precarious life path. This, he would have almost certainly known, would demand incredible resilience, with no promise of success.

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<sup>226</sup> Gilbert, *Compassion Focused Therapy*, p. 47.

<sup>227</sup> Otto Biba, ‘Schubert’s Position in Viennese Musical Life’, *19th-Century Music*, 3.2 (1979), p. 107, doi:10.2307/746282.

Schubert's early success (and in particular the huge success of 'Erlkönig') meant that his name became known and respected, but Schubert never reaped the financial reward that other composers did in their lifetime.

Schubert had more than his fair share of let-downs in his compositional career. Schubert's initial application to become a member of the Musikverein was rejected, and yet his resilience shines through.<sup>228</sup> Gingerich makes the very human (and astute) observation when he identifies that any recovery from illness activated Schubert's drive system:

Any prolonged period of health and well-being needed to be exploited with a new urgency. He had always been productive, but that was no longer enough. Time was short, and whatever dreams and ambitions he had harbored for some hazily projected, indefinite future now became a matter of immediate concern.<sup>229</sup>

Lorraine Byrne Bodley also recognises Schubert's resilience ('resolve') in the face of illness. She too draws a direct connection between Schubert's recognition of the severity of his illness to a new enhanced drive ('new period of creativity'). She writes:

When Franz Schubert contracted syphilis in 1822, it was for all practical purposes a death sentence, and he would have expected to live between three and ten years. Just how devastated Schubert felt about his sudden misfortune can be gleaned from his letters. While the composer grappled with despair, he maintained extraordinary resolve and the proximity of his impending death propelled a new period of creativity.<sup>230</sup>

Schubert's drive and resilience, though not always rewarded with success – for example in his desire to be successful in the opera genre<sup>231</sup> – was nonetheless a huge contributing factor to the fact that, even during his lifetime, he was regarded as one of the most successful composers of his time. It was then:

[...] no accident that from 1825 until his death Schubert's music was second in popularity on the Abendunterhaltungen only to that of Rossini. Having been slightly overshadowed by Mozart and Beethoven in the years following 1821, by 1825 he

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<sup>228</sup> For details surrounding Schubert's application, rejection and subsequent membership, see *Schubert: Die Dokumente seines Lebens*, ed. by Deutsch, p. 176.

<sup>229</sup> Gingerich, *Schubert's Beethoven Project*, p. 46.

<sup>230</sup> Byrne Bodley, 'A Place at the Edge', p. 18.

<sup>231</sup> Shockingly, Schubert's arguably best opera, *Fierrabras*, only received its Austrian premiere in 1998. For further reading on Schubert and his operas, see Thomas Denny, 'Schubert's Operas: The Judgment of History?' in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher Howard Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 224–38.

had surpassed them in popularity, with Mozart now in third and Beethoven in fourth place.<sup>232</sup>

As I see it, *the drive system was the most predominant* of the three systems in Schubert. There is no doubt that when in this zone, Schubert was at his best. But the constant oscillation between successes and socially perceived failures would have also played heavily on him. None of the three affiliation systems operate in isolation. They are in constant communication with each other. With Schubert, as with all of us, problems with the drive system can lead to problems for the threat system. When the drive system is not 'satisfied', particularly when it is forced to shift from a 'high' to a 'low', Gilbert tells us that the threat system is activated: 'When blocks to our wants and goals become "a threat", the threat system kicks in with anxiety or frustration-anger.' Lack of self-perceived success instantly and chronically would have fed his threat system. There is no question that this would have contributed to the trajectory of his illness.

### 3.9 The Soothing, Contentment and Safeness System and Schubert

Gilbert's third and final system is the soothing, contentment and safety system. As the name aptly and descriptively describes, this system enables us to relax and not feel threatened or influenced by our drive system. The drive system, as we have seen, if activated negatively, can ultimately lead to our threat system being activated. Gilbert reminds us that there is nothing negative per se with the threat and drive systems, the threat system being vital for our safety and survival when confronted with threat or danger, and our drive system which allows us a sense of accomplishment and even excitement. The soothing, contentment system is where our ability to self-soothe, and to calm ourselves, lies. Accessed correctly, it brings balance to the other systems and is the source of our feeling satisfied and content, a place devoid of struggle or pressure, and one which gives us a sense of inner peace. Gilbert is quick to point out that activation of this system is more than simply the absence of threat or drive:

CFT makes a big distinction between safety seeking and safeness. Safety seeking is linked to the threat system and is about preventing or coping with threats.

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<sup>232</sup> Biba, 'Schubert's Position', p. 107.

Safeness is a state of mind that enables individuals to be content and at peace with themselves and the world with relaxed attention and the ability to explore (Gilbert, 1993). Safeness is not the same as low activity – when we feel safe we can be active and energized. If some individuals try to create states of safeness by, say, isolation and keeping their distance from others then we see this as more safety seeking. The problem with this is that the brain can read isolation/disconnection itself as a threat and, in addition, this safety behaviour cuts them off from a natural regulator of threat – the endorphin/oxytocin system for affiliation. So, although avoidance and isolation may work to a degree, it's difficult to know how this action affects well-being. Certainly, research has shown that social anhedonia – the (in)ability to experience pleasure from social relationships – is linked to a range of psychological difficulties.<sup>233</sup>

When it comes to Schubert's affiliation system, his circle of friends, one of the most present factors in his life, should be understood and appreciated as contributing massively to emotions of feeling safe and loved. Schubert's circle of friends during his Schubertiades is an example of his drive system and affiliation system working in harmony. Surely here is where he felt most at home, surrounded by his friends and his music, and seeing and hearing the appreciation that others had for his art. Working with singers like Johann Michael Vogl, regarded as one of the most important singers of his generation in Vienna and who loved Schubert's music, would have fed both Schubert's drive and affiliation systems.<sup>234</sup> Indeed, there is a case to be made that the younger Schubert also fed the drive system of the older Vogl, particularly after his career ended on the stage. In any case, his music, his composition work and his circle of friends all represent valuable time spent in his soothing, contentment and safety system. These experiences were more than just healthy. They healed.

### 3.10 The Three Affect Regulation Systems of CFT at Work in Schubert

Perhaps there is no better demonstration of CFT at work in Schubert than in the following quote taken from his letter to Kupelwieser of 31 March 1824:

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<sup>233</sup> Gilbert, *Compassion Focused Therapy*, p. 49.

<sup>234</sup> In his letter to his brother Ferdinand, dated 12th September 1825, Schubert notes that others also noticed the strong connection that had been forged between the two musicians: 'The manner in which Vogl sings and the way I accompany, as though we were one at such a moment, is something new and quite unheard-of for these people.' Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, p. 458.

I feel I am the unhappiest, most wretched man in the world. Imagine a man whose health will never be right again and who by despairing about it always makes the matter worse instead of better; imagine a man, I say, whose most auspicious hopes have been brought to nothingness, to whom the joy of love and friendship has nothing to offer but pain at best, whose enthusiasm (at least of the creative kind) for beauty threatens to vanish, and ask yourself – is not this a wretched unhappy man? ‘Meine Ruh ist hin, mein Herz ist schwer, ich finde sie nimmer und nimmermehr’ – so indeed I can now sing every day, for every night when I go to sleep I hope never to wake again, and every morning serves only to remind me of the previous day’s misery.<sup>235</sup>

In this one excerpt, where Schubert lays his worries bare and shares them with his friend, there is an opportunity to see Schubert’s three affect regulation systems at work. Uncannily, Schubert is more in tune with his illness than we could possibly imagine (and more in tune with modern research than would seem possible). Syphilis was a debilitating, chronic disease, but many contemporaries learned to live with the symptoms, where their syphilis remained in a latent state, where they possibly would have had no symptoms. Not everyone who contracted syphilis died from the disease, yet Schubert seems to predict that he would not be so lucky. Announcing that he is aware that he will never be cured (‘Imagine a man whose health will never be right again’), Schubert’s words are sadly prophetic. His threat system is on high alert. Schubert’s disease, in my opinion, appears to have advanced to the tertiary stage. With the knowledge of how our minds can affect our body, it is perhaps the next passage that is the most upsetting. Here he tells his friend that by despairing about his illness, he is making himself worse instead of better. Again, prophetic in its content, Schubert’s comment directly acknowledges (quite correctly) the effect of worrying on his health. There can be no doubt from this extract that he understands, *on some level*, the important link between mind and body when it comes to his illness.

In an article from 2019 studying the importance of hope in people living with chronic illness, researchers found that ‘hope is a modifiable variable that may be modified to empower these individuals to improve their health’.<sup>236</sup> As Schubert’s ‘auspicious hopes’ are not clarified, we are left to wonder if these are his career hopes or otherwise. Nonetheless, they represent

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p. 339.

<sup>236</sup> Guillermo M. Wippold and Julia Roncoroni, ‘Hope and Health-Related Quality of Life among Chronically Ill Uninsured/Underinsured Adults’, *Journal of Community Psychology*, 48.2 (2020), pp. 576–89, doi:10.1002/jcop.22270.

(negative) activity of the drive system. As we have seen, drive system hopes or motivations, if left unfulfilled, in turn lead to an activation of the threat system (and subsequent ill health). Schubert mentions how his enthusiasm for all things creative ‘threatens to vanish’. For a composer as prolific as Schubert, any threat to his ability to compose should be seen as combined (negative) drive system/threat system activation. As for Schubert’s affiliation system, we read the word ‘joy’ in connection with love and friendship. Importantly, we read that Schubert also understands friendship and love as a potential source for his joy, and thus his health. This acknowledgement by Schubert acknowledging the joy of connection adds another layer of relevance to Schubert and Connector, chapter 2.

### 3.10.1 Schubert, CFT and Lessons for Us

From our newly acquired understanding of CFT, this letter is not the musings of a bitter or angry man. It is the writings of a *chronically ill man*, one whose illness has contributed massively to his depressed state and therefore to his illness. Schubert’s letter to Kupelwieser, written two hundred years ago, has new significance for all of us today. I am struck again and again by Schubert’s innate understanding of the effect of his emotions on his own health. Schubert is here used as a lens for CFT, but, as with every chapter in this thesis, it is presented here with the clear intention not only to afford us a new perspective on Schubert, but as a lens to (re) view ourselves. It may often feel that we are alone in our pain, but in truth it is a suffering which we share with all of humanity. Schubert again offers us a lens, an opportunity, through which to view our own suffering. Perhaps in doing so we can make correctional changes to help others, enhance our own self-compassion and begin our own self-healing.

## 3.11 Musicology and Schubert: Towards a More Compassionate Approach

Kenner’s comment, stripped of its moralizing, may indicate that Schubert had a vigorous, clandestine sexual life. It seems that he associated with prostitutes and was a dark figure to many of his contemporaries. The profound sense of shame that pervaded his life was heightened when he contracted syphilis. The stigmata of

recurrent secondary disease were embarrassing, especially the recurrent red rash. When it was present he confined himself to his house and hid from his friends.<sup>237</sup>

John O'Shea's article 'Schubert's Last Illness', published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* in 1997, takes licence when describing Schubert as a 'dark figure', but, in keeping with mindbody research presented above, he may well be correct in his assumption when it comes to Schubert and shame (though it is indeed a stretch to categorically state that Schubert went through life with a 'profound' sense of shame). Eric Sams's article 'Schubert's Illness Re-Examined' from 1980, while mentioning Schubert's shame (disgrace, disgust, etc.), takes a different tack, and one which is ultimately more compelling than O'Shea. Sams writes that 'if Schubert was indeed sentenced to six years of disgrace, distress and disgust before the final execution, then his mind and work could hardly have failed to be afflicted and modified thereby'.<sup>238</sup> Written in 1980, Sams is thirty years ahead of his time with the accuracy of this comment. What Sams *doesn't* mention (and what we know now to be true) is that there would have been a physical consequence of the guilt suffered by Schubert (Sams uses the words 'disgrace, distress and disgust') beyond that of the mind. Important, however, is that Sams does take Schubert's illness beyond the physical, *and into his music*.

As a man who struggled daily with his illness, *every* facet of his life would be affected. To qualify Sam's speculation: Schubert's compositions *were* affected. *How exactly* this is represented in Schubert's music is of course impossible to say. Nonetheless, musicology is now a step further in its understanding of the causal relationship between the composer's illness and his music. As already undertaken in 'Schubert the Connector', the task now is not so much to show precise representations of illness and/or healing in Schubert's music, but rather to present ways in which his music may be used as a lens to view illness or healing.

In his article 'Mapping the Human Heart: A Holistic Analysis of Fear in Schubert', Michael Spitzer finds parallels between fear and certain passages of Schubert's music.<sup>239</sup> That said, I have difficulty with Spitzer's comments that 'some of Schubert's music, I shall argue, dashes about thoughtlessly like a frightened person'. Taken literally, Spitzer seems to be saying that

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<sup>237</sup> John O'Shea, 'Franz Schubert's Last Illness', *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 90.5 (1997), p. 291, doi:10.1177/014107689709000518.

<sup>238</sup> Sams, 'Schubert's Illness Re-Examined', p. 21.

<sup>239</sup> Spitzer, 'Mapping the Human Heart'.

certain passages of Schubert have elements of thoughtlessness about them. Schubert was certainly prolific, and was able to compose quickly. But thoughtless? I disagree. That said, Spitzer's analysis of Schubert's music is captivating, made all the more interesting by his ability to align his analysis to elements of philosophy (Heidegger, Russell, Kant, etc.). One of the most cited articles in Schubertian scholarship is Hugh MacDonald's article from 1978 titled 'Schubert's Volcanic Temper'.<sup>240</sup> Largely unchallenged, it opened the way for others to think along the same lines.<sup>241</sup> There is, however, an alternative. Is it not time to revise these analyses based on developments not only in the area of mindbody medicine, but on the knowledge we have collectively acquired post-Covid era? The re-evaluation of the importance of connection, social interaction and compassion for us all (and the damages that social isolation causes for us) has ushered in an era where fundamental changes regarding how we relate to each other are being understood and action is being taken. In search of this new understanding, I propose a different kind of analysis. For this exercise I have chosen the same musical passage that Hugh MacDonald used. Using CFT again as a lens for this analysis, a compassionate approach will not only prove more forgiving on Schubert, it will allow for us to develop an understanding of compassion to other, which in turn will lead to self-compassion.

### 3.12 'Volcanic Temper' or Compassion Focused Therapy?

#### Different Perspectives

Hugh MacDonald's article 'Schubert's Volcanic Temper' from 1978 continues to be cited in Schubertian scholarship. His description is of Schubert as a repressed individual, one who was 'prone to violence and bad temper', a temper that he, again according to MacDonald, 'succeeded in repressing more in actual life than he did in his music'.<sup>242</sup> This is immediately at odds with other varied descriptions of Schubert, including descriptions of him as shy, or that he was full of mischief.<sup>243</sup> That said, there were rare occasions when Schubert did lose his temper,

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<sup>240</sup> MacDonald, 'Schubert's Volcanic Temper'.

<sup>241</sup> Susan Wollenberg in her chapter 'Schubert's Violent Nature' writes that 'violence was endemic'; *Schubert's Fingerprints*, p. 167.

<sup>242</sup> MacDonald, 'Schubert's Volcanic Temper', p. 951.

<sup>243</sup> Rita Steblin, 'Schubert: The Nonsense Society Revisited', in *Franz Schubert and his World*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs and Morten Solvik (Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 1–38, doi:10.1515/9781400865352-004.



for example in an exchange, according to Bauernfeld, with Vienna court musicians in the Bogner café. One of the musicians challenged Schubert, saying ‘I think we are as good artists as you’.<sup>244</sup> Schubert apparently went on a tirade, insulting the musicians and saying they were musicians, not artists like him.

I suggest a different approach than MacDonald’s. When I consider the passages in Schubert’s music that MacDonald chooses as an expression of a violent nature, I find it more convincing, more representative and indeed *fairer to Schubert* to begin with what the composer says about his mood and feelings. If (and here I agree with MacDonald) Schubert’s music is a vehicle for him to express his innermost feelings, we might begin with the now infamous quote from his notebook written on 27 March 1824, when Schubert writes that ‘my compositions spring from my sorrows. Those that give the world the greatest delight were born of my deepest griefs.’<sup>245</sup> Nowhere is anger or even frustration mentioned by Schubert.

### 3.12.1. Schubert and Shame: A Compassionate Approach

‘The earlier orchestral works yield little than [sic!] can be classed as volcanic, but the last two symphonies both have exceptionally strong orchestral eruptions.’<sup>246</sup> It is with this quote that MacDonald opens his analysis of Schubert’s last two symphonies, saving the dubious (and spurious) accolade of ‘the most violent of all passages in Schubert’ for the ‘Great’ C-major Symphony passage (see Example 3.2 below). There are two issues at hand here. MacDonald’s use of words such as ‘choleric’ or ‘volcanic’ as a description of Schubert (in his very first introductory sentence!) not only does not align itself with what we know of the man, it simply does not fit the musical passage on which he is basing his analysis. That is to say, in my analysis I not only take issue with MacDonald’s assigning violence as a predominant nature in Schubert, I simply don’t see it *visually* represented in the score, a point I will come to later in Section 3.13, ‘Violence in Music’. A third issue, in keeping with an understanding of the importance of compassion and its importance for all of us, is that MacDonald chooses to plough a harsh course here, with the full knowledge that Schubert was a man who lived his life with chronic illness, with all the negative emotions that come with this. Even if I could see violence in this passage,

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<sup>244</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, p. 337.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336.

<sup>246</sup> MacDonald, ‘Schubert’s Volcanic Temper’, p. 950.

might the violence he sees not be attributed or caused by a deeper underlying emotion, an emotion that perhaps a young man in his late twenties might have most likely experienced when confronted with his own death, such as trauma, pain, worry, depression or shame? MacDonald bypasses Schubert's illness, and leaves us with the impression of Schubert as bitter, choleric and petulant, without any serious consideration as to what may lie behind this. An analysis from the perspective of shame makes sense for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is reflective of the disease from which he suffered. Also, we know from mindbody research that shame can have a heavy toll on health. CFT can be hugely helpful in coping with shame. Gilbert tells us that 'understanding and working with the complexities of shame plays a major role in CFT'. He outlines two kinds of expression of shame:

There are two major defences (safety strategies) to external shame. One is the internalized shaming response where one adopts a subordinate, submissive strategy associated with self-monitoring and self-blaming. The other is an externalizing, humiliated response where one adopts a more dominant aggressive, attacking response – one tries to create a sense of personal security via one's ability to overpower or bully potential attackers/rejecters. These are not consciously chosen strategies but reflect phenotypic variations, and they can be context dependent.<sup>247</sup>

There is another element at play here. Simply put, an analysis from this perspective is altogether more humane. Basing my analysis on shame allows us a more compassionate approach, reflective of a young, committed composer who must have lived in constant fear that his health would never return, and living with the knowledge, and shame, that he had brought this cruel illness upon himself. While there are indeed examples of harshness in Schubert's music, the word 'violent' in connection with Schubert the man, or in his music, is a step too far. Using a combination of the recent publications presented above on AIDS research and shame, and Paul Gilbert's three affect regulation systems, a more convincing argument might be made by aligning the passage MacDonald mentions with that of the threat system, or as an expression of Schubert's shame.

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<sup>247</sup> Gilbert, *Compassion Focused Therapy*, p. 84.

### 3.13 Violence in Music

Before buying into MacDonald's reading of this passage as an expression of Schubert's violent nature, it may first be an idea to find other orchestrations where expressions of violence (or aggression) in music are 'specified', or intended, by the composer. Looking at the orchestral repertoire, the opening of the 'Dies Irae' (Day of wrath/anger) from Verdi's Requiem is iconic. The singular use of the bass drum pitted against the harsh staccato chords of the full orchestra is indeed violent in nature, and by design. Liszt's *Totentanz* for piano and orchestra begins with staccato dissonances in the lower strings and timpani, with the piano doubling the strings with lower-register percussive chords. In Holst's *Planets*, the opening movement, 'Mars, the Bringer of War', with its dramatic percussive-figure opening, requires the timpani players (Holst's score calls for two timpani players) to play with wooden sticks, and if that isn't percussive enough, Holst's scoring calls for the strings to play *col legno*, literally *beating* the strings. That is how to score violence. If we are to agree with MacDonald's reading of dramatic outbursts and violence, one might reasonably expect the composer to use the one instrument that truly is struck or hit (think 'violence'): namely, the timpani. Even the Dies Irae from Mozart's Requiem features the timpani (in a driving figure together with the trumpets), suggesting that the use of the drum is not exclusively the instrument of choice for later Romantic or twentieth-century composers like Verdi and Holst when evoking death, drama or violence. Not only is the timpani not featured by Schubert, it *actually doesn't play a single note* until the final measure. An analysis of MacDonald's chosen passage will show other discrepancies between his analysis and the score.

### 3.14 Towards a (More) Compassionate Analysis

The most violent of all passages in Schubert occurs in the Great C-major Symphony D944, bars 226–67 in the slow movement. Like the passage in the 'Unfinished' this carries no harmonic adventure, but relies almost entirely on a diminished seventh and dominant minor ninth. But its orchestral force is demonic and of all climaxes in Schubert it is the only one which seeks and finds its own violent resolution. The climactic two bars, when the harmony shifts up a semitone, give the climax a sense of completion which no other similar passages have. As soothing as the climax has

been disturbing, the cellos lead the music back after the silence to the Elysian lyricism of A minor, as though some great evil force had been exorcized.<sup>248</sup>

MacDonald chooses measure 226 as the beginning of Schubert's violent streak. What is so different here that it is seen in this way? The repeated chords are already present in measures 219–220. The dynamic of fortissimo is unchanged. What *does* change here is that Schubert, in keeping with similar passages analysed in 'Schubert the Connector', manages to successfully bring in a series of complementary rhythms throughout the passage. Here, in Example 3.2 below, we see how two successive quarter notes alternate between the woodwinds and trombones ('a'). We also notice how the first and second violins play two successive eighth notes, alternating with the lower strings ('b'), and how the trumpets and horns alternately answer each other with a rhythmic fanfare-like figure ('d'). With so many instruments managing to dovetail and complement each other, from my perspective, this is a carefully crafted development passage, rather than the work of a 'choleric' Schubert, lashing out uncontrollably at others with no sense of self-control. MacDonald's mismatching of emotions or 'Schubert characteristics' is evident in other ways also.

Though the fanfare-like figure alternating between the horns and trumpets is new here ('d'), we have been exposed to this material (for example in the first violins in a more lyrical setting beginning at measure 163, where it is subsequently fragmented) now numerous times since its first appearance at measure 160. Again, hardly what one might associate with a violent outburst. It is more than fitting that Schubert now fragments the material and extends the two-measure figure's length substantially here. What else would we expect in a development section? In fact, this figure exchange in the brass is perhaps the best evidence to suggest that MacDonald's analysis is difficult to support.

As we have seen, Schubert never once allows the brass to dominate the passage. Instead, he uses them antiphonally, always answering each other throughout the whole passage and never allowing them to be overpowering or violent in nature. Furthermore, as neither trumpets nor horns are allowed to deviate from their pitch, staying the course both rhythmically and harmonically, one may well argue that the passage *shows the absolute opposite of a violent outburst*, namely great control. If anything, it is almost premeditated, with repetition (the

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<sup>248</sup> MacDonald, 'Schubert's Volcanic Temper', pp. 950–951.

opposite surely of an outburst?) and complementary rhythm being the significant structural technique employed by Schubert.

Example 3.2 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/ii), measures 226–79

The image displays a musical score for measures 226 to 279 of Schubert's Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/ii). The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with staves for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in A, Bassoon, Horn in C, Trumpet in A, Alto Trombone & Tenor Trombone, Trombone, Timpani, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The key signature is C major and the time signature is 2/4. The score is marked with a forte (ff) dynamic throughout. Several annotations are present: 'a' is a solid black box around a measure in the Clarinet in A and Bassoon staves; 'b' is an oval around a measure in the Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello staves; 'c' is a solid black box around a measure in the Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello staves; and 'd' is a dashed black box around a measure in the Horn in C and Trumpet in A staves. The score shows a complex interplay of textures and dynamics, with the string section playing a prominent role in the later measures.

150

151

152



257

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in A

Bsn.

Hn. in C

Tpt. in A

A. Tbn.  
& T. Tbn.

Tbn.

Timp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

263

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in A

Bsn.

Hn. in C

Tpt. in A

A. Tbn. & T. Tbn.

Tbn.

Timp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

*pp*

*arco*

*pizz*

The first six measures of the passage, from measure 226 to 231, have the following structure:  $4(2 \times 2) + 2$ . The first two measures are repeated, and the subsequent two measures represent an intensifying of the phrase, with the strings now playing in each measure and the double basses dropping down an octave in measure 231. However, we notice that Schubert still intends on keeping some element of complementary rhythm, leaving the woodwinds out for the penultimate measure of the phrase (measure 230) and by also not bringing in the trombones until the last measure. In various recordings, a broadening of tempo from the conductor is typical here. It is stylistically appropriate, representing the inherent frustration or tension of the passage. But it also represents a 'breaking through' to the beginning of something new. Continuing on from this (beginning at measure 232) is a three-measure phrase repeated four times ( $3 \times 4$ ), making up twelve measures of music. While there are some slight harmonic changes in the last of each of the three-measure phrases, there is no change throughout the passage, and the persistent nature of this phrase, and its oppressive inability to relent, could be interpreted as a musical equivalent/image of the human gesture of shame: 'Extremely shame-prone patients tend to suffer from persistent, oppressive appraisal processes [...] Like a computer application program, whether running conspicuously in the foreground or more quietly in the background at any given moment, these processes are never completely disengaged.'<sup>249</sup>

Choosing to interpret the obsessive repetition of these measures as the expression of a man who was 'never completely disengaged' from thoughts and negative emotions surrounding shame around his illness is both sobering and upsetting. And yet it is a preferable analysis for me, because it recognises a vulnerability in the composer, and one that invites a more compassionate understanding of us. From measures 244 to 247 the music intensifies through a further fragmentation of the material, the same structure repeated in three consecutive measures, as we move from the previous three-measure repetitions to four single repeated measures. Schubert keeps the complementary rhythms throughout, alternating the horns and trumpets now at the half-measure. The trombones change to single quarter-note values, and a crescendo is added over the final two measures (see Example 3.2). The diminished-ninth chord changes, with the bass line leading the harmony through a series of diminished chords before

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<sup>249</sup> M. R. Zaslav, 'Shame-Related States of Mind in Psychotherapy', *The Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and Research*, 7.2 (1998), pp. 154–66.

landing on a final diminished-seventh chord built on D sharp (measure 248). The intensity here is undeniable, and Schubert calls for a dynamic of three *fs*, the only measures of the symphony to be marked thus. Here is what MacDonald sees in these measures:

But its orchestral force is demonic and of all the climaxes it is the only one which seeks and finds its own violent resolution. The climactic two bars, when the harmony shifts up a semitone, give the climax a sense of completion which no other similar passages have.<sup>250</sup>

MacDonald's description of the shift to the diminished-seventh chord in measure 248 as a 'resolution' and having 'a sense of completion' is curious. As the end of the phrase, it certainly represents a progression, but a resolution? After the preceding passage of pent-up repetition, *anything* is welcome, but no musical phrase, even the most troubled, 'resolves' on a diminished-seventh chord. Looking at the measures 248 and 249, we see three iterations of the two repeated eighth-notes beginning in the cellos and double basses, and moving to the trombones (still in measure 248) before moving to the upper strings in 249. Is this how one wields the orchestral apparatus as a 'demonic' force, *ending in the upper strings*? No. This is hardly a representation of the full ('violent') power of the orchestra. The timpani part has only one final eighth note, rather than the two eighth notes that Schubert writes in the strings. Again, the instrumentation and structure, *the very notes themselves*, of these two measures tell a different story than that of MacDonald's analysis. There is no doubt that these measures and the preceding passage are tense. Using CFT as a lens to 'read' such passages as a musical metaphor and expression of shame management may again prove insightful:

Research indicates a robust link between shame and tendencies to externalize blame and anger, again observed at both the dispositional and state levels. Among individuals of all ages and from all walks of life, proneness to shame is positively correlated with anger, hostility [...]<sup>251</sup>

With an understanding that Schubert's life and illness may have found expression in his music, viewing this passage as an expression of anger or hostility linked to shame, rather than one of violence, bears more fruit, and allows for a more contemporary reading and compassionate view of the composer. The opportunity to view this passage from this stance continues after

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<sup>250</sup> MacDonald, 'Schubert's Volcanic Temper', p. 950.

<sup>251</sup> June P. Tangney, Jeff Stuewig and Logaina Hafez, 'Shame, Guilt, and Remorse: Implications for Offender Populations', *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 22.5 (2011), p. 709, doi:10.1080/14789949.2011.617541.

the climax, and allows us to view Schubert under the important lens of *self-compassion*. Firstly, however, it is worth analysing the ‘Tchaikovskyan silence’ in measure 250.<sup>252</sup> It appears to me that this particular measure is one of those moments in music where more is said in silence than can ever be expressed in notes. Silence is often ‘taught’ to medical students as an important skill; however, the technique is not always well understood:

In trying to improve clinician communication skills, we have often heard clinicians at every level admonished to ‘use silence,’ as if refraining from talking will improve dialogue. Yet we have also noticed that this ‘just do it,’ behavior-focused ‘use’ of silence creates a new, different problem: the clinician looks uncomfortable using silence, and worse, generates a palpable atmosphere of unease that feels burdensome to both the patient and clinician.<sup>253</sup>

Therefore, even though we understand compassion as action-based, there are moments where silence has parallels in compassion:

While the typical use of silence recommended by many communication teachers would fall into the category of invitational silences [...] there is another type of silence that has received little attention in medicine, although it is highly prized in contemplative traditions: the compassionate silence. Compassion in contemplative traditions is transmitted through a quality of mind and requires active intentional mental processes – it is the opposite of passive, receptive activity. These compassionate silences arise spontaneously from the clinician who has developed the mental capacities of stable attention, emotional balance, along with prosocial mental qualities, such as naturally arising empathy and compassion.<sup>254</sup>

The ‘action’ in compassionate silence is the degree or level of attention to which we pay the other. In any case, such research on silence as it relates to compassion allows us to take an interesting perspective on measures 249 to 252 inclusive. Only measure 250 is fully silent, or ‘empty’. Measures 249, 251 and 252 each also use silence, having only two eighth notes at the beginning of each measure. In alignment with the above article, they are empathetic silences flooded with meaning, and offer an opportunity to breathe and contemplate the trauma of the previous musical episode. Measures 251 and 252 really do ‘breathe’, not just in a metaphorical sense, but also literally. These two measures share both the same notes and rhythm values of the climactic final measure, but in the silence, they have undergone a metamorphosis that

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<sup>252</sup> ‘The ‘Great’ C major Symphony’ in *Schubert Studies*, ed. by Newbould, p. 139.

<sup>253</sup> Anthony L. Back and others, ‘Compassionate Silence in the Patient–Clinician Encounter: A Contemplative Approach’, *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 12.12 (2009), p. 1113, doi:10.1089/jpm.2009.0175.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

demonstrates yet again the genius, and I would say the compassion, of Schubert. The enharmonic shift from a 'hard' D sharp to the softer E flat is also noteworthy. Now marked *pp* and written pizzicato, *they are a musical representation of a human pulse*. As I see it, the second half of the measure (the rest) can be seen as an inhalation in preparation for the next two eighth notes on the first beat of the next measure, or we can see the whole two measures as an out-breath. In any case, done correctly, with a longer 'out-breath' in the silences, we enter into the area of respiratory sinus arrhythmia, where we find a convincing and interesting reason behind why we find these measures so relaxing.

### 3.14.1 Schubert, Self-Compassion and 'Beating Time'

Heart rate variability (HRV) and respiratory sinus arrhythmia (RSA) are concerned with the variability between each heartbeat. While pulse represents beats per minute, RSA measures the *exact* variation between each beat. If for example we have a resting heart rate of 60bpm, the time between one beat and the next is rarely identical (one second). The measurement between one beat and the next may be .997 of a second, while the next may be 1.004 of a second and so on. So, though we typically measure our heart rate in terms of beats per minute (60bpm in this case), our heart is not beating strictly at exactly one beat per second. The exact measurement of these values is HRV.

One might be forgiven for thinking that the more regular this heartbeat is, the healthier we are; however, *it is the opposite that is the truth*. Simply stated, the more flexible or variable these values are, the healthier we are. We can influence this positively with breathing exercises, and in keeping with the phrase here, one way to increase our wellbeing is to take more time with our exhalation than we do with our inhalation. In measures 251 and 252, the time for the out-breath is on the rests. As conductors we need to allow for this release in the silences. Knowing that this is also a scientifically proven mode for relaxation should help us achieve this. Strong parallels exist between this choice of phrasing and increased wellbeing.

This study was performed to confirm that autonomic nervous activity is affected by breathing speed. I hypothesized that prolonged expiratory breathing would promote parasympathetic dominance, whereas rapid breathing would promote sympathetic dominance. Ten healthy men, ages 21–28 years old, were instructed to perform prolonged expiratory breathing (6 seconds expiration, 4 seconds inspiration) after spontaneous breathing and rapid breathing (1 second expiration,

1 second inspiration) after spontaneous breathing; changes in high frequency (HF) and low frequency (LF)/HF of heart rate variability (HRV) were measured during each type of breathing. During prolonged expiratory breathing, parasympathetic nervous function was significantly activated. Conversely, during rapid breathing, parasympathetic nervous function was significantly suppressed. The HRV method assessing sympathetic and parasympathetic modulation in this study is an indirect, non-invasive method with clear limitations. The use of additional techniques should be considered to clarify the relationships between the breathing speed and the mind.<sup>255</sup>

When it comes to our health, there is a strong link between our breathing and our cardiovascular system. RSA is increased by slow, deep breathing, and this in turn can improve our vagal tone. Vagal tone, though not synonymous with RSA, can be an important health predictor. The tenth cranial nerve, the vagus nerve, is a central part of the parasympathetic nervous system. Vagal tone can be measured using RSA and is used to give an indication of stress vulnerability and/or stress resilience. Steve Porges is one of the pioneer researchers and a leading expert on the vagus nerve. He explains that:

Cardiac vagal tone is proposed as a novel index of stress and stress vulnerability in mammals. A model is described that emphasizes the role of the parasympathetic nervous system and particularly the vagus nerve in defining stress. The model details the importance of a branch of the vagus originating in the nucleus ambiguus. In mammals the nucleus ambiguus not only coordinates sucking, swallowing, and breathing, but it also regulates heart rate and vocalizations in response to stressors. In mammals it is possible, by quantifying the amplitude of respiratory sinus arrhythmia, to assess the tonic and phasic regulation of the vagal pathways originating in the nucleus ambiguus. Measurement of this component of vagal tone is proposed as a method to assess, on an individual basis, both stress and the vulnerability to stress.<sup>256</sup>

From a musicological analytical perspective, the three-measure extension is simply that, a clever use of structure, but nothing uncommon for Schubert. However, if we were to use this as a breathing exercise, we would be activating our parasympathetic nervous system and increasing our vagal tone. As I see it, this passage has parallels with the CFT model, allowing for us to interpret this as a pathway for Schubert to access his own sense of self-compassion, particularly as it relates to shame. The conductor can, and should, facilitate this relaxation in

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<sup>255</sup> Teruhisa Komori, 'The Relaxation Effect of Prolonged Expiratory Breathing', *Mental Illness*, 10.1 (2018), p.6, doi:10.4081/mi.2018.7669.

<sup>256</sup> Stephen W. Porges, 'Cardiac Vagal Tone: A Physiological Index of Stress', *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 19.2 (1995), p. 225, doi:10.1016/0149-7634(94)00066-A.

performance through his/her gesture and embodiment, by *not* beating time, particularly in the rests, and by being sensitive, in terms of tempo, to allow for a longer ‘out-breath’, one of the hallmarks of relaxation.

### 3.14.2 Self-Compassion and Embodiment in Conducting

In keeping with respiratory sinus arrhythmia (RSA) research, where no two ‘gaps’ between two consecutive heartbeats are exactly the same, *here the conductor must allow for space*, and be careful to not ‘beat time’. The ‘music’ here, as is so often the case, is in the silence. This *inégalité* of the quarter-note rest in both measures 251 and 252 is essential for the passage to work. Broken down technically, the pizzicatos are played in tempo, but the quarter-note rest should be extended somewhat by the conductor. Arrhythmic, if you will, as if there were a short fermata on the quarter-note rest before the next measure is played. The conductor must be careful to represent the pulse-like ‘palpitando’ nature of the pizzicato. It is extremely important that the orchestra plays the first of the two eighth notes somewhat louder than the second. This is to mimic the so-called first heart sound (S1) and second heart sound (S2) produced by the closing of the two heart valves (also given the onomatopoeic name ‘lub-dub’). This period of relaxation, both metaphorically and literally, is to prepare for us for the ‘Elysian lyricism’ that MacDonald mentions. This unusual seven-measure phrase (from measures 253 to 259) is repeated and decorated in the subsequent passage, measures 260–66; the structure of each is 2x2+3. The seventh chord of 252 is continued into the first measure of the phrase (253), but now together with the entrance of the cello melody. In the second measure of the phrase, Schubert resolves the harmony to Bb major. The same two-measure phrase is repeated, and this repetition facilitates a sense of comfort or belonging, particularly as it is juxtaposed with the fortissimo ‘trauma’ of the previous passage. The cello melody has the dotted sixteenth, thirty-second rhythm that we have heard consistently since the beginning of the movement, but here its intent has changed. Utilised by Schubert earlier for its rhythmic drive, it is now languid in nature, helped of course by the legato phrasing, pianissimo dynamic marking and crescendo/diminuendo. While the harmonic resolution to Bb major adds of course to the sense of calm and safety of the passage, it is the structural repetition of the first two measures (4 (2x2)) that has strong parallels with techniques used in the practice of self-compassion.



Mantras, popular within transcendental meditation, have at their core a short repetitive phrase. In the practice of self-compassion, such phrases are constructed to contain a positive message, and then these phrases are repeated by the practitioner. Later, in Chapter 6, I will be writing about the positive effects of repetition and explore how Schubert uses repetition as a healing tool. For now, we can say that these first four measures represent a ‘musical mantra’ of sorts. With the subsequent three-measure phrase (measure 257–59) Schubert moves from languid to lyrical, using the oboe as a true duet to the cello, particularly as measure 258 moves away from the dotted meter to straight sixteenth notes. This extended end of the phrase (measure 257–59), with its three measures instead of two, is a musical equivalent of self-soothing, allowing for us to again stay longer on the ‘out-breath’. The warmth of this short passage has served also to develop the pulse-like two eighth-note figure (that has sounded at the beginning of each preceding measure), in favour now of a lilting ‘on-the-beat, off-the-beat’ exchange between lower and upper strings (see measures 258, 259). Kristin Neff’s theoretical model of self-compassion contains elements that are synonymous with Schubert’s three-measure phrase:

Self-compassion refers to being supportive toward oneself when experiencing suffering or pain – be it caused by personal mistakes and inadequacies or external life challenges. This review presents my theoretical model of self-compassion as comprised of six different elements: increased self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness as well as reduced self-judgment, isolation, and overidentification.<sup>257</sup>

The duet between oboe and cello is a wonderful representation of ‘common humanity’ and beautifully represents a sense of ‘reduced isolation’. The intertwining of the melody, alternating between both instruments, allows, as I see it, for three possible interpretations. By that I mean, *if we were asked to sing the melody here, what would we choose?* The answer is it would be a mix of both instruments. We would of course sing the oboe melody at 257, but we would change to the cello melody in 258. In doing so, Schubert offers us the possibility to view this as a moment of self-compassion, full of that common humanity and reduced isolation. It is because of this passage that we are ‘allowed’ the subsequent A-major passage. I will return to

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<sup>257</sup> Kristin D. Neff, ‘Self-Compassion: Theory, Method, Research, and Intervention’, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 74.1 (2023), p. 193, doi:10.1146/annurev-psych-032420-031047.

the subsequent A-major melody in Chapter 6 of this thesis, where I will address this passage from a different perspective.<sup>258</sup>

As Schubert purges, he is identifying with his own suffering. Moving forward, words such as ‘catharsis’ and ‘purify’ will resound in a new way, as opposed to MacDonald’s approach to Schubert’s music. If we are willing to see the fortissimo development section here as an expression of shame and stigma, and the cello melody passage as a way to deal with this shame in a way that involves self-compassion, then we have not only adopted a unique viewpoint, but in doing so, have afforded Schubert’s illness a more compassionate perspective. This perspective is grounded in the understanding that, as Neff points out, we all share a common humanity, and that we all make mistakes. The difference here is that Schubert would not only live with chronic illness because of his mistakes, he would also die from them. We owe it to the composer, and to ourselves as human beings, to take a gentler and more compassionate approach to the man whose music, almost two hundred years after his death, continues to help to heal us.

### 3.15 Further Examples of Compassion in Schubert’s Symphonies

The CFT approach to compassion borrows from many Buddhist teachings (especially the roles of sensitivity to and motivation to relieve suffering) but its roots are derived from an evolutionary, neuroscience and social psychology approach, linked to the psychology and neurophysiology of caring, both giving and receiving (Gilbert, 1989, 2000a, 2005a, 2009a). Feeling cared for, accepted and having a sense of belonging and affiliation with others is fundamental to our physiological maturation and well-being (Cozolino, 2007; Siegel, 2001, 2007). These are linked to particular types of positive affect that are associated with well-being (Depue & Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Panksepp, 1998), and a neuro-hormonal profile of increased endorphins and oxytocin (Carter, 1998; Panksepp, 1998).<sup>259</sup>

When considering an analysis of compassion in Schubert’s symphonies, expressions such as ‘feeling cared for’, ‘a sense of belonging’, ‘sensitivity to and motivation to relieve suffering’, ‘giving and receiving’ may serve to guide an analysis that focuses attention on passages where these words might apply. In particular the concept of ‘giving and receiving’ as a potential musical metaphor for compassion will serve to focus our attention within the score.

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<sup>258</sup> See Section 6.4: Ego and Soul in Schubert’s Final Symphonies.

<sup>259</sup> Gilbert, *Compassion Focused Therapy*, p. 4.

The following passage (Example 3.3) is chosen with these salient characteristics in mind. Though there is no overt ‘suffering’ here to relieve, the passage is analogous with phrases to which orchestral players respond more sensitively when associated with compassion. The second movement of Schubert’s ‘Great’ C-major Symphony, D. 944, measures 24 to 29 (inclusive), is a study in orchestration. But they also represent an opportunity to witness compassionate support in Schubert’s music, involving a single oboe line ‘supported’ by other instruments in a very original way (Example 3.3). From my own experience as a conductor, this can be a wonderful way to enhance contact within the ensemble. In the example here, the conductor can ask the orchestra to follow a single solo player. Some ensembles are used to this approach, but some are simply used to following the conductor. By relinquishing control over the passage the conductor can instead also support the players, showing where connections are within the instrumental groups (in this example one might give a cue to the short thirty-second notes in the cellos, or show the phrasing one would like to the first violins, or cue the clarinet) with an open-hand gesture: an ‘invitation’ to join, and not a ‘demand’ to play. In

Example 3.3 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/ii), measures 24–29

The image displays a musical score for measures 24 through 29 of Schubert's Symphony no. 8 in C major, second movement. The score includes staves for Oboe, Clarinet in A, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is C major and the time signature is 2/4. The dynamics are marked *pp* (pianissimo). Several annotations are present: a solid oval encircles the Clarinet in A part in measures 25-26; a dashed oval labeled 'c' highlights a phrase in Violin I in measure 25; a solid oval labeled 'b' highlights a phrase in Violin II in measure 26; a solid oval labeled 'd' highlights a phrase in Violin I in measure 27; and a solid rectangle labeled 'a' highlights a phrase in the Violoncello in measure 24.

my own experience this creates a wonderful camaraderie between the players and certainly embodies words such as 'feeling cared for'. One creates 'a sense of belonging' within the ensemble for the players.

The phrase length is six measures, divided 2+4. Until now, from the first measure of the movement we have heard short staccato eighth notes in every measure from the strings. This changes here. From measure 24 onwards, the dotted rhythm, also present from the very outset of the movement, also stops. The previous dynamic marking of piano is now changed to pianissimo. Schubert resolves the dominant chord at the end of the previous phrase not into the expected A minor, but chooses the more positive major (A major). The result is that Schubert brings an immediate sense of calm.

One could even say that Schubert prepares us for the new phrase. In anticipation of the A-major shift, most conductors (wisely) choose to do a small ritardando in the previous measure (the dominant E major) as preparation, or as a signal of the warmth of the new passage. This breath is not just a metaphorical one, but a physical one, which, by the very nature of breath, is life-giving. The structure of the phrase also brings a sense of calm: beginning with a two-measure phrase and then extended to four measures, it too is an example of RSA at work in music. The first two measures incorporate all the five notes of A major from the tonic to dominant, in stepwise movement, the last note being a leap from the dominant E to the leading-note G sharp, ready to begin the next phrase (four measures) again on the tonic note. Measures 3 and 4 (measures 26 and 27) of the phrase are a repetition of the first two measures, but measure 4, in particular, is a calming tool. The eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes of the second measure is now simply a quarter note in the fourth measure. Repetition, like a mantra or meditation exercise, is by its very nature relaxing, and this is precisely what Schubert does here.

The undoubted sense of calm that radiates from this phrase is a powerful and welcome contrast to the ever busy, march-like dotted rhythm present until now in the movement. On analysis, one recognises that nothing has been left to chance by Schubert. Everything in the composer's tool-kit, from key change to dynamic marking, and choice of instrumentation to choice of notes, serves collectively to achieve a sense of breath and instil calm. The second half of the phrase, extended in length to four measures, is also extended in range of pitch. There are no trust issues now in moving past the dominant. On the contrary, after measures 3 and 4

of the phrase, Schubert brings us to the higher octave A repeating the rhythm heard in measure 2 of the first phrase (again, we remind ourselves of the importance of repetition as a calming tool) before returning safely for a whole measure in the home key, represented by two quarter note A's in the final measure.

We have seen that research demonstrates a strong link between breathing exercises that utilise an extended exhalation (vagus nerve activation) and improved health. But there are also other parallels to be drawn from Schubert's choice of a longer four-measure 'out-breath' phrase and positive health outcomes.

As we consider compassion and Schubert, we can make a connection between the extended second phrase and the 'compassionate other' that Gilbert tells us is important in CFT. In a fascinating article from 2013, researchers found that there is a correlation between healthy vagal tone and positive social connection, leading to increased happiness:

We hypothesize [...] that the tie between positive emotions and physical health [...] is mediated by people's perceptions of their positive social connections. We tested this overarching hypothesis in a longitudinal field experiment in which participants were randomly assigned to an intervention group that self-generated positive emotions via loving-kindness meditation or to a waiting-list control group. Participants in the intervention group increased in positive emotions relative to those in the control group [...]. Increased positive emotions, in turn, produced increases in vagal tone, an effect mediated by increased perceptions of social connections. This experimental evidence identifies one mechanism – perceptions of social connections – through which positive emotions build physical health, indexed as vagal tone. Results suggest that positive emotions, positive social connections, and physical health influence one another in a self-sustaining upward-spiral dynamic.<sup>260</sup>

While, admittedly, Gilbert used a loving-kindness meditation as its tool to bring about positive change, and not a breathing exercise, it is interesting that vagal tone was used as a measurement to calculate the (positive) health outcomes, and that those outcomes were expressed also in terms of better social connection, leading to better outcomes for the practitioner. Thus, looking beyond the positive benefit of the extended out-breath analogy, there seems to be an added gain when we align the phrase with the 'positive social connections' that this article mentions. As positive social connection is an inherent ingredient in compassion,

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<sup>260</sup> Bethany E. Kok and others, 'How Positive Emotions Build Physical Health: Perceived Positive Social Connections Account for the Upward Spiral between Positive Emotions and Vagal Tone', *Psychological Science*, 24.7 (2013), p. 1123, doi:10.1177/0956797612470827.

we may well argue that Schubert's phrase can be interpreted as *fundamentally healing in nature*. While conducting passages such as this, I have witnessed what I see as an inner compassion and support not only between the instruments, but *the players themselves in their interaction/support* of each other. This support, combined with other elements such as phrase division, choice of harmony, instrumentation and rhythm, all contribute collectively to this reading from a compassion perspective.

### 3.15.1 Compassionate Listening, Support and the 'Rhythm' of Long Notes

The passage is also an excellent example of how Schubert allows his soloist (oboe) complete freedom, while simultaneously offering support. Here, there are four separate signals of support in play, marked a, b, c and d in Example 3.3. This use of complementary rhythm is different than that analysed in 'Schubert the Connector'. There we have seen how Schubert's use of complementary rhythm is shared between different instruments in the orchestra, with no instrument in particular being 'supported'. There, Schubert's use of complementary rhythm is used to connect everyone together *equally*. Also, in 'Schubert the Connector', I showed how Schubert takes a complementary rhythm and shares the same rhythm within different instruments of the orchestra. Here, by stark contrast, each of the complementary rhythms serves the solo oboe alone, and we also notice that each of the rhythmical figures *stays in that instrument* (a, b, c), rather than being shared with other instruments. In this passage the solo oboe is accompanied (or supported, if you will) by the complete string ensemble, only two of which (second violins and violas) have the same rhythmic values as each other. In total there are four supporting figures here. Marked in the example above as 'c' and 'a', the first violins and cello/bass have their own line, and though independent, are to be understood only in a supporting role, listening, as they must (in order to play their shorter note values) to the oboe. The fact that both instruments repeat a single tone (E in the case of the first violins, and a pedal A for the double basses) should not be overlooked. Their presence is not required harmonically. That is fulfilled by the second violins and violas. The first violins and basses are to be understood as 'concerned support' and show, in Gilbert's words 'affiliation with others', an attribute that

Gilbert tells us is ‘fundamental to our physiological maturation and wellbeing’.<sup>261</sup> The first violins, with their offbeat octave leap, offer at once both a *sospirare* and an *affrettando* motif, and it is here that the real musical expression lies. The conductor must be careful to recognise this rhetorical trope for what it is: as *both sospirare* and *affrettando*, a quasi-paradoxical use of relaxation and agitation, and be sure to bring out its expressive nature. This is best achieved by a slight crescendo to the new measure and a diminuendo over the last two eighth notes. The players should be careful that the offbeat entry is both soft yet active. For it to work, the first violins must also listen, not only to the solo oboe, but to each other, being careful to coordinate the subtle crescendo/diminuendo figure organically over these short two beats of the measure. Played correctly, it shows support and concern for the oboe, and is very active: all features that we associate with compassion. The cello/bass part, though built on only one pedal note, is anything but static. After the long tied note across the measure, the basses must coordinate four fast staccato thirty-second notes before beginning the next measure. To successfully do this in pianissimo, they, above all others, must listen and focus their attention on the other parts. As a conductor, I have always made the case that *held-out sustained notes are rhythmical* or rather *have a rhythm inherent in them*. Far from being some academic or philosophical construct, all first-class string players know and learn that long notes have a rhythm, *must have rhythm*, otherwise they are inactive, and are rendered superfluous. Beginner string players learn to divide their bow while playing a long note, so as not to run out of bow, or also to avoid having too much bow at the end of a note. This division of the bow on a long note may be the subject of a first-year string player’s lessons, but the true professional takes this to a new level. Throughout his/her career they will be cognisant of the need to ‘fill’ or phrase long notes. This is what is at the heart of *messa di voce* and hugely important for musical expression. As a conductor, I notice when a note is ‘dead’. In this case, I usually ask for the players to subdivide the note mentally, ensuring that the note always has a heartbeat, a pulse, a living thing. Schubert’s bass part here is a perfect example of this phenomenon, because the fast four-note passage can never work if the players do not collectively feel and sense the inherent rhythm of the long note before breaking from it to begin the four-note figure. Listening is also a key attribute that must be brought to bear in playing this two-measure figure. Again, not only is

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<sup>261</sup> Gilbert, *Compassion Focused Therapy*, p. 4.

this a wonderful metaphor for support, but a powerful example of a physical need for connection within the group, to each other and to 'the other' (in this case again, the solo oboe). One should be careful not to relegate the unvarying eighth-note line of the second violins and violas as a simple 'filling in' of the harmonies. Here there is a wonderful opportunity to see how Schubert offers groups within the string section their own more intimate connection to each other, while simultaneously supporting the more important solo oboe. Outside the string section, we notice that the first oboe is joined by the first clarinet midway through the phrase. In this phrase (though I choose to see the phrase as 2+4, it could also be analysed as 2+2+2), the clarinet 'support' waits until measure 4 before entering, particularly when one might reasonably expect that it would enter on measure 3 of the phrase, after the first two-measure statement. A small detail perhaps, not worth mentioning? Not so. By this 'late' entry Schubert creates a softer entry, which I see as 'quiet support', rather than overt help. It is beautifully done, because it is a subtle sign of support, which is sometimes all we may need at a particularly challenging time. The same is true for a small detail that we may miss in the second violin and viola line. With their gently moving eighth note harmony support, we notice one small break of the pattern, when they too join the melody in measure 25, the second measure of this phrase. It is also a brilliant and, more importantly, subtle recognition of the oboe as the centre of this musical phrase. Regarding the importance of small acts of compassion or kindness, the following short quote from the *British Journal of General Practice* tells us what all of us as humans already know:

The Schwartz Centre for Compassionate Healthcare in Boston is named after Kenneth Schwartz, who was a healthcare lawyer with a young family who died at the age of 40 from lung cancer. He described the ordeal of his treatment as being 'punctuated by moments of exquisite compassion' and how the 'simple human touch from his care givers made the unbearable bearable'.<sup>262</sup>

That we should align these poignant and powerful words of a man who died at age 40 with the music of a composer who died at age 31 is important. How fitting that listening to Schubert's music can afford us a lens through which to contemplate these complex issues. As we listen, we listen differently. But we can train ourselves to *listen compassionately*. The following excerpt, taken from a 2008 published article titled 'Compassionate Listening: A Framework for

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<sup>262</sup> Nigel Mathers, 'Compassion and the Science of Kindness: Harvard Davis Lecture 2015', *British Journal of General Practice*, 66.648 (2016), p. 526, doi:10.3399/bjgp16X686041.



Listening to the Seriously Ill', is all the more poignant when we consider that Schubert lived with chronic illness, and with a certain expectation, or even acceptance, that he would die from his illness:

Beyond listening to help (as in therapeutic listening) or listening to understand my experience (as with empathic listening), in compassionate listening the primary objective is the recognition of our connectedness. Such dialogue is 'characterized by openness, trust, presence, and an understanding of the other that arises not from psychological compatibility but from shared humanity'. With compassionate listening, as I experienced it, there was a sense of 'we-ness,' an acceptance of our shared human condition and an acceptance of the struggles that humans must face, such as serious illness.<sup>263</sup>

'Listening' is nuanced, and Rehling makes the distinction between compassionate listening, empathic listening and therapeutic listening. Rehling's description of what constitutes compassionate listening has direct parallels with Paul Gilbert's definition of compassion:

Grounding our listening in compassion suggests listening to someone who is seriously ill with an openness and acceptance of human suffering, a hope to better understand that suffering and a desire to act to relieve the isolation and loneliness so often reported during serious illness.<sup>264</sup>

In compassionate listening, the shared experience and shared understanding of the human experience is crucial. As I see it, these short six measures by Schubert allow us a musical representation of this research on listening, compassion and support of other. It is a musical invitation by Schubert, an invitation to view life like Kenneth Schwartz, as one 'punctuated by moments of exquisite compassion'.

### 3.16 Compassion: Part of our Evolution

While research on compassion points to positive outcomes, both physically and mentally for all of us, research also shows that *compassion is a basic requirement if we are to survive* in the human, even animal, world.

Familiar as we are with the concept of 'survival of the fittest', contrary to popular thinking, Darwin never actually coined or used this phrase in his seminal work *On the Origin of the*

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<sup>263</sup> Diana L. Rehling, 'Compassionate Listening: A Framework for Listening to the Seriously Ill', *International Journal of Listening*, 22.1 (2008), p. 87, doi:10.1080/10904010701808516.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

*Species*. The first appearance of ‘survival of the fittest’ occurs in Herbert Spencer’s book of 1864, *The Principles of Biology*. Darwin’s theory of natural selection, which states that individuals with heritable traits better suited to the environment are more likely to survive, is not the same as Spencer’s. Darwin noticed that throughout the animal kingdom, animals were willing (oftentimes at a risk to their own wellbeing) to help others in distress. American psychologist Paul Ekman writes that:

Darwin’s little-known discussion of sympathy reveals a facet of his thinking unknown to many, which is contrary to the competitive, ruthless, and selfish view of human nature that has been mistakenly attributed to a Darwinian perspective. In 1871, 11 years before his death, Darwin’s greatest unread book, ‘The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex’, was published. In the fourth chapter, Darwin explained the origin of what he called sympathy (which today would be termed empathy, altruism, or compassion), describing how humans and other animals come to the aid of others in distress. While he acknowledged that such actions were most likely within the family group, he wrote that the highest moral achievement is concern for the welfare of all living beings, human and nonhuman.<sup>265</sup>

The concept that compassion for others may play an important role in human and mammalian interaction has been developed substantially since Darwin’s writings. Psychologists from the University of California, Berkeley, tracking the development and evolution of compassion and its importance for human survival, also recognised Darwin’s role:

Compassion proved to be a source of contention early in the development of evolutionary theory (Cronin, 1991). The notion that natural and sexual selection processes could have led to the emergence of an affective state that leads individuals to enhance the welfare of others at an expense to the self struck many as implausible. Darwin, in stark contrast, viewed sympathy as the strongest of humans’ evolved ‘instincts.’ He made this assertion within the following analysis in *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*: ‘Sympathy will have been increased through natural selection; for those communities, which included the greatest number of the most sympathetic members, would flourish best, and rear the greatest number of offspring’ (Darwin, 1871/2004, p. 130).

Darwin’s consideration that compassion was important for our very survival has been confirmed by more contemporary research. The following excerpt from a 2010 article studying the evolution of compassion offered reasons why compassion is essential to our very survival:

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<sup>265</sup> Paul Ekman, ‘Darwin’s Compassionate View of Human Nature’, *JAMA*, 303.6 (2010), p. 557, doi:10.1001/jama.2010.101.

More recent evolutionary treatments of compassion offer three lines of reasoning that account for the emergence of an affective state that is oriented toward enhancing the welfare of those who suffer (Frank, 1988; Keltner, 2009; Sober & Wilson, 1998). Compassion emerged, this reasoning holds, as a distinct affective state and trait because it enhances the welfare of vulnerable offspring, because it is a desirable emotion or attribute in mate selection processes, and because it enables cooperative relations with nonkin.<sup>266</sup>

Being the fittest or strongest of any species may not be the best predictor of survival. In the absence of compassion or an inability to care for others, researchers at the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) at Stanford University focusing on social connection and compassion concluded that ‘compassion is a trait that evolved over many years and contributed to the formation of bonds and profound social connection between human beings and other mammals’.<sup>267</sup> To survive and propagate long-term, *compassion is key*:

From the dawn of modern psychology, psychological theorists have emphasized the importance of positive human social connection for health, well-being, and survival. Both early and modern psychologists have argued that social connection – that is, the development of positive relationships with others in the social world – is a primary psychological need and motivator essential for human development and survival (Baumeister and Leary 1995, 499; Hart, Shaver, and Goldenberg 2005, 1000; Maslow 1943, 375). Indeed, several decades of research on social connection now confirm that it is linked to a substantial number of psychological and physical health benefits as well as longevity (Berkman and Syme 1979, 201–202; Cacioppo et al. 2002, 416; Pressman et al. 2005, 297).<sup>268</sup>

### 3.17 Compassion and its Effect on the Body and Mind

We have all had the experience of enhanced wellbeing when in the presence of a compassionate person or when we have been the recipient of an act of compassion. In an article titled ‘The Neuroscience of Compassion: How Compassionate Micro Skills Can Build Psychological Safety for Effective Group Work’, researchers pointed to increased positive endocrine response associated with compassion and self-compassion:

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<sup>266</sup> Jennifer L. Goetz, Dacher Keltner and Emiliana Simon-Thomas, ‘Compassion: An Evolutionary Analysis and Empirical Review’, *Psychological Bulletin*, 136.3 (2010), p. 354, doi:10.1037/a0018807.

<sup>267</sup> Seppala, Rossomando and Doty, ‘Social Connection and Compassion’, p. 428.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p. 411.

Compassion is defined as the ability to notice distress or unfair treatment of either yourself or others, and to try and reduce or prevent it. Self-compassion, in comparison to self-esteem, is the action of acknowledging our own distress and taking steps to reduce it.

Compassion has several effects on our brain. First, the act of giving or receiving compassion releases oxytocin. This hormone encourages social bonding and regulates the brain's threat system. Second, self-compassion stimulates the self-soothing system in the brain, which helps to regulate the threat system potentially cutting rumination loops short and can boost the drive system associated with dopamine.

Compassion can build our sense of psychological safety and improve our capacity for attention regulation – our capacity to focus and concentrate on relevant information, choosing what to pay attention to and what to ignore.<sup>269</sup>

Here again, the mind/body link is essential to understand. The positive power of the mind, directing messages of positivity, compassion and self-soothing, is not just a positive exercise, it is a physical one. Changes to the body chemistry in the form of hormone release or parasympathetic nervous system activation are the consequences of these exercises. Following on from such research, particularly finding that a 'brief loving kindness meditation increased feelings of social connectedness and affiliation towards strangers', there is a very strong argument to be made for enhanced wellbeing within the orchestra, in passages where one instrument is acting as the 'compassionate other' in support of another instrument or instrument group. Where Schubert writes 'compassionately', as in the examples presented above, why wouldn't this compositional style also have a concrete representation between musicians (individuals and groups) within the orchestra? Research presented in 'Schubert the Connector' points to this being a truism. The following account, given to me by a professional musician, validates the hypothesis presented above, namely that music-making (or lack of) for musicians can have dramatic effects on our health.

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<sup>269</sup> (No author listed), 'The Neuroscience of Compassion: How Compassionate Micro Skills Can Build Psychological Safety for Effective Group Work', *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, 33.4 (2019), p. 42, doi:10.1108/DLO-04-2019-0082.

### 3.18 The Covid-19 Pandemic, Disconnection and Music: An Account

From my own experience as a conductor at the helm of a professional symphony orchestra during the Covid-19 pandemic, I made it a point to have regular conversations with my players, checking in with them and staying in contact, in what I knew was a difficult time for many. I soon realised that some of my players were experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety, ranging from mild to severe. As one might expect, not all were able to share what they were going through during Covid. It was only after the pandemic that three of these colleagues shared at length with me that they had experienced huge mental challenges.

I asked two of my musicians to write a description of what had happened. Though both reported a return to full health, I chose the following report, given with this player's permission, because his illness was deemed idiopathic by his doctors. As English is not his first language, he dictated to his wife, who then wrote the following:

Before May of 2020, subject was a relatively even tempered, 58-year-old male professional violist. He took great pride in being a musician and had immense passion for music and all of its aspects: the constant challenge to attain perfection, the usual ebb and flow in a professional musician's life of preparation/rehearsal/performance, and even the immense enjoyment on an aural and intellectual level of a phrase well played.

However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this professional musician's life paused suddenly in March of 2020 (his last concert was January 2020). He had no idea that not having a regular performance schedule would shake his core. Reading the daily news of the pandemic and the U.S. political turmoil (especially in terms of international relations – he is an immigrant with immediate family overseas) gave him great stress. Also due to the pandemic, he was not able to see his immediate family for over a year, as opposed to his four yearly visits.

The symptoms listed below began with an anxiety attack in May of 2020. Then the other symptoms listed below became almost debilitating. He saw multiple specialists in the fields of neurology, ophthalmology, cardiology, as well as MRI and CT scans. Nothing out of the ordinary physically was discovered. He also tried several therapists that did not help. By late July 2020, he was almost unable to function. In early August 2020, he went to a psychiatrist and tried a low dose antidepressant that worked well. In November 2020, the dosage was increased and currently he functions well with occasional dips.

Symptoms: anxiety attacks, trembling, heart palpitations, severe insomnia, lack of interest in normal activities, irritability, low energy, daytime drowsiness, severe tension pain lower back of skull.

What gave relief: fresh/outdoor air, vigorous exercise, qigong (Asian meditation exercise movements), practicing and performing instrument. Occasionally talking with friends/family helped but not always – sometimes conversation increased agitation. The antidepressant Remeron has been most helpful.

During this time of depression/anxiety, he prepared for and performed a chamber orchestra concert in June as a principal player. He was not sure if he would be able to handle the situation. But surprisingly he enjoyed the socially-distanced camaraderie as well as the build-up personal preparation, group rehearsal, and performance energy flow that professional musicians thrive on. He also prepared and performed a string quartet concert in September of 2020. Again he revelled in the preparation, rehearsals and performance tension and release of a musician's life in normal times.

In late January (2021) he again did a small orchestra concert and felt total relief of any depression and anxiety during the rehearsals and performance. His head and eyes seem to be almost relieved of any tension/pain when reading/processing music and performing. He was excited and shocked that rehearsing/performing give him such relief of symptoms.

### 3.19 Connection with Compassion: A Mindbody Approach

In 'Schubert the Connector', research documenting the importance of connection was linked with passages of Schubert's music, and aligned in a way to demonstrate how connection is present in Schubert's compositional style. In this chapter, compassion has been presented here as a natural extension of connection. While the bedrock of research in this chapter has been psychology-based and practice-based, mindbody medicine has been instrumental in backing up this research. It is important to recognise that there is a *science of compassion*:

Neuroimaging research has shown that compassionate action activates reward centers in the brain associated with dopamine. In addition, oxytocin release is associated with satisfying outcomes of affiliation processes within groups. Oxytocin is also released as a reward for helping others and can enhance the ability to recognize social and emotional cues, such as facial expressions. Compassionate micro skills training can also have long-term effects. Many of the students reported finding opportunities to use their skills in the work place or in other group projects. Even short-term training in compassion has been shown to

cause changes to activation in areas of the brain associated with social cognition and emotion regulation.<sup>270</sup>

Research presented here and in Chapter 2 shows that the ability to connect with others is essential to our development as children and to our health later in life as adults, and how this may be analysed in Schubert's later symphonies. Such analyses offer us a new way of viewing an issue that is of growing importance to us as humans in this ever-changing world. We remember however that simply being around others does not constitute 'healing' connection per se. The following research article is an acknowledgment of the importance of *compassionate connection*, or *connection with warmth*, while simultaneously presenting an upsetting picture of society today:

Despite its importance, sociological research suggests that social connection is waning at an alarming rate in modern American society. Household sizes are decreasing and biological family and friends are more geographically and emotionally disconnected from one another than ever before (Hobbs and Stoops 2002, 33; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, Brashears 2006, 358; Putnam 2001, 541). Consequently, loneliness, isolation, and alienation are rising (Lee and Robbins 1995, 232–241) and represent one of the leading reasons people seek psychological counselling (Baumeister and Leary 1995, 497–529; McWhirter 1990, 419). A revealing sociological study found that in 2004 the average American reported having only two close others with whom to confide while nearly 25 percent of Americans reported having no one at all (2006, 371).<sup>271</sup>

From the above research we can extrapolate that in the USA alone, 25 per cent of the population don't have access to the soothing systems that Gilbert and others tell us are so important to our health (compassionate other, empathic/compassionate listening, for example). The research demonstrating a clear link between lack of connection and compassion and mental and physical wellbeing is overwhelming. The pandemic of Covid-19 throughout the world (2020–21) brought about a new realisation of the negative effects of isolation which has subsequently motivated more research to be conducted in this area. That said, the evidence that this research produced, while valuable, *serves to validate what was already being experienced and felt on a personal, and subjective level throughout the world*: social connection heals, disconnection makes you sick. Here, in 'Schubert and Compassion', I have addressed an

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>271</sup> Seppala, Rossomando and Doty, 'Social Connection and Compassion', p. 412.

extension of this principle, understanding that social connection that heals is compassionate connection.

From this more scientific perspective, research presented here brings with it a new understanding of the health-related consequences of Schubert's life. It shows how shame or guilt surrounding the composer's illness would have potentially affected him both mentally and physically. It also offers another lens through which to view Schubert's circle of friends. We understand even more that these connections would not only have had a positive effect on him, but that denying him access to them (hiding due to his illness and social stigma) would have had a negative effect on his health.

How would Schubert's illness have progressed if he had knowledge of some of the exercises that Gilbert and others have given us? The ability to reframe and understand his 'mistakes' and address himself as a 'compassionate other' would have had a hugely positive effect. At least on a subconscious level, we see from the Kupelwieser letter that he did indeed have an understanding of his own drive and threat systems. For a composer of his stature (ranked higher than even Beethoven and Mozart at one time) to write that his 'auspicious hopes have been brought to nothingness' points to a complete breakdown of his self-soothing affiliation system. Based on research presented here, to argue that a man cognisant of his own death did not in some way channel his illness and emotions into his compositions would be difficult. Eric Sams is quite correct in saying that Schubert's mind and work could 'hardly have failed to be affected by his illness'. His mind and body were certainly influenced by his illness. *So too were his compositions.*

On the surface the Kupelwieser letter reads like a man distraught and without hope. But as shown in the 'Erlkönig' analysis presented above, Schubert channelled so much emotion into his compositions that it is impossible to see them as purely aesthetic or academic. The same is true of his instrumental music. Emotions, as we have seen in the chapter 'Schubert the Connector', have both positive and negative repercussions for not only our mental but our physical health. Schubert's music is not only full of emotion, the act *of living within that emotion* would have affected the composer. How we go about equating certain emotions to certain music needs further investigation and reflection. One might be tempted to equate positive upbeat music (the last movement of Schubert's Symphony No. 9, D. 944) with increased wellbeing, with slower, more 'sad' music (the beginning of the 'Unfinished') leading to a drop



in mood and/or health. While some of this is true, the reality is, as always, somewhat more complicated:

The pleasurable responses caused by listening to sad music is a possible indication that engaging with such music has been previously capable of helping restore homeostatic balance. Given that various psychological and emotional rewards (e.g., emotional expression, emotional resolution, catharsis) are shown to be associated to a higher degree with sad music than happy music (Taruffi and Koelsch, 2014), it may be that sad music, in particular, is preferentially suited for regulating homeostasis both in general physiological terms and mental terms. This notion is further supported by the fact that listening to sad music engages the same network of structures in the brain (i.e., the OFC, the nucleus accumbens, insula, and cingulate) that are known to be involved in processing other stimuli with homeostatic value, such as those associated with food, sex, and attachment (Zatorre, 2005).<sup>272</sup>

Schubert's final years were hugely creative, and there can be little doubt that throughout this time his illness was never far from his mind. In her article on Schubert's late style, Lorraine Bodley poses the following question in connection with Schubert's C-major quartet: 'Was the unearthly serenity that permeates the Quintet an escape from the fierce weather of the mind?'<sup>273</sup> With this question in mind, I wish to tie back to MacDonald's analysis. Though I do not share his view of Schubert as a violent person, he *does* touch on an element of Schubert's music that I believe is hugely positive, and relevant to Bodley's question. MacDonald refers to the lyrical A-minor cello melody as being an exorcism of some great evil force. *If* we are to acknowledge an 'exorcism', is this then not a form of catharsis? I will address elements of catharsis in Schubert's music in Chapter 5.

Schubert's music was certainly a vehicle through which to express his musical self, but more pointedly, in the next chapter, 'Schubert and Resilience', I wish to examine how Schubert used his music as a tool to build his own resilience. While I argue in this chapter that Schubert's affiliation system was often lacking in his life, in the next we will see his music also afforded him a certain strength to endure this lack of effective self-soothing. In particular, towards the end of the next chapter, we will see *in the score* a resilient and strong Schubert.

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<sup>272</sup> Matthew E. Sachs, Antonio Damasio and Assal Habibi, 'The Pleasures of Sad Music: A Systematic Review', *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 9 (2015), doi:10.3389/fnhum.2015.00404.

<sup>273</sup> Byrne Bodley, 'A Place at the Edge', p. 28.

In a time where resilience is now recognised as a fundamental tool to stay healthy, it can also have an unhealthy side effect.<sup>274</sup> *Telling someone* they need to build resilience or become more resilient can have the opposite effect on people. When we are physically and mentally exhausted, demanding more resilience is not a tactic that leads to effective end results. We must recognise what resilience is, *and what it is not*, when and where it comes from, and how to build it, and, perhaps most importantly, to realise when we are in need of help. In any case, such an analysis will allow us yet another perspective on Schubert's music through a different and timely lens, in a way that may not only open up new readings of his music, but invite us to use his music as a lens through which to explore the concept of resilience in Schubert, and in ourselves.

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<sup>274</sup> For more on the dangers around the concept of resilience, read Chiara Dall'Ora, 'Why "Resilience" Is a Dangerous Buzzword', *Nursing Standard*, 36.7 (2021), p.23, doi:10.7748/ns.36.7.23.s12.

## Chapter 4. Schubert and Resilience

This chapter focuses on the issue of resilience, what its core elements are and why it is important and relevant to all of us. I will take aspects inherent in resilience and show how they are elucidated within Schubert's score and draw attention to related issues of embodiment, both in the conductor and the musician, that arise from this discussion. Finally, I use the subject of resilience to throw new light on the the Beethoven Schubert relationship, using examples from Schubert's 'Great' C major symphony, and highlighting new findings in the score.

### 4.1 What Is Resilience?

In the opening chapter of their book *Resilience*, authors Steven Southwick and Dennis Charney write that 'it is estimated that up to 90% of us will experience at least one serious traumatic event during our lives'. They continue:

One of the first psychologists to study resilience, Emmy Werner, followed the lives of children who were raised in impoverished homes with an alcoholic, abusive, or mentally ill parent. Werner observed that resilient children – the ones who grew up to be productive, emotionally healthy adults – had at least one person in their lives who truly supported them and served as an admired role model (Werner, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1992). Our research has found a similar pattern: all of the resilient individuals we interviewed have role models whose beliefs, attitudes and behaviors inspire them.<sup>275</sup>

This phenomenon is certainly true for Dr James Doty. Growing up in a dysfunctional family and surrounded by trauma, he describes in his book *Into the Magic Shop* how his chance interaction with a lady who owned a magic shop at a strip mall taught him important life skills. Doty went on to become a professor of neurosurgery and founded the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) at Stanford University.<sup>276</sup> More recently regarded as an important issue within the workplace (and particularly the workplace within a healthcare setting), research on resilience has increased dramatically since the Covid-19 pandemic. Diverse definitions of resilience are to be found, but all centre around the concept that *resilience is the ability to develop skills to cope with traumatic and difficult situations in a way*

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<sup>275</sup> Steven Southwick and Dennis Charney, *Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life's Greatest Challenges*, 2nd edn (Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 158, doi:10.1017/9781108349246.

<sup>276</sup> James R. Doty, *Into the Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart*, (Avery, 2017).

that is healthy and allows for future growth. Authors Tom Dillon and Bob Thomson identify four main characteristics of resilience. They are: 1. Bouncing back, 2. Standing strong, 3. Being flexible and 4. Reaching forward.<sup>277</sup> The concept of ‘bouncing back’ appears in other research writings on the subject of resilience.<sup>278</sup>

## 4.2 Schubert and Resilience

Observing Schubert triumph over his emotions and personal circumstances allows us not only to sympathize but to witness in him what is most impressive. Schubert’s dignity in the face of such suffering, his ability to compose despite such physical and mental anguish, is the highest expression of his humanity.<sup>279</sup>

In line with my own alternative analysis of the ‘MacDonald passage’ from a compassion-based perspective in the previous chapter, Lorraine Byrne Bodley’s perspective in the quote above reveals a deeply human and compassionate approach to a man living with chronic illness. The ‘dignity’ which she recognises in the composer, and his ‘ability to compose despite physical and mental anguish’, demonstrates an acknowledgement of resilience in Schubert that is welcome. Barbara Barry, in her article ‘A Shouting Silence: Further Thoughts on Schubert’s “Unfinished”’, also speaks of the composer’s ‘extreme suffering’ and his ability to ‘work through’ the pain through his compositions. In Barry’s case, she points to Schubert’s ‘Unfinished’ Symphony as a place where Schubert’s trauma is avoided, and to works after the symphony where this trauma finds expression, and is ‘reframed’:

Suppressing the symphony – ‘burying’ it in his unconscious – was the mechanism that enabled him to live with death in his life, or at least to hold death temporarily at bay in order to reconfigure his compositional style. Suppression is one of the classic mechanisms of dealing with trauma by victims of abuse or victimisation or people who have suffered a severe shock, circumstances so threatening to normal functioning of life that they have to be buried and can only be exhumed with extreme difficulty and pain; and it is this deep-seated level that the silence about the B minor symphony addresses as well as its potential ‘unfinishedness’. Just as after such extreme suffering, a person may work through some of his or her pain

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<sup>277</sup> Tom Dillon and Bob Thomson, *Agile Resilience: The Psychology of Developing Resilience in the Workplace* (Critical Publishing, 2022).

<sup>278</sup> For more on ‘bouncing back’ as a trait of resilience read: Fred Luthans, Gretchen R. Vogelgesang and Paul B. Lester, ‘Developing the Psychological Capital of Resiliency’, *Human Resource Development Review*, 5.1 (2006), pp. 25–44, doi:10.1177/1534484305285335.

<sup>279</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 380.

by writing, drawing or description, so certain passages in Schubert's works after the 'Unfinished' – the ones that seem haunted by an uncanny presence, shadowed by melancholy or ruptured by explosive anger – can be regarded as offshoots of the trauma of mortality that have been reframed within lyrical contexts.<sup>280</sup>

As both scholars acknowledge Schubert's suffering, on face value these perspectives seem closely aligned. However, on deeper analysis, there is a marked difference. Barry's reading of Schubert is of a composer who suppresses negative experiences to the extent that he will not compose, *or cannot compose*. She draws parallels between this 'inability' (as she sees it) to come to terms with his fate and that of trauma victims, some of whom do indeed suppress their trauma for various reasons. Only after this period of 'suppression' (which Barry identifies as a period of silence following the 'Unfinished' Symphony) does she see in 'certain passages in Schubert's works after the "Unfinished"' places in his composition where his trauma eventually becomes exposed. These passages are 'haunted', 'melancholic' or 'ruptured by explosive anger'. Reminiscent of the Hugh MacDonald approach, we are asked to view any (and all) of Schubert's efforts to come to terms with his illness, fate and mortality solely in passages that are dark and disturbing. Unfortunately, this closes down any avenue that might hope to show how his illness might find positive expression in his music or indeed that we may view any of the darker passages as potential for our own growth, just as they may have been for Schubert.

Surely we must be 'allowed' to explore Schubert's compositional process in a broader, more holistic sense? The 'triumph' that Byrne Bodley identifies is in Schubert's compositions: compositions that have been written *under real challenge*. It makes sense that these 'triumphs' be acknowledged as a source of positivity, and if not that, at least of potential growth. With Byrne Bodley, we are offered a side of Schubert that we can not only identify with, but share in. In her writings, we are invited to *acknowledge a shared suffering*, the kind of shared humanity that occurs only when we are forced to go through difficult life-changing events. By choosing to recognise Schubert's resilience to continue composing despite his illness as 'the highest expression of his humanity', Byrne Bodley has placed Schubert scholarship in an altogether different realm than that of Barry or MacDonald. It is this perspective that I wish to explore further here. Though she stops short of saying that music composed at the time of his illness may contain elements of the composer's illness, it does open a unique way forward.

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<sup>280</sup> Barbara Barry, 'A Shouting Silence', p. 51.

Might this ‘highest expression of his humanity’ also find expression in his music? As we have already seen, literature and research taken from psychology and particularly from the field of mindbody medicine would certainly suggest so. *How it is expressed is left to us*. It opens for us the opportunity to explore this shared humanity in his music in a way that may bring Schubert and his music to a new audience. To begin, I propose that Schubert’s ‘triumph over his emotions and personal circumstances’ shows the hallmarks of grit and resilience. Resilience is a word that has come to the forefront in recent years. There is an increased awareness of the grit and fortitude that is needed to survive a hostile workplace, cope with an increased workload, navigate a difficult relationship or an unexpected loss or trauma. In this way, Schubert’s life and music may again be in a unique position to afford us a different, new lens through which to explore issues that affect us all, in the hope that we may not only gain a new perspective on our collective suffering, but perhaps on Schubert’s life, illness and music.

### 4.3 Schubert and Resilience through a Compassionate Lens?

Rather than see Schubert as a figure who had difficulties composing or expressing himself and his illness through his music, might research on resilience broaden our approach to the composer to include viewing his music as a coping mechanism, and a tool to strengthen and build his own resilience? The following quote invites just such a perspective:

Resilience has been described as a dynamic process whereby people rebound from crisis and adversity and move on with their lives (Polk, 1997). Interventions that may foster a sense of coherence, collaboration, competence and confidence are important to the process of developing resilience. The concept of resilience has significance for research and therapeutic intervention with people learning to live with chronic illness because it provides a shift from focusing only on their deficits and problems to working with their strengths to address the challenges that their lives present.<sup>281</sup>

As I see it, research such as this invites us to view Schubert, a composer ‘learning to live with chronic illness’, as a man who worked with his strengths (music) to address the challenges in his life, which would of course include his illness. If we choose this perspective, then concepts of resilience such as ‘rebounding’ may be found in Schubert’s music and interpreted *in a*

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<sup>281</sup> Debbie Kralik, Antonia Van Loon and Kate Visentin, ‘Resilience in the Chronic Illness Experience’, *Educational Action Research*, 14.2 (2006), pp. 187–201, doi:10.1080/09650790600718035.

*positive way*, as Schubert's way to deal with the 'challenges that their lives present'. In doing so, my aim is to not only offer a new perspective on Schubert, but simultaneously position Schubert as a vehicle to explore and understand resilience from a musical perspective. 'Rebound' as a word would seem to incorporate an element of speed (i.e. being quick or fast), but here the concept also seems to cover a slower, more gradual realisation.

The most powerful of 'interventions' (to take from the above quote) for Schubert was of course his music. For many, it may be impossibly difficult to imagine just how Schubert could live with chronic illness and still manage to compose such beautiful music. Or, as I wish to do here, take the vantage point of Byrne Bodley: though she too acknowledges the unimaginable struggle that he must have lived under, she reframes his ability to compose into a representation of all that is human in us, 'the highest expression of his humanity'. Recognising this, Bodley moves beyond sympathy to empathy. In inviting us all to acknowledge and share in his suffering, Schubert's music becomes a catalyst for human connection, the importance of which I have discussed in the previous chapters. Here, this approach offers a wonderful entry point to explore the concept of resilience in, and through, Schubert's music. With this in mind, the next step must be to address a methodology to find how concepts inherent in the resilience literature may be found and identified in Schubert's music.

## 4.4 Hermeneutics and Embodiment in Schubert

When I first read the word 'rebound' in connection with resilience, I was immediately drawn to the beginning of the last movement of Schubert's 'Great' C-major Symphony. The word resonated with me in connection with one particular figure that Schubert uses continuously throughout the movement. More importantly, the concept of 'rebound' helped me understand this musical passage in a way that I had previously struggled with when analysing and later conducting the symphony. Though the 'content' and structure of the passages were clear to me, the 'intent' was not (immediately) clear to me. While I find it hugely important to represent the composer's intent, using all in my musical experience to do so (technique, analysis, performance practice, place in history, etc.), I am also aware that I am projecting myself into the music. *And I must*, particularly as a conductor. If I am performing as a pianist and am not clear as to exactly why a certain passage should be this way or that, I can still be convincing. I

am not required to speak or explain why I choose this articulation or phrasing or such to my audience. As a conductor, if I can't find a way to understand a passage for myself, then by extension, I can't verbally articulate this to the orchestra.

Embodiment is an important issue. Unlike the violinist or pianist who can play a passage themselves, we are reliant on the orchestra to achieve our musical goal. The orchestra is my instrument of expression. The conductor, more so than any other musician, must be able to show the music, which must happen through their hands and gesture and/or through their body. For me, if I don't have a clear idea of what I want from a passage, *and why*, my hands won't find a way to express this to the orchestra. The sensation of not being able to embody the sound is one of the most uncomfortable and frustrating feelings one can have as a conductor. Young, inexperienced conductors know this. The young conductor is still learning how to use his/her instrument (body, hands, gesture, etc.). During this time, technical problems of all sorts often inhibit any real music-making. Unfortunately, even as a seasoned professional conductor, this can occasionally happen. When it happens to me, it is because while the 'content' is for me easy to express, the 'intent' of the passage, *if not completely clear in my mind*, will be difficult to embody. Outwardly no one will notice, but inwardly I will be uncomfortable. This is akin to standing in front of a locked door with a bunch of keys, but not finding the right one to unlock the door.

Understanding a passage of music (or any understanding) has its roots in hermeneutics. To express what the composer is 'looking for' is of course at once both an objective and a subjective undertaking. In trying to express the wishes and intent of the composer, I must first channel my own. In the final movement of the 'Great' C-major, I found myself, as always, needing to find meaning and context before I could convincingly show the music and conduct the piece. To clarify, this is not a technical issue; *it is one of concept and understanding*. However, if not resolved, it will become a technical issue because I am not *physically present in the score*. With the figure in question, immediately the concept of 'rebound' in connection with resilience in Schubert came to mind in relation to the opening of the final movement of the 'Great' C-major Symphony ('R' in Example 4.1). When such hermeneutical problems relating to my own understanding of the score are resolved in this way, it in turn leads to a resolution of any issues around gesture and embodiment. Perhaps this too is a way of expressing a shared humanity? Keenly aware as I am of Schubert's resilience in the face of his ongoing physical and



mental struggle, ‘welcoming’ this struggle into my own body, and expressing it to eighty or so orchestral musicians, is a way of sharing in this suffering. Seen this way, Schubert’s unusual statement that ‘the music which gives the world the greatest delight is rooted in my deepest sorrows’ is no longer confusing to us. *In every possible way, it makes perfect sense that the most ebullient, energetic and positive of passages in Schubert’s symphonic writing has its roots in suffering.* Furthermore, it is a suffering that we can share in, one that, while exhausting to play (the movement is extremely physically demanding on the players, in particular the strings), in the end leaves us all with a deep sense of being healed.

#### 4.5. Resilience within the Score: 1. ‘Rebound’

The figure in question appears already in measures 2–3, and 6–7 of the last movement of the C-major Symphony, and follows again in subsequent passages (see Example 4.1). The force of the opening gesture in this movement is brilliant and powerful. Scored for the whole orchestra (albeit without timpani), it is too short to be considered a fanfare, but it is reminiscent of such. It is a bold statement made with huge conviction. The conviction is represented in the accent marks on the first beat of the measure, the fortissimo marking and the *unisono* writing. It is purposefully powerful, but also bright. One could imagine the opening having more weight if the lower register of the lower strings (viola, cello and bass particularly are scored in a high register) and brass were used, but Schubert avoids this. By doing so he gives the figure this brightness, without sacrificing power.

In Peter Gülke’s analysis of the opening of the first movement of the same symphony, he correctly points to measures 3 and 6 as being a quasi-commentary on the preceding measures (see Example 6.2 in Chapter 6). The passage there is to be analysed not simply as eight measures, but unusually as 3+3+2. Here, in the final movement, measures 2–3, and 6–7 (and later in measures 35 and 36) have a similar function. Gülke fittingly analyses the two measures 3 and 6 in the first movement as being in parentheses, and the same is true of this figure here in the last movement, but with one marked difference. While the first-movement figure has a calming effect (due in part to its repetitious nature), the figure here in the last movement is one of

Example 4.1 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/iv), measures 1–54

**Allegro vivace**

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in C, Bassoon) and brass (Horn in C, Trumpet in C, Tenor Trombone, Bass Trombone) are grouped together. The strings (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass) are grouped together. The Timpani is shown as a separate part. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *p* (piano), as well as articulation marks like accents and slurs. The tempo is indicated as **Allegro vivace**. The key signature is C major and the time signature is 2/4. The score shows measures 1 through 54.

187

19

Fl. *fz*

Ob. *fz* *P* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Cl. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Bsn. *fz* *fz* *fz* *a 2* *fz* *fz* *fz*

C Hn. *a 2* *P* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

C Tpt. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Tbn. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

B. Tbn. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Timp. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Vln. I *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Vln. II *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Vla. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Vc. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

Cb. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

189

S1

36

Ob. *p*

Bsn. *p*

C Hn. *p*

Vln. I *fz p*

Vln. II *fz p*

Vla. *fp*

Vc. & Cb. *fp*

44

Ob.

Bsn.

C Hn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. & Cb.

The image displays a musical score for measures 49 through 52. The instruments are arranged in a standard orchestral layout: Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Cor Anglais (C Hn.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello & Contrabasso (Vc. & Cb.).

- Measures 49-50:** The woodwinds (Ob., Cl., Bsn.) play a melodic line with a crescendo. The strings (Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc. & Cb.) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked *p* (piano).
- Measure 51:** The woodwinds continue their melodic line. The strings play a similar rhythmic pattern, still marked *p*.
- Measure 52:** The woodwinds play a melodic line. The strings play a rhythmic pattern, marked *ff* (fortissimo).

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings (*p*, *ff*). The woodwinds are marked *p* in measures 49-50 and *ff* in measure 52. The strings are marked *p* in measures 49-50 and *ff* in measure 52.

vitality and energy, and, as I see it, is akin to a recoil, or a reloading spring, allowing for momentum to be built up again to prepare us for the next fortissimo tutti. As such, it can be described as a 'rebound' figure ('R'). This 'rebound' is reflected in numerous ways in the figure. After the first fortissimo entry, it almost ducks out of sight, moving decisively down in the register of the instruments. Also, it is played only by the strings, and played in the dynamic piano. Is it possible for such a figure to match the intensity of the opening? While the figure is marked piano (content) by Schubert, the 'intent' is quite different. It must be played with an inner intensity and conviction to match that of the previous fortissimo. Here we are confronted with what is for me one of the most interesting and important aspects of playing, orchestral or otherwise.

### 4.5.1 Piano Dynamic and Embodiment

While an outward forte in music has its own inertia, *piano as a dynamic is habitually difficult*. For the most part, we as musicians don't have to do much to make a forte passage 'work'. It looks after itself. With a piano dynamic, this is never the case. This is made all the more difficult if the piano dynamic is required to reflect something other than 'soft' or calm in nature, as is the case here. The hectic nature of the triplet figure (in 'R') does help to shape the nature of the figure enormously, but one must be careful that the accent in the second measure of the figure does not detract from the figure as a whole. While it is altogether a more intense accent than the accent in measure 1 (which belongs to the first loud opening figure 'O'), it must be played within the allotted piano dynamic, something that most orchestras find challenging. However, explaining the figure as a 'rebound' or 'recoil' figure to the orchestra conjures up an image in the players that can help enormously with the subsequent execution. The six measures from measure 9 to 14 (inclusive) can also be seen to contain a 'rebound' figure. On first analysis, what we have here is a 'Mannheimer Rakete' or 'Mannheim rocket' figure: a rising figure increasing in dynamic. Similar in intent to that of the rocket, its function is to create excitement. Looking closer we see that the rising figure is not consistent: that is, one would expect measure 12 to contain the notes E, C, E, G, E, G following along from the sequence set out at the beginning of the rocket. Instead, using the second half of measures 11, 12 and 13, Schubert continuously brings us back to the same notes C, G, C before finally continuing the figure 'correctly' in measure 14 and bringing us to an A-minor climax in measure 17. It too has a rebound character. This habitual return in the second half of the measure should not be understood as a regressing of the upward rise but rather as a figure that emboldens the rise. This 'rebound' is not an academic abstraction. When pointed out to the string section, as a conductor, I can instantly recognise a difference in the execution of the passage, one that comes not just from an understanding of how the passage is constructed, but by employing words such as 'recoil' or 'rebound'. In this way, *the passage takes on a visual significance for the players* which is represented accordingly in the sound produced by the orchestra. This in turn also fuels a much more powerful climax from measures 15 through to 17. Because of the collectively recognised 'recoil', the passage has energy that must be expended. In my performances, I have witnessed how this concept of the rebound effect affords this movement an inertia that is truly unique.



The next rebound element to be identified is found in measures 19 and 21 (marked as 'P' in Example 4.1). A testament to the resilience of Schubert, 'P' is indeed an exact relication of 'O', though *its function here is different*. Here it is a rebound figure, a quasi-'echo effect' of 'O', and vital again as a recoil after 'O'. Without it, the resilience of the whole passage would not work. Though not written to be played softer than the preceding measure (like 'R' is in relation to 'O') by changing the instrumentation and register, Schubert has rendered it less powerful. Presented only in some of the woodwinds and brass, and at a lower register, it cannot match the weight of the preceding measures which have the luxury and power of the whole string section with them. *What it does do*, is allow the previous tutti passage to breathe, to recoil, allowing for the whole passage to gain resilience. By now we realise that both 'R' and 'P' are interchangeably used by Schubert as the rebound figures for 'O'. Interestingly, while 'O' and 'R' are very different figures, 'O' and 'P' are almost identical in content, and yet *they are wholly different in intent*. As with 'R', 'P' is always a figure that drops down in register (from measure 18 to 19, the trumpet leap downwards is an interval of a tenth!), so that even though the dynamic remains fortissimo, the instruments utilised by Schubert simply don't have the power in that register to match the preceding measures. This is of course what Schubert intended, and as such their impact as a rebound figure is solidified.

Both figures ('R' and 'P') appear throughout the movement in various forms. Figure 'R' returns in measures 35–36 in a single appearance that is as unusual as it is effective. Here, for the first time, it is not preceded by 'O'. It is used in this way again in measures 53–54, again not preceded by 'O'. Schubert will continue to use his rebound figures in this fashion throughout the movement, particularly after a climax. In this way, he utilises these rebound figures as his way to 'regroup' before continuing.

The rebound figures are not always independently presented, as in measures 2–3 or 19–20, but are later cleverly meshed within passages where they are not readily recognised or realised by the listener, or indeed the players. Drawing the orchestra's attention to the *hidden* 'rebound' figures allows the players to instantly recognise these figures and play them accordingly. An excellent example of how such a detail can be lost in the orchestra is the lower strings from measures 36 to 52. Schubert's release or 'rebound' is in the violas, cellos and double basses, represented by the figure 'P' in Example 4.1. Against the melody in the woodwinds, and the fast triplets in the first and second violins, it would be impossible to expect the orchestral

players to realise or identify that their rebound 'P' is also a complementary rhythm juxtaposed with both the first and second horns (see measures 37 and 38). Pointing this out to the players and allowing for them to play this without the other parts connects players and the music in a way that is vital for getting across Schubert's genius, a genius that connects.

The woodwind phrase beginning at measure 36 also contains elements of the 'rebound' figures. The upbeat to 37 is of course 'P', and the upbeat for the subsequent four measures begins cleverly with a somewhat altered version of 'R'. The phrase is marked in Example 4.1 as 'S<sup>1</sup>'. Small details such as this are vital to secure Schubert's intent (excitement and release). Without these 'rebound' measures, maintaining the tension is impossible, and as such, it is important that the orchestra understands these figures when executing the passage. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that audiences have difficulties with the length of this piece? As the conductor one must keep the tension in this whole passage, and one does this in different ways. For example, when communicated to the lower-string section of the orchestra as to the 'intent' of figure 'P', one can expect a completely different approach from the players. Explaining such details and how they 'fit' within the phrase is always a good way to engage the interest and curiosity of players. In this case, there must be a conscious interaction with their colleagues in the horns. The violas, cellos and basses should be urged to approach their long held-out note prior to 'P' differently. Notice how only measures 50–52 have any dynamic marking (crescendo followed by diminuendo) from Schubert. Despite this, or maybe because of it, the whole phrase, particularly for the violas, cellos and basses, requires focus and attention to work as Schubert has conceived it. The long note must have a direction if the phrase is to maintain its energy (particularly important with a phrase that involves repetition, as this does), and this is achieved by a *messa di voce* somewhere in the four-measure held-out note which leads us to 'P'. They are the loaded spring, and 'P' is the rebound. A passive approach from the lower strings on the long notes will render 'P' useless, non-functional even, and would kill the passage.

We have seen how the dominant melody of the passage from measures 37–52, played in thirds (first oboe being doubled by first bassoon, etc.), begins with an upbeat figure reminiscent of 'P' and 'R' respectively. Despite being a legato line, it can be seen to have another element of 'rebound' about it. The melody itself moves downwards, but always lifts in the middle of the phrase and returns to the note it started on. This cyclical 'dipping down' and returning creates its own inertia, and Schubert raises the tension by beginning the second appearance (measures

41–44) one tone higher than the previous iteration. Measures 37 to 52 is a sixteen-measure phrase. After the first four measures are repeated, Schubert shortens the next four-measure segment, before finishing again with a four-measure phrase. The analysis is 16(4+4+2+2+4). Both of the two-measure segments (45–46 and 47–48) are exact repetitions of each other, and, with accents also on each beginning note and acting as a diminution of the previous four-measure phrases, they create (positive) energy. With this kind of analysis, it is possible to see how concepts of ‘rebound’, taken from literature on resilience, can be shown to be present in Schubert’s music. By finding the positive aspects around resilience, and motivating the orchestra to bounce back with their respective figures, we ensure a resilience in the music itself. By pointing these elements out to the players, they themselves ensure that the music is more lively. It is connections such as these, forged between his music-making, his life and his illness, that make for a convincing performance. It also brings us to a space where, as Bodley correctly points out, we can all share in his expression of humanity.

#### 4.5.2 Resilience within the Score: 2. ‘Standing Strong’, 3. ‘Being Flexible’, 4. ‘Reaching Forward’

‘Schubert relates to Beethoven, he reacts to him, but he follows him hardly at all.’<sup>282</sup> Alfred Brendel is correctly regarded as one of the foremost Schubert interpreters of his time. Equally acquainted with Beethoven, Brendel’s words are as exact as they are succinct. Contemporary research on resilience is an opportunity to explore and evaluate one of the most contested of issues within Schubertian scholarship in a new way: namely, the Schubert/Beethoven relationship.<sup>283</sup> In the next section, ‘The Schubert/Beethoven Relationship: An Expression of Resilience’, I intend to take the final three of the four characteristics of resilience (1. Rebound, 2. Standing strong, 3. Being flexible, 4. Reaching forward) and show how they shape this debate. In particular I will use the Beethoven quote inserted by Schubert in his ‘Great’ C-major Symphony for this analysis. It is my hope that this ‘intervention’ will convincingly show just how

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<sup>282</sup> Brendel, ‘Schubert’s Last Three Piano Sonatas’, p. 410.

<sup>283</sup> For a detailed account of the untruths around Schubert, how they came about and a correction of the same, see ‘Prologue: Becoming Schubert’ in Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, pp. 1–18.

resilient Schubert was in the face of challenges, and indeed how he used these challenges as a force to grow and reach forward.

## 4.6 The Schubert/Beethoven Relationship: An Expression of Resilience

To understand how ‘standing strong’, ‘being flexible’ and ‘reaching forward’ may be relevant in the Schubert/Beethoven debate, we must first look at a passage in the final movement of the ‘Great’ C-major, beginning at measure 163 and ending with measure 200 (Example 4.2).

In Example 4.2, ‘Q’ represents a four-measure repeated throbbing half-note figure which is accompanied by a strict but playful string *accompagnato*. ‘L’ is the subsequent legato four-measure phrase which comes as a consequence of the inertia and energy that the repeated figure ‘Q’ brings with it. ‘L’'s continuous quarter notes make for a legato line, but Schubert interrupts the figure in the second measure with an accent and a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, so that the true relaxation only happens in the final two measures (175–76 and their parallels), after which the pattern repeats again. While we have heard ‘Q’ before in the movement (113–16) and will hear it at its most powerful towards the end of the symphony (measures 1057–60), ‘L’ is new. ‘L’ will have implications later in the Beethoven quote, and we will learn why the creation of ‘L’ and its use here is representative of both ‘being flexible’ and ‘reaching forward’. The structure of the thirty-two-measure phrase from 169 to 200 (inclusive) is interesting as it too shows elements of ‘being flexible’ and ‘reaching forward’. This thirty-two-measure phrase is to be analysed as  $[16 (8(4+4) \times 2) + 8 + 8(4+4)]$ . The eight-measure phrase from 185–92 is an extension of ‘Q’ (with crescendo) and a decoration of ‘L’. The following eight-measure phrase from 193–200 (*and in particular, the first four measures*) is where Schubert’s attention is focused. We will see the tremendous significance of this in the Schubert/Beethoven relationship later. Suffice to say that, in many ways, *all previous measures of the phrase lead to this*. The measures in question are marked in the example as ‘SB’.

Resilience literature tells us that ‘being flexible’ is an important characteristic of resilience. In this regard, it is interesting that measures 193 to 200 are an exact reversal of how Schubert has presented this passage until now. Before, ‘Q’ began the phrase. Now ‘Q’ is at the end of the phrase and the legato quarter notes from 193–96 (‘SB’) are the beginning of the phrase. Later,

Example 4.2 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/iv), measures 163–200

[illegible]

Q L

177

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

C Hn. *simile* a 2

Tbn. *simile* II

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. & Cb.

Q

185

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

C Hn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. & Cb.

The image displays a musical score for measures 193 to 200. The score is divided into two sections: 'SB' (measures 193-196) and 'Q' (measures 197-200). The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Ob. (Oboe):** Measures 193-196: *f* (forte), then *p* (piano). Measures 197-200: Sustained notes, marked *p*.
- Cl. (Clarinet):** Measures 193-196: *f*, then *p*. Measures 197-200: Sustained notes, marked *p*.
- Bsn. (Bassoon):** Measures 193-196: *f*, then *p*. Measures 197-200: Sustained notes, marked *p*.
- C Hn. (Cornet II):** Measures 193-196: *f*, then *p*. Measures 197-200: Sustained notes, marked *p*.
- Tbn. (Trombone):** Measures 193-196: *f*, then *p*. Measures 197-200: Sustained notes, marked *p*.
- Vln. I (Violin I):** Measures 193-196: *f*, then *p*. Measures 197-200: Sustained notes, marked *p*.
- Vln. II (Violin II):** Measures 193-196: *f*, then *p*. Measures 197-200: Sustained notes, marked *p*.
- Vla. (Viola):** Measures 193-196: *f*, then *p*. Measures 197-200: Sustained notes, marked *p*.
- Vc. (Violoncello):** Measures 193-196: *f*, then *p*. Measures 197-200: Sustained notes, marked *p*.
- Cb. (Cello):** Measures 193-196: *f*, then *p*. Measures 197-200: Sustained notes, marked *p*.

The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings (*f* and *p*). The 'SB' section is characterized by a strong, rhythmic pattern, while the 'Q' section is more melodic and sustained.

row, with the subsequent four measures (289–92) being ‘SB’ in diminution. These permutations of ‘SB’ demonstrate how ‘being flexible’ shows up in the score, and there are many more examples to demonstrate just how flexible Schubert is in his treatment of ‘SB’. For example, in measures 333–36 (Example 4.4), Schubert now has yet another use for ‘SB’, using it as a climax in its own right, existing again without any sign of ‘Q’. Marked *fff* (the loudest dynamic Schubert uses anywhere in the symphony), Schubert somehow manages to maintain ‘SB’'s nature as a calming figure, bringing in an immediate diminuendo. This allows the passage to act as a quasi-pressure release valve after the previous build-up as it deflates the tension. This is also true in the subsequent phrase (337–52, Example 4.4), where Schubert uses a long diminuendo to bring a sense of calm after the build-up to the ‘pressure valve’ measure 333. Here again, beginning

at measure 337, 'SB' receives a new treatment by Schubert. He changes the very make-up of 'SB', both extending it and shortening it within the same phrase (see 'SB<sup>1</sup>' in Example 4.4). The trombone part 337–52 (inclusive) shows the structure to be nine measures followed by seven, but within that structure exists another structure. Beginning at measure 345, Schubert simply repeats the same passage begun at 337. Nothing unusual here: 'SB<sup>1</sup>' is an extension of 'SB'. But what *is* unique is the phrasing that Schubert chooses for the second iteration of the phrase, choosing to begin the last phrase on the first note of 349, rather than on the second note of the measure as in the earlier iteration in measure 341. This is truly Schubertian and shows incredible flexibility. *Beethoven does not change his phrasings or adapt them as Schubert does.* Certainly, when

Example 4.3 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/iv), measures 277–93

The musical score for Schubert's Symphony no. 8, measures 277–93, is presented in a standard musical notation. The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flute, Clarinet in C, Bassoon, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The key signature is C major and the time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 277–341) is marked 'SB' and the second system (measures 342–393) is marked 'SB'. The Flute, Clarinet in C, and Bassoon parts are marked 'fp' (fortissimo) and feature a series of chords. The Violin I and II parts feature a series of eighth notes. The Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass parts feature a series of eighth notes and triplets. The score is written in a standard musical notation with a grand staff for each instrument.



285

Fl. SB cresc. *f* cresc.

Ob. *p* cresc. *f* cresc.

Cl. cresc. *f* cresc.

Bsn. cresc. *f* cresc.

C Hn. *f* cresc.

C Tpt. *f* cresc.

Tbn. *f* cresc.

B. Tbn. *p* cresc. *f* cresc.

Vln. I cresc. 3 3 3 *f* cresc. *p*

Vln. II cresc. 3 3 3 *f* cresc. *p*

Vla. cresc. *f* cresc.

Vc. cresc. *f* cresc.

Cb. cresc. 3 *f* 3 cresc. 3

Example 4.4 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/iv), measures 333–52

SB

333

Flute *fff* *ffz*

Oboe *fff* *ffz*

Clarinet in C *fff* *ffz*

Bassoon *fff* *ffz*

Horn in C *fff* *ffz*

Trumpet in C *fff* *ffz*

Tenor Trombone *fff* *ffz*

Bass Trombone *fff* *ffz*

Timpani *fff* *ffz*

Violin I *fff* *ffz*

Violin II *fff* *ffz*

Viola *fff* *ffz*

Violincello & Contrabass *fff* *ffz*

SB1

342

Fl.

decresc.

Ob.

Cl.

decresc.

Bsn.

decresc.

C Hn.

C Tpt.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vln. I

decresc.

Vln. II

decresc.

Vla.

decresc.

Vc. & Cb.

decresc.

SB1

Beethoven takes a theme and fragments it or extends it, by its very nature the phrasing changes, but he does not alter from his original phrasing.

I wish to choose one last example of Schubert's flexibility in his use of 'SB'. As a final example of Schubert's seemingly infinite ability to transform or adapt (all characteristics of resilience), Example 4.5 (beginning in measure 433) shows 'SB' in a new way. I have shown how 'SB' invariably is used as a figure that pacifies the score, yet this time it appears as a tense tremolo passage, begun in the violins but interrupted by the violas, canonic in nature, with staccato entrances from measure 437 in the woodwinds. What we cannot know now is that Schubert will be taking this theme to later frame the Beethoven quote. Just how forward-reaching Schubert is in his concept of structure will be understood later in combination with the Beethoven quote.

## 4.7 Schubert Standing Strong

By now, we recognise that Schubert has used 'SB' in multiple ways: he has varied the dynamic markings, changed its structure and even moved its position within a phrase. While we have seen how 'SB' is a wonderful way to explore musically the concept of 'being flexible', it is a preamble for the true mission that Schubert has for this short theme. That mission is to frame and accompany the Beethoven quote. There is one final element of 'SB' that I wish to explore: one that will show the incredible creative genius of Schubert, embrace the concept of resilience and show how independent Schubert truly was.

In measures 389–92 (Example 4.5) of the final movement of Schubert's Ninth Symphony, we are presented for the first time with a four-measure quote from the final movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony ('Tochter aus Elysium' in Example 4.6). In close harmonies in the clarinets (and later beginning in measure 413 in the oboes), it appears *pp* and is presented not in the march-like or triumphant fashion as it is in Beethoven's score, but in a way that instils a sense of calm. Apart from some rhythmic changes (the two repeated quarter notes of 'Tochter' appear as one half note, and 'Elysi-' of 'Elysium' is also heard now as a half note), it is an exact quote taken from measures 241–44 in the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Measure 241 is the first appearance in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony of the theme sung with the words 'Freude schöner Götterfunken, Tochter aus Elysium', but the theme itself is introduced earlier in the movement.

Example 4.5 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/iv), measures 385–440

[illegible]

391

*p*

B1

Fl.

*p*

B1

Ob.

*p*

I

*p*

Cl.

Bsn.

*p*

Vln. I

Vln. II

*pp*

Vla.

Vc. & Cb.

SB

400

B2 B2X

Fl. *p*

Ob. *p* *pp*

Cl. *p*

Bsn. *p*

Tbn. *p*

B. Tbn. *p*

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. & Cb. *pp*

410

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. & Cb.

SB

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*



[illegible]

210

Example 4.6 Beethoven, Symphony no. 9 in D minor ('Choral') (opus 125/iv), measures 241–44



First presented by Schubert in Eb major (one notes that in Eb major, it is one half-tone above the Beethoven original key of D major, which helps the passage take on a more pastoral or relaxed role), the oboe passage later is in Ab major. In both instances Schubert chooses a lively dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note as the accompanying figure, one that is utilised as a complementary rhythm, being shared between the various string instruments in different pairings. This rhythm creates a strong sense of support and adds an energy to the passage despite the pianissimo marking. Looking to the literature presented above on resilience, the passage offers us the possibility to compare it with the concept of 'standing strong'. Already explored in Section 2.11, 'Schubert and the Singular Mindset', what I recognise in this passage is a strong sense of self in Schubert. Far from the now out-of-date stereotypical view of Schubert as the cowering younger composer living under the shadow of the great Beethoven, here Schubert embraces Beethoven in a way that empowers the older composer, but in no way weakens Schubert. To the contrary, as I see it, here Schubert is 'standing strong' in the most powerful way possible. He has put any sense of ego aside. In doing so, he empowers Beethoven, while simultaneously being true to himself. The conviction, strength of character and resilience that Schubert shows by directly quoting another ('competing') composer, in his own most important work to date, is telling. How Schubert brings us to the Beethoven quote here is of huge importance and we will see why later. Instantly, in measures 385–89 (Example 4.5) we recognise 'SB' as the introductory four measures that mesh with the subsequent Beethoven quote. *It is here that the 'mission' of 'SB' is realised.* 'SB', though undoubtedly used brilliantly and with huge variety (as discussed above) already, has been constructed and composed with the clear intention of aligning itself to, and with, the Beethoven quote here. One could say that up until now, 'SB' has been used in a secondary role by Schubert, in preparation for the Beethoven quote. Because this is the case here, in every way the passage is a wonderful display of Schubert's strong stance as a composer. The structure of the forty-eight-measure passage from 385–432 is noteworthy. The first (twenty-four-measure) phrase that begins with two

clarinets at measure 385 is repeated with the entry of the oboes at 409 (with some slight changes in instrumentation). Each of these twenty-four-measure phrases is to be analysed as 12  $[8(4+4) + 4]$ ; 12  $[6(4+2) + 6]$ . We will see how this analysis demonstrates (to take from the Brendel quote above), how Schubert reacts to Beethoven, but follows him hardly at all. At the same time, it offers another opportunity to reflect on the resilience of Schubert. The measures directly before the Beethoven quote are my prime focus here: namely the four measures of 393–96 (‘B 1’), and secondly the eight-measure extended parallel phrase from 401–08.

Schubert’s phrase from 393–96 represents for me a Schubert far removed from that of a shy or apologetic composer. Directly after the Beethoven quote, Schubert takes the three notes of Beethoven’s ‘Tochter aus Elysium’ (‘B’ in Example 4.5) (Eb, F, G, (G), (F)) and decorates it. Beginning with Eb, F and G, he adds one step to Ab (Eb, F, G, Ab, (G), (F)). As I see it, this act shows in Schubert is a certain confidence (boldness even?): a willingness to change and adapt the older composer’s work, yet fitting it within his own composition. He *could* have simply repeated the four-measure phrase again (which certainly would have worked) but chooses not to. For me, these four measures are a demonstration of Schubert’s ability to rely on his own strengths, and his resilience in the face of Beethoven’s legacy. Measures 401 to 408 only serve to strengthen this. At 401 he begins as he did previously, but instead of using the Beethoven quote as in the preceding phrase, *he drops the Beethoven quote completely* now, instead substituting ‘B’ for his own adaptation of it: a now shortened 2 measure version of ‘B1’ (marked ‘B2’ in example 4.5) followed by an extended six-measure phrase from 403–08, marked ‘B2X’. All this shows Schubert in full flight, extending the range and length of the previous parallel passage ‘B1’ in a brilliantly constructed phrase, replete with canonic trombone hearings of ‘SB’ and stronger tutti instrumentation in the strings. It is a sign of the younger composer’s courage and self-reliance. This, in the context of the Schubert/Beethoven relationship, has huge implications. Factually and objectively, *Schubert has substituted Beethoven’s work with his own*, and chosen to decorate Beethoven’s work. Later, we will see that this is an audacious undertaking, but only in the most positive sense. The listener is never aware that Schubert has been substituted for Beethoven, but in truth, that is what has happened... or is it?

## 4.8 Resilience in the Schubert/Beethoven Debate

That we can explore the concept of resilience in Schubert using the Beethoven quote is significant on a number of levels. Schubert's lived experience aside, Schubertian scholarship itself has had to be resilient in the face of mistruths and stereotypes that abound about the Schubert/Beethoven relationship. From the perspective presented here we can see how Schubert embraces Beethoven, demonstrating respect for his fellow composer (not subservience), while remaining true to himself. *Now however, we shall see a Schubert that is in complete control.* Brendel's quote above will be shown to hold true. Building his own original material around that of Beethoven shows Schubert not only to be full of genius, it demonstrates resilience in the face of his illness, as shown in his letter to Kupelwieser, and, perhaps paradoxically (because he uses Beethoven's music), an independence to do his own thing. What is so remarkable about 'SB' is shown in Example 4.7. *The notes of 'SB' are not only the exact notes of 'Freude schöner Götterfunken', they also contain the correct note values of the Beethoven phrase.*

Example 4.7 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/iv), measures 385–92



What does this tell us about Schubert, if anything at all? Above all else, it shows incredible ingenuity, and perhaps also a side of Schubert that shows that he kept things hidden. Maybe it shows a sense of humour? As regards the Schubert/Beethoven debate, it is fitting that it is here, *in the Beethoven quote*, that we are afforded an opportunity to hear a Schubert who is 'standing strong' in every possible way. The creativity and perspective to take Beethoven's own music and change it, unbeknownst to us, into 'SB', and to *use it both before and after the Beethoven quote*, is noteworthy. It is an excellent example of those important characteristics of resilience, namely 'being flexible' and 'reaching forward'. But of course, it shows much more.

On first appearance we are 'sold' this phrase as Schubert's creation, and it is that, of course, *but it is artificially constructed*. The confidence it must have taken to alter Beethoven's music and place it alongside the direct quote is arresting, even bold. Whatever the answers are as to

what it tells us about Schubert, it certainly shows us that Schubert is in complete control. Such actions belie any account that would attempt to paint Schubert as a man who struggled under the weight of Beethoven. But if it is bold, it is not brash. As I see it, it comes from a position of deep respect and admiration.

It is timely that Schubert's music, and particularly the Schubert/Beethoven relationship, be examined from an angle that not only embraces the challenges Schubert faced mentally and physically with his illness, but demonstrates how his compositions may be used as a vehicle to explore the positive aspects of Schubert's personality. This, I believe, is how we need to reframe the Schubert/Beethoven discussion, not (only) because it represents a compassionate approach, but because it is what we see in the score. Unfortunately for Schubertian scholarship, there are still pockets of those who lean towards the traditional image of Schubert as a weaker composer, even claiming that:

The young composer was so inspired by Beethoven that he was able to transcend his 'suffering' in composing his own *Kunstmusik*: string quartets, piano works, and symphonies. Without Beethoven's uncompromising views on music, 'Schubert' as we know it would not have existed.<sup>285</sup>

The author is quite correct in attributing Beethoven as a source of inspiration to Schubert. That is present in the score, *literally* in the very notes of Schubert's music. However, to think that Beethoven was the catalyst or a motivating force for Schubert to overcome the suffering caused by his illness (or any other suffering) simply doesn't hold water. A more correct reframing of the Schubert/Beethoven relationship is provided again by Brendel, who suggests that it was Schubert's strong acquaintance with Beethoven's music that led him to be so different. Here, the flow originates from Schubert, not Beethoven. It is Schubert's 'uncompromising views on music' (not Beethoven's), that leap from the score.

Schubert helped to carry Beethoven's coffin. In the following year he evokes the memory of Beethoven and the classical style without being a docile follower; rather, Schubert's familiarity with Beethoven's works taught him to be different. Dvorak noticed that Schubert from the outset had little in common with Beethoven [...]<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Joost Willink, *An Unfinished Life: Franz Schubert's Schmerzen and the Shadow of Beethoven* (Eburon, 2022).

<sup>286</sup> Brendel, 'Schubert's Last Three Piano Sonatas', p. 409.

Brendel's perspective is one which I value deeply because *it affords respect to both composers*. And yet I disagree. I see the source of Schubert's compositional style as more than simply a motivation to be different to Beethoven. Just as Rossini's voice was different to Beethoven, so too was Schubert's. It was always his own voice. It is also true to say that while it is a voice of deep admiration and respect for Beethoven, it is a resilient voice. In the next section, with my analysis of the end of the 'Great' C-major Symphony, we will see just how resilient this voice has become.

## 4.9 Schubert's Resilience and Vanquishing Beethoven

After circa one hour of music, Schubert brings the symphony to a strong and triumphant conclusion, a conclusion that one might well describe as 'heroic' (even Beethovenian?). But there is a more hidden, personal element of triumph at play here, and one that is hugely significant. Though this protracted coda begins at 973, for the sake of this analysis I wish to begin at measure 1057 and continue to the end of the symphony. As I see it, measures 1057 to 1105 (see Example 4.8) in the score is where Schubert takes full control over any possible shadow cast by Beethoven. Whether conscious or not, here Schubert casts aside any reference to the older master, and decides to go it alone. After that, the second part of the coda, from measures 1105 to the end, *contains no theme previously heard in the symphony*. It is all purely triumphant in nature. It deserves to be recognised as a celebration of what Schubert has become, without any need to reference himself, or Beethoven.

The passage from 1057 to 1105 is to be analysed as [16 (8(4+4) x2), 4, 16 (8(4+4)x2, 12 (4x3)]. Here we have two passages of sixteen measures that are almost identical (the most notable difference is that Schubert swaps the position of the Ab-major and D-major sections in the second phrase), and after each appearance of the sixteen-measure phrase, Schubert presents us first with a four-measure phrase (beginning in measure 1073), and subsequently (beginning in measures 1093) with the same four-measure phrase repeated three times, thus: 12 (4x3) (see Example 4.8). The first sixteen measures from 1057 to 1073 and the subsequent parallel phrase (1077 to 1093) represent a framing of what on first sight appears to be 'SB'. The framing of this four-measure phrase is powerful and raw, beginning with four repeated *unisono*

Example 4.8 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/iv), measures 1057–1105

The musical score for measures 1057–1105 of Schubert's Symphony no. 8 in C major, D. 944/iv, is presented below. The score is in 4/4 time and C major. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Flute:** Measures 1057–1060: *ff* (quarter note, rest, quarter note, quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *ffz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Oboe:** Measures 1057–1060: *ff* (quarter note, rest, quarter note, quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *ffz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Clarinet in C:** Measures 1057–1060: *ff* (quarter note, rest, quarter note, quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *ffz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Bassoon:** Measures 1057–1060: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *ffz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Horn in C:** Measures 1057–1060: *ffz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *ff* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Trumpet in C:** Measures 1057–1060: *ff* (quarter note, rest, quarter note, quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *ff* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Tenor Trombone:** Measures 1057–1060: *ff* (quarter note, rest, quarter note, quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *ff* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Bass Trombone:** Measures 1057–1060: *ff* (quarter note, rest, quarter note, quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Timpani:** Measures 1057–1060: *ff* (quarter note, rest, quarter note, quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Violin I:** Measures 1057–1060: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Violin II:** Measures 1057–1060: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Viola:** Measures 1057–1060: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Violoncello:** Measures 1057–1060: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).
- Contrabass:** Measures 1057–1060: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1061–1064: *ffz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note). Measures 1065–1068: *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note), *fz* (quarter note).



SBR

1069

Fl. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ff*

Ob. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ff*

Cl. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ff*

Bsn. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ff*

C Hn. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ffz*

C Tpt. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ffz*

Tbn. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ffz*

B. Tbn. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ffz*

Timp. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ffz*

Vln. I *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ff*

Vln. II *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ff*

Vla. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ff*

Vc. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ff*

Cb. *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *ffz*

218

1091

SBR SBR

Fl. *fz* *fz* *ff* *ff*

Ob. *fz* *fz* *ff* *ff*

Cl. *fz* *fz* *ff* *ff*

Bsn. *fz* *fz* *ff* *ff*

C Hn. *fff* *fff*

C Tpt. *fff* *fff*

Tbn. *fz* *fz* *fff* *fff*

B. Tbn. *fz* *fz* *fff* *fff*

Tim. *fff* *fff*

Vln. I *fz* *fz* *fffz* *fffz*

Vln. II *fz* *fz* *fffz* *fffz*

Vla. *fz* *fz* *fff* *fff*

Vc. *fz* *fz* *ff* *ff*

Cb. *fff* *fff*

220

Cs in the full string section and bassoons and horns (first appearing in measure 1057). This is answered with another four measures (beginning in measure 1061) of Ab major and later a diminished chord built on F sharp, both chosen for the obvious tension they cause. Schubert keeps the note C present throughout, forcing the tension, even relishing in it. This is resilience: a fight or struggle yet knowing that he has the power to prevail. Looking at the score, the first iterations of the *unisono* C are transferred to the trumpets and horns as a repeated quarter note, followed by a triplet figure. It is relentless in nature. Capitalising on the atmosphere of the repeated *unisono* Cs from the previous four measures, it is aggressive, and not fanfare-like (celebratory) in nature. I am reminded that the same figure is used by Gustav Holst in the opening of *The Planets*. The movement there is of course 'Mars, the Bringer of War'. In Schubert, here, beginning with the repeated unison fortissimo Cs, the harmonic tension of A flat and F sharp, the war-like fanfare of the triplets in the horns and trumpets, through to the accents in each measure of the trombones and the entrance of the timpani, there is a dogged resilience, a resilience that has been fought for.

The end result from measures 1105 to the end is a sudden return to piano, and thereafter a gradual swelling, indicative of the Mannheim rocket. It is here that we celebrate the results of Schubert's resilience, in a passage representing ebullient triumph, even joy. The final note of the symphony (see Figure 4.1) is marked with a huge accent mark, which in the past has been confused with a diminuendo.<sup>287</sup>

Any proposal that the accent mark in the last measure of the symphony could be a diminuendo is an academic abstraction, and borders on the absurd. One need only look at other places in the score. *Schubert's accent marks are made in correlation with the size of the note*. Thus, a half-note accent receives a bigger (longer) accent making than a quarter note and so on. Figure 4.2 (taken from the first movement) shows in the fifth and eighth measures of the facsimile of the score that the oboes (playing a whole note) have a larger, longer accent mark than the accent mark given to the dotted quarter note in the strings. Simply put, Schubert marked longer notes with longer accent marks. It makes sense, then, that the final note of the symphony, written over three full measures would have a very long accent mark.

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<sup>287</sup> Brian Newbould has pointed that the marking is indeed an accent and not a diminuendo. The NSA editor Werner Aderhold interprets the mark as an accent. Some conductors however, notably Georg Solti, have chosen to end with a diminuendo.

Figure 4.1 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/iv), facsimile of last measures

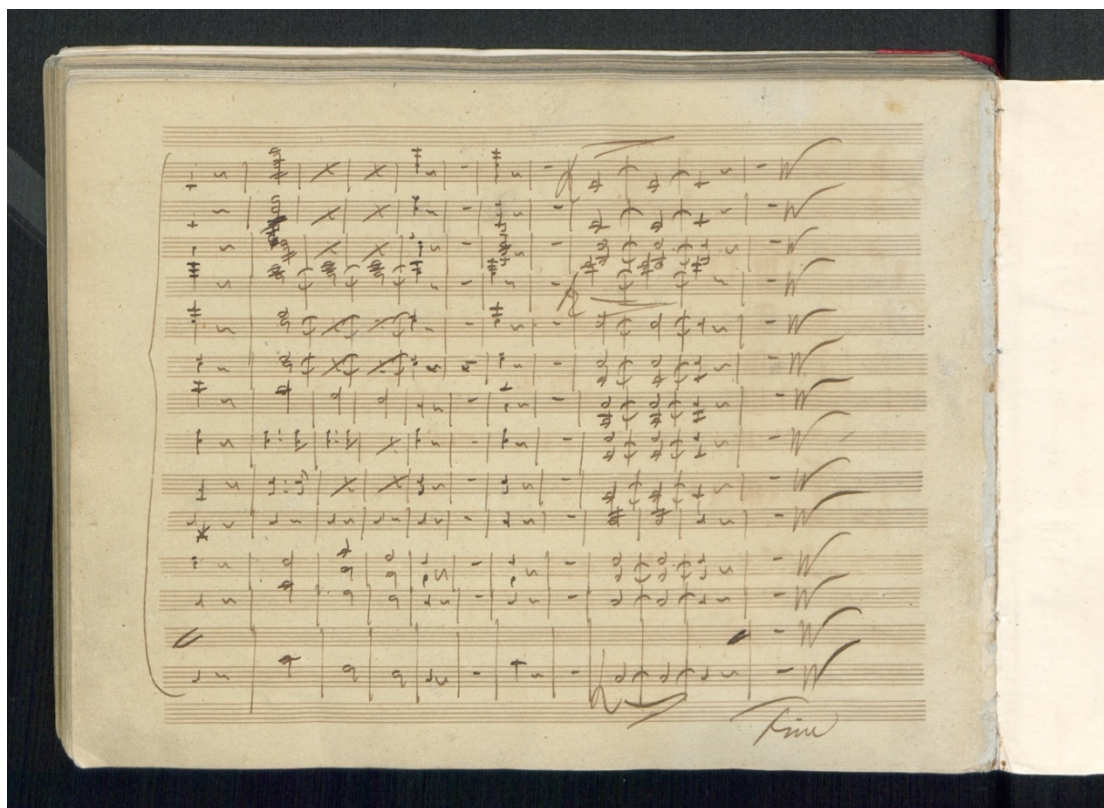


Figure 4.2 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/i), facsimile of varying size of accent marks



This is a hugely confident ending, and what Schubert is celebrating is represented in the four measures from 1073 to 1077 and in the three repetitions of this four-measure phrase from measures 1093 to 1105 (see Example 4.8). As I see it, these four measures and the subsequent twelve-measure phrase (marked in Example 4.8 as 'SBR') contain the essence of the whole movement. It is not 'SB', but a variant of it. I choose to name it 'SBR': 'S' representing Schubert, 'B' representing Beethoven and 'R' signifying resilience. Of the many themes and motives that have been presented in the movement, *we are left with this alone*. 'SB', as we have seen, is a Schubert theme that he has 'borrowed' from Beethoven but by changing the order of notes he has made his own. Here he makes one significant change that has not occurred until now. Looking to Example 4.8, we see that Schubert has now changed the melody, and in doing so has moved away from the notes of 'Freude schöner Götterfunken'. Until now, 'SB' moved stepwise G, F, E, E, F, E, D, but now, after the second note (f), Schubert chooses a step of a third: G, F, D, C, D, E, D (see measures 1073 to 1076 inclusive in Example 4.8). *There is no more Beethoven, just Schubert*. As it happens, it would have been perfectly possible to keep 'SB' here, as the notes would fit the harmony that Schubert has chosen. No, this is deliberate.

The same holds true for the first two of the three four-measure repeated passages later (measures 1093 to 1105). To think that Schubert made this last-minute change for any other reason other than that is what he wanted is to deny Schubert's genius in all things compositional. One could argue that the change was made to add something new to the end of the symphony, to keep a vibrancy, or to awaken interest, or even to fit a changing harmony, but what of the last four measures of the twelve-measure phrase? 'SBR' again surely? Looking at measure 1097, we see that Schubert has reduced the dynamic in many of the parts from *fff* to *ff*. This is in preparation for the final iteration of the repetition from measures 1101 to 1105. What we also see is that Schubert *returns* to 'SB' *over* 'SBR'. Is this proof positive that the dominance of Beethoven looms large, that Schubert will never escape Beethoven's shadow? Not as I see it. Schubert has shown what he can do; he has shown and demonstrated his creativity. Yes, he has linked it with Beethoven's, but this is his strength, not weakness. Returning to acknowledge the older Beethoven only shows to me Schubert's true character. Expressing the wish on his deathbed to be buried alongside Beethoven, there can be no doubt but that he felt connected with the older composer. Moreover, asking to be buried alongside him *also shows Schubert's sense of self-worth*. The final measures of this theme, from 1101 to

1105, represent for me Schubert's final resting place. He is alongside Beethoven, deeply respectful of the older master, even celebrating him. And yet Schubert is conscious that this celebration is also an expression of his own creativity.

As a conductor, the opportunity to point out such details to audiences and orchestral players (all of whom understand the challenges of life and the importance of resilience only too well), together with the thought that, *just maybe*, Schubert was expressing his resilience and 'moving forward' under his own steam without any ties to anyone else, is too poetic to avoid. With this foremost in mind, Lorraine Byrne Bodley's quote rings true more than ever:

It would be quite wrong to suggest that he insulated himself from pain. On the contrary, to recall pain, to put up a musical, if often inscrutable, monument to it, was for him an obsessive need. It was a way of making sense of his suffering.<sup>288</sup>

Through Schubert's lived experience with illness, permeated through his music, we are presented with a unique opportunity. We may choose to witness the suffering in him, but we may also choose to validate *our own suffering together with him*, a shared suffering, and perhaps, cathartically, a shared healing. Of course Schubert does not have a monopoly on suffering. A simple reading of Beethoven's 'Heiligenstadt Testament' (written to his two brothers) is proof positive of the suffering that Beethoven endured, waiting for his ever-nearing deafness to banish him to a life without sound.<sup>289</sup> Schumann, Mahler and Bartók are just three names of composers who suffered incredible health challenges in their lives, each of whom allow for individual and unique perspectives when analysing their music as an exploration of issues surrounding health.

But what is this shared suffering and shared healing that we have in common with Schubert? Resilience has been identified as a challenge that requires immediate attention within the medical profession,<sup>290</sup> but we all face challenges in life that require resilience. Schubert's music should be recognised, not only as an opportunity to explore resilience, but, as his was a life full of illness, hardship and suffering, it invites us to contemplate his life and his music as a means

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<sup>288</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 381.

<sup>289</sup> For more read Mark Evan Bonds, Chapter 4 'Deafness', in his *Ludwig van Beethoven: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 36–43, doi:10.1093/acrade/9780190051730.003.0005.

<sup>290</sup> Margaret McAllister and Jessica McKinnon, 'The Importance of Teaching and Learning Resilience in the Health Disciplines: A Critical Review of the Literature', *Nurse Education Today*, 29.4 (2009), pp. 371–79, doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2008.10.011.



to build our own resilience. Being aware of our own capacity to be resilient, and to recognise what forces impact this, both positively and negatively, is hugely important, and Schubert's life and music has an invaluable role to play in this journey of discovery.

The connection between mind and body is in the very name 'mindbody' medicine.<sup>291</sup> This area of study has conclusively shown how mental health is inseparable from our physical health. Being in touch with outside (and particularly inside) forces that sabotage our mental health, with a focus on reducing those negative influences and concentrating on affording us more of the positive ones, equates to better overall health: mind *and* body. We have seen how Schubert and musicology have a role to play in helping us understand aspects of our own health. The last chapters have shown the importance of human connection, compassion and resilience in Schubert. And through Schubert we can go further. I turn again to Byrne Bodley, as the following quotes invites an even broader, more holistic approach to illness and suffering, again using Schubert as our lens:

While scholars are unanimous about Schubert's change in style, some reject concepts of 'lateness' in one who died so young. But to dismiss the notion of a late style on the basis of age is to deny the significance of extreme suffering in Schubert's life. Perhaps it is the concept of 'lateness' which needs to be redefined, for the development of wisdom does not depend on age but on experience acquired through hardship and suffering, in particular through situations according a reflection on life.<sup>292</sup>

While Byrne Bodley is of course addressing the question of whether we can identify a 'late style' in Schubert, she does so from a perspective that is new to Schubert scholarship, adopting a perspective that challenges us, and from which we can all benefit. It is interesting, timely and fitting that Byrne Bodley identifies in Schubert's illness and suffering a way to refocus the debate on what the catalyst, or main contributing factor, may be in identifying a 'late style' in Schubert. For her, his 'extreme suffering' is a 'wisdom' acquired. Faced with the 'full catastrophe of living' that we must all go through, why would we not look to Schubert for

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<sup>291</sup> Famously, pioneering neuroscientist who discovered neuropeptides Candace Pert advised that 'mind body' medicine should be written as one word, which she said represented the true connection between mind and body. Walt Oleksy, 'Videos by Candice Pert, PhD, a Pioneer in Mindbody Medicine', *The Mindbody Syndrome (TMS) Discussion Forum*, 2014 <https://www.tmswiki.org/forum/threads/videos-by-candice-pert-phd-a-pioneer-in-mindbody-medicine.3824/> [accessed 19 December 2024]

<sup>292</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 379.

direction?<sup>293</sup> We don't have to share his fate of dying young or that of a chronic and difficult disease to see that his music is an ideal vehicle to explore issues of life. This should be undertaken not necessarily with the goal of 'solving' life's problems, but simply as a way of being with them and reflecting. In doing so, we bear witness to his 'dignity' and share in the understanding that this is the 'highest expression of his humanity'.

Moving forward I wish to continue to find ways in which Schubert's music can be used as a lens through which to reflect on life issues that we may all face. Beyond social connection, compassion and resilience, Schubert's lived experience is omnipresent in the score. A repeating leitmotif throughout his own descriptions of his music, that of his friends and of Schubertian scholarship is *the cathartic nature of his music*. Though life surely brings great joy, it also brings great suffering. Perhaps by seeing how Schubert used his music as not only a means of expression, but as a cathartic tool to help in his own healing, we too may not only learn more about Schubert and his music, but may shape our own perspective on illness and healing.

## 4.10 Epilogue: Resilience in the Orchestra

'When it was rehearsed in 1827 at the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, the string-players complained that passages in which a rhythmic figure is obsessively repeated, especially in the finale, were unplayable.'<sup>294</sup> Though not of course unplayable, one can relate even today to how the players must have felt. The effect of the pedantic, almost forced, repeated Cs at measure 1057 in the strings is brutal. Often played with repeated downbows in the strings (I have always chosen this bowing from my players when performing the work), it underscores yet another aspect of resilience in Schubert: *the physical resilience required of the players* (particularly the string section) to get to the conclusion of the work without tensing or tightening up. Typically, physical tension when playing is to be avoided at all costs, as it has a negative impact on the sound. Even for seasoned professional musicians, the demands of the ending are striking. I have seen (and heard) this exhaustion from the first violins at the end of

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<sup>293</sup> The title of the book *Full Catastrophe Living* is taken from the movie 'Zorba the Greek, where one of the characters is asked if he is married. He replies 'Am I not a man? Of course I've been married. Wife, house, kids... the full catastrophe'. Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*.

<sup>294</sup> 'Schubert: Symphony No. 8 (9) – de Vriend', *HRAudio.Net*

<https://www.hraudio.net/showmusic.php?title=14476&showall=1> [accessed 19 December 2024]

the symphony in my own performances. I remember a very personal moment shared with my concertmaster when last performing the work. It was clear to me that she was getting tired after the repeated downbows and in particular the twelve-measure passage from 1093 to 1105. Had she held back in the preceding passages, I am quite sure she would have not been so tense, but she was (correctly) absorbed in the music and her commitment to it. Leaving nothing in reserve, she used sheer resilience to finish the work. Sensing that I had noticed her bowing arm was tired, she looked up and caught my eye. Her look, and smile, said it all: 'This is tough, I don't know if I'll make it, but I'm not going to stop.' On conclusion of the work, when I shook her hand as an acknowledgement of my thanks to the whole orchestra, we both laughed. As I understood it, it communicated a shared sense of achievement. And I know that she understood how grateful I was for her utter commitment to the music. Professional orchestral musicians are some of the most resilient people I know, and it is this willingness to push past their comfort boundaries for the sake of the music that I respect the most. In a way, we shared resilience through Schubert, and in some ways, maybe even with Schubert. The result was both cathartic and healing.

## Chapter 5. Schubert and Catharsis

This chapter serves to explore the important issue of catharsis in Schubert's music. I explore the purging of emotions through catharsis by identifying key elements in catharsis and how one can go about identifying these trademark characteristics in Schubert's score. Issues raised in this chapter will be addressed using Gadamer's hermeneutical approach, in particular how his philosophy has influenced my conducting and my own philosophy on conducting. I will consider the issue of repetition in Schubert, and in doing so will touch again on areas of mindbody medicine and psychology.

### 5.1 'An die Musik'. Schubert and Catharsis: An Introduction

<i>Du holde Kunst, in wie viel grauen Stunden,</i>	<i>Oft hat ein Seufzer, deiner Harf entflossen,</i>
<i>Wo mich des Lebens wilder Kreis umstrickt,</i>	<i>Ein süßer, heiliger Akkord von dir,</i>
<i>Hast du mein Herz zu [warmer]* Lieb entzünden,</i>	<i>Den Himmel [besserer Zeiten] mir erschlossen,</i>
<i>Hast mich in eine bessere Welt entrückt.</i>	<i>Du holde Kunst, ich danke dir dafür.</i>

Reading Schober's 'An die Musik' makes one wonder whether his good friend Schubert was the impulse for these words. Schober must have often witnessed in the Schubertiades and elsewhere how music took control of Schubert and transported him away from his illness. The poet (Schubert?) has lost count ('wie viel') of the many 'grey hours where life's wild circle ensnares' him. Music alone is the catalyst that has transported him to a 'better world'.

In the Merriam-Webster dictionary, catharsis is described as 'purification or purgation of the emotions (such as pity and fear) primarily through art, or a purification or purgation that brings about spiritual renewal or release from tension, or elimination of a complex by bringing it to consciousness and affording it expression'.<sup>295</sup> There are numerous ways to justify music as being a cathartic force in Schubert's life. Schubert's own letter to his brother Ferdinand from July 1824 is a concrete affirmation that his compositions were a way for Schubert to process his pain:

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\* Added by Schubert, not in original poem by Schubert's friend Franz von Schober.

<sup>295</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 'Catharsis' <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/catharsis> [accessed 19 December 2024]

Of course that happy time is over when everything seemed to glow with a youthful halo, but instead there is dire confrontation with a miserable reality, which I through my fantasy (thank God) try as much as possible to make more beautiful.<sup>296</sup>

Taken literally, the above quote suggests that the compositional process represented for Schubert not only a cathartic opportunity, but corresponded to a lift in mood, which would have had a positive consequence for his health. Lorraine Byrne Bodley also identifies a cathartic element in Schubert's writing:

The only way in which he could deal with his sorrows – which by his own admission brings us to the root of who he is – was by protecting himself from them: by devoting his mental and emotional energies and transmuting them in his art. It would be quite wrong to suggest that he insulated himself from pain. On the contrary, to recall pain, to put up a musical, if often inscrutable, monument to it, was for him an obsessive need. It was a way of making sense of his suffering.<sup>297</sup>

Byrne Bodley mentions both sorrow *and* pain. This invites the possibility to explore what pain is, or perhaps better articulated, *what pain encompasses*. A fitting answer to this question is to be found in the incredible work of the hospice movement founder in England, Dame Cicely Saunders. Saunders spoke and wrote of 'total pain' as pain not only reduced to the physical, but encompassing also the psychological, spiritual and social pain that we endure.<sup>298</sup> Byrne Bodley's words are an extension of Grillparzer's because she identifies in Schubert not only a need to 'flee to the arms of music' ('Kunst'), but a need for his pain to find expression in his music, 'transmuting them in his art'. Returning for a moment to the world of mindbody medicine, research demonstrates that every facet of our make-up, from our body, our thoughts, through to our neurological function and down to our very cellular make-up, is affected by illness and vice versa. By identifying in Schubert an obsessive need (and not simply a desire) to express his joy and sorrow in his music, we are faced with something altogether more powerful in his compositions. Schubert's compositions are not simply some form of escapism from his illness. Certainly, composition was always a passion for Schubert, even before his illness. But now, it has become the vehicle through which he can, and must, make

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<sup>296</sup> My own translation from the original letter from Schubert to his brother Ferdinand, dated 16th or 17th July, 1824. *Schubert: Die Dokumente seines Lebens*, ed. by Deutsch, p. 250.

<sup>297</sup> Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*, p. 381.

<sup>298</sup> 'Cicely Saunders Institute of Palliative Care, Policy & Rehabilitation' <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/cicelysaunders/about-us/cicely-saunders> [accessed 19 December 2024]

‘sense of his suffering’. With recent research in the area of mindbody medicine in mind, this perspective raises the question as to whether there might have been physical consequences. If we are to accept Byrne Bodley’s viewpoint, then Schubert’s ability to reduce his suffering through musical expression would have had a direct effect on his physical health. A next step would be to ask how we might go about finding evidence of this in his score. Byrne Bodley’s choice use of the words ‘often inscrutable’ does not necessarily mean that we are to be denied a way of identifying Schubert’s illness in his music, or that an analysis of his music is incapable of being investigated from the perspective of illness. We are reminded here that the value of any true art is its enigmatic nature, inviting many different readings, and that each generation must make its own. In a world where compassion and social connection are now understood as being central to our health, Schubert’s music has a role to play. While some musicologists may be reluctant to enter the debate on whether illness, healing and/or emotions felt by Schubert are expressed in his music, by not doing so we miss an opportunity, an opportunity, as I see it, to take a holistic look at ‘pain’ (as defined by Cicely Saunders) in Schubert and by extension in ourselves. Moreover, such a view would find a willing supporter in science-based mindbody research presented in previous chapters. Again I argue for the inextricable link between our emotions and our bodies, and vice versa.<sup>299</sup> Both can, and do, affect every part of our being, and so too did it affect Schubert.

Byrne Bodley is not alone in her assessment. As with my previous exploration on resilience in Schubert’s compositions, I am motivated in my own analysis by the following quote, again, from pianist Alfred Brendel:

Is it not likely that a depressive composer, instead of letting himself sink deeper into despair, would take advantage of the act of composing as a lever to lift himself out of inertia? Is it frivolous to conceive that, with the help of his creative urge, even a syphilitic might have some lighthearted notions a few months before he dies? Where once Schubert was labelled as genial and sentimental, he has recently been made out to be desolate and relentlessly depressive.<sup>300</sup>

There are many things to unpack in this quote. Firstly, as with Byrne Bodley, Brendel sees the distinct possibility that Schubert wrote part of himself into his music, or at least that his music

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<sup>299</sup> Veronika Engert, Jonathan Smallwood and Tania Singer, ‘Mind your Thoughts: Associations between Self-Generated Thoughts and Stress-Induced and Baseline Levels of Cortisol and Alpha-Amylase’, *Biological Psychology*, 103 (2014), pp. 283–91, doi:10.1016/j.biopsycho.2014.10.004.

<sup>300</sup> Brendel, ‘Schubert’s Last Three Piano Sonatas’.

was a tool through which he expressed his mood and possibly his illness. In particular, Brendel acknowledges the cathartic nature of Schubert's work: as a way to 'lift himself'.<sup>301</sup> While I certainly agree with Brendel, nonetheless I find his perspective reduces not only the starkness of Schubert's illness and how it affected the composer, it also reduces the potential for us to harvest a deeper sense of knowledge in relation to *our own shared suffering* through Schubert. Brendel seems to be putting forward the notion that composing was a form of distraction for Schubert. It is true that even distraction can be cathartic (whatever brightens the mood would similarly have the potential to heal in some way), but it still limits Schubert's potential. In his assessment that Schubert is unjustly seen as 'desolate and relentlessly depressive', Brendel seems to (rightly) recognise a shift in Schubert reception, and here I am again in agreement with him. Unfortunately, suggesting that Schubert would choose to compose something 'lighthearted' as a way to express his inner suffering, while certainly possible, simply doesn't allow for anything other than 'happy' music as the result of any 'cathartic composing' for Schubert. Brendel's focus, at least in the quote above, is that Schubert could well have distracted himself from his illness by writing upbeat, happy music, but doesn't contemplate the possibility that 'sad' music may have been a cathartic (and healing) act for Schubert. Ironically, we see how Schubert himself recognises that the product of his depression and illness – his music – is healing for others. One can't help but wonder if he himself reflected on the healing effect of his compositional process on himself.

## 5.2 Finding Catharsis in Schubert

In light of Schubert's letter stating that all of his music is the product of his deepest sorrows, is there any point in choosing any one passage over another as an example of catharsis? On the other hand, perhaps a literal approach to everything that Schubert wrote can also lead to misinterpretation. The danger of course with having so little first-hand information from the composer is well noted by Leo Black, because, though sparse, it is 'enough' to form an/any opinion: 'Even leaving aside his friends' questionable reminiscences long afterwards, there is enough on record that Schubert himself said and wrote, under this or that passing influence,

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

to let one mould whatever graven image one pleases.’<sup>302</sup> Objectively seen, it would be difficult to agree with Schubert that there is no such thing as ‘happy’ music. And the prospect that *everything he ever wrote* was solely the product of his deepest sorrows is also problematic. Schubert, like all of us, had his difficult moments, but he certainly also had his good ones. If his letters are to be held up as the golden standard of everything Schubert, then equally we could quote moments from them where he is openly happy, and even moments when he is charmingly silly.

Like Brendel, my instinct too would be to choose Schubert’s ‘happy’ music as a beginning point to view catharsis. However, before embarking on a journey to identify what passages in his final two symphonies might provide the best opportunity for this, the following article is worth noting:

Sad music, to a higher degree than other types of music, is associated with certain psychological rewards, such as regulating or purging negative emotions, retrieving memories of important past events, and inducing feelings of connectedness and comfort (Taruffi and Koelsch, 2014). Therefore, incorporating sad pieces that are found to be pleasurable into receptive music therapy could augment the efficacy of such treatments in ameliorating the symptoms of depression.<sup>303</sup>

Though it is clear from the quote above that this research is presented purely from the perspective of the listener (not the composer), it is nonetheless interesting in the greater context of music and emotions. It might allow us, by extension, to consider that ‘sad’ compositions of Schubert might have been a better way for him to come to terms with his illness. Brendel seems to suggest that Schubert’s writing was a form of distraction from his suffering. As it happens, distraction, research tells us, *does* have positive effects:

Among the many strategies proposed to regulate mood (Larsen, 2000; Parkinson & Totterdell, 1999; Thayer, Newman, & Mc-Clain, 1994), two seem particularly related to art-making: venting (expressing one’s negative feelings) and distraction (expressing feelings that take one away from negative feelings). By venting we mean attending to one’s mood (Lischetzke & Eid, 2003). The underlying principle of art therapy is to use art to discharge negative feelings through self-expression (Kramer, 2000). And while artists have described purging themselves of suffering

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<sup>302</sup> Leo Black, *Franz Schubert: Music and Belief* (Boydell Press, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>303</sup> Sachs, Damasio and Habibi, ‘The Pleasures of Sad Music’.



by expressing their pain in their art through venting, they also speak of how creating takes them away from their feelings through distraction (Greene, 1980).<sup>304</sup>

The researchers' somewhat loose description of venting as 'expressing one's negative feelings' and distraction as 'expressing feelings that take one away from negative feelings' is qualified later: 'While previous studies (Dalebroux et al., 2008) have conflated distraction with positive content (asking participants to draw something happy), here we investigate the effects of distraction by asking participants to draw an affectively neutral image.'<sup>305</sup> Our 'take-home' from this research is that *any artistic activity*, whether venting (negative), 'happy' or neutral, correlates with positive mood adjustment. Thus yet again with Schubert, we are faced with (too) many possibilities: to see 'happy' positive passages and/or neutral passages in his music as a modus of distraction, to view dissonant passages as a form of venting, and/or, lastly, to interpret any 'sad' passages as a form of self-reflection, which may be 'associated with certain psychological rewards'.<sup>306</sup> That said, these endless possibilities are completely in line with what Schubert himself has said about his music: *all of his music has his suffering as its source*. Though Leo Black does not use the word catharsis, he speaks of a life where Schubert lived out his experience through his compositions, and that his writing was a way for him to connect with something beyond the self. Black invites us to see Schubert's compositional process as a spiritual one:

Schubert lived out his philosophy rather than expounding on it, nor is there evidence of any such 'creative agony' as Brahms' while he composed: what was undoubtedly there was the supreme concentration recorded by his painter friend Schwind: 'If you go to see him during the day, he says "Hullo, how are you? – Good!" and goes on writing, whereupon you depart.' Deep concentration of that kind is a creator's road to the secrets of his inner world. It stands at least on a par with the 'meditation' so many human beings employ to make contact with something beyond themselves, and could even be taken as the equivalent of that missing link in any discussion of Schubert's spirituality, prayer.<sup>307</sup>

The 'secrets of his inner world' of course would have included anything from living with chronic pain, guilt (possibly around his sexuality?), through to thoughts on his own mortality. The

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<sup>304</sup> Jennifer E. Drake and Ellen Winner, 'Confronting Sadness through Art-Making: Distraction Is More Beneficial than Venting', *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 6.3 (2012), pp. 255–61, doi:10.1037/a0026909.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Sachs, Damasio and Habibi, 'The Pleasures of Sad Music'.

<sup>307</sup> Black, *Franz Schubert: Music and Belief*, p. 3.

realisation that this act of composition could stretch beyond that of meditation into the direction of prayer and spirituality suggests a higher purpose beyond mere distraction.

Looking at this from a mindbody perspective, it is highly likely that Schubert's compositional process would have had an effect on Schubert's illness trajectory. Research acknowledges that engaging in creative activity has a positive effect on the immune response:

Expressive writing results in significant improvements in longer-term physical health outcomes such as illness-related visits to the doctor (Pennebaker & Beall, 1986; Pennebaker et al, 1988; Pennebaker & Francis, 1996; King & Miner, 2000), blood pressure, lung function, liver function and number of days in hospital. Expressive writing has also produced significant benefits in a number of measures of immune system functioning.<sup>308</sup>

The healing and cathartic effects of Schubert's composing were his own, and yet we can all share in this in some way. Byrne Bodley's and Black's perspectives offer us an insight in how we can 'make contact with something beyond' ourselves.<sup>309</sup> By not acknowledging the significance of Schubert's illness in his compositions, we not only misunderstand Schubert, *we pass on an incredibly unique opportunity to understand ourselves*. It is for us to share in this humanity. If not, then we bypass our own.

### 5.3 Catharsis in the Score

With Schubert's words foremost in my mind, namely that all his music is a result of his suffering, we find alignment with contemporary research telling us that catharsis encompasses the purging of emotions through different ways, i.e. through negative (venting), positive or neutral means. A unique way to explore catharsis in Schubert would be to find passages in his music that align with these emotions. If we can find a way to frame this whole practice in a way that is meaningful to our world today, reflecting Black, Byrne Bodley and others who recognise the spirituality and shared humanity in Schubert's work, then this would be a worthwhile analysis. In doing so, we honour the composer himself, while simultaneously utilising this perspective on catharsis as a way to share and understand the universality of suffering. For this analysis, I

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<sup>308</sup> Karen A. Baikie and Kay Wilhelm, 'Emotional and Physical Health Benefits of Expressive Writing', *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 11.5 (2005), pp. 338–46, doi:10.1192/apt.11.5.338.

<sup>309</sup> Black, *Franz Schubert: Music and Belief*, p. 3.

propose to take two different passages of Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony as a pathway to explore catharsis through venting, and catharsis through neutral expression. In doing so, I actively am avoiding 'happy' passages (which we might find, say, in many parts of the 'Great' C-major Symphony) and challenge myself instead with finding parallels between Schubert and neutral expression, a task that, while challenging, may also prove rewarding.

## 5.4 Venting as Catharsis in Schubert

I have explored a passage from Schubert's 'Unfinished' in Example 2.11 in Chapter 2, 'Schubert the Connector', as both an example of disconnection and of frustration in Schubert, and this same passage would serve well as an example for venting of negative energy and emotions to achieve catharsis. However, it could also be said that the whole of the development section of this movement represents a strong example of cathartic venting. For the sake of this analysis, I begin at measure 176 (see Example 5.1), when Schubert explodes from the page with a frustration that is impossible to deny. The once ominous but almost inaudible first introductory theme at the opening of this symphony is now fragmented in the cellos and basses and marked fortissimo. To add volume but also significance to the passage, Schubert also allocates the trombones the same melody in unison octaves. As the instrument that heralds the final judgement ('Tuba mirum spargens sonum' in Mozart's Requiem), the semantic significance of the trombones should not be lost on us. The articulation Schubert chooses for the trombones (the same as the cellos and basses) of course dictates the tonguing they choose, and here it is pronounced. They must be encouraged to embrace this, as there is a danger that they would choose a more lyrical approach, which of course is not what Schubert wants here. Though the same theme is heard in the woodwinds in the third measure (measure 178), here Schubert uses an altogether different articulation. He chooses to slur their entry in one phrase, making it take on an elegiac lyrical quality, more a sigh or moan than the frustration that comes from the detached phrasing of the lower strings and trombones. Is the diminuendo mark in the woodwind parts more likely a mistaken accent mark as in the ending of the 'Great' C-major Symphony? The timpani gives us a good clue. Playing a half note, it also bears the same mark (diminuendo), which of course is nonsensical, unless understood as a kind of metaphorical decrease in tension. The violins and violas are given sixteenth-note values again, just as with the beginning of the symphony, but here they too are marked fortissimo and *unisono*, which

creates a frantic drive. After the four-measure passage is repeated, Schubert at measure 184 fragments the melody and brings in new elements, all of which reflect the purging or venting nature of the passage. The bassoons, horns or trumpets (there are discrepancies in how he utilises these instruments and when, probably due to the limitations of the transposing ability of the brass, and possibly the colour and range of the bassoon) are allocated a driving figure, 'A', (Example 5.1) introduced antiphonally. The antiphonal writing allows the players to take a

Example 5.1 Schubert, Symphony no. 7 in B minor (D. 759/i), measures 176–219

The musical score for measures 176–219 of Schubert's Symphony no. 7 in B minor (D. 759/i) is presented in a standard orchestral layout. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes the Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in A, Bassoon, Horn in D, Trumpet in E, Alto & Tenor Trombone, and Bass Trombone. The second system includes the Timpani, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The key signature is B minor (two sharps: F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. The score shows a driving figure 'A' introduced antiphonally, with various instruments playing in a rhythmic pattern. The woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in A, Bassoon) and brass (Horn in D, Trumpet in E, Alto & Tenor Trombone, Bass Trombone) are prominent in the first system. The strings (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass) are prominent in the second system. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *ff* (fortissimo). The score is written in a standard musical notation with staves, clefs, and notes.

181

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in A

Bsn.

D Hn.

E Tpt.

A. & T. Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

A

B

C

*fz*

*a 2*

238

194

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in A

Bsn.

D Hn.

E Tpt.

A. & T. Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

*ff*

*f*

*pp*

*cresc.*

*ff*

*f*

240



211

Fl. *pp*

Ob. *pp*

Cl. in A *decresc.* *pp*

Bsn. *decresc.* *pp*

D Hn. *decresc.* *pp*

E Tpt.

A. & T. Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vln. I *decresc.* *pizz.* *pp*

Vln. II *decresc.* *pizz.* *pp*

Vla. *decresc.* *pizz.* *pp*

Vc. *decresc.* *pizz.* *pp*

Cb. *decresc.* *pizz.* *pp*

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break, and this in turn keeps the driving force alive and not fade due to tiredness or lack of breath. 'B' is a fragmentation of the main melody but written with staccato markings on the quarter notes. 'C' is the most captivating of the motifs, having both a syncopated accent on the second beat of the measure, as well as a fast sixty-fourth-note flurry at the end of the figure. Wherever 'C' appears, it is juxtaposed by 'B' (showing again Schubert's creative use of complementary rhythm), and 'A' is a constant driving figure throughout. Beginning at measure 184, the phrase is ten measures long, and though 'B' is heard in every second measure (which would make this a two-measure phrase repeated five times), it is of course a repeated four-measure phrase with a two measure extension, thus:  $10(8(4 \times 2) + 2)$ . The final two-measure phrase is interrupted by a new phrase marked fortissimo for the whole orchestra (measure 194). Though it brings a stop to the movement and drive of the passage, it provides no comfort. This passage, beginning in measure 194, is eight measures long, and on first sight appears to be a two-measure repeated phrase,  $8(2 \times 4)$ . After a frustrated repetition of the two-measure phrase (with semitone movement C, B natural, A sharp), first marked *ffz*, Schubert reduces the dynamic to *fz* and appears to give up. By the fifth measure (measure 198) we are at *pp* dynamic. This fifth measure, however, shows the structure to be more nuanced than first perceived: the first four measures are made up of two measures repeated, and though that repetition continues, the last four are to be analysed as a single four-measure phrase, suggesting the following make-up:  $8(4(2 \times 2) + 4)$ . The fifth measure (measure 198), despite its pianissimo marking, heralds a move to C sharp in the bass, and thus new energy, which is confirmed by the crescendo in the seventh measure (measure 200). This is a rare example of how a dynamic marking can dictate analysis of a phrase. In essence the crescendo 'wins' over the repeated two-measure repeated motif, forcing us to choose a four-measure phrase.

The whole passage is true to the nature of venting: short bursts of intensity, followed by a breath, and then back to venting of a new challenge or problem. This is precisely what happens in measure 202. An eight-measure phrase broken into two repeated four-measure phrases,  $8(4 \times 2)$ , these measures even have a physicality about them. The fast four 'grace notes' in the strings are anything but graceful. In *ff* dynamic they take on a unique 'whipping' characteristic. After two measures of self-flagellatory 'whipping', followed by a short, tired figure in the strings in piano dynamic (beginning on the upbeat to measure 205), we are fooled into thinking that the catharsis has reached its conclusion. But Schubert has one more fortissimo left before

returning to the dark exposition. While he may have vented, we are left to wonder – much like the research presented on the benefits of venting as catharsis – if much, or anything, has improved.

## 5.5 Neutral Expression: An Analytical Dilemma

The following analysis is motivated by research presented above by Drake and Winner (see Section 5.2, 'Finding Catharsis in Schubert') demonstrating that strong emotions (i.e. negative and positive) were not the only tools for catharsis. The researchers found that asking participants to draw a neutral image was also perceived as achieving a positive outcome. When considering Schubert and catharsis, are there parallels to be found? 'Neutral' and 'Schubert' seem an oxymoron. While there is no doubt in my mind (and others) that Schubert's compositions were cathartic for him, composition for Schubert was much more. It was a fundamental need for him. To use Byrne Bodley's words, it was 'an obsessive need'. If this is true (and I believe it is), then what can be construed as 'neutral' for Schubert? We would have to answer this by saying that if composition was such an integral part of his make-up, then nothing about it was neutral for him. Schubert's compositions were his craft, a professional skill, stemming from pure genius and honed over his lifetime, so what parallels are to be found with asking someone (who is not an artist) to draw a 'neutral' picture? These two 'artists' are very different. And yet this should not render the exercise pointless. As I see it, this dilemma presents us with a hermeneutic opportunity, one that music affords us. As I argue for catharsis in Schubert, then it should be possible to explore in his music all issues that pertain to catharsis. The fact that the product of Schubert's cathartic exercise is so fundamentally different than, say, someone drawing a picture of a house or a book, should not be an impediment to using his music as a vehicle to help us achieve a new or more holistic view on catharsis. If we can't use Schubert's music as a vehicle to explore catharsis, then we relinquish not only a unique opportunity to explore catharsis, we also run the real risk of sectioning his music off into an elite, highbrow group of those who can 'really' understand him, or worse still, those who deny the possibility that his music can give us anything other than the score itself. The following quote taken from a rebuttal by Lawrence Kramer against Charles Rosen's attack on his work is well made:

Rosen seeks to protect music from both meaning and mutilation. He accepts a traditional notion of musical meaning as vague connotation, but balks at 'non-musical' meanings that involve critical reflection [...] Fair enough: I think that denying music discursive meaning mystifies rather than enhances it, and that this attitude has increasingly encouraged people to believe that classical music has nothing to say to them.<sup>310</sup>

This concept of art for art's sake has been addressed by Hans-Georg Gadamer as 'aesthetic differentiation', where art loses its place in relation to all of us. In doing so, we lose also a way for us to understand ourselves. Gadamer has given us the example of paintings on white walls in art galleries, most of which 'exist' with little or no context as to where they 'fit' in the world. We are reminded again of Gadamer's words on meaning in music:

Although absolute music is a pure form movement as such, a kind of sounding mathematics, and there is no representational meaningful content that we preserve in it, the understanding still retains reference to the meaningful. It is the indeterminacy of this reference that is the specific relation of meaning of such music.<sup>311</sup>

One could take issue with Gadamer here. There is, of course, some kind of 'representational meaning' in music. Rhetoric in music has been categorised as far back as 1788 in Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, and tropes and semiotics in music maintain a healthy space within musicology.<sup>312</sup> Nonetheless, we understand the greater point that he is making, which is that we enter into a relationship with the music where the music means something to us. The above quote is grounded in Gadamer's fundamental hermeneutical stance on understanding, namely that everything we understand has language at its core. This is not always a 'speakable' language. And yet, of course, he tells us that in our effort to understand, we use words to describe this meaning. The 'indeterminacy' he writes about may have different and varied sources, but suffice to say that we all have different personalities, experiences and opinions, and it is to be expected that the meaning we extract from any communication will always be our own personal one.

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<sup>310</sup> Lawrence Kramer, 'Music à la Mode', *The New York Review*, 1994, <[https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1994/09/22/music-a-la-mode/?srsltid=AfmBOoouZJe0AYMq9P0DtMeiRpdeyiZYA\\_mfp4QWqR11xfijkJHJdL2v](https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1994/09/22/music-a-la-mode/?srsltid=AfmBOoouZJe0AYMq9P0DtMeiRpdeyiZYA_mfp4QWqR11xfijkJHJdL2v)> [accessed 24 August 2024].

<sup>311</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 91.

<sup>312</sup> Victor Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton University Press, 1991); Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (Oxford University Press, 1990).

The fact that these inequalities exist between music and meaning certainly represents a stumbling block, but not an impasse. As I see it, there is a commonality between Gadamer's standpoint and my analysis here on what constitutes neutral catharsis. While I am reluctant to acknowledge that anything Schubert wrote was 'neutral', I also recognise that not all of Schubert is emotionally driven. By this I mean that not every measure of Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony contains the same pathos or emotion as, say, the beginning. That said, all of Schubert's music is form-driven, and so perhaps a passage that (primarily) serves the purpose of fulfilling his own demands on structure may offer the possibility for analysis from the perspective of 'neutral'. Therefore, while on the one hand I am sceptical of this (my own) perspective, on the other hand, taken from a Gadamerian perspective, I choose to approach this analysis as an opportunity to broaden my own hermeneutical circle, not only on catharsis, but on Schubert's score, and on Schubert himself. It appears to me that one musician is challenged more than any other when it comes to relating music which has 'no representational meaningful content' to 'the meaningful', and that is the orchestral conductor.

## 5.6 Hermeneutics and the Conductor: A Unique Relationship

As a conductor, I enter into a very different relationship with the score that I prepare for a concert as opposed to a score that I am learning for myself, such as a piece of music that I am preparing to play on the piano. Unlike an instrumentalist, as a conductor, *I am de facto forced into a relationship with the score that must include words*. I am aware of this from the very outset when learning a score. I know that I must speak to the orchestra about the score if I am to communicate something more than the obvious 'louder, softer, shorter, longer'. While such directions are often necessary and will undoubtedly contribute to a change in the sound, *they will not lead to a change in atmosphere*. In short, they won't catch the 'intent' of the composer. How the conductor creates the atmosphere, through physical gesture and personal embodiment of the score, will always be of paramount importance. In fact this is the optimum, and always preferential to words. Words will never explain the end of Schubert's 'Erlkönig', the choir entrance in the finale of Mahler's Second Symphony, or the end of life as represented in the conclusion of Michael Tippett's Fourth Symphony or Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony. This is,

as I see it, the art of conducting: the communicating of musical meaning and emotion through gesture that renders words superfluous. As it happens, this act has its own parallels in catharsis.

In my experience teaching student conductors, I am continuously reminded of the difficulty in conducting. Quite aside from the encyclopaedic knowledge required of the conductor in regard to a myriad of issues ranging from bowings in the strings or breathing and tonguing in the winds, performance practice knowledge, not to mention having an excellent ear, there is a tremendous amount of technique required in conducting. And yet, in my opinion, all of this, if mastered, still does not make a good conductor, *unless one can find one's own way to be expressive through gesture*. I am constantly reminded of the technical challenges that conducting poses when I teach. I have great sympathy and empathy with students, as I too have felt this. It is the utter frustration of student conductors in their own (quite normal) inability to get their hands and bodies to respond and show what they know they want to express, but can't. Though this ability to embody the score is always important, in a concert setting it is essential. In a rehearsal setting things are different. However: as vitally important as gesture is, gesture alone may not always be enough to convey a particular emotion or intent to ninety orchestral musicians. This is of course to be expected, and in line with what Gadamer tells us about meaning. We have to understand that each musician will take his/her own individual meaning from the gesture of the conductor, and his/her own sense of intent from the music on the page. When the conductor notices that gesture is not enough, we do as Gadamer says. We turn to words.

## 5.7 Neutral Expression as Catharsis in Schubert

In the first movement of the 'Unfinished', beginning at measure 73 is where I choose to begin my analysis of Schubert from the perspective of 'neutral expression' as a cathartic act. Having already had the second subject and a short transition, essentially what Schubert presents us here is akin to a development section, but one that happens too early. Indeed, the whole passage from 73 to 98 is somewhat like a development section, but one built almost entirely from a one-measure fragment of the second theme, something that Schubert does not do with the first theme. The first theme does make an appearance in this section, and though referenced twice, it is barely recognisable. It appears almost as an apparition or memory in

measures 73 and 77 in the woodwinds.<sup>313</sup> The material which Schubert chooses to develop is a fragmentation taken from the third measure of the second subject and here allocated to the strings. For me, the passage is neutral because everything about it is functional, rather than new or inspired. Because of its unusual placing (just before the development section proper), I see this as structurally motivated rather than representing emotion. The first phrase, beginning at measure 73, is four measures long, and consists of a single repeated measure, transferring from the lower to the upper strings and phrased or bowed also as a single measure. The phrase thereafter (beginning measure 77) is played *détaché* and staccato, and is repeated twice. While we can expect repetitions to be exactly that (without any development or change), the way in which Schubert repeats the four-measure phrase is functional. There is nothing inspiring or exciting here. In fact, it is almost pedestrian, going from a piano marking to forte and then to fortissimo. Despite the fortissimo and the syncopations (that are new, beginning in measure 81) the passage doesn't have the fire or passion that could constitute an analysis from the perspective of 'venting'. The repetitive nature of the passage simply doesn't allow for such a reading. Yes, it is loud, with Schubert even bringing in the full weight of the brass, but we have heard it all before. By the time measure 81 comes around, we have heard the same measure eight times in a row. Even Schubert's subito fortissimo feels monotone because it simply follows the dynamic structure that he has prepared for us: piano, forte, fortissimo. It all serves its purpose, which is to fill out the structure of the movement. As a conductor, there is very little to do here, no depth or intent, hidden or otherwise. There is no change in character throughout these measures. Yes, the first four measures (73–76) are lyrical through their legato bowing, but if one imagines the passage without the four measures from 77 to 80, what would be missing? The passage would still 'work'.

The eight measures from 85 to 92 consist of a repeated four-measure phrase, and though Schubert begins the phrase on the second beat of the measure, in fortissimo dynamic, replete with accent (*fz*), the passage is also repetitive in its construction (three repeated measures, followed by one staccato measure at the end of each four-measure phrase). This structure also fits well under the banner of 'neutral'. There is no drama here, no frustration or venting. This

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<sup>313</sup> Walther Frisch has written about repetition and memory in Schubert. For more read: Walther Frisch, "'You Must Remember This': Memory and Structure in Schubert's String Quartet in G Major, D. 887", *The Musical Quarterly*, 84.4 (2000), pp. 582–603, doi:10.1093/mq/84.4.582.



Example 5.2 Schubert, Symphony no. 7 in B minor (D. 759/i), measures 73–98

**Allegro moderato**

73

Flute *p* *f*

Oboe *f*

Clarinet in A *p* *f*

Bassoon *f*

Horn in D *f* a 2

Trumpet in E

Alto & Tenor Trombone

Bass Trombone *f*

Timpani

Violin I *p* *f*

Violin II *p* *f*

Viola *p* *f*

Violoncello *p* *f*

Contrabass *f*

80

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in A

Bassoon

Horn in D

Trumpet in E

Alto & Tenor Trombone

Bass Trombone

Timpani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

*ff*

*fz*

*a 2.*



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is largely achieved through the use of repetition. This is not the driving repetition (think Beethoven's Fifth, first movement) of insistence. After all we have witnessed up until now in the symphony, from the eerie first introduction through to the shocking *sforzato* 'interruptions' and the lyrical genius of the second subject; perhaps what we really need now is an emotional 'time out', a musical breather before the concentrated development section proper that is to follow. Certainly the functionality or neutrality that this passage conveys is consistent with a musical 'time out'. Seen in this way, the passage presents well from the perspective of 'neutral expression' and aligns well with research presented here on the benefits of neutral expression as catharsis in psychology. It is not the venting of strong emotion as a cathartic act, *but it is cathartic*. This alignment of neutral expression as a form of catharsis in Schubert not only gives us a new perspective on catharsis, it simultaneously affords Schubert's quote stating that *all* of his music is born of his deepest sorrows, to gain a new perspective, and perhaps even a new understanding.

## 5.8 Repetition in Schubert

The use of repetition by Schubert has always been a focus of musicology, particularly when it comes to his use of repetition in his Lieder.<sup>314</sup> In an article from 2005, Scott Burnham asks provocatively:

Can Schubert handle large instrumental forms? Mainstream music critics raise this question again and again in the face of Schubert's tendency to repeat extended stretches of music in development sections or second-theme groups. For these are precisely the stations in the musical process where it would be more normative to avoid such repetition.<sup>315</sup>

Perhaps the musical excerpt presented in Example 5.2 is one such example of 'Schubert's tendency to repeat extended stretches of music'. It certainly lends itself to the analysis presented above.

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<sup>314</sup> For more on the use repetition in Schubert Lieder, see Chapter 4 'Schubert: Repetition, Motion and Reflection' in: Yonatan Malin, *Songs in Motion: Rhythm and Meter in the German Lied*, Oxford Studies in Music Theory (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 95–122.

<sup>315</sup> Scott Burnham, 'Landscape as Music, Landscape as Truth: Schubert and the Burden of Repetition', *19th-Century Music*, 29.1 (2005), pp. 31–41, doi:10.1525/ncm.2005.29.1.31.

Quite aside from Schubert's use of repetition as a compositional device, no other composer (apart from perhaps Anton Bruckner) solicits more interest from orchestral players when enquiring which repeats I intend to take in the performance of Schubert's Ninth Symphony. In short, repetition is always an issue with Schubert. Repetition is worth reflecting on here also as we contemplate catharsis because there are parallels into the world of psychology that are interesting and offer a new perspective. In literature on psychology and catharsis, 'repetition' can be both positive and negative. On the negative side, the ability to notice mistakes and take corrective action is important if we don't want to create a negative pattern.

In fact, if we make mistakes while performing a certain task, 'frequency bias' makes us likely to repeat them whenever we do the task again. Simplistically speaking, our brains start assuming that the errors we've previously made are the correct way to perform a task – creating a habitual 'mistake pathway'. So the more we repeat the same tasks, the more likely we are to traverse the mistake pathway, until it becomes so deeply embedded that it becomes a set of permanent cognitive shortcuts in our brains.<sup>316</sup>

What this research tells us is that, essentially, *we learn our mistakes* and in doing so we are neurologically mapping our brains to repeat these mistakes. However, luckily our brain can also play *an active role in breaking this cycle*. This is elucidated beautifully in the poem by Portia Nelson 'There's a hole in my sidewalk'.<sup>317</sup>

I walk down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I fall in.  
I am lost... I am helpless.  
It isn't my fault.  
It takes forever to find a way out.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I pretend I don't see it.  
I fall in again.  
I can't believe I am in the same place.  
But, it isn't my fault.  
It still takes me a long time to get out.

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<sup>316</sup> Pragya Agarwal, 'How the Brain Stops us Learning from our Mistakes – and What to Do about It', *Positive.News* <https://www.positive.news/lifestyle/wellbeing/how-to-learn-from-mistakes> [accessed 21 December 2024]

<sup>317</sup> Portia Nelson, *There's a Hole in my Sidewalk: The Romance of Self-Discovery* (Atria Books, 2012), pp. xi–xii.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there.  
I still fall in. It's a habit.  
My eyes are open.  
I know where I am.  
It is my fault. I get out immediately.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it.

I walk down another street.

Moving forward and taking our cue from Schubert's letters that everything he composed stemmed from his deepest sorrows, is there a possibility that a better understanding of repetition might contribute, at least in a broader way, to understanding Schubert? Could repetition in Schubert be seen as an unconscious way for him to explore his illness, or even more? One way of exploring this would be through the lens of Freud's 'repetition compulsion theory'.

### 5.8.1 Repetition Compulsion Theory and Schubert

Freud's 'repetition compulsion theory' remains topical in psychology today, and describes an unchecked or unconscious compulsion we may have to repeat, either symbolically or literally, a previous trauma:

The compulsion to repeat consists of two dimensions: the re-experiencing of past beliefs and feelings and the compulsion repetition of defenses, behaviors, and ways of being in the world that are designed to keep away terror, anxiety, and dread. There is a similarity between these processes and what has been written concerning the dilemma of trauma survivors who have not been able to integrate past trauma.<sup>318</sup>

Undoubtedly, Schubert's life contained trauma. The death of his mother was a traumatic event early on in his life, and would certainly have had consequences for the young Schubert. All that

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<sup>318</sup> Michael S. Levy, 'A Conceptualization of the Repetition Compulsion', *Psychiatry*, 63.1 (2000), pp. 45–53, doi:10.1080/00332747.2000.11024893.

aside, living with syphilis and the consequences of that for his life and social acceptance remains my main focus in looking for the source of Schubert's pain. It appears to me that we must learn to acknowledge the holistic pain that syphilis brought to Schubert's life, and the consequences for his music-making. This is the 'total pain' as Cicely Saunders described it: physical, emotional, spiritual and societal.

One facet of repetition compulsion theory enquires whether the act of repetition is an unconscious act to try *to master the trauma* of a previously experienced event:

It has been theorized that the compulsion to repeat may serve the purpose of mastery. The repetition may give the individual an opportunity to work through, process, assimilate, and accommodate a past event (Chu 1992; van der Kolk and Greenberg 1987). As has been articulated in this article, one part of the compulsion to repeat is the repetition of rigid defenses that were enacted to cope with a past event or trauma [...] However, as the compulsion to repeat is a repetitive, self-defeating, and rigid way of being in the world that causes the individual distress, this process needs to be understood as a maladaptive attempt at mastery.<sup>319</sup>

Inherently, Charles Fisk touches on this when he states that:

This is the crisis that the transition in the Andante quietly remembers, melodically articulating the same C#-minor arpeggiation that descends from G# and reintroducing through it much the same syncopated ostinato figure. The music of the Andante explicitly returns to this traumatic moment, as if to seek recovery by living through it again.<sup>320</sup>

The concept of repetition as a tool for unconscious mastery of a past event or previous trauma is interesting in the context of Schubert. I have questioned the 'relevance' or function of the quasi-development section at the end of the second-theme section. Might Schubert's use of repetition in any way be deemed unconscious? It somehow doesn't seem possible. And yet we would have to accept that there is always something in composing that is unconscious, that stems from genius and thus, to a certain extent, from the subconscious, if not the unconscious. In any case, viewing Schubert's use of repetition as an unconscious effort to master his illness, his guilt, or 'repair' that part of him that was lost when he lost his mother is at least worth considering.

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>320</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, p. 85.



## 5.9 Beyond Catharsis

As I contend that all acts of expression can be cathartic and allow for healing, then I argue that we should respect Schubert's writing when he tells us that his work is rooted in his sorrow (pain). The previous analyses have probed into that space, which simultaneously creates an added dimension for those interested in exploring the psychology and philosophy of catharsis and mindbody research as it relates to catharsis. If Schubert's music was a cathartic act, and if indeed all of his music was a cathartic act, *what went wrong?* If compassion, resilience and catharsis are all linked to health, and Schubert channelled so much of this into his music, a question we must ultimately face is: *why was he then not able to cure himself?*

The first port of call would of course be to investigate Schubert's medical treatment plan. Mercury may have proven effective in the treatment of late benign syphilis, but it was wholly unsuitable and ineffective in treating Schubert's secondary (or tertiary) syphilis.<sup>321</sup> But Schubert's death can't solely be blamed on the inefficacy of mercury as a cure for syphilis. Despite the inefficacy of his treatment, we should also acknowledge that while contracting syphilis in the early nineteenth century was never good, it was not always a death sentence. Even if Schubert's syphilis did advance to neurosyphilis (as I claim), he would still have had a reasonable chance of it not being fatal. Research on the natural history of untreated syphilis 'estimates that one-third of patients will develop late manifestations, including cardiovascular syphilis, late benign syphilis [...] and neurosyphilis'.<sup>322</sup> The other two-thirds of those whose syphilis went untreated would not be fatal. Following conventional medical advice, musicologists writing on Schubert have pointed out that his illness could not have advanced to neurosyphilis because it would have taken seven years, or more, to present. This is not necessarily true. Newer, more recent research shows that neurosyphilis can present at any time: 'Although included as one of several probable criteria in the revised case definition of unknown duration of late syphilis, neurologic syphilis [...] may occur at any stage of infection.'<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> J. G. O'Shea, "'Two Minutes with Venus, Two Years with Mercury': Mercury as an Antisyphilitic Chemotherapeutic Agent', *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 83.6 (1990), pp. 392–95 (p. 394), doi:10.1177/014107689008300619.

<sup>322</sup> Cleo Whiting, Gabrielle Schwartzman and Amor Khachemoune, 'Syphilis in Dermatology: Recognition and Management', *American Journal of Clinical Dermatology*, 24.2 (March 2023), p. 291, doi.org/10.1007/s40257-022-00755-3.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

Based on this more recent research on syphilis, an article from the *International Journal of Urologic History* in 2021 on Schubert (and other composers) goes further, and points to neurosyphilis as the most likely cause of death: 'An erroneous diagnosis of typhus seems less likely than end-stage syphilis (as no typhoid epidemic was recorded in 1828) and he [Schubert] died at the age of just 31 years, or four years younger than Mozart.'<sup>324</sup> What, then, of his music? The mindbody element? Why was his music not the healing tool to push him into the percentage of those who survived syphilis?

As I see it, music was, in many ways, the tool Schubert used to palliate his suffering. Throughout this process, his music became infused with his suffering. And while he wasn't cured from his illness, he was offered something of great depth by his composing. It makes perfect sense for us to embrace the cathartic expression of his suffering in and through his music, and for us to recognise its potential as a salve to help alleviate our own suffering. In a foreword to his book *Mortally Wounded* by Irish psychologist Michael Kearney, Dame Cicely Saunders writes that:

Sometimes there will be no answers to give to those in apparently desperate situations, and we find ourselves with nothing to offer but silent attention. Those of us who have spent time in the company of people with mortal illness have learned from them that we are always challenged to know more and to help more effectively but, above all, to listen.<sup>325</sup>

From Cecily Saunders we have learned that pain is more than just the physical. From those in palliative care we learn that there is very little 'doing' that needs to be 'done'. What is needed is to 'be there'... to listen. Musicology has long addressed the subject of death in Schubert's music.<sup>326</sup> By listening to Schubert's music, we can tune into his suffering, allowing us the possibility to 'learn from them'. Schubert's music towards the end of his life was marked by incredible creativity, and much has been debated on whether this period of creativity can be regarded as a 'late style' in Schubert, the irony of which seems cruel for someone who died so

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<sup>324</sup> Leonidas Rempelakos, 'The Impact of Syphilis on Late Works of Classical Music Composers', *International Journal of Urologic History* (2021), doi:10.53101/IJUH71216. For more on Schubert and neurosyphilis, read: G. Hetenyi, 'The Terminal Illness of Franz Schubert and the Treatment of Syphilis in Vienna in the Eighteen Hundred and Twenties', *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 3.1 (1986), pp. 51–65, doi:10.3138/cbmh.3.1.51.

<sup>325</sup> Michael Kearney, *Mortally Wounded: Stories of Soul Pain, Death, and Healing* (Spring Journal Books, 2016), p. xiii.

<sup>326</sup> For more on how death is represented in Schubert's music, see: Lauri Suurpää, *Death in Winterreise: Musico-Poetic Associations in Schubert's Song Cycle*, Musical Meaning and Interpretation (Indiana University Press, 2014).

young.<sup>327</sup> Beyond catharsis in Schubert's music, there is an opportunity for further depth. As Saunders points out, by spending time with those who are dying we are 'challenged to know more'. What this 'knowing more' entails we are not told, but as in all learning, it will be different for every person. *What we will learn* from Saunders, Kearney and others is that 'healing' is not synonymous with 'curing'. For the untold lessons that we may learn from Schubert, Saunders' words are particularly appropriate. Firstly, and 'above all'... we must listen.

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<sup>327</sup> Lorraine Byrne Bodley, 'Introduction: Schubert's Late Style and Current Musical Scholarship', in *Schubert's Late Music*, ed. by Byrne Bodley and Horton, p. 1.

## Chapter 6. Schubert, Death and Acceptance

This final chapter will focus on Schubert's death, where I will probe the concept of being healed but not cured. Taking my impulse from writings in contemporary musicology about Schubert's death, I turn to the work of palliative care specialist Dr Michael Kearney as a new way to illuminate aspects around death in Schubert's music. The issue of ego and soul, central to Kearney's writings, is explored in relation to Schubert, and I will undertake an analysis of 'Gute Nacht', the opening song in 'Winterreise' from this perspective. I attempt to discuss the subject of ego and soul in Schubert's symphonic writing, and subsequently offer a different perspective on repetition in Schubert's music than the one presented previously. To conclude, I will use Kearney's image of the 'Chiron', a mythical figure, exploring issues around suffering and the concept of a 'good death'.

### 6.1 Schubert, Death and Acceptance: An Introduction

For a large portion of his short life, Schubert lived with a chronic illness that he sensed he was going to die from. Though many composers have grappled with their own mortality at some stage in their music, perhaps Gustav Mahler was the only other composer who so openly engaged with his own death in his compositions. In my own conducting career, I have always sensed this strong (death) connection between Mahler and Schubert. Mahler's orchestral song cycle *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and Schubert's *Winterreise* have always been, for me, inextricably linked: both composers as wanderers, looking for the existential life answers, and always with an eye towards their own death. In the past, in my symphonic concerts, I have paired arrangements of Schubert songs for voice and orchestra by Berlioz, Reger and others with Mahler's song cycle. I have also used Mahler's *Rückert Lieder* as a pairing together with works of Schubert. Songs such as 'Um Mitternacht' and 'Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen' are a strong match with Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony. In many ways they seem for me to come from the same pen, or at least, from the same sense of ego and soul.

In relation to the omnipresence of death in Schubert's life, Leo Black writes that 'thoughts of death and transience had always been in the air' for Schubert.<sup>328</sup> Black reminds us of the war-torn Vienna that the young Schubert would have witnessed. Aside from the war, it is true

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<sup>328</sup> Leo Black, *Franz Schubert: Music and Belief*, p. 191.

that Schubert was only 15 when he lost his mother, and that he also lost other siblings. In keeping with Black's observation that death was always there in his life, I contend that 'Erlkönig', written very early in his career and indeed in many ways a catalyst for his early success, has death at its core. Others have commented on the pervasive presence of death in works of Schubert: Lorraine Byrne Bodley eloquently informs us that 'images of death seem to leak into Schubert's late work'.<sup>329</sup>

Regarding 'Erlkönig', on closer reflection, it seems to me that the song is *primarily* a dramatic song, rather than one focused on death. As gut-wrenching as the end of 'Erlkönig' is, the song is busy and loaded with other dramatic elements. That is to say, drama is there from the very beginning. With its sense of urgency, imagery of horse hoofs and impending tragedy, it is hugely visceral. The expert picture-painting continues with the three different characters, all alternating in quick succession: the at first confused but then terrified son, the detached quasi-Victorian authority of the father, and the saccharine-laden conniving Erlking before he becomes violent are all brilliantly captured by Schubert. While I have already shown how 'Erlkönig' may be used as a modality to explore connection, I also recognise in 'Erlkönig' the younger Schubert's prerogative: one who wants to make his way and show the world how brilliant he is. *Winterreise*, on the other hand, is different. From the very first song, 'Gute Nacht', we witness something much more powerful, with much more depth. Other songs, like 'Der Leiermann', tell us that something has changed in Schubert. In her article on Schubert 'A Place at the Edge', Byrne Bodley writes that:

Whatever the answer to such rhetorical musings, one thing is clear: Schubert's last works are saturated with images of death. The energy of youth in the presence of impending death in Schubert's final works calls forth not a noble sadness, but something far deeper. It is the prerogative of great art that it arouses nameless emotions and is the location of such mysteries.<sup>330</sup>

Byrne Bodley's assessment that Schubert's works are 'saturated with images of death' is both poetic and factual. Her vision to see beyond the obvious sadness and recognise 'something far deeper' offers a unique space which I wish to explore here in this chapter on Schubert, death and acceptance. When listening to *Winterreise* we are all confronted with our own mortality. It

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<sup>329</sup> Lorraine Byrne Bodley, 'Late Style and the Paradoxical Poetics of the Schubert–Berio Renderings', in *The Unknown Schubert*, ed. by Barbara M. Reul and Lorraine Byrne Bodley (Routledge, 2016), p. 234.

<sup>330</sup> Byrne Bodley, 'A Place at the Edge', p. 28.

is my intention to explore this ‘far deeper’ area in Schubert’s music and look for, and at, the possibilities it may present us with. Having explored and learned from Schubert on issues such as self-compassion and resilience, it is my strong sense that his well-trodden pathway in all things death-related may be a natural pathway for us all to explore suffering, death and perhaps... healing.

As in previous chapters, Schubert’s Lieder have offered a gateway into the composer’s world, and so it makes sense to start there. By first exploring Schubert’s music with words in his songs, we can then extend out into his instrumental music. To help in this journey of exploration into Schubert and death, Irish physician, author and palliative care expert Dr Michael Kearney will be our lens. His vast experience in the field of palliative care, mindfulness and psychology is informed, compassionate and deeply humanistic. By placing Schubert and Kearney together, as I see it, we are offered a unique and new perspective on death. We may choose to learn why developing that perspective is so important in a way that is positive and, ultimately, healing.

## 6.2 Schubert, Ego and Soul

‘When the Ego dies, the Soul Awakes’ – Mahatma Gandhi

In his deeply moving book *Mortally Wounded: Stories of Soul Pain, Death and Healing*, Dr Michael Kearney shares stories of his own individual experiences, both good and bad, on accompanying those near to death. He tells us that:

To fear death is neither a sign of weakness nor a reason for shame. [...] We all share that primal, instinctive fear [...] and I believe that it is this existential and primal fear of the unknown that can generate that particular form of human suffering I call ‘soul pain’. In psychological terms, the prime mover in this is that aspect of the human mind known as the ‘ego’, which is happiest when in control of a familiar and predictable world but which is profoundly threatened by the approach of death, which it sees as utter chaos and the ultimate unknown. [...] In a reaction aimed at ensuring its survival, our panicking ego then flees from soul, thereby alienating itself from all that is deepest in us and leaving us feeling isolated and terrified in a wasteland of meaninglessness and hopelessness – soul pain.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Kearney, *Mortally Wounded*, p. 1.

‘Soul’, then, is seen as the antithesis of ‘Ego’. It is that part of us that is not afraid of death, that sees the greater picture and understands death as a part of life itself. Neither, however, is the ‘Ego’ a selfish or negative part of us. In its context here, it is important not to attach anything negative to the concept of Ego, but to see it as something very natural. For now, it is simply the part of us that wants to stay in control, and thus is afraid of the unknown, afraid of death. From a psychodynamic perspective, Schubert’s journey through his illness and towards his death could prove to be a profitable one, particularly if we could draw from his music and find parallels with Kearney’s work. We might then see it as a modality or pathway to think of our own soul pain and what we may do to allviate such pain. As I envision it, we may also open up new possibilities for Schubert’s compositions to be framed within the palliative care setting. Perhaps in this setting, Schubert might offer counsel to others who find themselves living with serious and life-limiting illness. As we begin this journey with Kearney, we might begin by thinking of concepts of ‘Ego’ and ‘Soul’ in Schubert, and ask ourselves what that might look like.

### 6.3: Ego and Soul in ‘Gute Nacht’

With the first line of ‘Gute Nacht’, ‘Fremd bin ich eingezogen, fremd zieh ich wieder aus’ (‘I was a stranger when I arrived and a stranger when I left’), Schubert paints a dark picture in D minor.<sup>332</sup>

One could be forgiven for expecting something more dramatic for the beginning of a song cycle that lasts an hour and fifteen minutes. Not so. Marked piano and with no leading or opening melody, Schubert’s choice of beginning is synonymous with the marching of time (see Example 6.1). Sometimes in music, such as with the beginning of Brahms’s Fourth Symphony, we are confronted *with a beginning that isn’t one*. The first note of the symphony (B natural) is played only by the violins. In conducting this, I have always imagined that the B natural has always been a part of this world, always in the air, hanging. Waiting to be played. When it is played, *we are only joining what has always been*. I have always shared this picture when conducting Brahms’s Fourth Symphony. The violins must be hypervigilant to produce a sound

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<sup>332</sup> Richard Giarusso in his chapter ‘Beyond the Leiermann’ in *The Unknown Schubert* writes how certain Schubert’s songs in *Winterreise* ‘articulate an apparent wish for death’, in *The Unknown Schubert*, ed. by Reul and Byrne Bodley, p. 29, doi:10.4324/9781315085012.

that sounds passive, asleep and ethereal. Such is the nature of this beginning: incredible focus and concentration to produce: nothing. Or at least, next to nothing. In rehearsals I have asked orchestras to hold out a long B natural, and when the orchestra is cued by me for the *accompagnato* figure in the first full measure, the violins are asked to fall in with the others, changing to the g natural, where we hear that we are in the key of e minor. After this, I ask for this concept to be followed through but without the 'pre-note'. When it works, the effect is magical. So too with the (non-)beginning of *Winterreise*. Consider this: what effect would one extra measure have to the beginning? What effect would one less eighth note have to the beginning, or indeed what effect would be created if Schubert simply entered with the melody directly, without the three eighth-notes D minor accompaniment? The answer is: nothing.



# Example 6.1 Schubert, 'Gute Nacht' from *Winterreise*

**Mässig, in gehender Bewegung**

Singstimme (Voice)

Fremd bin ich ein - ge - zo - gen, fremd  
Ich kann zu mei - ner Rei - sen nicht

Pianoforte

*p* *fp* *fp* *pp*

S E S S

10

Singstimme (Voice)

zieh ich wie der aus. Der Mai war mir ge - wo - gen mit man - chem Blu - men - strauss. Das Mäd - chen sprach von  
wäh - len mit der Zeit, muss selbst den Weg mir wei - sen in die - ser Dun - kel - heit. Es zieht ein Mon - den

Pno.

*ligato*

17

Singstimme (Voice)

Lie - be, die Mut - ter gar von Eh', das Mäd - chen sprach von Lie - be, die Mut - ter gar von Eh'.  
schat - ten also mein Ge - fähr - te mit, es zieht ein Mon - den schat - ten als mein Ge - fähr - te mit,

Pno.

*fp*

25

Singstimme (Voice)

Nun ist die Welt so trü - be, der Weg ge - hüllt in Schnee, nun ist die Welt so trü - be, der  
und auf den weis - sen Mat - ten such' ich des Wil - des Tritt, und auf den weis - sen Mat - ten such'

Pno.

*fp* E

32

Singstimme (Voice)

We ge-hüllt in Schnee.  
ich des Wil-des Tritt.

Pno.

*fp* *fp*

[measures 39–64 not shown]

65

Singstimme (Voice)

Will dich im Traum nich

Pianoforte

*pp*

A

73

Singstimme (Voice)

stö - ren, wär Schad' um dei - ne\_ Ruh, sollst mein - en Tritt nicht hö - ren, sacht, sacht die Tü - re\_ zu! Schreib'

Pno.

80

Singstimme (Voice)

im Vor - ü - ber - ge - hen an's Tor - dir: gu - te\_ Nacht, da - mit du mö - gest se - hen, an dich hab'ich ge dacht.

Pno.

*ligato*

88

Singstimme (Voice)

Schreib im Vor - ü ber - ge - hen an's Tor - dir: gu - te Nacht, da - mit du mö - gest se - hen, an

Pno.

96 *un poco ritard.* **a tempo**

Singstimme (Voice)

dich hab' ich ge - dacht, an dich hab' ich ge - dacht.

Pno.

*pp* *un poco ritard.*

S E

100

Singstimme (Voice)

Pno.

*pp* *dim.*

Put another way, what does the pianist do before playing the opening? He/she has the opening in his/her head. The accompanist sings/plays it in her/his head before it is ever played. And so too, like Brahms's opening, the accompanist simply steps *onto the conveyer belt of sound that has always been moving, always present, but not heard*. With the beginning of *Winterreise*, we have no concept what the time signature is. This is of course purposeful. The entry of the melody on the final upbeat to the next measure confuses us yet further. Are we in compound or simple time? The plodding repetitions of the introduction represent, for me, Kearney's concept of 'Soul' and are marked 'S' in Example 6.1. It is not afraid of death. Schubert could have simply left it as an open fifth, but, of course, then it is not minor. We need the F to set the mood. Using Kearney again as our lens, the major would be counterintuitive to death. We are in a sacred space, and D minor is that key. This is the relative minor to F major, noted as being a pastoral key. There is an understanding of the gravitas of the situation. And yet no fear. There is a quiet acceptance here, in keeping with Kearney's concept of 'Soul'.

The melody line, when it enters, is purposefully innocuous, entering on the third of D minor, and, on the upbeat to the next measure, it enters softly and unannounced. Schubert has laid

out his stall in the first two measures: a mix of timelessness in terms of time signature, but one of total security when it comes to the choice of key (Dminor). As soon as D minor is settled in the ears of the listener, the line is rudely interrupted on the last beat of the measure with dissonance (marked throughout Example 6.1 as 'E'). Here Schubert takes the effort to write both an accent on the diminished-seventh chord over the pedal D, as well as a forte–piano marking. The E to D movement in the melody (measures 2–3, and 3–4 in Example 6.1) is the 'seufzer' or 'sighing' motif, a well-known trope. Here, this disturbance of 'Soul' has parallels with Kearney's description of 'Ego'. The result is 'Soul Pain'. The settled chords and *accompagnato* of 'Soul' are interrupted by the 'Ego', as if trying to come to grips with mortality itself. As in life, again and again throughout the song, we are interrupted by 'Ego'. I have marked subsequent appearances of 'Soul' as 'S', and appearances of 'Ego' as 'E' in Example 6.1. Kearney, speaking with decades of experience in hospice and caring for the dying, tells us that not all of us have access to 'Soul' at end of life:

For others, however, this spontaneous descent does not happen, and these individuals remain trapped at the surface level of their mind, cut off from the healing power of their own inner depths [...] in psychological terms it is a symptom of the ego's total identification with the surface mind and its resistance to a descent into depth.<sup>333</sup>

To prepare us for death and to help us avoid 'Soul Pain', Kearney suggests 'Soul Work', and gives us a list of thirteen possible activities. It is my contention that Schubert engaged in ten of these thirteen, which I have marked with an asterisk.<sup>334</sup>

*Art therapy\**

*Bodywork, e.g. massage, yoga, Qi Gong*

*Creative and artistic expression\**

*Dream work\**

*Gratitude journaling*

*Humour, laughter, levity\**

*Meditation practice*

*Music therapy\**

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>334</sup> See Box 38.1 in Michael Kearney and Radhule Weininger, 'Facing Fear through Primary Care of the Soul', p. 275.

*Quality time with significant others\**

*Reflective writing\**

*Reminiscence therapy\**

*Spiritual and religious practice\**

*Time in nature\**

As I see it, Schubert's compositions fall both under the headings of 'art therapy' and 'creative and artistic expression'. His Schubertiades might be understood to fit three categories: 'music therapy', 'quality time with significant others' and 'humour, laughter, levity'. His poem 'Mein Traum' can be viewed under the headings of 'dream work' and 'creative writing'. And his love of walking (German: *Wandern*) falls under the heading 'time in nature'.

Schubert's acceptance of death comes, as I see it, in the form of a direct transition to D major later in the song (measure 71). Marked 'A' ('acceptance') in Example 6.1 the protagonist is telling the sleeping partner that he does not want to wake them, but writes something over their door to show that the person was there, and thinking of the other. The previous dissonance of measures 2–3 and 3–4 is still there, but now it is diluted through the change of key. Here (measures 88 and 89), death ('Ego') has lost its sting. Western medicine might learn much from this. With decades of experience in his corner, Kearney is critical:

The dynamics of the frightened ego are relevant throughout the illness trajectory. For example, with a new diagnosis the ego is given what is tantamount to a death sentence: Life as you knew it is over. Finished. However life will be from now on, it will never again be how it was [...] The prevailing norm in Western healthcare is, first – treat the disease and contain the suffering; then, if and when satisfactory results have been achieved and the necessary resources are available to do so, then – take care of the soul.<sup>335</sup>

When considering Kearney's list, it is clear that Schubert engaged in his own 'Soul Work'. And yet, towards the end of the song, from measures 96 to 99, we witness how the minor key returns, accompanied by a *ritenuto*. This return of 'Ego', where 'Soul' is always questioned, fits well with Kearney's perspective. And though in this case it is 'Ego' that finishes the song, we have seen 'Soul' at work. We recall Byrne Bodley's words: 'Schubert's final works calls forth not

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<sup>335</sup> Michael Kearney and Radhule Weininger, 'Facing Fear through Primary Care of the Soul' in *Oxford Textbook of Spirituality in Healthcare*, Oxford Textbook in Public Health, ed by Cobb, Mark R, Christina M Puchalski, and Bruce Rumbold, (Oxford, 2012; online edn, Oxford Academic, (2012), doi.org/10.1093/med/9780199571390.001.0001 [accessed 19 Dec. 2024]

a noble sadness, but something far deeper.’ As it happens, *depth* is at the heart of what ‘Soul’ is:

I am using ‘soul’ in its more classical sense as referring to ‘psyche’ [...] soul as psyche is at the very heart of, and at one with, human experience. My mentor in the ways of soul has been the archetypal psychologist James Hillman. In his writings, Hillman frequently comments that soul as psyche is that in us which experiences and is experienced imaginatively, emotionally, and physically rather than rationally grasped or understood. [...] While emphasizing that soul defies definition, Hillman states that there are, nonetheless, certain things that can be said about it. First, to speak of soul is to speak of depth, for soul refers to ‘the *deepening* of events into experience’. Hillman quotes a fragment from the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus to the effect that ‘you could not discover the limits of soul (psyche), even if you travelled every road to do so; such is the depth of its meaning [...] the dimension of soul is depth (not breadth or height) and the dimension of soul travel is downward.’<sup>336</sup>

The song’s simplicity belies a maturity and the kind of *depth that comes with great suffering*. As I see it, there is much to be taken from an approach that bears witness to another’s suffering. If it is true that we cannot ‘discover the limits of soul, even if you travelled every road to do so’, it may also be true that *Schubert’s road is the closest we might ever get*.

### 6.3.1 Other Possibilities of Ego and Soul in *Winterreise*

*Winterreise* invites many possibilities to consider the juxtapositions of ‘Soul’ and ‘Ego’. ‘Die Nebensonnen’ and ‘Der Lindenbaum’ both provide excellent examples from a psychodynamic perspective. In ‘Der Lindenbaum’ the ‘Ego’ exists in the middle of the song, in the minor key, and in the form of a frenetic, rushing piano part. ‘Soul’ is represented by the singer’s simple melody. As with many things of this beauty in the arts, this beautifully simple but effective melody found its way into popular culture. Under the title ‘Am Brunnen vor dem Tore’, the Schubert melody is a song in its own right, and synonymous with every male voice choir. Though undoubtedly less popular than in the early twentieth century, the ‘Männerchor’ is still a hugely respected fixture of the German cultural landscape, particularly in rural villages. Apropos the Schubert and Mahler connection, the traditional image of the Lindenbaum also makes an appearance in Mahler’s song cycle *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. Known for its healing properties, in the final song, ‘Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz!’, the tree appears as

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<sup>336</sup> Kearney, *Mortally Wounded*, pp. 41–42.

an image at the side of the road. The image is one that affords the protagonist rest, and perhaps more importantly, peace. Mahler's transition from 'Ego' to 'Soul' is beautifully portrayed as he first introduces the solo harp (which appears now in the major key) followed by the strings after the words 'My company was love and pain' ('Mein Gesell war Lieb und Leide'). Schubert does something similar in 'Gute Nacht' when he moves from D minor to D major, where there is a mature 'warmth' surrounding his fate ('A' in Example 6.1).

With 'Die Nebensonnen' the *semplice* beginning and timelessness of the melody invites parallels to be drawn with 'Soul'. With the words 'Ach, meine Sonnen seid ihr nicht!' ('Alas, you are not my suns'), the 'Ego' appears to challenge the perception of the protagonist. The setting suns represent the approach of death, and represent an opportunity for 'Soul Work'.

*This music is, of course, Schubert's own 'Soul Work'.* We must find a way to bear witness to this, to share Schubert's 'Soul Pain' with others. It is my hope that this chapter may add a new perspective to Schubert's songs, and show how Schubert's life and music is a wonderful resource for any and everyone who would like to engage in 'Soul Work'.

## 6.4 Ego and Soul in Schubert's Final Symphonies

Schubert's final symphonies offer us multiple possibilities to demonstrate Kearney's concepts around 'Ego' and 'Soul'. Hermeneutic possibilities are ours for the making, and are to be found anywhere a passage 'speaks' to us. As I have explained earlier, the conductor is de facto *forced* to find a relationship between words and music, between emotion and meaning. The first sentences in Charles Fisk's powerful book *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas* suggest that the conductor may not be alone:

The questions addressed in this study of Schubert's piano music originated as a performer's questions. Wanting better to understand and to deepen my sense of identification with this music while playing it, I began to search for words to describe what it held for me.<sup>337</sup>

It is here, in Schubert's final two symphonies, that we find depth. In his experience, Kearney is slow to dictate what 'Soul' or 'Ego' *must be*, but he clearly links the existence of the soul with depth:

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<sup>337</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, p. 1.

My own personal and work experience has repeatedly endorsed these observations of Hillman's, that soul is indeed connected to depth, to death, to the imagination, and that it brings with it a sense of meaning. These characteristics of soul were beautifully expressed to me some years ago by the relative of a man who had died in the hospice. [...] 'As I remember how he was shortly before his death, I can't help thinking of Rembrandt's paintings, where the light is so glorious that it makes even the darkness look beautiful. I can't put it any better than that, except perhaps one could say that the light only looked so glorious *because* of the darkness around it. The darkness was the cause of the beauty, not so much the light.' Soul [...] is a dynamic entity [...] constantly moving back and forth between the surface and the depths, weaving a web of images in a restless longing to bring depth to all that is superficial and to bring what is superficial into depth.<sup>338</sup>

In the light of contemplating this passage by Kearney, I wish to return to an example that I used in Chapter 3 (Example 3.2 Schubert, Symphony no. 9 in C major (D. 944/ii), measures 226–79). It is the passage of music from the 'Great' C-major that musicologist Hugh MacDonald used to depict a dark, negative side of Schubert ('Schubert's Volcanic Temper'). Much attention is given to finding passages that MacDonald feels demonstrate a side of Schubert that (as I have explained earlier) I believe is unjustified, though MacDonald does acknowledge that 'as soothing as the climax has been disturbing, the cellos lead the music back after the silence to the Elysian lyricism of A minor, as though some great evil force had been exorcized'. Surely MacDonald means A major, not A minor? The link passage (measures 253 to 266) is also not A minor, but rather a search for a new key. MacDonald's conclusion is, at best, worrying:

If we have to abandon associating violence in the music with any violence in the man, how can we continue to link the melodic, lyrical, effortless music with the easy-going, good-humoured frequenter of cafes? Perhaps this too is a fallacy of oversimplification. We know in any case that the intensity of feeling in, for example, *Winterreise*, was not observed in his character by his friends, so that no assumption that character and music are reflective one of the other can safely be held. Might there be any other source of hysteria or volcanism in Schubert's mental background? Could the music be evidence of psychological disturbance, even of mental instability, which was unperceived in the medical sense during his brief lifetime?<sup>339</sup>

If we learn anything from MacDonald's musings, it is how diverse interpretations can be. I would only point out, in line with Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy, that there is a myriad of possibilities that Schubert's music presents us with. Where MacDonald chose to see a 'violent'

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<sup>338</sup> Kearney, *Mortally Wounded*, pp. 42–43.

<sup>339</sup> MacDonald, 'Schubert's Volcanic Temper', p. 952.



Schubert in his 'Great' C-major Symphony, I discover different character traits through my experience as a conductor using Compassion Focused Therapy as my lens. There are, of course, other possibilities. Rather than complete an analysis as I did in Chapter 3 of this thesis, I invite the possibility to see dissonance as 'Ego' and the 'Elysian lyricism' as 'Soul' in this same passage. Here the perspective I suggest would be one through Michael Kearney's eyes. From Kearney we have learned that, if we listen, we hear a different story. We have also learned from Kearney that 'Soul Work' creates space (depth) for such a shift in perspective. It is perhaps that shift to depth that should be embraced here. As I see it, it is in line with the man Schubert, who prematurely was so cruelly confronted with his own mortality and death. We know that he expressed this in his music. Kearney's perspective allows us to not only put words to this 'Soul Pain' but invites us to find creative ways to engage with Schubert's late works, which have drawn much attention as mature works 'steeped in death'. Beyond recognising them as such, we could also view them as a unique and powerful resource to explore the 'depth' that Kearney describes, the depth that comes with true acceptance at end of life.

### 6.4.1 Repetition Compulsion Theory in Schubert's 'Great' C-major Symphony

I am drawn to the beginning of the C-major Symphony as a pathway to explore Kearney's concept of 'Soul'. It is not a work that belongs to the deep maturity and acceptance of death that we find in *Winterreise* (Schubert had of course begun work on his Tenth Symphony), and yet there is a maturity in this opening that is impossible to deny. Considering the beginning of Schubert's 'Great' C-major Symphony, John Gingerich, in his book *Schubert's Beethoven Project*, writes that 'Schubert's famous opening melody avoids, or at least does not obviously invoke, the horn's long-standing associations with hunting and the forest, and more abstractly with distance, absence, regret, separation, and memory'.<sup>340</sup> Indeed, Gingerich is right in the sense that this is not Schumann's First Symphony beginning. Though that symphony also begins very similarly, with the brass (Schumann adds the trumpets to the horns) in a pastoral summoning of spring (it also has a subsequent repeat as a quasi-'endorsement' by the orchestra), it is

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<sup>340</sup> Gingerich, *Schubert's Beethoven Project*, p. 216.

celebratory in nature, just as Schumann conceived it: 'ein Ruf zum Erwachen' ('a call to awaken'). Gingerich's reading of Schubert's beginning as having elements of memory aligns well with my own analysis. After all, repetition *is* a form of memory, and this beginning is full of repetition. I see the whole beginning, however, not as 'absence, regret, separation', but as something wonderfully understated *and positive*. Both Schumann's and Schubert's beginnings are stately, but Schubert's is more subdued, one might even say understated. As I see it, there is much in this opening that is comforting.

In Section 5.8.1, 'Repetition Compulsion Theory and Schubert', I raised the question whether Schubert's use of repetition might be seen to be a tool to come to terms with previous trauma. There, research pointed out that there is a *negative* side of repetition, stating that because the 'compulsion to repeat is a repetitive, self-defeating, and rigid way of being in the world that causes the individual distress, this process needs to be understood as a maladaptive attempt at mastery'.<sup>341</sup> The following research shines a somewhat different light on the topic, informing us that repetition can be incorporated in a therapeutic way. The following describes how a psychologist repeatedly used small human figures and imagery in a playful way in a sandbox to help a child come to terms with a past trauma:

When this stage of the game ended with the imaginary arrival of the paramedics, Philip was ready to move on to the next stage of the session, namely the artistic creation. Crenshaw and Kelly stated that using miniatures in sand enables children to '[shrink] the problem to a more workable and manageable level... [enabling] them to gain mastery' (p. 89). It is possible that he had thus resolved a portion of the original injury in a way that he found adequate. However, given that this game was repeated many times, I cannot state that genuine psychological healing took place but rather suggest that the healing process was likely slowly taking effect. Over 29 sessions of art therapy, the client demonstrated repetition through themes of struggles, calls for help, entombment, and a woman superhero. This recurrence seemed to relate to resolving trauma, gaining power, regulating anxiety, and seeking a savior.<sup>342</sup>

Repetition is a trademark of Schubert's compositional style. Is his use of repetition a pathway to resolve trauma or gain power? Perhaps. In any case, it is worth looking at how he constructs

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<sup>341</sup> Michael S. Levy, 'A Conceptualization', p. 49.

<sup>342</sup> Michelle Nuttall and Lise Pelletier, 'Understanding Symbol Repetition in Art Therapy', *Art Therapy*, 38.3 (2021), p. 156, doi:10.1080/07421656.2020.1816105.

this melody, and his use of repetition here. As I see it, and as mindbody medicine would tell us, if it is calming, then it is inherently healing.

Example 6.2 Schubert, Symphony no. 8 in C major (D. 944/i), measures 1–30

Andante

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in C

Bassoon

Horn in C

Trumpet in C

Tenor Trombone

Bass Trombone

Timpani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

276

15

Fl.

Ob.

pp

Cl.

Bsn.

pp

C Hn.

C Tpt.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vln. I

pp

*p* arco

3

pizz.

simile

Vln. II

pp

*p* arco

3

pizz.

simile

Vla.

*p*

due viole

due violoncelli

Vc.

pp

*p* arco

Cb.

pp

*p*

simile

278

26

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

C Hn.

C Tpt.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Timp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

*pp*

*a 2*

*pp*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*ff* arco

*ff* arco

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff* arco

In Section 4.5 I have shown that these first measures of the opening of Schubert's 'Great' C-major Symphony (Example 6.2) are to be analysed not simply as eight measures, but rather unusually as 3+3+2. Peter Gülke has shown that in actual fact, what we have is as follows: 3(2+1), 3(2+1), 2, where measures 3 and 6 are, as he says, 'wie eingeschoben' or 'as if inserted', so much so that Gülke contemplates if this should not be better seen as *a six-measure phrase*, with these two measures as quasi in parentheses.<sup>343</sup> This is indeed very much the case. Gülke leaves other possibilities open also, such as 3+3+2, even leaving the possibility open for an analysis of 3+5. The use of repetition is the reason that so many possibilities are available. Everything about this opening is about stability and security. If Schubert risks anything by rising from C to E in the first measure, he disarms it in the next, by jumping to the submediant in measure 2 and returning (safely) to the tonic. The confidence and 'striding forward' nature of the rhythm in the first measure (half note followed by two quarter notes) is also 'disarmed' in the second by adding the dotted quarter note and using the very same rhythm in measure 3. Though Schubert moves now to the subdominant F, it feels prepared through the first measure's use of E. So too is the dominant G 'prepared'. As my analysis would have it (3(2+1) + 3(2+1)), measure 4 is the beginning of the second part of the phrase and so we are 'due' something new, even expecting it. But in actual fact the G is a very safe move, as, by now, we have heard every note of the C-major scale before first hearing it in measure 4. Again Schubert uses repetition as a comforting tool by repeating measure 2 in measure 5. The movement from the submediant is of course a return home to the tonic, and nothing could be more grounding than this. Measure 6 is of course one of the 'parentheses' measures, and is healing for a number of reasons. If measure 5 is an exact echo and repetition of measure 2, then measure 6 is perhaps the next most 'safe' of the phrase, repeating the same rhythm as the preceding measure. It too has a 'memory effect' about it, with the inherent harmony being the same as measure 2, namely dominant-tonic. The last two measures of the phrase are again 'memory laden', and stronger than any repetition. They are of course measure 6 in augmentation, spread now over two measures. Marked *pp*, they represent a clear break from the preceding six measures. For me they do not have the character that might lean them to be seen as trying to resolve any previous trauma; rather, their repetition has something deeply relaxing, calming and healing.

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<sup>343</sup> Gülke, Franz Schubert und seine Zeit, p. 306.



As it happens, repetition is synonymous with relaxation and healing. In his groundbreaking work in the field of mindbody medicine at the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine in Boston, Harvard professor Dr Herbert Benson's 'Relaxation Response' was devised as a means to combat stress and to be healing. The core requirements to solicit this response involve a quiet environment, a comfortable position, an empty mind and, importantly, a word or phrase to be repeated, like a mantra. The benefits from this exercise have been well documented, and it is not surprising to know that these are benefits that affect the body, the immune system and thus the spread of disease.<sup>344</sup>

Schubert's use of repetition, seen from this perspective, takes on a new dimension. The whole eight-measure melody goes through an exact repetition in the woodwinds, with both the first oboe and first clarinet doubling on the melody. Now harmonised and accompanied by the strings, the treatment is light and airy. Replete with pizzicato marking in all strings, it creates a relaxing and positive narrative. I have analysed measures 17 to 28 in Example 2.8 from the perspective of connection, but here I wish to look at their content from the perspective of repetition. On first glance, measures 17 to 28 seem new, and yet here too there is a sense that we have heard this before. This twelve-measure phrase should conventionally be analysed as 8+4, but it too has elements that are 'eingeschoben'. First the repetitions: measures 17 and 18 are repeated in 21 and 22. In measures 19 and 20, Schubert drops the viola and cello melody to a lower register. By doing this, they too feel 'inserted' or in parentheses, aside from the fact that they *are* inserted before the repeated measures of 21 and 22. They also have the same rhythm as the previous (and subsequent) two measures, which, again, is soothing. The final two measures of the eight-measure phrase, measures 23 to 24 do add something new. Not only do they modulate to E minor, these measures are the only ones with a hairpin crescendo and diminuendo marking, which, with the modulation, contributes to it attaining a new sense of interest. The interest, however, is positive in nature, and any tension that is created here is purposefully dissolved again in the next measure (measure 25), being as it is an exact replica of the preceding measure. Here we instinctively feel what Benson's 'Relaxation Response' tells us: repetition is calming and healing. Even measure 26 features repetition. In fact we have

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<sup>344</sup> Herbert Benson, Martha M. Greenwood and Helen Klemchuk, 'The Relaxation Response: Psychophysiologic Aspects and Clinical Applications', *The International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, 6.1–2 (1975), pp. 87–98, doi:10.2190/376W-E4MT-QM6Q-H0UM.

heard the same three notes at the beginning of each of the last three measures, before the crescendo to the *unisono* opening phrase is introduced. As complex and lyrically intertwined as measures 17 to 28 have been, Schubert simplifies everything beginning in measure 29. Showing real intent, the opening melody is triumphantly re-introduced in the strings *unisono* and in all three trombones, also *unisono*. Schubert's symphony has begun. It bursts onto the scene as if everything before was constructed just to prepare us for this moment. Perhaps *this* is a musical representation of catharsis. However we choose to regard the phrase, I argue that it is Schubert's use of repetition that adds to (and perhaps makes?) the immensely positive and healing effect of this unusual opening.

## 6.5 Schubert's 'Depth' and 'Soul'

True, it is no longer that happy time during which each object seems to us to be surrounded by a youthful radiance, but a period of fateful recognition of a miserable reality, which I endeavour to beautify as far as possible by my imagination (thank God). We fancy that happiness lies in places where once we were happier, whereas actually it is only in ourselves.<sup>345</sup>

On the face of it, much could be found in this quote from Schubert to argue that his life was extremely unhappy. The 'miserable reality' he speaks of would obviously have had many sources, not least his illness. While the quote points to an acceptance of sorts, it is not (yet) a peaceful acceptance of his place within the world, but a grudging 'fateful recognition' that things are not as he would like them to be. And yet Schubert's 'endeavour to beautify as far as possible by my imagination' speaks to me of a music *beyond* catharsis: it is *music as a vehicle for transformation*. Here we witness music's ability, or more specifically, Schubert's ability, *to transform suffering into beauty*. There is much here that is acknowledged by Lorraine Byrne Bodley:

The portrayal of Schubert's plight directly mirrors the fundamental connection between sickness and creativity which the syphilitic Nietzsche made, which influenced Mann's view that disease is not to be regarded as wholly negative. In his essay on Dostoyevsky, he acceded of such artists: 'in their case something comes out in illness that is more important to life and growth than any medical

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<sup>345</sup> In a letter to his brother Ferdinand, dated 18 July 1824. Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, p. 363.

guaranteed health or sanity [...] in other words certain conquests made by the soul and the mind are impossible without disease, madness, crime of the spirit'.<sup>346</sup>

Her quote begs an important question. Could it be that some 'other' form of healing or growth may come of illness that 'is more important [...] than any medical guaranteed health'? Or is Thomas Mann's quote to be understood more as a Romantic abstraction, easily mused upon by those of us that enjoy full health? It is true that research presented in previous chapters shows how adversity can equate to growth. But this concept is much more. As I see it, this is as much a philosophical question as a *literal, physical one*, with real-life consequences beyond the philosophical. If we are to take Schubert at his word, then the following quote is telling:

For long years I felt the greatest grief and the greatest love divide me [...] I sang songs for many, many years. If I wanted to sing of love, it turned to pain. And if I wanted to sing only of pain, it turned me to love. And thus, love and pain divided me.<sup>347</sup>

There is a beautiful message within this quote that may elude some. If we can agree that love is beauty, then we will agree that there is a beautification, a *healing*, going on when Schubert tries to express his pain. The 'energy of youth' (to quote Byrne Bodley) towards the end of Schubert's life is a phenomenon recognised and documented by those incredible individuals who care for the dying in the hospice movement. Dr Michael Kearney tells us that on his first visit to St Christopher's Hospice in London:

I encountered patients who, despite the fact that their bodies were frail and dying, seemed to be among the most real and complete human beings I ever met. I too felt more alive in their presence and left with my faith restored in the power of the human spirit – and in medical care [...] A 'place of healing' accurately described what I experienced during my visit [...] By 'healing' here I mean the process of becoming psychologically and spiritually more integrated and whole; a phenomenon which enables persons to become more completely themselves and more fully alive.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Lorraine Byrne Bodley, Chapter 16 'Music of the orphaned self? Schubert and concepts of late style' in *Schubert's Late Music*, ed. Byrne Bodley and Horton, p. 334.

<sup>347</sup> My own translation from the original, taken from Schubert's poem 'Mein Traum'. *Schubert: Die Dokumente seines Lebens*, ed. by Deutsch, p. 159.

<sup>348</sup> Kearney, *A Place of Healing: Working with Suffering in Living and Dying* (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. xix.

Kearney describes an important phenomenon, yet one that he, and others in hospice work, see regularly: those privileged persons who are alive when confronted with death, and despite not being cured, are healed.

To understand this better, Kearney describes what he sees as two fundamentally different models at work within healthcare. The first is the Hippocratic method, based on the Greek physician Hippocrates, which represents the standard medical model. The Hippocratic model is always seeking to find a cure and involves intervention to treat the patient. It is evidence-based and focused on curing, and importantly, relies on medicine or some extremal means for helping the patient. The second model is the Asklepiian model. It represents the 'being', rather than the 'doing', of medical care. In ancient Greece, Asklepiian temples were sacred places where the infirm would go and spend the night, surrounded by the healing gaze of the Asklepiian snake. The Asklepiian temple was a place of *holistic healing*. Though it should be seamlessly integrated into healthcare, today it struggles in modern medicine to find its place. It is present in healthcare when there is nothing else to do, where the Hippocratic model is powerless. In ancient Greece there was an understanding of the importance of both approaches. Indeed, they were one. Kearney explains:

Where Hippocratic practice emphasized the need for a rational and evidence-based approach and was dependent on an external agent to achieve its effect, the Asklepiian rites assumed that there was a spontaneous tendency towards wholeness within each individual and that healing came through cooperation with this inner dynamic. Here was a culture that recognised the value of two fundamentally different but complementary models of care. Here was an integrated system of healthcare that attended to patients as whole persons: body, mind, soul, and spirit.<sup>349</sup>

As I see it, Schubert's newly sourced compositional energy comes from *an Asklepiian place*, one where there is a fundamental understanding, on some deeper level, that there is nothing else to do. Perhaps it is that acknowledgement that allows for a new healing to take place, along the lines of what Kearney describes? Indeed, this may be the case, as Kearney writes that:

Covertly, Asklepios is to be found with patients' subjective experiences of inner transformation and healing, and in the compassionate and caring attitude of those

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<sup>349</sup> Ibid., pp. xxi–xxii.

who attend them and stay with them in their suffering. Overtly, his influence is seen in areas such as the arts, the humanities, and deep ecology.<sup>350</sup>

Within this framework, the following quote from Schubert on how he sees his own compositional process is of particular interest: 'I [...] compose like a God, as though that were as it should be.'<sup>351</sup>

Schubert's equating himself with a God isn't the work of an oversized or fragile ego. Instead I see or recognise an 'inevitability' in his music, a quasi-Asklepian approach that accentuates the 'being' rather than the 'doing'. Kearney's book *Mortally Wounded* is full of stories of individuals in palliative care who found a way to confront their mortality, and others who suffered great 'Soul Pain', who could not come to terms with their own situation and mortality. Which was Schubert? The following quote from Schubert gives us a strong clue:

He has been at death's door nine times, as if death was the worst thing a person could encounter. If, even once, he could look at these heavenly mountains and lakes, whose landscape threatens to crush or engulf us, he would not love this tiny human life so much, but realise that he should not consider it a great fortune to be entrusted to the unimaginable power of the earth for new life.<sup>352</sup>

It paints a picture of Schubert as having an open and holistic approach to death. In any case, it certainly does not show a man *afraid* of death. Schubert's pantheistic perspective demonstrates the attitude that Kearney describes, which embraces something greater than the self.

## 6.6 Healing without Curing?

Is there such a thing as healing without curing, and what is its relevance, if any, to Schubert? Kearney speaks from decades of experience in palliative care when he explains that 'by "healing" here I mean the process of becoming psychologically and spiritually more integrated and whole: a phenomenon which enables persons to become more completely themselves and more fully alive'. That this healing can happen when one is close to death is something that

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<sup>350</sup> Ibid., p. xxii.

<sup>351</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, p. 93.

<sup>352</sup> Letter from Schubert to his father and stepmother, dated 25th or 28th of July 1825. *Schubert: Die Dokumente seines Lebens*, ed. by Deutsch, p. 300.

Schubertian scholarship has mused upon, and as it happens, such contemplations are in fact closely aligned with the reality that palliative care doctors such as Kearney face on a daily basis. Describing Schubert's final works (e.g. the C-major String Quintet, *Schwanengesang*, the last three piano sonatas, 'Der Hirt auf dem Felsen', etc.), Byrne Bodley observes that 'the final works suggest the triumph of artistic achievement over the degradation of death and disease, the permanent presence of death. Although in one sense he had entered the winter of his life – as in "Der Musensohn" – in this season spring is found.'<sup>353</sup>

In Schubert, and through Kearney's guidance, we realise that *there is a healing without curing*, a coming to terms with death that, as Thomas Mann suggested, 'something comes out in illness that is more important to life and growth than any medical guaranteed health'.<sup>354</sup> Mindfulness expert Jon Kabat-Zinn shares this perspective in his book *Full Catastrophe Living* when he writes that 'while it may not be possible to cure ourselves or to find someone who can, it is possible for us to heal ourselves'.<sup>355</sup>

## 6.7 Schubert, the Musical Chiron

In Chapter 4 of his book *Mortally Wounded: Stories of Soul Pain, Death and Healing*, Michael Kearney tells the story of the Greek half-god, half-human centaur Chiron, who, abandoned at birth, was raised and taught by Apollo. As such he was respected and wise, and became the mentor to Hercules and other heroes. When mistakenly shot in the knee by Hercules with a poisoned arrow, Chiron retreated from life and sought out all ways of treatment to heal his wound. Kearney identifies with Chiron, the 'wounded healer':

If the first half of Chiron's life had brought him success and acclaim among the kings and heroes of Greece, the next part saw him becoming a recluse, as he withdrew to his mountainside retreat to tend his wound and begin a desperate search for release from his suffering. This search was to last the rest of his life. While he could not find his own cure, he became wise in the use of all forms of healing herbs and compassionate to the suffering of others. Those who now visited him were not the rich and powerful but the blind and the lame and those in pain,

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<sup>353</sup> Byrne Bodley, 'Introduction', in *Schubert's Late Music*, ed. by Byrne Bodley and Horton, p. 9.

<sup>354</sup> Lorraine Byrne Bodley, 'Music of the Orphaned Self? Schubert and Concepts of Late Style', in *Schubert's Late Music*, ed. by Byrne Bodley and Horton, p. 334.

<sup>355</sup> Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, p. 200.

and he welcomed them and brought them comfort. They called him ‘the wounded healer’ and wondered why he could not heal himself.<sup>356</sup>

As I see it, Schubert is the musical representation of the Chiron: one who has suffered a fatal blow, and yet who manages to *find a pathway through his illness* to wisdom. This ‘wisdom’ is a musical one. What can we hope to glean from this perspective, and what, if any, is the benefit to sharing in a wisdom acquired through suffering?

## 6.9 Sharing in Schubert’s Chiron: A Pathway for Us All

As I contend that illness, healing and death are represented in Schubert’s life and music, another question must be asked. Does it matter that there are those who don’t understand Schubert’s suffering when listening to his music? The simple answer is no. We don’t need to know anything of the man or his suffering to enjoy the music. And yet there is a different path that we can take with Schubert: a new model for musicianship similar to that Asklepan model for conventional medicine that Kearney wishes we would return to and embrace. Just as in medicine, perhaps this represents a different pathway for musicology that may serve all of us in a more holistic way. I am struck by the words of Dominic Wilkinson. In his article ‘Sleep Softly: Schubert, Ethics and the Value of Dying Well’, he writes that:

Ethical discussions about medical treatment for seriously ill babies or children often focus on the ‘value of life’ or on ‘quality of life’ and what that might mean. In this paper, I look at the other side of the coin – on the value of death, and on the quality of dying. In particular, I examine whether there is such a thing as a good way to die, for an infant or an adult, and what that means for medical care. To do that, I call on philosophy and on personal experience. However, I will also make reference to art, poetry and music. That is partly because the topic of mortality has long been reflected on by artists as well as philosophers and ethicists. It is also because, as we will see, there may be some useful parallels to draw.<sup>357</sup>

Wilkinson also advocates for a ‘good death’, acknowledging, as does Kearney, that there can be a ‘bad death’. As it happens, because of the reports of a delirious Schubert on his deathbed, Wilkinson sees Schubert’s death as a bad death, as one exhibiting what Kearney would describe as ‘Soul Pain’:

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<sup>356</sup> Kearney, *Mortally Wounded*, p. 28.

<sup>357</sup> Dominic Wilkinson, ‘Sleep Softly: Schubert, Ethics and the Value of Dying Well’, *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 47.4 (2021), pp. 218–24 (p. 218), doi:10.1136/medethics-2020-106937.

I have suggested that death can be bad when it deprives us of a future that we would value, when it is painful or associated with suffering for the patient, when it occurs in a way that is contrary to the patient's wishes or values, and where it is distressing and traumatic for the patient's family. Indeed, it is perhaps because it involved all of those elements that Schubert's seemed a particularly bad death.<sup>358</sup>

Ferdinand's letter (dated 21 November) to his father after Schubert's death tells of a delirious Schubert. Schubert's words were supposedly: 'I implore you to take me to my room, not to leave me in this corner under the earth. Do I, then, deserve no place above the earth?!'<sup>359</sup>

Is Wilkinson correct? Was Schubert's a bad death? In Wilkinson's eyes, perhaps. But we also know from the same letter that Ferdinand's account of his response to his brother shows that Schubert was surrounded by love until the end. Deutsch also tells us that 'according to Spaun's testimony Schubert died painlessly: his face remained unchanged'.<sup>360</sup> Delirium or not, Schubert's edits to *Winterreise* tell of the real Schubert, who consciously, or perhaps semiconsciously, spent his final days at work. Despite my difference of opinion with Wilkinson, his use of Schubert's music ('Der Tod und das Mädchen') and Schubert's illness as a modality to explore death and illness is at the heart of what I believe is a huge opportunity for us all. It is a way to share in Schubert's Chiron, to value Schubert's music as a vehicle to explore our own suffering, our own healing and our own death. One thing is certain, we will all suffer:

Chiron's primal wounding is one that each of us shares. It represents the moment of betrayal that brings about our loss of innocence, that traumatic moment of rupture when we first discover that we live in an imperfect world. Whatever the individual circumstances, such a moment inevitably comes. The outer event, which for some is horrific and explicit, can, for others, be subtle and unseen. Invariably, it is shocking and, as the protective bubble of innocence bursts, the hurt goes straight to the core.<sup>361</sup>

Whether this suffering is sudden or something we can prepare for, Schubert can act as a pathway for us all. As Kearney suggests, acknowledging the Chiron in all of us is not just 'Soul Work' around death, it is work that can help us gain a different perspective on an imperfect world that brings with it suffering and pain. If we believe there is a maturity in Schubert's works

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid., p.222.

<sup>359</sup> Deutsch, Schubert: A Documentary Biography, p. 825.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid., p. 823.

<sup>361</sup> Kearney, *Mortally Wounded*, p. 126.



that came as a consequence of his acknowledgement of his impending death, then we might take solace from Kearney's perspective when he tells us that:

To focus on soul pain purely in terms of what we can, or cannot, do about it may mean that we fail to recognize the extraordinary role that I believe the soul itself plays in the healing process. The deep psyche is more than a passive dustbin for our unwanted thoughts, memories, and emotions. It also contains autonomous elements that are concerned with psychological wholeness, and it is my experience that this process of deep inner healing becomes accelerated in the dying [...] If the dying person even begins to attend to soul, soul responds a thousandfold.<sup>362</sup>

The 'autonomous element' in Schubert was his innate musicianship, which gifted the world with some of the most beautiful music we have. It was present throughout his life, and perhaps was accelerated, just as Kearney's experience tells us happens, towards the end of his life. What untold treasures this music can hold for each and every one of us is the subject of each and every one of us. It offers us to share in Schubert's musical Chiron, to use his suffering as a pathway to our own 'wholeness'. There we will see how our own soul responds. Kearney's decades of experience in the world of the 'wounded healer' tells us it will be 'thousandfold'. A composer whose music has given the world such beauty may offer himself as a salve to those who cannot be cured, but may be healed.

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

## Conclusion

Franz Schubert's early death from a chronic illness that was visible to others, which affected his lifestyle, and which brought him extreme physical and mental pain has rightly been a topic of intense yet diverse discussion in Schubertian scholarship. While scholarship recognises Schubert's illness, the polemic on whether the composer's music was affected by his illness continues. Broadly speaking, from my perspective, Schubertian scholars can be divided into three camps when it comes to Schubert's illness and his music. The first cohort wholly dismiss the possibility that Schubert's music may have been affected by his illness;<sup>363</sup> a second cohort seemingly leaves this possibility open, yet has not undertaken any analyses that may show *how* his illness might have penetrated his work.<sup>364</sup> A third (and in my opinion, perhaps braver) cohort of Schubertian scholars have embraced the possibility that his illness is present in his music and have undertaken analyses in this vein.<sup>365</sup>

Mindbody institutes such as the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital explore the now undeniable link between emotions, both positive and negative, and the body.<sup>366</sup> Mindbody and psychology research presented here points unequivocally to a strong connection between mood, emotions and physical health. In the research presented above, we have seen how illness is linked to emotional health, *and to physical health*. We have seen how illness changes us on a molecular level.<sup>367</sup> We must recognise that Schubert's illness found expression in his music, and not avoid it. At the very least, we cannot deny that Schubert's states of mind, influenced by his illness, found their way into his compositions.

Rather than a reductive position that might attempt to align a particular timeline in his illness with a particular movement of a symphony, or show *what* emotion is present *where*, my thesis, in keeping with the holistic nature of mindbody medicine, draws parallels from within psychology and mindbody medicine with Schubert's compositions. It demonstrates how

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<sup>363</sup> Gülke, *Franz Schubert und seine Zeit*; Newbould, *Schubert and the Symphony*; Dent, 'Fitzwilliam String Quartet'.

<sup>364</sup> Hascher, 'Narrative Dislocations'; McKay, *Franz Schubert*; Wollenberg, *Schubert's Fingerprints*.

<sup>365</sup> Black, *Franz Schubert: Music and Belief*; Pesic: *Schubert's Dream*; Byrne Bodley, *Schubert: A Musical Wayfarer*.

<sup>366</sup> Benson Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, <<https://bensonhenryinstitute.org>>. [accessed December 22 2024]

<sup>367</sup> Vitor Bonetti Valente and others, 'Stress Hormones Promote DNA Damage in Human Oral Keratinocytes', *Scientific Reports*, 11.1 (2021), p. 19701, doi:10.1038/s41598-021-99224-w.

musicology can act as a pathway to explore issues outside of music that may affect us in a negative way, highlighting how Schubert's music can alleviate suffering. It seeks to demonstrate the universality of suffering, while offering Schubert as a new lens to consider our own suffering and the suffering of others.

Aside from the ethical issues in posthumously diagnosing conditions such as cyclothymia in Schubert,<sup>368</sup> I have taken issue with Schubertian scholarship particularly around what I consider to be an unjustified interest in highlighting negative emotions such as fear and aggression in Schubert's music. This thesis is timely: issues such as loneliness, guilt, burnout and lack of compassion are topical global issues which necessitate multiple platforms in an effort to combat suffering.<sup>369</sup> Schubert's music is the product of a life surrounded by chronic illness, and represents such a platform.

This thesis has contributed to a better understanding on how to use music as a pathway to explore issues around illness and healing. Chapters on compassion, catharsis and resilience highlight the potential of Schubert's music to enhance our own wellbeing. Schubertian scholarship has always found parallels between Schubert's music and death. In my chapter on death, acceptance and end of life, I have contributed to this scholarship, demonstrating how Schubert's music can act as a lens for a difficult concept: the possibility of being healed yet not cured. Anyone who has witnessed the wonderful work of palliative care specialists and staff in hospices around the world know that this is indeed not a concept, but a reality.

In this thesis I have shown how mindbody medicine can inform musicology. Reciprocally, in contemplating issues such as resilience and end of life, I have also shown how music, particularly in the area of the health humanities, has much to offer medicine. Both music and medicine are complex subjects. While there is an interest on both sides to learn from the other, meta-studies and research tracking the efficacy of music in a medical setting show that results have been less than ideal.<sup>370</sup> Music has an indescribable ability to connect. In this thesis, I have highlighted metastudies showing that music is, as yet, a largely unexplored resource through which to consider essential issues around health and wellbeing. As a musician who knows of the power of music to transform, this concerns me. We as musicians can do better. This thesis

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<sup>368</sup> McKay, *Franz Schubert*, p. 138.

<sup>369</sup> Murthy, *Together*.

<sup>370</sup> Fancourt, 'An Introduction to the Psychoneuroimmunology of Music'.

demonstrates how music can be harnessed as a healing tool into the medical or health humanities. It is our responsibility to demonstrate the power of music, and this thesis has contributed to this scholarship. In addition, this thesis demonstrates how a new approach to composers and their stories (Schubert and his illness) may be successfully used as a pathway to explore classical music in a way that seeks to find commonalities between new audiences and the lives and music of these composers. The area of the health humanities has struggled to use music as a modality to explore topical issues within postgraduate and graduate medical training. One of the best books about the arts in the health humanities has not a single chapter of its eleven chapters dedicated to the role of music in the health humanities.<sup>371</sup> My work in this thesis, ranging from analyses based on topics such as social connection, resilience and end of life, should prove a good starting point for those interested in learning how to integrate music into the health humanities. The so-called ‘health humanities’ is distinctive from the ‘medical humanities’ in that it seeks to embrace those outside of medicine, or rather those on the periphery, such as chaplains, social workers and those who work in palliative care. I have purposefully included this cohort in my analyses.

Mindbody medicine and psychology research presented here acts as a scientifically backed method through which to embark on my analyses of Schubert. However, the research presented in my thesis may also be seen as a new resource to advance musicology. The science presented in my work makes it is no longer justifiable to deny that Schubert’s music was not affected by his illness. As we look to the future, an acceptance of this in Schubertian scholarship will open new lines of enquiry into Schubert’s music and elicit new debate. I believe that Schubert’s music should be a pathway or channel for healing. I have therefore purposefully challenged some earlier analyses and approaches that choose to focus on supposedly negative aspects of Schubert’s personality. In particular, my challenging and re-directing of MacDonald’s long established and accepted reception of Schubert’s music from the perspective of violent outbursts to a compassion-focused analysis demonstrates how Schubert’s music can be used as *a vehicle for positivity*. Choosing to explore Schubert’s use of dissonance or fortissimo dynamic as guilt rather than ‘bad temper’ or even ‘violence’ provides, as I see it, more *justice* to Schubert. It recognises, and simultaneously acknowledges, the challenges he must have gone

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<sup>371</sup> *Health Humanities*, ed. by Peterkin and Skorzevska.

through, his suffering and how his illness might have affected him negatively. To share in Schubert's music from a perspective of suffering allows for others to share in his suffering, through his music, and will serve to help alleviate our own pain.

This thesis has several limitations. The first is the obvious fact that all these analyses are inductive. The linking of such passages to topical issues may seem for some a step too far, a 'grasping for connection' between Schubert's music and the topic at hand, resilience and compassion for example. Yes, Schubert was ill, and yes, mindbody medicine overwhelmingly shows that illness and negative emotions attached to illness such as depression do change us on a molecular level, at the very core of our being. However, one could question my connection between this molecular change in Schubert and its influence (if any) on his compositions. Put another way, would Schubert's illness *have to have affected his compositions*? If these works are cathartic (as I have stated they are), then might Schubert's works be seen as a way to bypass his illness, an escapism that allowed him complete freedom of expression, without any referral to his illness?

The inductive nature of this work is undertaken with a full (or as much as is possible) recognition that this is so. Schubert did not contemplate the subject of resilience and choose to express it in his music, no more than he chose to use dissonance to express guilt. That said, Schubert *was* ill, and he *did* write about his illness. Though syphilis was hugely prevalent, it was certainly not socially accepted and was mostly hidden from others. One can only imagine how difficult such a lifestyle was. Also, if Schubert was gay he would have felt a lonely sense of not belonging, having to hide his true self. If we have learned anything from mindbody medicine, it is that this makes us sick. And so while my work is inductive, *there is a truth in Schubert's life that is an essential and justifiable content of these analyses*. Hugh MacDonald's analysis of a dark side of Schubert is flawed for the same reason that Michael Spitzer's is: there is no more evidence of Schubert being a violent person (MacDonald) than there is of him being a fearful one (Spitzer). There *is*, however, evidence of him being ill. There *is* evidence of him contemplating his death, and there *is* research that shows a link between illness and emotions. Thinking again from a more holistic or broader standpoint, why would we *not* use Schubert as a lens through which to view illness and healing? Knowing that music is such a powerful tool for expression, to deny the comfort that a new reading of *Winterreise* might give to a person in hospice care, or to deny someone suffering from depression brought about by guilt the

possibility to heal through Schubert's music, represents a much greater disservice to the composer than can ever be leveraged against such analyses. The perspective required of the reader here is a broad one, but it is in line with the general nature of this thesis. A myopic view will not serve the reader well, and I respect that there are those that will adopt such a mindset, just as there are those who feel that mindbody medicine is not scientific 'enough' or those that choose to see the health humanities as 'fluff'. 'Illness' and 'healing' in this thesis are treated in a holistic, broad way and such a reading requires the reader to be open to the analysis.

Throughout this thesis, Hans-Georg Gadamer provides a foundation that has motivated me to continue in this vein. Gadamer explains that when a spectator attends a festival or event:

[...] it must be presented for the spectator, and yet its being is by no means just the point of intersection of the spectators' experiences. Rather the contrary is true: the being of the spectator is determined by his 'being there present'. Being present does not simply mean being there along with something else that is there at the same time. To be present means to participate.<sup>372</sup>

If the reader is willing to 'participate' in these analyses, there is the possibility for understanding to take place. In any case, from my own extensive experience witnessing the healing effects of music on patients receiving chemotherapy, *any such opposition might do well to think of those to whom it may offer help and support*. This cohort also includes those suffering with chronic illness, those suffering from guilt, and those, whom like Schubert, are forced to accept their own death much too early. It has been my experience working in this setting for over fifteen years that at a time when people are most vulnerable, they are also most open.

This research is a musicological analysis. It draws on psychology and mindbody medicine, but there is a broader application, both in and outside musicology. Future research in this area might leverage other composers and their life issues as a source to help others. Bela Bartók went into remission from cancer when he received the commission for his 'Concerto for Orchestra' from Koussevitsky. What might be taken from his music to help those with cancer? Schumann's struggle with depression and the two sides of his personality (Florestan and Eusebius) make for fertile ground to explore depression or mental illness. How might Beethoven's late music be used as a pathway to comfort those going deaf, or his Heiligenstadt Testament be utilised as a lens to explore resilience?

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<sup>372</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 124.

Musicology has a role to play in the health humanities and yet this is currently hugely underserved and underresearched. Cross-disciplinary networks between musicians and healthcare professionals who see the intrinsic value of the arts in medical education, in areas such as self-compassion and self-leadership, etc., might take inspiration from the work presented here. Former director of the National Institutes for Health in the United States Dr Francis Collins, in the foreword of *Music and Mind*, a book written in partnership with soprano Renée Fleming, advocates for such work, adding that ‘a challenge for this still young field is to contemplate where our joint efforts should be directed in the next five to ten years’.<sup>373</sup> Such cross-disciplinary or interdisciplinary groups could act as a think tank on how to resource music as a means to inform and help others. Such work can also happen *away from the score*, or musical notes, and take a more practical approach. Musicians must listen, and train to listen. The same is true of doctors. Musicians perform, and in many ways, doctors must *also* perform.<sup>374</sup> There are valuable lessons to be learned from interdisciplinary conversation. Centres such as Sound Health Network at the University of California, San Francisco, have begun such work.<sup>375</sup> Future musicians and musicologists working alongside psychologists or healthcare professionals might research *what* music is best for *which* setting, also incorporating composers who themselves have suffered, and possibly sharing in these composers’ stories, as well as their music, in an effort to help... and heal.

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<sup>373</sup> *Music and Mind: Harnessing the Arts for Health and Wellness*, ed. by Renée Fleming (Viking, 2024), p. xvi.

<sup>374</sup> For a unique and valuable insight into doctors as performers read: Michael O’Donnell, ‘Doctors as Performance Artists’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 98.7 (2005), pp. 323–24, doi:10.1177/014107680509800712.

<sup>375</sup> Sound Health Network, ‘Sound Health Network’ <<https://soundhealth.ucsf.edu>>. [accessed December 27 2024]

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