

FRANZ SCHUBERT AND THE MUSICAL ROMANTICISM

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SUMMARY. The role of music in Romanticism became crucial precisely due to the mysterious and inexplicable effect it had over the human being. This era was one of the richest and most prolific ones in the entire history of music. Most musicians of that age possessed a vast cultural background, often being poets, composers and performers at the same time. Composer Franz Schubert reunites his art the subtle text interpretation with the melodic, purely musical ideal of shaping melody. By way of the lyrical tone of his melodies, he is considered to be one of the most talented composers of the 19th century. Although he died at a very young age, he left behind a great artistic legacy.

Keywords: Romanticism, conveyance of emotions, musical freedom, rich style, Franz Schubert

1. The Origins of Romantic Music

The 19th century was the period of reforms, revolutions and great societal changes, in which a new artistic movement – romanticism – was born. The political and economic advancement of the bourgeoisie realizes – while philosophy, literature and art will later add value to this movement in their works – the democratic thought of the forerunners of the bourgeois ideas, the philosophers of the Enlightenment. The new movement first appeared in literature, later gaining more and more ground in music, visual arts and architecture.

Moreover, as many as diverse and often opposing aspirations and tendencies, they all agree that novelty should replace the old everywhere and in every respect. This newness is longed for, desired, demanded by the man of the period, not unlike Beethoven's Florestan desires to free himself from jail. Innovation springs from the fields of science, arts, technology, industry, transportation alike. The world suddenly gets smaller and larger at the same time. The inquisitive, exploratory man extracts one secret after another from the hands of nature. *“If the motto of science is to reveal the undiscoverable,*

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*then arts will have as their goal the expression of the inexpressible. The ships of romantic art want to “sail to new, virgin waters”. Berlioz’s favourite word: “immeasurable” - is most revealing when discussing this period.*²

Romanticism has juxtaposed extreme human passions and emotions in the same manner as everyday life has done, symbolically relating the inspiring examples of the heroic past to the present. The romantic soul is in a constant quest, wandering, trying to express its experiences in the most obvious, free, sincere manner with heightened emotion. This is the reason why it is so discursive, imaginative, and now desperately tragic, now wanting to conquer the world, now amazed by the smallest wonders of nature.³

In the initial segment of the movement, romanticism could hardly be distinguished from classicism, the appearance of the two movements happening almost simultaneously, at the end of the 18th century. The notion of romanticism as such came from the French word *roman* (meaning “novel”) and the English *romantic* (“novelistic”).

In fact, romanticism is not a style, in the spirit of the great styles of the feudal period, such as Gothic, Renaissance or Baroque, but more of an artistic method developed as the result of a spiritual trend, an aesthetic ambition, a state of mind, for it employed the most diverse European trends and styles in its artworks.⁴

In spite of this fact, we cannot enlist it either as an element of historicism or eclecticism, for it gave new meaning and new context to the parts that it adopted, thus arriving at a uniquely defined mode of expression that cannot be mistaken for anything else. The socially formative activity of the arts – which has never been such a conscious endeavour before – brought forth cooperation within the art forms. All of them – literature, visual arts, and music – will symbiotically feed off each other.

Another important trait of romanticism lies in the fact that music takes the leading role in artistic expressions. The romantic musician, both as a person and in light of his worldview – with only a few exceptions – is inseparable from the politics of the era.

The early romantics (C. M. von Weber, F. Schubert, H. Berlioz, F. Chopin, R. Schumann) initially turn to their peoples, to their own national language only by way of their music, thus following in the footsteps of the classics. Their national character dwells in their own musical language with a sort of spontaneous naturalism.

² Tóth, Dénes, *Hangversenykalauz (Guide to the Concert Music) I-II*, Budapest, Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, 1959, p. 215.

³ Pécsi, Géza, *Kulcs a muzsikához (Key to the Music)*, Kulcs a muzsikához kiadó, Pécs, 2003, p. 87.

⁴ Stanley, John, *A klasszikus zene, Mesterek és mesterművek a kezdetektől napjainkig (The Classical Music, Great Composers and their Masterworks)*, Kossuth kiadó, Budapest, 2006, p. 123.

“In the countries where the national and social antagonism are at their height within this period (in Russia, followed by Hungary, Poland, Bohemia), music’s national romantics play the roles of “musician-Luthers”,⁵ with music’s renewed message they also deliver a new kind of language to their people.”

New styles emerged, such as subjectivism, nostalgia toward the past, the miracle of love, tragic elements, and fabulousness, love of nature, reawakening and nurturing national traditions. The independence of the composer carries with it the feelings of insecurity, vulnerability, which are transposed into art. Originality and not banality becomes the core principle. *“Bringing the wealth of experience to the surface and not levelling it into gleaned communities: the artistic magic emerges out of this particular pursuit”.⁶* Thus, romantic forms are developed, which have the Ego at their core, the human personality that has escaped from under all other restraints.

According to Balzac, music is numerous times more magical than words, *“that enchants the listener. A title, a reference, a short program is enough for the man living in that age to be jolted out from the small world of his everyday life, and obviously abandon himself to the magical powers of music”.⁷*

Romanticism liberates composers from the strict laws and rigid rules of classicism. It makes way for creative imagination. Composers enrich music by bold colour and sound effects, thus enforcing their own creative personalities. The melting together of different art forms, like the picturesque qualities of Chopin’s music, the musical traits of Delacroix’s paintings, are symptoms of the period, which make way to another important trait of romanticism: where everyone is innovative, trying their talents, experimenting, orating within many art forms. Romanticism appeared in many different forms during its development, emphasizing various facets of the movement. Music history speaks about three distinct periods within romanticism: *Early Romanticism*, *Middle Romanticism* and *Late Romanticism*. The Early period coincides with the age of the Viennese Classicism, for the traits of Romantic music were already distinguishable in Beethoven’s music.

Beethoven was the herald of Romanticism in music⁸, being the one who first made traditional genres suitable for the expression of deep and intense emotions. He slackened the traditional form of musical works, changed the traditional succession of movements, introduced the human voice into the orchestral sound effect and done all this in order to enrich the poetic content of the works. Composers such as Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Frederick Chopin, Franz Liszt, Richard Wagner, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Bedřich Smetana and many others will develop their craft in the period of Romanticism.

⁵ Tóth, Dénes, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

⁶ Molnár, Antal, *Népszerű zeneesztétika (Popular Musical Aesthetics)*, Széchenyi Irodalmi és Művészeti Részvénytársaság Kiadása, Budapest, 1940, p. 117.

⁷ Pécsi, Géza, *Kulcs a muzsikához*, Kulcs a muzsikához kiadó, Pécs, 2003, p. 91.

⁸ Stanley, John, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

Along with the popularization of music, piano became a solo instrument within this age. In addition, the effective and self-serving creation of special timbres and sound effects of the modern orchestra will also take place, especially starting with the works of Weber and Berlioz, as well as the pursuit of orchestral effects within the literature of concert and chamber music.⁹

We consider this period to be decisive in the development of piano music, for actually the instrument will reach the height of its popularity in the 19th century. In accordance with this fact, the piano literature will also be enriched and diversified, for the instrument is most appropriate for solo performance and the distinct expressivity relevant for the period of Romanticism. A new genre will emerge in Early Romanticism, the *short lyric piano piece*, the lied's pair. While Classicism strived towards balancing out the opposites, the emotional impulses of Romanticism consciously seek the extremes, both in the forms of dramatic excitement and lyrical calmness. Both push the boundaries of the Classical forms.¹⁰ Beside the popular four-hand piano pieces played in the salons and at home, a rich concert life and a new type of virtuosity developed.

A division was created within the field of musical performance, for the shorter, more modest pieces were performed in front of a select audience within the intimate setting of the salons, whereas the orchestral apparatus slowly developed to such magnitude that allowed it to restore the rich Romantic sonority of the already developed symphony.¹¹

E. T. A. Hoffmann depicted marvellously musical Romanticism in his *Musical Writings*:

"[Music]... is the most romantic of all arts, for its spirit pervades the entire nature. It is not a mere image, nor a plain allegory, if the musician feels that colours, scents and rays all appear in the form of sounds. The sole object of art is coincidence. The mission of opera is to make visible the manner in which higher powers affect us, thus revealing the Romantic essence, where language also inhabits a higher plain, and as the herald of that realm, it is transposed into music, into song. The situations and actions depicted on stage grab hold of us as they hover in the shroud of enchanting sounds. Thus, opera music must directly and necessarily be born out of poetry, as the magical power of poetic truth must be at the poet's disposal, to the poet who asserts and illustrates the miracle. The only true opera is the Romantic opera, because music is truly at home only within the realm of Romanticism... Mozart was already a pioneer and became the unparalleled creator of the Romantic lied, whereas Beethoven's music awakens the endless

⁹ Molnár, Antal, *A zeneművészet könyve (The Art of Music)*, Dante kiadó, Budapest, 1923, p. 121.

¹⁰ Michels, Ulrich, *SH atlasz- Zene-(SH Musical Atlas)*, Springer Hungarica Kiadó, Budapest, 1994, p. 437.

¹¹ Stanley, John, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

longing that is the essence of all Romanticism".¹² In his writings on Beethoven, Hoffmann goes further in stating, that: "[Music] is the most romantic of all arts, one might almost say the only one that is genuinely romantic".¹³

Alfred Einstein, one of the most important musicologists of the 20th century (the brother of the famous physicist), emphasizes in his work *Die Romantik in der Musik* that besides literature and visual arts, the Romantic style of the 19th century reaches its culmination in music, and it is this art form that is governed by Romanticism for the longest period.¹⁴ The history of European Romanticism, he writes, is almost synonymous with the history of Romantic music.

Johannes Brahms, Anton Bruckner further develop the sonata, in order to better mould it to their own grand conceptions, while Franz Liszt creates a new genre – the symphonic poem – to describe his own single movement works, in which the content of a poem, a story or novel, or mythology is illustrated or evoked. The basic element of construction - the word, text – melts and gets sublimated into music. Liszt writes: "*Poetry and music engage in a much more intimate connection in the symphonic poem than in the lied, oratorio or opera*".¹⁵ The title of Mendelssohn's lied cycle is almost symbolic: "*Lieder ohne Worte*" (*Songs without Words*). The typical genre of the movement is the *symphonic poem*. The *Etude*, *Prélude*, and *Impromptu* became popular genres as well. Chopin has adopted earlier the possibility of writing shorter, more intimate pieces. This is also the period when the *Romantic Lied*, *Program music* and *Romantic opera* were born. The *waltz*, *polonaise*, *mazurka*, *etude*, *impromptu* all depict a particular mood. These genres¹⁶ prove to be suitable to illustrate novelistic, adventurous, exciting stories, extraordinary events in music.

They bring exotic realms, the life of the people, glorious historical events alive with their music, also bringing homage to remarkable personalities, heroes.

¹² Szabolcsi, Bence, *Régi muzsika kertje (The Garden of Ancient Music)*, Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1957, p. 99.

¹³ Tóth, Dénes, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *Symphonic poem*: an orchestral form in which a poem or programme provides a narrative or illustrative basis; *Etude*: the French equivalent of 'Study', widely adopted for fairly short pieces whose principal aim is the development or exploitation of a particular aspect of performing technique, such as Chopin's *Etudes* op.25. The term *étude* was also used as a title by some 20th-century composers, usually to indicate a piece exploring a specific aspect of the composer's craft; *Prelude*: in its original usage, indicated a piece that preceded other music whose mode or key it was designed to introduce, In the 19th century, however, these were short pieces exploring particular moods, musical figures or technical problems; *Impromptu*: a composition for solo instrument, usually the piano, the nature of which may occasionally suggest improvisation. Liszt and Schubert were among the composers who excelled in the creation of works within this particular genre.

The Austrian composer Franz Schubert is most often described as the “Classical Romantic composer”, since his art is the conscious continuation of Mozart and Beethoven’s works, and his message is conveyed within Classical forms. What makes him a Romantic is the constant feeling of wandering, which is beyond his need toward a certain type of sonority, beyond the almost physical desire of a beautiful sound, together with his love for landscapes, and nostalgia over his remote home, along with the painful solitude of a person who has been excluded from a community. These traits depict the boundaries of Schubert’s art; still, the intensity of his music, its emotional richness, powerful expressivity and mood-setting magic is unparalleled. He feels generally more at ease in the boundless realm of reverie than the strict field of formal structures, but his dreams reveal the completeness of an entire world for his audience, at times foreshadowing infinity. He was not acknowledged as a great composer during his lifetime; still, more than 100 of his works were published by the time of his death at 31. He is considered the master of Viennese Classicism, and the first Romantic composer.

2. Franz Schubert’s Life and Work

Austrian composer Franz Schubert was one of the greatest composers and the creator of the Lied (song), a new musical genre of Romanticism. His work – with the exception of his songs – was created always having the mastery level of Beethoven’s legacy in mind. Schubert was the modest contemporary of Beethoven, who was his highly esteemed master and role model. He could not achieve what Beethoven had – to find patrons, an audience and a publisher for his works. His entire life’s work became famous only after his death, not being able to hear public performances of most of his works. The new genres created by Beethoven – the concert-sonata, concert-quartet – were not adopted and further developed by Schubert, for the vast majority of his works were performed only within the private walls, in the intimate setting of the salons. Schubert’s chamber music lacks the exciting lights of the podium in the same manner it lacks the pathos and spectacular virtuosity for the benefit of the audience. His symphonies, piano works, chamber music and masses are remarkable, for they preserve the principles of the Classical structure; still, their brooding and yearning poetry is heralding the new spirit of Romanticism.¹⁷

“Its magic lies in the occasional harmonic change, the occasional melodic turn touches the listener in their most intimate moments, its voice is forever passionate, always speaking from a 1st person singular; it speaks with chaste simplicity about a small world, not knowing that in the meanwhile it besieges the heavens, knocking on the doors of infinity.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Szabolcsi, Bence, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

¹⁸ <http://www.zeneforum.hu/hangversenyreszlet.asp>, 03.04.2008.

2.1. Schubert's Childhood and Education

He was born in the outskirts of Vienna, in Lichtenthal, on January 31, 1797, as the twelfth child of a teacher father and a domestic mother. His father, Franz Theodor, was the son of a Moravian farmer. He was a tutor and amateur musician. His mother, Elizabeth Vietz, worked as a cook for a Viennese family before getting married.

Music was present in the everyday life of the Schubert family. Franz started learning music regularly from his father from the age of five, showing his musical talents from a very young age. His father had a crucial role in the later development of these talents. Because of his culture and his musical education he was able to become Franz' first teacher. His father was the one who first taught him the basics of violin playing, while his brother Ignaz gave him piano lessons. Schubert also played the viola, and started composing in his childhood. He also played the viola in the family string quartet, with brothers Ferdinand and Ignaz on violin and his father on the cello. These musical events lent a certain intimate character to family celebrations. When his father felt he had nothing else to teach his young son, Franz began receiving lessons from Michael Holzer, the local church organist and choirmaster. He started his actual musical training with Holzer, learning how to play the organ, how to sing and play the violin, but also harmony, becoming the lead singer of the church choir by the tender age of 10.

Everything he had previously learnt from his father, brother and Holzer came to be very useful in Stadtkonvikt (Imperial seminary).

The seminary was run by Antonio Salieri, and was the leading Viennese music school. At the Stadtkonvikt – where other students also lived – music was a crucial part of their lives, for they saw music as one of the most important subject of the institution. The Moravian Wenzel Ruzicka, imperial organist and viola player, taught them to play the violin and the piano. However, Schubert soon came to Antonio Salieri's attention who took him in his class after Ruzicka saying the following statement about Schubert: "*I have nothing else to teach this boy, for his teacher is the Lord*".¹⁹

His musical studies occupied almost a quarter of his overall study time. The school orchestra rehearsed every day, playing mostly contemporary music, by composers: W. A. Mozart, J. Haydn, L. van Beethoven. Schubert adored the works of the great masters, and soon became Ruzicka's substitute. "*The simplicity manifested in Haydn's slow movements became dear to his heart, and in Mozart's G minor symphony he heard "angels singing"*".²⁰ Of

¹⁹ Petzold, Richard, *Sein Leben in Bildern, Franz Schubert élete képekben (Franz Schubert's Life in Pictures)*, Zeneműkiadó V., Budapest, 1955, p. 11.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

Beethoven's symphonies, he loved Symphony no. 2 and 4 the most. He listened to Beethoven's 5th symphony, and it soon became his favourite. He had never heard a symphonic orchestra prior to his arrival to the seminary, we can thus imagine the great impact the fact that he had been asked to bring his violin and to sit in the orchestra as the second chair had on him.²¹

He studied here until the age of 17, and later in life the orchestra rehearsals he attended and the talented artists he befriended here proved to be more useful than the actual school subjects were. The friendships that Schubert forged already in the seminary would accompany him throughout his entire life. He became friends here with Joseph von Spaun, clarinetist Anton Stadler and Holzappel and many others, who all helped him financially as much as they could, buying him music sheets for him to write on, supporting and encouraging him. It was also at the school where he was acquainted with Mozart's symphonies, overtures and smaller pieces, and where he started to build his musical knowledge.

He was very focused on the private composition lessons Salieri gave him, for Salieri helped Schubert more than any of his other teachers did. Since Salieri was one of the composers who first introduced the timbre of the biedermeier period into the Viennese Church music, it comes as no surprise that Schubert's early sacred works relate to his teacher's church works. Similarly, Salieri's melodies written in many different languages were mirrored in Schubert's early lied compositions. Salieri was very content with his pupil: "*He knows everything that can be known about music*", he said.²²

Schubert composed his first work at age 13. This G major fantasy is a fourhanded piano piece that is more than 30 pages long. He composed his first quartet (C major) in 1812.

Franz left the Stadtkonvikt in 1813, however, since in those days one could not make a living based on his compositions, especially not without a patron, he followed his father's footsteps and enrolled in Normalhauptschule, to train as a teacher. He finished the 10-month training for the assistant teacher position, therefore, at age 17 he already taught at his father's school. Although he left, he still kept in touch with the musical life of the seminary. They allowed him to try out his newest compositions on the seminary's orchestra, while maintaining a very close friendship with Ruzicka, the same one who later defended Schubert when his pupils attacked him for his dissonance within the *Erlkönig*. According to Ruzicka they "*went well with the lyrics of the poem*".²³

²¹ McKay, Elizabeth Norman, *Franz Schubert: Biography*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, p. 3.

²² <http://www.karpatinfo.net/article37566.html>, 04.05.2008.

²³ Petzold, Richard, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Schubert was forced to take his compositions into the seminary, for he had no piano at home. For him, a person who was committed to music, the schoolwork he had to do was almost like torture. On the one hand this happened, because his pay was very modest, on the other hand, how could have an assistant teacher be content with this situation, when his head was filled with harmonies and melodies that demanded to be put into coherent form, while being surrounded by hoards of children? – states Richard Petzold.

His pedagogical work and composing could not have been raised to the same level. He sought a way out through composing. In spite of everything, he possessed good teaching qualities, for even his teacher colleagues stated that Schubert employed his pedagogical skills self-consciously and achieved notable results.

While his teaching years flew, lied music was relentlessly pouring out of his every fibre. He was most inspired by the works of J.W. von Goethe, F. Schiller, F.G. Klopstock, L.Ch.H. Hölty, M. Claudius, T. Körner and others. Some days were especially fruitful, hence “*on February 2, 1816 no less than five songs were written, on August 15 and 19 of the same year eight each, on July 25, 1816 he composed six songs and four pieces for choir. His first breakthrough happened on October 19, 1814 with Gretchen am Spinrade. 1815 can be called the year of the lied, for alongside other types of compositions, he wrote 150 lieder*”.²⁴ Others recognized Schubert’s genius within his lied compositions. He discovered Goethe’s *Faust* in 1814, which inspired his first masterpiece, *Gretchen am Spinrade*. *Erkönig* followed in the next year, which depicts an ill child, who has a fever and sees the king of terror before he dies. The sensibility awakened in Schubert thanks to Goethe’s works made him want to be acquainted with the works of all the great poets, from whom he later drew inspiration. “*The melody and the tempo, the transposition, as well as his feel with regards to the interaction between singer and pianist, the mastery of timing and variation of accents lend a newfound power to the Lied. Schubert has not written one single Lied, said Brahms, from which one could not learn something*”.²⁵

2.2. Schubertiaden

His best friends supported him genuinely, which helped the young composer immensely. First of all, Count Franz von Schober, who himself was an important poet of the time (1796-1882), who had first heard Schubert’s songs at Spaun,²⁶ visited the composer and offered to take him out of the

²⁴ Petzold, Richard, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

²⁵ Stanley, John, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

²⁶ Joseph von Spaun, was an Austrian nobleman, an Imperial and Royal Councillor, best known for his friendship with the composer Franz Schubert. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_von_Spaun

school and give him the freedom he desperately needed to continue his work in peace. The offer came at the right time, for Schubert did not succeed in getting a choir master job in that period in Laibachba and experienced further frustration in his teaching job. He even got the blessing of his father, therefore, by the end of spring he moved into one of Schober's townhouses. He tried to contribute to the expenses by giving music lessons, but he soon gave it up, spending all of his time composing. Franz von Schober was a sort of friend who understood Schubert better than anybody did, for he knew his fragile, sensitive inner world and could even express these traits so much so, that he became Schubert's lyricist for one of his most popular songs: *An die Musik*. Schubert considered Schober his true friend, and as circumstances would have it, he lived in Schober's house for long periods, years even, when Schober was in or near Vienna. "*I shall never forget, for what you have meant for me no one else could mean, alas!*",²⁷ wrote Schubert in a letter addressed to Schober. The last letter written by Schubert was sent to his friend Schober. His atypical poem, *On the Lake Bank*, defined their later friendship, and many Schubert songs were created to accompany Schober's deeply meaningful, richly intellectual poems.

In this period that the so-called "*Schubertiaden*" were started within Schubert's close-knit circle of friends made up of artists and students. Schnorr, Rieder, and especially painters Moritz von Schwind and Leopold Kupelwieser became Schubert's friends at these social gatherings; and thanks to them and their works, we today have plenty of information regarding that era and particularly on the life of the composer. The painter Kupelwieser also was close to Schubert's heart. Besides immortalizing church paintings, he was the one who depicted Schubert's circle of friends and the *Schubertiaden* within his paintings. Schubert's entourage became even larger: with Anselm and Joseph Hüttenbrenner (who considered themselves his most fervent admirers), Joseph von Gahy (the remarkable pianist, who performed the composer's sonatas and fantasies), as well as members of the Sonnleithner family, who all joined the *Schubertiaden*. Leopold von Sonnleithner, the son of a lawyer, who achieved fame not only because of his chosen profession, but also for the concerts held in his salon, gathered all Schubert's writings and offered them to the Society of Music Lovers.

His friends supported him financial, since Schubert had virtually no money, for he gave up his teaching position, he could not earn money from public representations and the publishers not yet paid him for his works. Together with his friends, he named these spiritually refreshing nightly gatherings *Schubertiaden*, where everybody wanted to please him, and in the centre of which was the taciturn Schubert. He hardly ever spoke, but listened

²⁷ Petzold, Richard, *op. cit.*, p.18.

very carefully to his friends, and it was his nod and approving smile that was immensely appreciated by all those who frequented these gatherings.²⁸ Only the last few years of his miserable life were a bit happier, when surrounded by his friends – writers, poets, painters, musicians – he could present and perform his works and could spend time among those closest to him and engage in readings, playing music, and having literary arguments with each other. *“The members of the groups lived in each other’s houses; they wore the same hats, and used the same pouches, according to the old bohemian rule.”*²⁹ Their lives were centred on the nightly gatherings, however, then often made trips to the outdoors of Vienna’s outskirts, where they danced to Schubert’s improvised waltzes.

He had a frail spirit, and his faintheartedness and lack of self-confidence played a role in him not being able to popularize his works more. *“He had a problem with his appearance, was always struggling with his complex about being short, and perhaps the sad tone of his songs reveals his inner tensions. We have knowledge only about the misfortunes of his love life, whereas he depicts the sublime feeling of love in his songs, however, we do not have any reliable sources that would indicate he ever had a long-lasting relationship.”*³⁰

Although he had influential friends, who were in contact with people of higher social status, Schubert was not given the opportunity to get ahead; hence, virtually no one noticed his talents as a composer. He looked up Goethe twice, but he did not even want to meet with him, he also did not have a chance to meet Beethoven.

When his life finally started to go on the right track, he became ill with typhoid fever and after eight days of suffering serious deliriums, he finally died on November 19, 1828, at age 31.

2.3 Works

Schubert composed in almost every genre known by that time. In 1874, Gustav Nottebohm, the leading researcher into Classical German music published a thematic catalogue of his works, including all the Schubert compositions available to him. Under 278 item numbers, he listed 900 works. A significant research process followed, to which Johannes Brahms and Eusebius Mandyczewski contributed among others, resulting in publishing Schubert’s entire life’s work in 40 volumes. This edition had 950 items, 1300 separate pieces, the opus number surpassing 1515, according to the latest researches.³¹

²⁸ Székely, Júlia, *Schubertiáda (Schubertiaden)*, Magvető Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1968, p. 81.

²⁹ Szabolcsi, Bence, *A zene története*, Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, Budapest, 1958, p. 296.

³⁰ Gibbs, Christopher Howard, *The Life of Schubert*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 5.

³¹ Petzold, Richard, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

Perhaps the fact that he received his education in a traditional choir school accounts for the reason why Schubert's talent – in contrast with that of Mozart and Beethoven, but similar to that of Haydn – strived not toward the glory of the performing artist, but focused exclusively on composing. We could not pinpoint the exact time when he started composing; suffice to say that by the age of 13-14, in the years 1810-1811, he had already been passionately composing many pieces. During his childhood and teenage years, he wrote in the lengthiest genres. By age 21, he had already written six symphonies, while the number of his early quartets reaches almost three times the number of symphonies. His instrumental works were not written to stay in a drawer; they were performed within the intimate setting of family and friends. By age 20, he had also composed eight musical pieces for stage performance – leaving most of them unfinished perhaps because he knew he had little chance for his works to be ever played on stage. In 1815, he makes his first attempt in writing piano sonatas, while in 1817 he composes 7 pieces in this genre.

“The genius boy works in a genuine old worldly tempo and lightness within the great genres made special by his forerunners; the masses and other instrumental works testify to the fact that he is a wonderfully, harmonically gifted descendant, to whom the gods awarded a sense of musical beauty that could only be compared to that of Mozart’s.”³²

In only 31 years, he had composed more than other composers do in their entire lifetimes. The uniqueness of Schubert's art lies in the fact that he did not compose to an anonymous crowd, not to total strangers, but to his own friends, with whom he met on a regular basis during those social gatherings, and spent time with them reading, playing music, dancing, making trips and enjoying each other's company during the *Schubertiaden*. His works require the highest degree of technical knowledge and sound culture.

He wrote music in every genre and form, enchanting his audience with a wide array of album pages, divertissements, fantasies, fugues, moments musicaux, impromptus, variations, dances, marches. Schubert's resourcefulness is matched only by his knowledge of composition. *“Due to your charming humour, people tend almost to lose sight of the greatness of your knowledge”*,³³ said Liszt about Schubert.

Schubert was the one who best knew how to convey a certain mood, or a feeling in the most expressive manner within a short interval of time. Naturally, all composers are able to set a certain mood with the help of their music, however, most of them need a larger form to do so. Schubert is considered to be the creator of the Romantic song (lied).

³² Tallián, Tibor, *Aki elveszti életét, megtalálja azt - 200 éve született Franz Schubert (The One Who Loses his Life Will Find it – 200 Year Anniversary of Franz Schubert's Birth)*- article, in: *Muzsika* 1997. November issue, No. 11, p. 3.

³³ Michels, Ulrich, *op. cit.*, p. 437.

When interpreting Schubert's lied, the role of the piano is just as important as that of the singing voice.³⁴ Schubert made the piano accompaniment to also serve the musical expression, thus completing the portrayal of Romantic music first in the *Gretchen am Spinrade* in 1814. The publisher later released seven songs based on the lyrics of Rellstab and six on Heine (D 957), in 1828.³⁵

Among more than 600 songs two song cycles also exist, *Die Schöne Müllerin* composed in 1823 and *Winterreise* created in 1827. When he composed the second cycle, he had already been very ill; still, he worked fervently to give life to the songs inspired by Wilhelm Müller's poems.

3. Schubert's Church Works

Schubert's choir works are also very important, such as the *Mirjam's Siegesgesang*, ("*Miriam's Song of Victory*") and *Gesang der Geister über den Wassern*, ("*The Song of the Spirit over the Waters*") cantatas, but also many works written for a men's choir - *Die nacht*, *Ruhe*, *Schönstes Glück*, *Grab und Mond*, remain landmark Romantic compositions.³⁶

One of the most valuable pieces is his *Ave Maria*, sung with great joy until this day. It was first sung by his friend J.M. Vogl³⁷ in Gmunden, in the summer of 1825 in front of a large crowd.

Schubert composed this piece in 1825, which was inspired by a Walter Scott creation – the female character in the *The Lady of the Lake*, Ellen sings this song supposedly with a harp accompaniment.³⁸ Schubert imitates the voice of the harp in the gently waving sextolet-motion of the accompaniment, above which the gentle captivating melody freely flows.

Ave Maria

According to the audience's testimonial, this song captures the entire crowd. As the composer himself states: "*My audience was amazed by my piety [...], demonstrated by my hymn to the Sacred Virgin. The song visibly spread the same piety within those listening. I think the reason behind this is the fact that I have never forced myself to feel piety, and unless this feeling comes over me against my own will, I would never compose such hymns or prayers; but if it does, then it is usually true and sincere piety*".³⁹ Schubert is firstly lyrical in his masses too. The songs come from the soul of a believer, from a warm heart and are woven together with the text of the

³⁴ <http://www.papiruszportal.hu/site/?lang=1&f=&p=9&n=983>, Lehotka Ildikó, 24.09.2006.

³⁵ Michels, Ulrich, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

³⁶ Molnár, Antal, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

³⁷ Johann Michael Vogl, Austrian singer, Schubert's friend.

³⁸ <http://www.daisyfield.com/music/guitar/about/AveMaria.htm>

³⁹ Tóth, Sándor, *Schubert Mária himnusza (Schubert's Mary Hymn)*, in: *Új ember (New Man – Catholic Weekly)*, issue 37, 2004.09.12, p. 7.

mass. As the son of a provincial tutor and graduate of the Stadtkonviktus, he was close to sacred music, since he knew the texts and lyrics so much so, that he considered it is not necessary to immerse himself deeper in the subject. Therefore, in contrast with Beethoven, who contemplatively immersed himself in the depths of the matter, for Schubert the lyrics of the mass remained only song lyrics, especially in his early masses. Song lyrics, with which he sang praise to his God, as he sang the endless beauty of nature, richness of feelings, wondrous depths of love in numerous other songs. Only his later masses rose – by way of his seamless technique in the use of lyrics – to the dramatics of the passion-tales.⁴⁰

3.1. Masses

Four out of his seven masses were composed between 1814 and 1818. Schubert's modesty was satisfied with having Vienna's provincial churches – his natal Lichtenthal also – perform his masses. The most significant of these four is the G major Mass. Also important are the A-flat major and E-flat major Masses. The two latter works will be greatly appreciated and popularized by none other than Johannes Brahms. I will next try to describe and analyse the creation of these two masses.

3.1.1. Mass A-flat major

Schubert started composing this work in November 1819, as the date on the original manuscript shows. He mentions the Mass in a letter written in December 1822: *"My mass is done, and will be performed soon; I still intend to dedicate it to the Emperor or Empress, for I believe it to be a remarkable piece."*⁴¹ He of course further improved the work for the aforementioned performance, however, he have no proof that particular concert actually happened. 35 years after the death of the composer, this masterpiece was first performed in Vienna on March 3, 1863, based on the original manuscript.

He applied for the assistant choirmaster's position in 1826 with this piece. He took the manuscript to the first imperial choirmaster personally, as the composer himself writes: *"I took one of my masses to the imperial choirmaster Eybler not long ago, to be performed at the court's chapel. After introducing myself, he said he had never heard any of my works. Although I do not consider myself a conceited person, I still would have assumed that the choirmaster of the Viennese Court must have heard one of my compositions. When I visited him again after only a few weeks in order to inquire about the fate of my work, Eybler said that the mass is good, but it is not written in the*

⁴⁰ Meszlényi, Róbert, *Hangverseny kalauz II. (Musical Guide II.)*, Rózsavölgyi és Társasága Publishing, Budapest, 1938, p. 120.

⁴¹ McKay, Elizabeth Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

style that pleases the Emperor. I bowed and thought to myself: Well, I believe I am not fortunate enough to be able to write in an imperial style".⁴² As we unfortunately already know, the position was not given to Schubert. I would like to present a short analysis on the parts of the mass.

The Parts of the Mass

Kyrie: In correlation with the lyrics, the part has three segments. The intimate and unsophisticated melody of the Kyrie eleison and Christe eleison speak to the assurance of the believer. A short closing part is connected with the repetition of the Kyrie eleison.

Gloria: The festive, powerful beginning emphasizes the laudatory character of the movement. Endless delicacy flows from the Gratias segment that is interwoven with vocal interventions. The Qui tollis part is divided between the solos and the piously praying miserere choir. Starting with Quoniam, a great intensity gradation follows, that reaches its climax in the full force of the choir singing in unison. The movement ends with the powerful – both in timbre and voice – Sanctu Spiritu fugue.

Credo: The creeds align in succinct simplicity. The same type of powerfully splendid orchestral ending then follows every smaller segment. The slower middle part of the movement is constituted by the picturesque sound patterns of the passion-tales. In the next parts, Schubert refers to the earlier segments of the movement.

Sanctus: The soft timbres of the orchestra are interrupted by forceful Sanctus chants, and it would seem that Schubert is depicting miraculous visions. The Pleni sunt part is intimacy and melody woven into one, while the short Hosanna brings celebratory light into the movement only at the very end.

Benedictus: The peaceful and pious mood of the Sanctus is continued through the alternate singing between the solos and the choir. At the end of the movement, the previous movement's Hosana part is repeated.

Agnus Dei: The choir's prayers accompany the warm melody of the soloists. Within the dona nobis part, we can hear Schubert, the great lyrical composer, as he sings with joyful faith and an open heart. The entire mood of the works illustrates the delicate, sensitive inner world of Schubert and paints a unique image of his spirituality.

3.1.2. E-flat Mass

Schubert finished writing this work a few months before his death. The first performance of the piece took place unfortunately only on November 15, 1829 in Vienna, after the maestro's death. If we were to attempt analysing this

⁴² Meszlényi, Róbert, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

piece, we would find that its character is deeply lyrical; however, we can also find traces of polyphony in the tradition of the old masters, for he enriched the work by many fugue-like segments. The movements of the mass:

Kyrie: three part strophic form, with soft, continuous, large arc. The middle part constructed around the *Christe eleison* brings diversity to the segments of the *Kyrie* by introducing lively rhythmic patterns.

Gloria: The movement starts with a powerful, lively sonority. In the *Qui Tollis* part Schubert introduces more dramatic voices. The *Quoniam* segment evokes the beginning of the movement, followed by the *Spiritu* fugue.

Credo: Starts with dignified force. The *Et incarnatus est* part develops into a lyrical episode, in which the soft voice of the cello, then the solo soprano and the two tenors complete the effect. A striking passion-mood develops during the *Crucifixus*. Schubert strives toward strict forms by the use of repetition. The *Et resurrexit* rediscovers the same atmosphere as the beginning of the movement, while the end fugue starts with the words *et vitam venturi*.

Sanctus: Three powerful chants of *Sanctus* begin the movement, being later augmented by the *Hosanna* fugue in the slow part of the movement.

Benedictus: The soft, intimate type sonority of the movement begins with a dialogue between the four soloists and the choir. The movement ends with the repetition of the *Hosanna* fugue.

Agnus Dei: The movement starts with a powerful fugato, characteristic to Schubert's artistic weaving of the melody, followed by a soft and melodic *Dona nobis pacem*. If we listen to the entire work knowing Schubert's music, we feel that although we can identify the traces his predecessors left, he this is still a uniquely original composition, marvellous pieces pertaining to music history.

Conclusion

Almost two centuries ago, the critics mourned his early death, for they thought that his demise robbed humanity of many valuable works of art, still, we could also state that his early death in fact robbed Schubert of his difficultly earned success that he reached at the end of the 1820s.⁴³ With the exception of his close friends, he was not popular during his lifetime. His work is discovered after his death, but then a distorted image is created about him in order to "discredit his art".⁴⁴ Still, based on his own writings, the memories of his contemporaries, and based on certain critiques of the day we have the possibility of acquainting ourselves with the real life, struggle and art of the creator of song.

⁴³ Gibbs, Christopher Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Fábíán, László, *Franz Schubert életének krónikája (The Chronicle of the Life of Franz Schubert)*, Zeneműkiadó Vállalat, Budapest, 1975, p. 160.

Schubert's works prove to be landmark creations. In the same manner, the misty, gloomy, melancholic September greets us; the September of Romanticism had also arrived. During the period of Mozart and Haydn's last works, Beethoven and Schubert's entire lifework, harmony will be newly defined as compared with previous ages. An entirely new movement emerges, the splendour of classical art is overshadowed a bit, a new era has begun, the century of music, the 18th century, debuting with the tempest of Romanticism, the storm of autumn and not that of spring.⁴⁵

In Beethoven's hands instrumental music became lyric testimony, while in Schubert's the lied did the same. In Schubert's music not only the lyrical warmth of the melody, its fantastic freedom, intimate tenderness, not only the newly assumed role of the piano in the song literature was new, but also the mysterious character of form also, as the text transforms from a delicate strophic form to dramatic recitativo.

This deep intuitiveness, uniqueness, the ancient naïveté and lose confidence of his song-mood raised Schubert to the level of "poets", to the pinnacle of Viennese Classicism alongside Beethoven and Mozart, although with his restless wondering spirit he already belonged rather to the European youth of the day, to Romanticism. Doubtless, that certain parts of his short, but fruitful life were especially frustrating and discouraging, however, Schubert did not give up the fight.

The mission of our own age is also to depict Schubert's life and works in their true, original manner, as we start a journey to bring Schubert closer to us, however, this will only be possible if we analyse his life story and work together.

Translated by Köpeczi Juliánna Erika

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⁴⁵ Szabolcsi, Bence, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

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