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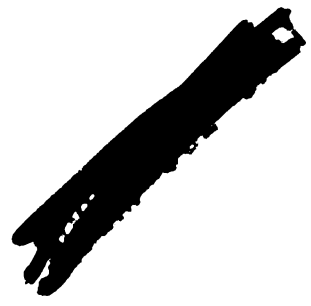
SCHUBERT, THE INTERPRETER OF THE
GOETHEAN MOOD

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Esther MacFarlane Snow
1955

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SCHUBERT, THE INTERPRETER OF THE
GOETHEAN MOOD

By

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A THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth century, two men, one a literary and the other a musical genius, gave to the cultural world rich gifts of exquisite songs, which have been loved and enjoyed by succeeding generations.

These men, Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Franz Peter Schubert, were worlds apart socially and economically, but on the catholic ground of art, they met as brothers. The products of their great, inspired minds seemed made for one another and by combining the matchless poetry of Goethe with the glorious music of Schubert, the perfect song emerged in all its purity and beauty.

Schubert set no less than seventy of Goethe's poems to music; a considerably greater number than that of any other poet. He used lyrics of other poets, but as if drawn by a magnet, he always returned to his greatest love, Goethe.

It is the purpose of this study to show by means of comparisons between these great Germans as men, as writers in their particular field, and as inspired creators, that there was a spiritual bond between them which operated for the benefit of mankind.

CHAPTER I

THE PERSONAL LIFE OF GOETHE AND SCHUBERT

A span of half a century separated the early life of Goethe from that of Schubert. This was sufficient time for all the poetical contributions of the young Goethe to have become well known, and it now remained for Schubert, the eternally young musician, to respond to them in his own medium.

The many similar characteristics of background and early training are of sufficient importance to be mentioned as a first step in the comprehension of the artistic attraction between the two artists.

Goethe was born August 28, 1749, in Frankfort-on-the-Main, a metropolis lying between North and South Germany. The city was much more akin to the south than the north in its lack of restraint and its joyous living. It was almost Viennese in atmosphere. Here the North German intelligence combined with the happy, light-hearted atmosphere of the South were united even as both extremes came together in the nature of its famous son, Goethe.¹

¹ Georg Brandes, Goethe, New York, 1936, I, p. 33.

Vienna was the birthplace of Schubert on January 31, 1797. Though Schubert did not live in Vienna throughout his life, the atmosphere of the city undoubtedly made a lasting impression on him and wielded a definite influence on his music.

The elder Goethe was a descendant from the working class, but became a lawyer. He was a serious, scholarly man, interested in learning and teaching. He lacked imagination and, therefore, did not understand his gifted son. He was exacting, and though possessed of considerable means, was extremely penurious and refused to finance any of his son's artistic projects. Forced into inactivity by illness later in his life, he became a household tyrant and his son felt no sorrow at his death.

Goethe's mother was happy and vivacious; she enjoyed life in a carefree, light-hearted manner. Hers was a constant, loving nature and she gave sympathetic encouragement to the poet. Goethe expressed some of his parent's characteristics in the following familiar lines:

Vom Vater hab' ich die Statur,
Des Lebens ernstes Führen,
Vom Mütterchen die Frohnatur
Die Lust zu fabulieren.²

² Ibid., p. 37.

Father Schubert was of peasant origin but became a successful school-master. His ability was not rewarded financially, however, and he and his large family struggled through life in the middle-class poverty of this profession. He instructed Franz in music in his early years and was very proud when Franz's beautiful voice gained him admission to the Imperial Chapel-Royal as a chorister. Here the boy received musical instruction which was of inestimable value to him in his composing. However, Father Schubert was unyielding in his demands that Franz become a school teacher and the boy spent many unhappy years at this profession before he chose the free, poverty-stricken life of a composer.

Schubert's own mother died at an early age, but a kind, understanding stepmother encouraged and loved the boy and helped him through many difficulties. Although there was little money in the family, she always had a bit laid aside to give him when he appealed to her for financial aid.

In the Schubert home, God was an inexorable Judge, a stern God of no appeal while God was considered an "unchangeable family God" by the Goethe family. In later years, this environment and early training produced the same effect on both artistic temperaments. Both men became rebellious, then openly antagonistic to religion. Schubert was less outspoken than Goethe, so did not

attract the same criticism to himself. However, as is the case so often when man denies God to the world, he acknowledges a kinship to the Divine in his creations. There is no dearth of such feeling in the poems of Goethe nor in Schubert's music.

Both of these young men had affairs of the heart and were more or less affected by the passions which at the time possessed them--Goethe loved many women but always left them, and many women loved him. When he finally married, his wife, Christiane Vulpius, was a simple unknown girl who was content to become a plain 'Hausfrau' and to remain in the background, loving him and caring for his material needs. Some of his finest poetry is inspired by his various loves, and his most helpful and encouraging intellectual friend was a woman.

Romance was a torment to Schubert for he always worshipped from afar. He never seemed able to overcome his extreme shyness with women. It is known that there were women whom he admired and who were the inspiration for some of his loveliest music, but the personal relationship between him and a woman remained nebulous.

But male companionship was not lacking to Schubert, and a circle known as the 'Schubertians' was formed in which there were many young poets, painters, and musicians. This group spent many happy hours together, enjoying one another's art as well as

companionship. These friends encouraged Schubert, helped to make the public aware of his genius and even furnished him paper on which to compose when he was unable to buy it for himself.

Comparable to this circle of Schubert's friends is the group of Goethe's friends who joined together in the "Sturm und Drang" movement of German literature. These men were young, talented writers and although their organization had a certain political flavor, yet they influenced and supported one another's artistic ideas and ideals. As they grew older, this group separated, whereas Schubert's early death occurred before his "Circle" completely disintegrated.

Love of freedom, simplicity of nature, and an eternal child-likeness characterized both Goethe and Schubert. Goethe spoke to Schubert through these intangible means as well as through the pure music of his poetry. Schubert could gaily and happily tackle Goethe, the greatest of German poets, because Goethe spoke in the language of youth and his words were simple.

Both men joyfully expressed their own inner beings by means of their art. Schiller, who classified all poets as either naive or sentimental, would have identified them as naive artists judging by the following excerpt from his essay, Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung, written in the year 1795: "Wie der Gottheit hinter dem

Weltgebäude, so steht der naive Dichter hinter seinem Werk; er ist das Werk und das Werk ist er."³

A striking similarity is found in the contents of the two following paragraphs, the first an observation concerning Goethe and the other about Schubert. Since they are written by different authors, there is no thought on the part of either writer of any but his own subject, but they seem to strike a common note.

Goethe ist der vielseitigste Dichter aller Zeiten und in der Weltliteratur sind nur Homer und Shakespeare seines gleichen. Am grössten ist Goethe als Lyriker, Fast alle seine Lieder stehen in direkter Beziehung zu seinen Leben; sie sind wirklich Gelegenheitsgedichte. In denselben bringt er die edelsten und tiefsten Gefühle des Menschenherzens in der denkbar einfachsten und natürlichsten Weise zum Ausdruck. Ohne jede rhetorische Phrase und philosophische Reflexion spricht er in kindlich-naiver Weise vom Herzen zu Herzen. Er singt, wie der Vogel von seinem Zweige singt, ohne Studium und Regel, instinktiv, so wie die Natur ihn treibt zu singen: darum ist Goethes Lyrik wahre Naturpoesie, verkörperte Musik.⁴

The tune in Schubert springs from the poet's tune. Sometimes the suggestion is to be traced to the contour of a striking phrase, at other times to the general swing of the metre. A bold lilt with plenty of trisyllables and double or triple rhymes caught his ear and awakened tunes in his head. In many of Schubert's songs, we can imagine him as having hummed over a verbal tune until it grew into a full-fledged melody. His ear was unsophisticated. Experiments in classic metres, dear to several of the German poets, meant nothing

³ The Oxford Book of German Prose, Oxford, 1950, p. 248.

⁴ Wilhelm Bernhardt, Deutsche Litteraturgeschichte, New York, 1892, p. 38.

much to him. But given a simple ripple of rhymes, Schubert was off like a bird.⁵

Schubert set to music the best poetry that came into his hands. He loved and understood poetry better than any of his predecessors in German music. In the writing of his six hundred songs, he used lyrics of ninety poets. But all poets seemed immature to him after knowing Goethe. Poetry that did not strike his taste or lacked proper form did not interest him. He was seeking poetry of individual artistic beauty, which expressed a depth of feeling but remained simple in form. All this he discovered in Goethe's verse.

Schubert can be called Goethe's artistic offspring. Schubert, the lad who was a great musical genius and possessed a love for poetry, grew to manhood under the stimulus of Goethe's verse. Goethe led and Schubert followed, instinctively, joyously, and unerringly interpreting the superb poetry of the master into ineffably beautiful music. Without Goethe, Schubert would still be a well-loved musician but a humbler one.

The great poet, too, owes a debt to the humble musician whose very existence he failed to acknowledge. Without the

⁵ Richard Capell, Schubert's Songs, New York, p. 43. Hereafter referred to as Capell.

exquisite musical settings of Schubert, many of Goethe's poems would be unknown to people outside of Germany. His poems, in several instances, became familiar to the common folk only through Schubert's music. Certainly the dissemination of Goethe's lyrical art is due, in some measure, to the association of his poems and the familiar music of Schubert.

Nature at springtime, the river, the brook, birds, and flowers were favorite subjects for Schubert's musical expression. His own nature responded instinctively to the beauties of Mother Nature and many a rippling accompaniment to his songs suggests flowing water, while trills and cadences represent the songs of birds. These songs are written with a certain freedom that expresses a boundless joy in the universe and in God's gifts to man.

Goethe, in much the same unrestrained manner, has manifested his profound admiration for the beauty all around him. In a fund of poems, he has revealed his great appreciation and love of nature. Thus, with respect to their approaches and attitudes toward nature, it is not at all difficult to perceive a striking similarity between the musician Schubert and the master poet Goethe.

CHAPTER II

SCHUBERT'S TREATMENT OF GOETHE'S POEMS

Schubert wrote songs in two forms: the strophic and the "durchkomponiert," or continuous. Modified strophic songs and lyrical monodies fall into the general class of strophic, though they contain some variations of the strict form.

The strophic is the form used in folksong and corresponds to stanzaic structure, while the "durchkomponiert" form is more dramatic and is musical blank verse. Had Schubert lived longer, his talent for writing in the latter style might have made him famous in the operatic field.⁶

⁶ Goethe wrote Claudine von Villabella to elevate the tone of German ballad opera. This opera marks Schubert's only attempt to write music for one of Goethe's opera libretti. The opera glorifies folk song and folk melodies and the most valuable part of the drama consists of the few interpolated songs. This composition is Schubert's operatic masterpiece, but only the first act has been preserved. The second and third acts were used by a servant to kindle a fire.

At one time, Goethe remarked that he would write an opera based on an Oriental theme if a composer, competent to write suitable music, could be found. Though Schubert was too young and immature at the time for such an undertaking, it is significant that one of his last ideas was of an opera based on Oriental material.

The use of a "neutral melody" was a practice of many musicians of the early nineteenth century. The same melody was employed for as many as nine or ten stanzas of verse. The only relief and variation was created by the shades of expression introduced by the singer. Goethe, himself, branded as reprehensible any deviation from this procedure. But here the musician did not heed the words of his beloved poet. He used the strict strophic form, but only when he felt it to be the proper setting for that particular poem. Time has proved that in this decision, Schubert's judgment was superior to Goethe's.

Schubert felt obliged to examine and then to exhaust the content of the verse so as to bring to the listener the very essence of the poem. He was much too rich in his means of expression to be repetitive and limited. He often added accompaniment between the stanzas or varied the interlude to avoid repetition. When he did follow Goethe's suggestion in the strophic song, he gave instructions to the singer for the performance of that song. He suggested that the singer express the content of the poetry, indicating the different moods by forte and planissimo.

A careful examination of a few of Schubert's representative songs will serve to illustrate his varied methods of interpreting Goethe's poetry. In each case, he has unerringly placed the poetry

in the setting which most perfectly expresses the poet's thoughts and moods.

Perhaps the most familiar of the strophic songs is Heidenröslein. Goethe wrote this poem in 1771 when he was twenty-two years old. Schubert set it to music in 1815. He was only eighteen years of age.⁷

In the treatment of this poem, Schubert and Goethe were in perfect accord. The poetry demanded simplicity and Schubert wrote a simple strophic setting, with entrancing results.

Schubert's range of keys is infinitely richer than any earlier or contemporary composer. In his songs there seems to be a sort of system governing the choice of key. One can practically determine the degree of subjectivity of a song from its key.⁸

Schubert chose G major for Heidenröslein with a combination of four bars in the tonic, six in the dominant, and closed with four in the tonic. This balanced nicely with the six-line meter of the

⁷ Heidenröslein is included in Herder's Von Deutscher Art und Kunst under the title of Fabelliedchen. In Herder's essay, he extolled the merits of the popular song and advocated a collection of German Volkslieder.

Von Deutscher Art und Kunst, herausg. von H. Lambel (Deut. Lit.--Denkm., 40) Stuttgart, 1892; ed. by E. Purdie, with English commentary, Oxford, 1924.

⁸ Alfred Einstein, Schubert, New York, 1951, p. 121.

poem. The sentiment expressed in the verse is emphasized by the tender, hauntingly simple melody and accompaniment.

The year 1815 was one of the great years of productivity in Schubert's song writing. He wrote musical settings for one hundred eighty-nine poems in this year. Of this number, thirty were Goethe's poems and some of these were set in the strophic style.

Among the strophic are Die Spinnerin, Schweizerlied, Der Goldschmiedgesell, Wer kauft Liebesgötter, Liebhaber in allen Gestalten, Tischlied, Bundeslied, Hoffnung, Der Fischer, Der Gott und die Bajadere, Der Rattenfänger and Der Schatzgräber.

On October 19, 1814, Schubert wrote his first Goethe song, Gretchen am Spinnrade. This song, unsurpassed in beauty and emotional expression, was written by a lad of seventeen. No previous writing can be regarded as preparation for the production of this musical gem. Since many songs written later are inferior to this composition, it does not represent the beginning of a period of outstanding achievement in song-writing. Nevertheless, it does represent a break-through to complete independence in song-writing and makes free use of the piano-song.

The piano was a relatively new instrument at this period and its possibilities had not been completely discovered. Schubert, an accomplished pianist, was fond of improvising and spent hours

running his fingers over the keys in rippling melodies. Thus, the familiarity of the song-writer with the instrument resulted in a fusion of the vocal and instrumental, in which each is of equal importance.

Schubert had been reading Goethe's Faust and his sympathetic heart went out to the plight of the forlorn Gretchen. Her suffering, bewilderment and moments of exaltation are expressed by him in vivid musical imagery.

As a background, yet markedly pronounced is the monotonous but exciting whirr of the spinning-wheel in the accompaniment. Symbolically, this expresses Gretchen's spiritual restlessness.

The song is a scene from Faust, but it is clear from the outset that it cannot be sung on the stage, quite apart from the difficulty of orchestrating the piano accompaniment. It is a transfiguration. The proper treatment for the stage would be a strophic song. Schubert, however, writes what has been called a lyrical monody, with a conventional "da capo," it is true, and a melodic unity, but with a constantly changing, sensitive inflection.⁹

The forlorn plaint of the love-sick Gretchen is heard after a short introduction in the accompaniment:

⁹ Ibid., p. 92.

Meine Ruh' ist hin,
 Mein Herz ist schwer,
 Ich finde sie nimmer
 Und nimmermehr.¹⁰

Schubert sets this sad refrain in the key of D minor and each time the poet repeats this stanza, we find the musician has returned to that key, which expresses the melancholy which Gretchen feels.

However, Schubert varies the verse to suit his own fancy and in the song the last two lines of that stanza read:

Ich finde, ich finde sie nimmer
 Und nimmermehr.¹¹

This alters the rhythm from 4 + 4 to 4 + 5, which relieves the monotony of the accompaniment. This was a favorite device of Schubert and is especially effective in this song.

Gretchen continues:

Wo ich ihn nicht hab'
 Ist mir das Grab,
 Die ganze Welt
 Ist mir vergällt.

As the pitch of her emotions rises, Schubert follows with a higher pitch, modulating from the key of D minor to E minor and then on into F major as she cries:

¹⁰ The Oxford Book of German Verse, "Meine Ruh' ist hin," Oxford, 1927, p. 108. The balance of the poem in this section is taken from this source.

¹¹ Schirmer's Library, Schubert, Album I, New York, 1895, p. 222.

Mein armer Kopf
Ist mir verrückt.
Mein armer Sinn
Ist mir zerstückt.

Returning to the motif of plaintiveness, we again hear Meine Ruh' ist hin in the key of D minor.

As she describes her lover, her excitement rises once more, her foot moves more swiftly and the climax is reached when she remembers his kiss. Schubert has reached the key of B flat and suddenly there is a pause in which Gretchen, completely lost in ecstasy, is motionless and the spinning-wheel is silent.

After this moment of exaltation, she returns to the world of reality and the plaint recurs. Desperation, longing, and hopelessness follow as she spins and sings:

Mein Busen drängt
Sich nach ihm hin;
Ach dürft ich fassen
Und halten ihn.
Und küssen ihn
So wie ich wollt',
An seinen Küssen
Vergehen sollt'!

The key changes constantly throughout this portion, the minor always predominating. In closing, Schubert adds to the original poem:

Meine Ruh' ist hin
 Nein Herz ist schwer.¹²

This is marked with a gradual decrescendo, ending in double pianissimo as Gretchen's sadness and despair overcome her. The spinning-wheel ceases to turn.¹³

Gretchen am Spinnrade is one of the finest examples of the perfect union of Goethe's poetry and Schubert's music. Ever alert to the delicate nuances of poetry, Schubert instinctively followed the poetry with music which fully supported every emotion which the poet expressed.¹⁴

Nearly forty musical settings of Goethe's Erl König have been produced, but when one speaks of the song, it is the Schubert setting which comes to mind. The ballad, as well as the musical interpretation, is the finest piece of writing of its kind. It is an incidental song occurring in Goethe's ballad opera, Die Fischerin.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Cf. Capell, p. 84.

¹⁴ In Act IV of Gounod's opera Faust, the betrayed Gretchen declares her undying love for Faust, then gives voice to her loneliness and despair in The Spinning Song. The song is effective within the opera, though it tends to be more a dramatic exposition of a situation than a melodious song of artistic proportions. Taken out of context, it becomes dull and uninteresting.

The legend was adapted from the Danish by Johann Friederich Herder and later used by Goethe.¹⁵

The Erl König is one of the last songs Schubert wrote in the year 1815. Friends who called on Schubert one day found him in a state of great excitement. He had just read Goethe's poem and the words seemed to have literally taken possession of him. He was driven to set them to music and worked in feverish haste. The song was sung the same evening to the "Schubertians" who gave it the full recognition it deserved.

This song remained within the privacy of the "Circle" for many years. It was nearly eight years before it was sung in public. Schubert's friend, Vogl, sang it into fame and thus the composer's name became familiar to the musical world.

In 1825, Schubert sent a volume of his songs including Gretchen am Spinnrade and Erl König to Goethe. Accompanying the volume was a letter, dedicating the songs to Goethe. Goethe did not acknowledge the gift nor the honor of the dedication. It

¹⁵ Cf. Capell, p. 108.

was certain he received them for he was heard to remark that he did not like Schubert's setting, which left him unmoved.¹⁶

Schubert has really interpreted Goethe in this ballad. Within the verse lies a mixture of moods; fear, fantasy, triumph, and despair are manifested in rapid succession. Only music such as Schubert writes can give the poem the coherence it requires.

The wild wind, the ghostly forms in nature, and the galloping horse are vividly portrayed by the music. The child speaks in a high range, the father in a lower range. The music moves from major to minor with the changing moods of the poem and the shading varies from pianissimo to fortissimo.

Schubert was often dissatisfied with his first setting of a lyric and composed several before he felt assured that he had found the most perfect vehicle for the expression of the poet's thoughts. He composed four separate manuscripts of the Erl König, all of which are preserved.¹⁷

¹⁶ Later, when he heard Erl König sung by a great singer, he was overcome with emotion and wept. It was too late. Schubert had been dead for two years. Newman Flower, Franz Schubert, New York, 1928, p. 185.

¹⁷ Alfred Einstein, Schubert, New York, 1951, p. 100. Of interest also is Johann Gottfried Loewe, one of the many who set Erl König to music. He is the only composer whose work can be compared to Schubert's, but his composition lacks the dramatic and descriptive element which Schubert uses so effectively. Loewe produced four hundred songs and ballads which are as fresh and vital today as when they were written, early in the nineteenth century.

Schäfer's Klagelied is one of the loveliest of Goethe's pastoral poems. Schubert chose the modified strophic form for this lyric but

Masterpieces by Great Composers, Loewe, Six Ballads, New York, 1903.

In addition, a brief comparison of the treatment of the poem by the two composers draws attention to several features in Schubert's setting which make it superior to Loewe's.

The mad, breathless race, the pounding of the horse's hooves, and the terror of both father and child are not forgotten for one measure by Schubert, who keeps the steady 4/4 rhythm in triplets throughout the song.

Loewe uses 9/8 rhythm, in itself less forceful and varies it occasionally with 6/8. The dramatic pitch is not sustained in this manner of writing to the extent that one experiences it in Schubert's method.

In Loewe's interpretation the Erl König uses the same three notes in the same key the three times he speaks to the child. But Schubert introduces three different melodies, with a faint suggestion of similarity, which intrigues the listener.

By the clever use of a dissonance, Schubert expresses the despair as well as the fear which the poet intended in the phrase, Mein Vater, Jetzt fasst er mich an! We are prepared for the final tragedy. Loewe expresses only blind terror and flight.

The difficult accompaniment which Schubert wrote presents problems to the pianist which are lacking in Loewe's composition. This accounts partially for some musicians favoring Loewe's setting. The element of the dramatic, however, which Schubert's accompaniment produces, provides effects which one does not find in Loewe's work. Schubert introduces the song with fifteen measures of accompaniment which set the atmosphere for the story. Loewe proceeds with the tale after two measures of introduction. Once again, Schubert, the pianist, realizes the value of the piano to the song and makes full use of its possibilities.

The endings of the two settings are similar, both written in the style of a recitative, with a dramatic pause before the final words, war tot! Loewe carries the accompaniment on for three full measures, with a decrescendo. Schubert, dramatic to the end, closes with two abrupt chords, played forte.

he introduced some bold and unusual variations which only a master could use successfully.

Normally, music corresponds in its sections to the lines of poetry and the average musician adheres rigidly to this principle. Schubert departed from this procedure at times in a most surprising manner, and the result is a delightful variation from the strict correlation of poetical and musical rhythm.

In Schäfer's Klagelied, he used the usual 6/8 rhythm which is a typical means of expressing pastoral mood. He ignored the normal pause at the end of the second line of verse, using words which belonged to the third line to complete his musical measure. But he added a syllable to make up this deficiency in the third line of verse by placing a prefix hin before the verb. This is a common device of poets, and Schubert did not hesitate to use "poetic license," even with one of Goethe's poems. He brought the rhythm back into order, although the verse now reads:

Da droben auf jenem Berge
Da steh' ich tausendmal,
Am meinem Stabe hin gebogen
Und schau' hinab in das Tal.¹⁸

In the third stanza, he altered the verse once again for the benefit of musical rhythm. Instead of

¹⁸ Cf. Capell, p. 51.

Da stehet von schönen Blumen
Die ganze Wiese so voll,¹⁹

Schubert writes:

Da stehet von schönen Blumen
Da steht die ganze Wiese so voll,²⁰

thus again making use of repetition of a phrase or a word as he did in Gretchen am Spinnrade.

Goethe wrote the last stanza to read:

Hinaus in das Land und weiter,
Vielleicht gar über die See,
Vorüber, ihr Schafe, vorüber!
Dem Schäfer ist gar so weh.²¹

But Schubert needed an extra syllable so he made the following change:

Hinaus in das Land und weiter
Vielleicht gar über die See,
Vorüber, ihr Schafe, nur vorüber!
Dem Schäfer ist gar so weh.²²

He concluded the song with a repetition of the last two lines of this stanza.

¹⁹ The Oxford Book of German Verse, "Schafer's Klagelied," Oxford, 1927, p. 138.

²⁰ Schirmer's Library, Schubert, Album I, New York, 1895, p. 286.

²¹ The Oxford Book of German Verse, "Schafer's Klagelied," Oxford, 1927, p. 138.

²² Schirmer's Library, Schubert, Album I, New York, 1895, p. 286.

Schubert's varied use of melodies and keys is an interesting development in this composition. Plaintiveness, serenity of spirit, brightness of the flowers in the meadow, and the lack of shelter in a storm are all expressed by different melodies within the song.

Each of these short melodies is written in the key which best expresses the feeling in the lines of poetry, and Schubert modulates from one key to another with charm and grace.

We hear the melancholy plaint of the shepherd in the key of C minor, followed by a certain calmness as he watches his flock grazing, protected by the faithful dog. This is written in the key of E flat major, presenting a somewhat happier picture. Modulating from this key through G minor into the key of A flat raises our spirits and we view the beauty of the flowers in the meadow where all is brightness and light. The key of A flat minor expresses the storm and the lack of shelter, and builds up to a sudden climax.

A short recitative passage follows in which the shepherd resigns himself to the fact that his beloved is still absent. Then we return to the placid mood of the quiet landscape, expressed in the key of E flat major. We again approach the plaintive motif in the key of C minor through a modulation

from G minor and the shepherd repeats his plaint to the close of the song.²³

In this poem of twenty-four lines, Goethe has given us a delightful pastoral scene, graphically portrayed. One sees the beauty, feels the changes in mood, and sympathizes with the forlorn shepherd in his longing. Transported into the atmosphere of this poem, Schubert found no difficulty in translating the charming picture into musical expression. Again the world is enriched by a gift from these great artists.

In the latter part of the year 1816, Schubert set to music three of the Harper's songs from Wilhelm Meister.²⁴ The musical clairvoyant, Schubert, understood the soul of Goethe as expressed in these songs and produced some of his finest settings of Goethe's poetry.

²³ Cf. Capell, p. 74. Schubert is the only composer who wrote a musical setting for Schäfer's Klage. Brahms composed music for Heidenröslein and Schumann for Wanderer's Nachtlied, but since neither song is included in collections of these composers' many songs, it is to be assumed that their settings are not comparable to Schubert's.

²⁴ Wilhelm Meister, the hero of Goethe's autobiographical work, was able to write or speak in any meter he had heard or read, and thereby acquired an imate passion for the art of poetry. Goethe placed on the lips of the mysterious Harper some of his most wonderful lyrics.

In the same year, he composed music for Jägers Abendlied, Der König in Thule from Faust, An Schwager Kronos, Mignon's Sehnsucht, Der Fischer, Wanderers Nachtlid (der du von dem Himmel bist), and a fragment of Gesang der Geister über den Wassern.

Ganymed, Auf dem See, a fragment of Mahomets Gesang I and Gretchen's prayer, Ach, neige du Schmerzenreiche from Faust (a fragment) were set to music in 1817. A lapse of one year occurred and Schubert briefly returned to Goethe in 1819. Only two Goethe poems were given musical settings in this year: Der Liebende schreibt and Prometheus. The latter was Schubert's masterpiece of the year. Even though he used so little of Goethe's poetry in this year, he composed steadily and Prometheus was significantly superior to any other songs written at this time.

Goethe's poems were strongly in favor in 1821 and several excellent songs appeared: Grenzen der Menschheit, four songs from Westöstlicher Divan, Suleika I, Suleika II, Geheimes and Versunken, two Mignon songs, Heiss mich nicht reden, So lasst mich scheinen, and a fragment of the ballad Johanna Sebus.

The year 1822 is the last year of Schubert's use of Goethe poems involving new material. After this date, Schubert wrote new settings for several poems he had previously set to music. His contributions after this year include four additional settings of the

Wilhelm Meister songs, several settings of Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt, and new settings of Heiss mich nicht reden and So lasst mich scheinen (all Mignon's songs).²⁵

Thus in the year 1822, Schubert gave to the world his last and some of the best loved of his songs and Goethe's lyrics. For three years, he had neglected Goethe and now, in rapid succession, he composed music for Der Musensohn, An die Entfernte, Am Flusse, Willkommen und Abschied, and Wanderers Nachtlied (Über allen Gipfeln). Wanderers Nachtlied was the last song of this year's contributions and the last of Goethe's poems which Schubert set to music.

It is difficult to make an interesting song from a short verse and few composers have been successful in this venture. Schubert's talent in this direction is expressed in four settings of Goethe's

²⁵ The Wilhelm Meister Harper's songs and Mignon songs held a peculiar fascination for Schubert and he was ever seeking an improved musical version.

Alfred Einstein, Schubert, New York, 1951, p. 100.

"If Schubert had been the self critical man that Wolf was, there is no doubt that he would have suppressed all the earlier settings of these songs. But it's both interesting and instructive to examine the gradual apprehension by the composer of the full significance of the poem, and to see him sometimes cast utterly aside a mould that did not seem amenable to refashioning, and in other cases to take the original impression and from it produce perfection."

E. G. Porter, The Songs of Schubert, London, 1937, p. 80.

poems, Meeresstille, Wanderers Nachtlied (Der du von dem Himmel bist), Die Liebe (Clärchen's song from Egmont) and Wanderers Nachtlied (Über allen Gipfeln).

Clärchen's Song and Über allen Gipfeln have been surpassed by no other poet in beauty and simplicity. Über allen Gipfeln is considered the most celebrated poem in German literature.²⁶

Goethe wrote this poem on the wall of a chalet in Thuringia, September 6, 1870. He rewrote it many years later and was moved to tears by the simple lines.

What more fitting poem could Schubert have chosen as his last musical setting of a poem by his beloved Goethe? He took a gem of German poetry and placed it into a delicate and exquisite setting which enhanced the beauty and content of the words which are so simple and yet so profound.

Schubert's life was drawing to a close. His spells of illness became more frequent and more prolonged and he sensed that the

²⁶ "Goethe's lyrics were frequently translated by the Romantics, each poem many times; the mot juste was not easy to find, but the search was pleasing. Théophile Gautier has even tried to reproduce a few lines of Wanderers Nachtlied:

'Pas une feuille qui bouge,
Pas un seul oiseau chantant.' "

Georg Brandes, Goethe, New York, 1936, II, pp. 477-8.

end was not far off. Perhaps it was not mere chance that led him to select the poem Über allen Gipfeln at this time.

For the last time, the musician responded to the image in the poet's soul and gave to the world fourteen bars of pure beauty in music in his interpretation of Goethe's immortal lines:

Über allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde,
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch.²⁷

²⁷ The Oxford Book of German Verse, "Wanderers Nachtlied," 1927, p. 117.

"That is without doubt one of the most perfect poems that has ever been written at any time on this earth. The only poems that can be compared with it, though they are not equal to it, are Shelley's One word is too often profaned or The flower that smiles today, or Verlaine's La lune blanche luit dans les bois, or Les sanglots longs des violons de l'automne, the most inspired verses that have been written in the century following Goethe."

Georg Brandes, Goethe, New York, 1936, I, p. 331.

The beauty of a lovely poem is often destroyed by translation. Longfellow, our American poet, seems to have been sensitive to Goethe's Stimmung (mood) in this splendid translation of Über allen Gipfeln.

O'er all the hilltops
Is quiet now,
In all the tree-tops
Hearest thou
Hardly a breath;
The birds are asleep in the trees:
Wait; soon like these
Thou too shalt rest.

Schubert, the musician, repeats softly,

Warte nur, warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch.²⁸

From the Complete Writings of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,
Boston and New York, 1904, p. 288.

Another version appears, together with the original German
words, in the song. The translator is Dr. Theodore Baker.

Night descends in peace o'er the trees,
Each trembling leaflet, e'en the breeze,
Hath slumber blest:
The little birds cease their evening song,
Wait awhile, wait awhile, 'ere long
Thou, too, shalt rest.

Schirmer's Library, Schubert, Album I, New York, 1895,
p. 291.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 201.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Schubert's death in 1828 ended a life which was brief, troubled, and unhappy. Goethe passed away less than four years later. He had lived over four score years as compared to Schubert's short life of thirty-one years.

Goethe, the handsome child of fortune, the darling of the German literary world, seems far removed from the grotesque figure of the humble, penniless musician, who fought his way from obscurity to a place of fame in the musical world.

But, just as the Creator "makes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust alike," so does He present artistic talents with an impartial hand. He gave to the favored son a great literary talent and to the lowly one an equally great gift in the field of music.

Either man would have been remembered and honored for his own contribution to the world, but how much greater does each one appear when associated with the other!

Qualities in the personality, the mind, and the soul of Goethe attracted similar qualities in Schubert. They communed in the language of art which is of the spirit.

They never met in person but they walk down through the ages, side by side, united by the strong ties of mutual appreciation and understanding of the sublime.

THE GOETHE SONGS²⁹

31.	Gretchen am Spinnrade (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel)	1814
32.	Nachtgesang (Night Song)	1814
33.	Trost in Tränen (Comfort in Tears)	1814
34.	*Schäfers Klagelied (Shepherd's Lament)	1814
35.	Sehnsucht (Longing)	1814
37.	*Szene aus Faust (Scene from Faust)	1814
45.	*Der Sänger (The Minstrel)	1815
47.	Am Flusse (By the Brook)	1815
48.	*An Mignon (To Mignon)	1815
49.	*Nähe des Geliebten (Near the Beloved)	1815
78.	Die Liebe (Love)	1815
82.	Meeresstille (The Sea Becalmed)	1815
87.	Wanderers Nachtlied (Wanderer's Night Song)	1815
88.	Der Fischer (The Fisher)	1815
89.	Erster Verlust (First Loss)	1815
97.	Tischlied (Table Song)	1815
111.	Der Gott und die Bajadere (God and the Bayadere)	1815

²⁹ "Unfortunately, there is no complete edition of the songs in this country, but in the original language there are ten volumes in the 'Werke' edition, and twelve volumes in the popular edition. The publishers of these (Breitkopf and Härtel) [Collected Edition] also publish an annotated list of the songs in chronological order from which this list is numbered for purposes of reference."

E. G. Porter, The Songs of Schubert, London, 1937, Preface.

The number attached to each poem is the number in Breitkopf and Härtel. The English titles are from E. G. Porter.

Not included in this list are several fragments:

Gesang der Geister über den Wassern	1816
Mahomets Gesang I	1817
Mahomets Gesang II	
Gretchen's Prayer (Ach neige, du Schmerzenreiche)	1817
Johanna Sebus	1821

112.	Der Rattenfänger (The Rat-Catcher)	1815
113.	Der Schatzgräber (The Treasure-Seeker)	1815
114.	Heidenröslein (Hedge Rose)	1815
115.	Bundeslied (Companion's Song)	1815
116.	An den Mond (To the Moon)	1815
117.	Wonne der Wehmut (The Bliss of Absence)	1815
118.	Wer kauft Liebesgötter? (Who Buys Love?)	1815
119.	Die Spinnerin (The Spinster)	1815
120.	Liebhaber in allen Gestalten (Love in all Shapes)	1815
121.	Schweizerlied (Swiss Song)	1815
122.	Der Goldschmiedgesell (The Goldsmith's Apprentice)	1815
158.	*Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt	1815
168.	Kennst du das Land (Know'st thou the Land)	1815
173.	Wer sich der Einsamkeit ergibt (Who gives himself to Solitude)	1815
174.	+Geistes Gruss (Spirit Greeting)	1815
175.	*Hoffnung (Hope)	1815
176.	An den Mond (To the Moon)	1815
177.	Rastlose Liebe (Restless Love)	1815
178.	+Erl König (Erl King)	1815
254.	*Wer sich der Einsamkeit ergibt (Who gives himself to Solitude)	1816
255.	An die Thüren (At the Doorways)	1816
256.	Wer nie sein Brot (Who ne'er his Bread)	1816
257.	Wer nie sein Brot (Who ne'er his Bread)	1816
258.	Wer nie sein Brot (Who ne'er his Bread)	1816
259.	Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt (Only he who Longing Knows)	1816
260.	Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt (Only he who Longing Knows)	1816
261.	Der König in Thule (The King of Thule)	1816
262.	Jäger's Abendlied (Huntsman's Evensong)	1816
263.	An Schwager Kronos (To Postilion Kronos)	1816
310.	Auf dem See (On the Waters)	1817
311.	Ganymed (Ganymede)	1817
369.	Die Liebende schreibt (The Beloved Writes)	1819
370.	Prometheus	1819
391.	Versunken (Passion)	1821
392.	Geheimes (Secrecy)	1821
393.	Grenzen der Menschheit (The Boundaries of Humanity)	1821
394.	Heiss mich nicht reden (Make me not Speak)	1821

395.	So lass mich scheinen (So let me Appear)	1821
396.	Suleika I	1821
397.	Suleika II	1821
416.	Der Musensohn (The Son of the Muses)	1822
417.	An die Entfernte (To the Distant One)	1822
418.	Am Flusse (By the River)	1822
419.	*Willkommen und Abschied (Welcome and Farewell)	1822
420.	Wanderers Nachtlid (Wanderer's Night Song)	1822
488.	Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt	1826
489.	Heiss mich nicht reden	1826
490.	So lasst mich scheinen	1826
491.	Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt	1826
596.	Szene aus Faust (unfinished)	1817

* Of these songs there are two MSS, slightly varied.

+ Of these songs there are four MSS, slightly varied.

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