A Surfeit of Musics: What Goethe's Lyrics Concede When Set to Schubert's Music

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Of the many possible relationships between music and poetry, which are but a small subset of the possible relationships between music and text, I have chosen a still narrower focus for inquiry. I will investigate two independent, lyric poems whose musically poetic language and form was fully conceived without any expectation that a composer might use their texts as structural scaffolding and expressive inspiration for related, and emergent, musical and artistic ends. Two lyric poems by Goethe, each set by Schubert, will serve to illustrate the conflict between poetic and instrumental/vocal musics, in which the lyric poems inevitably concede something of their music to an *appropriation by*, and not merely a *translation into*, another artistic medium. Even when Schubert succeeds in exemplifying, or expanding upon, the symbolic richness of meaning embodied in the poem, we should consider the fate of overwritten meaning embodied in the musical language and form of the poem by itself.

Exploring what is 'conceded' by an already musically rich lyric poem, I will suggest, can be a useful exercise in balancing the competing claims of poetic text and musical setting, especially given the tendency of performers and theorists to privilege the latter. This interpretive bias has a surprising spokesperson in Arnold Schoenberg. In an essay from 1912 he observes:

> A few years ago I was deeply ashamed when I discovered in several Schubert songs, well-known to me, that I had absolutely no idea what was going on in the poems on which they were based. But when I had read the poems it became clear to me that I had gained absolutely nothing for the understanding of the songs thereby, since the poems did not make it necessary for me to change my conception of the musical interpretation in the slightest degree. On the contrary, it appeared that, without knowing the poem, I had grasped the content, the real content, perhaps even more profoundly than if I had clung to the surface of the mere thoughts expressed in words.[1]

Now, if we understand Schoenberg to be focusing on Schubert's appropriation of the text, and his refashioning its music into something that captures a deep spiritual essence of the poem, we might not find this statement to be so extraordinary. But I think Goethe might be extraordinarily upset by Schoenberg's cavalier and essentialist treatment of poetry as reducible to a translatable

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[1] Arnold Schoenberg, 'Das Verhältnis zum Text', in *Der Blaue Reiter*, ed. Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc (Munich: R. Piper and Co., 1912); trans. Dika Newlin as 'The Relationship to the Text', in *Style and Idea*, 1950; reprinted in *Style and Idea*, ed. Leonard Stein (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975): 144.

'content', however 'real' or 'profound'. And Goethe was, as we know, often upset with Schubert's honest attempts to capture aspects of his poems in a music that could nevertheless run roughshod over Goethe's own. For, unlike Lorenzo da Ponte for example, Goethe was not writing poetry to order for a musical setting. Da Ponte, in facing the constraining formulae and conventions for arias, recitatives, ensembles and finales required for a comic opera, was compelled to adjust his poetic intentions accordingly, and had to concede from the start a more functional role for his art. As a librettist myself, I am fully aware of the importance of making concessions for what is ultimately a musical genre, and I am usually quite willing to do so. But like most poets, when I write poetry independently I compose music into the very texture of my poems, by which I mean not only such effects as rhyme, rhythm and metre, or alliteration and consonance, but also accelerations and ritards, enjambments and caesuras, syntactic and rhetorical effects, and, more generally, what Frost called 'sentence sounds', or those intonational curves that are implied by our understanding of the idiomatic expressions of spoken language.[2] Such a complex texture of poetic music would of course be difficult if not impossible to preserve in any musical setting. Indeed, I have found it extremely frustrating to try to 'set' any of my own poems to other music. One time I skirted this frustration by writing the music first, then composing the poem to the fixed form of its preset melody and rhythm, based on my interpretive awareness of musical meaning in all the elements of the music. I found the process workable, and not unlike the negotiations one makes in writing to fixed forms such as sonnets and villanelles. But this wordsmithing produced a rather shallow poetic text, since the verbal dimension could track only one of many possible paths through an already composed and dense web of musical expressive meaning. Ultimately, in this case, I decided that my lyrics were inadequate to the richness of my music.

What might be revealed if we shift our interpretive perspective in this way, in order to examine how settings of lyric poems are *always* to some degree inadequate to the rich music of the poetry? After all, language (here, Goethe's lyric condensation into poetry) and music (here, Schubert's lyrical or dramatic expansion into melody and instrumental accompaniment) often work quite differently in their calibration and pacing of sound and sense. Furthermore, that calibration changes historically from one musical style to another, just as it does among different poetic styles.

In an elegant study, James Winn presents a brief history of these changing relationships, noting the variety of interactions between poets and composers.[3] Winn offers the example of Jonathan Swift, who satirized the problem in his day by writing a text for a cantata which exemplifies, and hence critiques, the absurdity of conventions common to composers of his day in setting texts. Swift exaggerates the defects by piling these conventions on top of each other, as in the following lines quoted by Winn:

> See, see, Celia Celia Dies,
> Dies, Dies, Dies, Dies, Dies, Dies, Dies,
> While true Lovers' Eyes

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[2]   Robert Frost, Letter to John T. Bartlett, 4 July 1913, in *Collected Poems, Prose and Plays*, ed. Richard Poirier (New York: Library of America, 1995): 664–9. Cited in Robert Pinsky, *The Sounds of Poetry: A Brief Guide* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998): 4, note 1.

[3]   James Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations between Poetry and Music* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1981).

Weeping Sleep, Sleeping Weep, Weeping Sleep.
Bo peep, bo peep, bo peep, bo peep, peep, bo bo peep.[4]

Swift's contemporary, the composer John Echlin, successfully exemplifies this satire in music by using extremes of tone-painting, notably an overdose of melismas and leaps, to create a ludicrous, word-for-word mapping.[5]

From this perspective, it would appear equally absurd for Schubert to propose a literal equivalent or correlate for every musical element already existing in Goethe's poem, since to do so would inevitably conflict with the conventions of coherence in his own musical style. Although in the twentieth century George Crumb might come closer to capturing each word or a phrase in an aura of composed sound, as in his settings of fragments from Lorca, other aspects of Lorca's poetic music must inevitably be lost in the course of miming sound and meaning primarily at the level of the word or phrase. For example, in the *Madrigals*, Book III, Crumb often dissolves Lorca's poetic fragments into melismas of nonsense syllables or percussive whispers.

As Winn notes, there is a potential conflict between word-painting and accurate declamation (whether poetic or prosaic, I might add), and this conflict was often resolved by Romantic composers such as Schubert by relegating the role of word-painting to the mood-painting of an accompaniment – the spinning wheel, or the galloping horse, as in two of Schubert's most famous early lieder.[6] Schoenberg's sense of correspondence between poem and song, as one might expect, is to be conceived at a deeper, or higher, level than such concerns:

> the outward correspondence between music and text, as exhibited in declamation, tempo, and dynamics, has but little to do with the inward correspondence, and belongs to the same stage of primitive imitation of nature as the copying of a model. Apparent superficial divergences can be necessary because of parallelism on a higher level.[7]

Just how generous should we be in accepting the implied superficiality of correspondence in declamation, or superficial divergences, in a composer such as Schubert, when he decides to set a lyric poem such as Goethe's 'Wandrers Nachtlied II'?

'Wandrers Nachtlied'	'Wanderer's Night-song' (poetic translation by Robert Hatten)
1 Über allen Gipfeln	Spread over all the peaks
2 Ist Ruh,	Is peacefulness
3 In allen Wipfeln	In all the treetops
4 Spürest du	You can sense
5 Kaum einen Hauch;	Barely a breath;
6 Die Vöglein schweigen im Walde	The tiny birds fall silent in the wood
7 Warte nur, balde	Just wait, soon
8 Ruhest du auch.	You, too, will be at peace.

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[4] Ibid., 250.

[5] The complete cantata from which Winn draws is found in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, vol. 3, ed. Harold Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937; 2nd edn 1958): 956–61, which Winn 'reprinted from Faulkner's edition of 1746' (Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, note 59).

[6] Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, 282.

[7] Schoenberg, 'The Relationship to the Text', 145.

This poem, and its setting, were exhaustively analysed in 1967 by Thrasybulos Georgiades, who notes how closely Schubert captures elements of metric scansion, enjambment, formal partitioning, and (through his textures) meaning.[8] Note the poem's short line lengths, which foreground what would otherwise constitute internal rhymes, in this heavily sonorous yet extremely laconic distribution of lines. The predictability of pattern in the first four lines is broken by an enjambment of line 4 into line 5, which features its own internal assonance, the diphthong shared by 'kaum' and 'Hauch'. Line 6, as Georgiades notes, is separated from the others by its length. It also has a wonderful effect of both acceleration and decrescendo, exemplifying the settling down of the birds in the trees:

> 6 Die Vöglein schweigen im Walde.

This line links to the next, shorter one, by virtue of its rhyme, and the final line creates musical closure by bringing back both the 'u' and 'auch' sounds from lines 2, 4 and 5. The final two lines clinch the allegorical conceit, as the persona links images of peace in nature to the potential for inner peace – perhaps death, but not necessarily.

Schubert's setting (see Ex. 1) captures the wonderful imagery of wind and birds rustling and settling down with the restless oscillation of hands in bars 5–8. But he creates his own *reverberant poetic rhythm* when the last three lines are subjected to the following repetitions (in translation):

> The little birds fall silent, fall silent, in the wood
> Only wait, only wait, soon
> You'll rest too.
> Only wait, only wait, soon
> You'll rest too.

Do we hear an echo of Jonathan Swift? Recall the delicately balanced lines and proportions of Goethe's lyric poem. One cannot imagine Goethe repeating 'schweigen' and then repeating the last two lines with an echoing 'Warte nur'. Schubert's addition reflects a conventional stylistic device of text emphasis, employed here to support a closural strategy. The horn fifths in bar 10, recalling Romantic distance and longing, are an instrumental topic pressed into service here, supported by the inversions and voice-exchanges in bars 9–10.

The echoing cadence in the piano in bars 10–11, heard twice more in 13–14, was first used to close the brief, two-bar prelude. Its hymnlike character and resignational, chromatic reversal from E to E♭ suggest a moral reassurance that – dare I say it – is too comfortably pat in its conviction for Goethe's more evocative ending. Goethe's poem requires neither the verbal repetition nor the moralizing closure, and, despite Schubert's many felicities in his setting, I believe he has in this respect undermined the expressive force of Goethe's eloquent lyric. Much of the poem's meaning comes from the musicality of its spare diction, from which we

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[8]   Thrasybulos Georgiades, 'Lyric as Musical Structure: Schubert's *Wandrers Nachtlied* ("Uber allen Gipfeln," D. 768)', in *Schubert: Musik und Lyrik* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1967): 17–31; trans. Marie Louise Gollner in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986): 84–103. Compare the analysis in Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman, *Poetry into Song: Performance and Analysis of Lieder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 45–51.

Ex. 1   Schubert, 'Wandrers Nachtlied II', D. 768 (c. December 1822)

infer an entirely different 'cadence' (in the poetic sense of pacing) than Schubert provides. And Goethe's reverberant silence can be heard as a more thematically expressive closure than that achieved by Schubert's reverberant echoes.

Let me emphasize at this point that I do not consider the Schubert song to be a failure on its own terms, nor even to be uniformly lacking in its sensitivity to the text. Rather, I would caution against a tendency to approach text settings of the masters as though everything were calculated for the best of all possible reasons, and to hear poetic texts primarily through the filter of their compositional setting. As a counterweight to my critique, let me note here a few of the felicities to which I earlier alluded. The first two lines of the poem are beautifully captured in their serene and glowing stillness by use of a flattened contour, the turn figure

with the upper neighbour for the 'peak' (first syllable of 'Gipfeln'). The image of stillness spreading across the peaks is wonderfully accompanied by simple harmonies (I–V^7–I over a pedal B♭) and the spacing of the B♭ triad, with the third on top and in the richer tenor register of the piano, is glowingly radiant. Even the inner voice-exchange with the melody promotes the stasis of this serene image of peacefulness.

The slight anxiousness troubling this serenity, as one traces 'hardly a breath', is wonderfully evoked by the use of mixture in bars 5–6 (ii half-diminished 6/5 to viio^7/V), and alternating attack points in the two hands exemplify the subtlety of that sustained tremor of activity, motivated by the image of birds settling down for the night in the trees. The reassuring closural gesture just analysed for 'Warte nur' anticipates a similar quieting down, perhaps of an inner anxiety; an assurance to one who would patiently wait.[9]

There may be more behind Schubert's poetic miscalculation in subjecting Goethe's 'Wandrers Nachtlied II' to such moralizing assurances as found in the closing six bars. Schubert set the poem in December 1822. He had only recently set aside the 'Unfinished' Symphony, which he worked on in October and November, and had just completed the 'Wanderer' Fantasy that November. Although the evidence is admittedly incomplete, Newbould conjectures that, by December, Schubert had already begun to show symptoms of syphilis.[10] He did not attend any parties that month, having returned to the family home in Rossau. In a letter dated 28 February 1823, Schubert mentions that 'the state of my health still prevents me from leaving the house'.[11]

Thus, Schubert's reading of the poem might have been motivated by his own state of mind, in which he was desperately seeking inner peace in the face of a death sentence. Indeed, Kristina Muxfeldt notes Schubert's general 'tendency to create an experiential perspective' in his settings, giving as an example his 1815 setting of Goethe's *Rastlose Liebe*, in which Schubert's music is passionate throughout, whereas Goethe 'modulates between two distinct lyric temperaments',[12] the second of which is 'distant and removed … commenting ironically on the events called up in the active lines'.[13]

If we nevertheless love the music of Schubert's setting of 'Wandrers Nachtlied II', in the spirit of Schoenberg's concern with spiritual content – and appreciate

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[9]   One of the anonymous reviewers of this article hears in the cadence an analogously 'laconic expressiveness' – quoting my words in describing Schubert's closing gesture – which for this reader captures, in its simplicity, something of the brevity 'embedded' in the poetic structure – and even a 'deeper echo of the image inherent in "spürest du kaum einen Hauch"'. I concur with this kind of interpretation, which goes a long way toward justifying Schubert's personal sensitivity, despite the repetitive conventions that his inherited musical rhetoric apparently demanded. But these conventions, I would still claim, run roughshod over a delicate poetic cadence such as Goethe's. Perhaps only a modern composer would have the stylistic means available in order to capture the kind of ending Goethe achieves, but this possibility need not undermine our admiration for Schubert's text-setting abilities in general; rather, by my critique I am simply acknowledging what is missing.

[10]   Brian Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997): 183.

[11]   Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom (London, J.M. Dent, 1946): 270. Cited in Newbould, *Schubert*, 183.

[12]   Kristina Muxfeldt, 'Schubert's Songs: The Transformation of a Genre', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 132.

[13]   Ibid., 134.

its many correspondences to the poem's rhythms and moods, in the spirit of those close interpretations by Georgiades and also Stein and Spillman – then it may come as a shock to recognize just how much of Goethe's exquisitely laconic expressiveness has been lost, or traded for another kind of brevity. Indeed, this is exactly the kind of thing that happens in any translation. If my first translation of the poem, in which I attempted to capture the rich connotation of its simple German words, comes across as too wordy and syllabic in English; my second attempt (below) at a more abbreviated *transliteration* (though with slight adjustments to provide correct noun–verb sequences in English) sounds terribly flat:

> Over all the peaks
> Is calm,
> In all the treetops
> You detect
> Hardly a breath;
> The little birds fall silent in the wood.
> Only wait, soon
> You'll rest, too.

Having exemplified my evaluative perspective with a brief example, I turn now to one of Schubert's early lieder from 1815, 'Erster Verlust' (D. 226), to examine in greater detail how Schubert negotiates sound and meaning from lyric poem to lied, and to evaluate whether his 'divergences' from Goethe's music in this poem measure up to Schoenberg's standard of having created a more profound connection to the meaning of the text. Since finding exact musical correspondences for every aspect of the poem is clearly impossible, I will reframe the question by asking what Schubert chooses as *expressively most relevant* in the potential parallelisms between the music of the poem and his own musical conception. I will also consider in what ways Schubert may be able to *compensate* for what is lost of the poetic music, perhaps even *enhancing its musicality* and thus its *embodied poetic meaning*.

Note the unusual form of the lyric, with its condensation of the first stanza into a refrain-like return of the outer lines, marked A and D, in the closural couplet (see Fig. 1).

Goethe uses a fairly consistent four-stress line (tetrameter) with a strong–weak poetic foot (trochaic). Strikingly, each subsequent stanza has one fewer line, perhaps a formal exemplification of loss; in any case, it allows for a strong summing up when the first and last lines of the first stanza return as refrain lines for the ending couplet.

The last line of each stanza ends on an incomplete trochaic foot, with the isolated, stressed syllable serving to create a closural effect. Line 9 slightly varies its model, line 4, and the emphasis on 'Wer' ('who') turns the initial foot into a dactyl. The only other dactyl is found in the second foot of the second line ('Tage der').

Examining Schubert's setting (see Ex. 2), one can verify that he has respected the relative strengths of these line-endings, whether weak beat or strong. Furthermore, the single enjambment, between lines 3 and 4, is the only place without a rest between lines (see bars 7–8). One might imagine a more routine or primitive setting, in Schoenberg's sense, which would strictly distribute two feet, or four syllables, per bar. What is marked about Schubert's setting, as schematized in Fig. 2, is his expansion to an entire bar for especially thematic words: *schönen* in bars 2 and 18, *Liebe* in bar 5, and *einsam* in bar 10.

'Erster Verlust'		'First Loss'
Goethe	(rhyme scheme)	(transliteration, Robert Hatten)
1 Ach, wer bringt die schönen Tage,	A	Ah, who can bring (back) the beautiful days,
2 Jene Tage der ersten Liebe,	b	Those days of first love,
3 Ach, wer bringt nur eine Stunde	c	Ah, who can bring even an hour
4 Jener holden Zeit zurück!	D	Of that sweet time back?
5 Einsam nähr' ich meine Wunde,	c	Alone, I feed my wound,
6 Und mit stets erneuter Klage	a	And with continuously renewed lament,
7 Traur' ich um's verlor'ne Glück.	d	I mourn for [my] lost happiness. [trauern um = mourn for (someone)]
8 Ach, wer bringt die schönen Tage,	A	Ah, who can bring (back) the beautiful days,
9 Wer jene holde Zeit zurück!	D	Who that lovely time return?

Fig. 1   Goethe, 'Erster Verlust', with rhyme scheme and English transliteration

			(expansions)	(*musical* rhymes)
	(phrase length)	(key and cadence)	(norm: 4 syllables/bar)	
Lines 1–2	3+2	f –A♭:V	bar 2: **schönen**	bar 3: **Tage** (w/ bar 14)
Lines 3–4	2+2	A♭: I	bar 5: **Liebe**	(rhy. & sigh)
Lines 5–7	3+2+2	f: +6–V	bar 10: **Einsam** [bar 16: Glück]	bar 14: **Klage**
Lines 8–9 =1, 4	3+2	f –A♭: I	bar 18: **schönen**	[**exact returns**] bar 19: Tage bar 20: zurück)
Postlude	1 (echo)	f (!)		(echo 'rhyme')
			(*inverted* musical rhyme)	
			Line 3 (bar 7):	**eine Stunde** (major, linear ascent)
			Line 5 (bars 11–12):	**meine Wunde** (minor, linear descent)

Fig. 2   Schubert's setting of 'Erster Verlust', (D. 226, 1815), showing musical expansions and rhymes

Ex. 2   Schubert, 'Erster Verlust', D. 226 (5 July 1815)

'Schönen' in bar 2 is marked not only durationally, but dynamically and tonally. Schubert sets up his expressive F-minor/A♭-major opposition immediately, moving in bar 2 to an unexpected 'arrival 6/4' in A♭.[14] The verbal expansion creates a three-bar phrase, exemplifying longing for the beautiful past in a quite

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[14]   For Brian Newbould, 'the loss is symbolized by F minor, the happiness by A flat major' (*Schubert*, 52). Even if one considers the opening progression to be an auxiliary one in A♭ major, the opposition between F minor and A♭ major will prove to be thematically and expressively significant. The term 'arrival 6/4', which addresses the rhetorical force of a move to a tonic-flavoured 'cadential 6/4' whether or not it is resolved immediately to V, is introduced in Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994): 15, 22.

literal way. Bar 5 expands 'Liebe' with the same harmony, here enhanced with mixture to create a viio^7/V on the second beat. Lines 3 and 4 (bars 6–9) are regular in their distribution of syllables, but line 5 begins, in bar 10, with an expansion of 'einsam', and the gnawing pain of the wound is exemplified by a change of texture, a tortured descent through sighs, and a painful G♭–F sigh overlaid above 'Wunde' in bar 12. This creates an irregular three-bar phrase. In setting line 7, Schubert reverses Goethe's scansion for 'traur' ich' (bars 14–15) perhaps in order to emphasize the personal and active aspect of mourning the loss of one's first love. Schubert's setting of lines 2 and 4 captures another subtlety in Goethe's rhythm, in which 'Jene' implies a trochaic downbeat but could be delivered as an anacrusis to 'Tage', and 'jener' implies an anacrusis to 'holden' but could be emphasized as a downbeat. Schubert explores both possible metric construals: in bar 3 as an upbeat for line 2, and in bar 8 as a downbeat for line 4.

Goethe is even more subtle with his use of rhyme (see Figure 1). After an unrhymed quatrain, the following tercet provides echoing rhymes in reverse order: rhyme c, then a, linking to the third line and then the first, before sharing the closing sound, rhyme d, with the last line of the first stanza. As summarized in Figure 2, Schubert also creates a musical rhyme connecting lines 1 and 6 ('Tage' and 'Klage') by using the same rhythmic and melodic figure in bar 3 and bar 14, albeit transposed. Perhaps more exotically, Schubert achieves a kind of inverted rhyme in his treatment of the longer rhyme pairs 'eine Stunde' and 'meine Wunde', ending lines 3 and 5. As can be seen in Ex. 2, one ascends in the major in bar 7 whereas the other descends in the minor in bars 11–12 (note that each includes a chromatic pitch, as well). The last couplet, lines 8–9, achieves a remarkable compression of the first stanza, concatenating lines 1 and 4, with the slight adjustment created by the addition of the rhetorical 'who' in line 9. Schubert's solution to this compressed return has been noted; since the fourth phrase is a parallel variant of the second, the connection from line 1 to line 4 will sound perfectly natural.[15] But the near-exact, refrain-like return setting of lines 1 and 4 demands that Goethe's important (and marked) addition of 'wer' (bar 19) be slipped in as an innocuous, unmarked anacrusis. Thus, while Schubert respects the formal music of the refrain, he loses some of the idiosyncratic music of Goethe's changed accentuation and rhetorical emphasis.

Since tonal motion has taken line 4 to A♭, not unlike the first half of a rounded binary form, Schubert faces a problem. His return section beginning in F minor in bar 17 will also modulate to A♭, with a conclusive cadence in the vocal line in that key. In order to end the song in F minor, as appropriate to the tragic loss being mourned, he simply echoes the last measure of the voice, transposed down to F minor. Thus, the tonal problem has become an expressive opportunity to achieve *thematic* closure. Schubert has already set up the expressive troping of minor (tragic loss) and relative major (glowing memory) by their contiguity in bars 1–2; 'poetic closure' in bars 21–22 is achieved by emphasizing this striking emblem of the unbridgeable gulf between a beautiful past and a desolate present.[16] Furthermore, Schubert here achieves what he could not in 'Wandrers Nachtlied II' – a suitably laconic close. The final bar both reverberates with, and expressively reverses, the hopeful recasting of memory suggested by the preceding close in A♭ major.

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15   Newbould, *Schubert*, 52.
16   For this strategy of thematic closure in poetry, see Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: Or Why Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

Goethe's lines are fairly discrete, despite the one enjambment noted earlier. Schubert's vocal setting corresponds precisely, but his accompaniment allows him to create other 'enjambments' via harmonic and textural continuities that link lines 1–2, and 5–6–7, as well as 3–4. In this way, he avoids the sense of superficial parallelism (which Schoenberg might have dismissed as 'primitive'). Lines 5–7 constitute a dramatic middle section, introducing a new and fairly consistent texture of eighths in the left hand, an *empfindsamer*, lamenting chain of sigh figures in the melody, and an overlaid sigh in bar 12 to emphasize the painful 'Wunde'. This turn to intimate enactment reveals that the lost beauty of the past is tied to a very specific loss, that of the beloved. An operatic, augmented-sixth-to-V half-cadence in F minor, bars 15–16, supports the strong linear drive to cadence in the voice, $\hat{6}$–$\hat{5}$–$\hat{4}$–$\hat{3}$–$\hat{2}$–$\hat{1}$, with its final drop from $\hat{1}$ to $\hat{5}$ undermining the 'verlor'ne' (lost) aspect of 'Glück'(happiness). The low tessitura at this point also dramatizes the inexorable descent of 'Klage' (lament).

Schubert also borrows from a more distant past in his use of the pavane rhythm (long–short–short), both in the opening and at the point of return in bar 17.[17] This same rhythm is used to begin both settings of 'Wandrers Nachtlied II', even though these are set in the major mode.[18] The long–short–short motto rhythm, also characteristic of the canzona, may have been used by Schubert to evoke a venerable, ritual solemnity, whether tied to mourning (minor mode) or the spiritual evocation of nature (major mode).

A closer look at Schubert's harmonic setting moves us into Schoenberg's realm of purely musical equivalents for deeper poetic meanings. Here, Schubert is masterful in his enhancement of the psychological – we are led to feel, in an embodied way, what it is that Goethe's less intensely lyrical poem can only state. I will mention only one set of related examples. Bar 11 features a tortured descent with 7–6 implied chain suspensions. The chromatic reversal of E♮ to E♭ in the bass of bars 11–12 intensifies this sense of negation, but it has been well prepared thematically. Compare:

a. bars 2–3, where the sudden insistence on V/A♭ slips away chromatically (E♭–E♮) for the deceptive return of F minor, now as vi;
b. bar 3, where E♭ marks another positive shift in the modulation to A♭, as V4/3/IV; and
c. bar 7, where E♮ yearns upward, as a retardation that breaks through positively to F (as third of the IV of A♭).

Having examined several aspects of Schubert's setting, what might we conclude? On the one hand, Schubert (necessarily) overwrites the music of the poem in several ways. The trochaic tetrameter of the poem is distorted by Schubert's forcing of syllables into a dactylic foot (including the pavane rhythm

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17   For 'pavane rhythm', see Georgiades, 'Lyric as Musical Structure', 89. The long–short–short motto is characteristic of some (but not all) openings of pavanes and early allemandes (see examples, respectively, in Willi Apel, *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700*, trans. and rev. Hans Tischler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972): 240 (Fig. 235, 2) and 259 (Fig. 257). The motto rhythm on a single pitch is a formulaic opening for the chanson and its instrumental transcription or intabulation, the canzona (see Arthur J. Ness, 'Canzona' entry in *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. Don Michael Randel [Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986]: 136–8).
18   Interestingly, Schubert's setting of Goethe's first 'Wandrers Nachtlied' (1776) was composed on the same day as his setting of 'Erster Verlust': 5 July 1815.

of the opening), and by his durational expansion of key words. Thus, the irregular but rhythmic flow of 'speech sounds' is perturbed in specific ways by Schubert's differences in duration and accentuation. There is unfortunately a loss of weight on unaccented words such as 'Wer', which would have had more rhetorical force in an oral performance of Goethe's poem. Finally, the intonational curves or 'speech sounds' of the poem are overwritten by the melody, with its emphasis on key words. On the other hand, Goethe's lyric, as I've hinted, is not as poetically musical as his near-perfect 'Wandrers Nachtlied II', and Schubert's various phrase-structural, harmonic and tonal enhancements in 'Erster Verlust' enrich the meaning through both exemplifications and departures from the music of Goethe's poem.

We might conclude that in the case of 'Erster Verlust' Schubert's overwriting can be justified, and not merely because he has respected much of the music of the poem – its lines, its rhymes and its formal structure. His expansions of words for emphasis are far less troubling here than were the sentimentalizing repetitions in his setting of 'Wandrers Nachtlied II'. But, more importantly, his melodic and rhythmic overwriting, when coupled with the depth of harmonic and tonal detail, has significantly enriched a poem whose lines are not nearly as evocative as those of 'Wandrers Nachtlied II'.[19]

Neither independent poem nor subsequent musical setting need be the governing agent in the negotiation of text-setting. If a composer meets the poem's music at least halfway, then his or her setting may well transcend, in artistic value, the poem itself. If, however, the poem near-perfectly embodies meaning in its own music, composers might be well advised not to attempt an alternative musical setting. Goethe – perhaps fortunately for us – never had the power of veto that present-day poets possess in controlling the musical setting of their poems, at least during the span of their copyright. Yet Goethe need not have been unduly concerned that a single musical setting could ever permanently displace the music of the poem in its own right (unless, when overly sympathetic to the music, listeners or critical scholars neglect to give the poem's own music its due consideration).

But why might Schubert (and Beethoven) have composed multiple settings of certain of Goethe's poems, notably the lyrics from Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister*? The continual resetting of these poems suggests awareness that one can never capture enough of the richness of their poetic music, and perhaps also recognition that the individual music of a lyric poem is inevitably overwritten by any musical appropriation.

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[19] 'Erster Verlust', however, would continue to attract later composers, notably Felix Mendelssohn, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Hugo Wolf.