PART I

Contexts: musical, political, and cultural

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1 Realism transformed: Franz Schubert and Vienna

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> On one very beautiful October afternoon . . . they got out at Nussdorf and immediately looked to see whether they could see the thick smog which would always hover over the city, breeding diseases – but they did not find it; rather on the right were beautiful green mountains and on the left beautiful green meadows. Above them rose a sundrenched, gray and delicately chiseled tower – the spire of St. Stephen's. Fashionably dressed figures were strolling by; carriages bearing attractive white numbers on their drivers' seats criss-crossed, carrying beautiful men and women seated inside. The coachmen's faces, owing to their especially fine appearance, betrayed not the slightest sign of the unhealthy air of the place.[1]

This was the way the eminent Austrian author and painter Adalbert Stifter (1805–68), writing during the mid 1840s, recalled his first impression of Vienna. He penned this description in a thinly veiled autobiographical sketch about himself and two friends who came to Vienna to enter the university. The year was 1826. Stifter was twenty-one years old when he arrived from Bohemia to take up the study of law. Franz Schubert, already quite well known in the city, was twenty-nine and living with his close companion Franz von Schober, two blocks from St. Stephen's.

To the young Stifter – and to most other literate contemporaries of his generation raised in the German-speaking regions of the Habsburg Empire – Vienna was already the stuff of legend. It was a place of seductive paradoxes and symbol of both past grandeur and modernity. Danger, opportunity, squalor, and beauty existed side by side. Vienna with its own uniquely alluring surface possessed (as Stifter recounted) the power to render the ugly seemingly invisible, as if by magic. Yet the conditions of daily life in the city during Schubert's adult life were grim if not sinister. Vienna simultaneously ennobled and threatened the lives of those drawn to it.

That fall, in November 1826, at the Theater in der Leopoldstadt the wildly successful première of Ferdinand Raimund's *The Maiden from the Fairy-World*, or *The Peasant as Millionaire*, "an original romantic-magic fairy tale with song,"[2] took place. With Raimund a brilliant tradition of

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Viennese satire began, which extended to Karl Kraus in the next century. Here was a farce marked by a trenchant seriousness: high comedy filled with fantasy and exuberance that masked a deft literary and philosophical sensibility about the ironies and sufferings of urban daily life. The uneasy and conflict-ridden interdependence between the fantastic and the ordinary that appeared on Raimund's stage was a key to its popularity among the Viennese. Likewise, the moralistically sentimental and the cruelly candid (both visible and invisible) would be combined later in Stifter's prose and pictures.[3]

The dualities that lay at the center of Raimund's and Stifter's work matched the circumstances of life in Vienna between 1815 and 1830, an era of declining living standards, deteriorating sanitary conditions, overcrowding, increased poverty, and public begging. When Schubert died in 1828, there was still no sewage system in the city. The absence of a modern water supply system was particularly devastating. No new hospital had been built since the Allgemeine Krankenhaus opened in 1784. The oft-recounted scene of Schubert becoming violently ill at a meal shortly before his death ought not to divert the attention of the modern reader from how common encounters with bad food actually were. The quality of the diet and the food was a cause of constant concern throughout Schubert's life. The "disease breeding smog" Stifter saw was not a metaphor. It pointed to dangers particular to the fast-growing city.

In the case of Schubert, posterity has been inclined to find in his music sentiments and ideas quite distant from the mundane, even when the texts of many songs deal with the everyday. As time passes, it has become increasingly hard to imagine daily life in the 1820s, particularly in Vienna. Undeterred, we locate continuities of thought and emotion in aesthetic objects from the early nineteenth century, particularly in poetry and music. This procedure is in direct conflict with the enormous discontinuities in daily life between past and present. The differences in living conditions – hygiene, health, diet, transportation, dress, the acoustic environment, and perhaps the most poorly understood of all dimensions (but yet the most crucial to music), the perception and use of time – cannot be ignored.

Given the contemporary controversy over Schubert's sexual activities and proclivities[4] (aspects of behavior easily influenced by all the mundane dimensions of life enumerated above), yet another look at the particular world inhabited by Schubert is warranted. Dying children, grave diggers, wanderers, hunters, floods, the postal service, the inn, the signpost, and the hurdy-gurdy man all meant something to Schubert's contemporaries that may elude us for no other reason than the foreignness of the past.

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During Schubert's adult years a fashionable assertion and modern-sounding rhetoric of individuality became popular, only to be hounded by a seemingly unparalleled and novel consciousness of loneliness and vulnerability. Rural life was both idealized and abandoned. It became pitted against an irresistible new urban alternative. Nature took on its now all-too-familiar conceptual role as an emblem of innocence and simplicity. The urban emerged as the construct of a polar opposite: a man-made world that signaled artificiality and corruption. Commerce, industry, and the structure of society took on forms and contours understood as essential to progress and yet in conflict with common-sense mores and morality. The ambition to become rich and realize dreams of material and social advancement was dogged by the nagging sense that in the end all would be empty and destructive to any plausible notion of happiness.

The struggle with these currents and countercurrents became a hallmark of the best work done by the great Viennese artists and writers of the so-called Biedermeier and Vormärz eras.[5] The manner in which these paradoxes were dealt with set the terms of the subsequent nineteenth-century political and aesthetic struggle with modernity and its consequences. For Raimund and Stifter (and the consistently underrated Franz Grillparzer as well), who, unlike Schubert, lived into middle and old age, the severity of the artist's confrontation with reality first experienced in Vienna during the years between 1815 and 1848 left its mark. Grillparzer died in 1872 an embittered eighty-one-year-old man. Both Raimund and Stifter committed suicide.[6]

The appropriation of Schubert

Practically every biography of Franz Schubert, from Heinrich Kreissle von Hellborn (1865) to Maurice J. E. Brown (1958), has acknowledged the peculiar tradition of myth-making that has marked Schubert's posthumous reputation as man and musician. Each succeeding generation, to this day, has developed its own distinct portrait of the composer and maintained an intense psychological investment in it. The common thread, no doubt, has been the music. From Robert Schumann on, Schubert's music has inspired, perhaps on account of its undeniable susceptibility to personal and intimate appropriation, the compulsion to mold some sort of reassuring account of the composer's life and personality.[7]

The late twentieth-century debate about Schubert's sexual orientation and behavior, in this sense, might have been predicted. Despite

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the insights it has brought, it remains an instance of a familiar historiographical habit. The effort to pin down facts surrounding Schubert's life, following the magisterial accomplishment of Otto Erich Deutsch, continues unabated.[8] However, progress in empirical research neither dampens nor eludes the enthusiasm for ideological appropriation.

The struggle over the soul of Schubert has been most sustained and intense within Vienna, his native city. The *Schubertbund*, one of Vienna's leading choral societies, was founded in 1863 and quickly became a rallying point for schoolteachers and comparable segments of the Viennese middle class who increasingly felt themselves embattled during the Gründerzeit and the less prosperous decades that followed the Crash of May 1873.[9] The dedication of the Schubert *Denkmal* in 1872 in the Stadtpark was a major civic occasion. It was a gift to the city from the Wiener Männergesangverein, the leading male choral society of the city and an influential Viennese organization. The group performed at the dedication of the monument.[10] From the founding of the Männergesangverein in 1843, Schubert and his music were at the center of its self-image, ideology, and repertory. In 1888, the Society sponsored the transfer of Schubert's remains from the Währing Cemetery to the Central Cemetery.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, Schubert figured prominently in the social and aesthetic split within the musical community of Vienna surrounding the parallel careers of Brahms and Bruckner. Both composers and their adherents claimed Schubert for their side, aesthetically and politically. Brahms (who edited the symphonies for the complete edition [*ASA*]), critic Robert Hirschfeld, and scholar Guido Adler stressed the Classical and universalist aspects of Schubert. Insofar as Schubert's relationship to Vienna was concerned, liberal critics understood his image as that of a populist who united all forms of music from the dance to the concert hall.

But by the end of the century, Schubert had become integral to the conservative cultural politics of Vienna's mayor Karl Lueger and the Christian Social Party.[11] In the twentieth century, Austro-fascists and Austrian Nazis extended the stance taken by pro-Bruckner conservatives at the end of the century, who espoused forms of Austro-German patriotism. Schubert fitted neatly into a chauvinist vision of a local Viennese nativist cultural tradition at odds with Jews, modernism, and cosmopolitanism.[12] By the First World War, Schubert had emerged as the quintessential emblem of an anti-modern politics of nostalgia: the symbol of a simpler, more homogeneous, and coherent Viennese world.

This Viennese obsession with Schubert ironically points to a relatively

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unexplored vantage point for a fuller understanding of Schubert and his music as dimensions of a history that lie outside the narrow frame of biography. The years between 1815 and 1828 – which cover most of Schubert's career as a composer – form a rich, coherent, and, above all, decisive era in the development of Viennese culture and society. Vienna, it turns out, influenced Schubert.

No doubt Schubert's status as unique and genuinely a product of the local environs – as *echt* and paradigmatically Viennese – has been exaggerated. But that overemphasis has been partly a defensive historiographical effort by the Viennese designed to counteract the constant and covertly disparaging reminder that Vienna's international reputation as the city of music *par excellence* was based on the accomplishments of non-Viennese figures – including Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and Bruckner – composers whose relationship to the city was often either ambivalent or detached. The canonization of Viennese Classicism within the historiography of music as the generically undisputed foundation of a presumably universally valid system of music-making – or at least the pinnacle of the European tradition of art music – from the perspective of Viennese observers seemed implicitly, if not explicitly, to denigrate the substantive importance of the city. Soon after Schubert's death, his Viennese contemporaries took pains to locate the roots of his greatness within the city.[13] Grillparzer's great novella *Der arme Spielmann* from 1848 may be one of the first and most eloquent examples.[14]

The instinct to counteract a universalist discourse about Schubert with what, in modern terminology, would be regarded as a foray into "local knowledge"[15] – an ethnographic account and contextualization – flourished under the dubious patronage of pre-fascist and fascist politics in the years before 1945. However, cut off from this repugnant political agenda, the project of attempting to understand Schubert from within the seemingly narrow confines of Viennese life and culture may not be misplaced. The nasty and alluring details of the Vienna of the 1820s can go a long way in illuminating complex and hidden dimensions of Schubert's work. The end result may be a better-differentiated sense of universal aspects of Schubert's genius.

Interpretation of Schubert and his music needs to turn away from an overemphasis on psychology and personality understood as categories detached from local history. The implicitly normative psychological analysis and textual exegesis now directed at Schubert's life and work – particularly with respect to issues of sexuality – continue the traditional tendency to appropriate Schubert within universalist rhetorics. This tendency led past scholars and enthusiasts astray and generated the

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sentimentalized and maudlin portrait popularized, for example, in the biographical sketch written by La Mara (Marie Lipsius), which first appeared in 1868.[16] That portrait properly earned the contempt of scholars.

But the effort to render Schubert polemically unrespectable *vis-à-vis* some apparently unauthentic, neo-Victorian, and haute-bourgeois criteria (as construed perhaps in the writings of Theodor W. Adorno) is as laughable as the late nineteenth-century desire to make of Schubert a naïve, lovable, lovelorn, and long-suffering romantic idol – the cherished possession of smug and sentimental culture buffs who dominated musical life in late industrial capitalist societies. Today's superficially radical views share a common heritage with the 1916 Schubert of Heinrich Berté's operetta *Dreimäderlhaus*, based on Rudolf Hans Bartsch's novel *Schwammerl* (1912).[17]

Perhaps Schubert's greatness lies in the extent to which he was unabashedly local. We seem not to object to such an admission in the cases of Stephen Foster, Duke Ellington, George Gershwin, and Béla Bartók. We accept the local circumstances of culture and society in *fin-de-siècle* Prague as crucial to an understanding of Kafka without sensing any sacrifice to our appreciation of his greatness.

Music remains a tricky aspect of cultural and social history. The narrative of music history continues to cling to an implicit social theory of *autopoiesis* and the evolutionary coherence of an autonomous system supported by a cadre of professionals and near professionals, influenced only selectively by external factors.[18] The fact that of the significant cultural residues from the Vienna of Schubert's day (with the exception of furniture design)[19] little is known, appreciated, or understood in the non-German-speaking world apart from music (e.g. Beethoven, Lanner, and the elder Johann Strauss) – including the work of Grillparzer, Raimund, and Johann Nestroy, the graphic work of Moritz von Schwind, the paintings of Ferdinand Waldmüller, and the early poetry of Nikolaus Lenau – is a disturbing symptom of how music history is usually written. Music from within the history of Vienna has been extracted and placed artificially into a European-wide story of the development of music and located out of reach of the larger and intricately intertwined matrix of its immediate environment, making music nearly impossible to approach from the perspective of contemporaneous culture.

Viennese Schubert enthusiasts have realized that there appears, by contrast, little opportunity to localize Mozart or Beethoven. The fact that Schubert might be significantly revealed by reference to his local environment itself signals what has been acknowledged by all: that in Schubert's music something entirely new and different from either Beethoven or

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Mozart makes its appearance. Schubert presents a classic paradigm of how the local becomes the basis for a novel cultural formation whose transference outside of the local framework is dialectically the result of its contingency on the specifics of time and place.

The sense of the historical moment

Stifter approached Vienna knowing that it was a rapidly growing city.[20] His first impression focused on its role as a setting for intense human activity incompatibly located in the midst of a natural landscape. In the minds of Stifter and his contemporaries, the striking beauty of Vienna was associated with two moments from an irretrievable past: (1) the medieval world (idealized in the graphic work of the young Mortiz von Schwind from the 1820s and represented by St. Stephen's Cathedral); and (2) a Baroque world of architectural splendor and political greatness.[21]

Schwind's family home was adjacent to Vienna's most imposing monument of Baroque culture, Fischer von Erlach's masterpiece, the 1739 Karlskirche.[22] The gatherings by Schubert and his companions at Schwind's place were literally in the shadow of the Baroque. The Baroque implied not only the rebirth of Vienna after the defeat of the Turks in 1683, but also the subsequent exploits of Prince Eugen of Savoy and Maria Theresia. The Viennese of Schubert's day had already developed a nostalgia for the reign of Joseph II, from 1780 to 1790, which in retrospect was a unique decade of enlightened and progressive monarchical rule during which Vienna grew in stature physically, politically, and culturally.

Peter Gülke has appropriately cast doubt on the utility of the notion of historicism as a useful category for understanding the formal character and substance of Schubert's music.[23] But at the same time, Schubert came of age in a culture fascinated with the past. Schubert's contemporaries were eager to use external and recognizable hallmarks of history as frameworks in which to express contemporary aspirations.[24] Among the most visible aspects of this was the revival of interest in Greek poetry (amply reflected in Schubert Lieder), and the self-conscious interest in classicism in much of post-1815 architecture.

This cultural historicism thrived in an uneasy alliance with an ambivalent wonderment about modernity. The undeniable allure of Vienna as a center of culture and learning, of future possibilities and modern economic opportunity, persisted side by side with a profound pessimism. By the 1820s, the consequences of Napoleon's early success and ultimate defeat had become all too clear. Charles Sealsfield's notorious anonymous English-language tract *Austria as it is*, published in London in 1828, for

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all its reputed exaggerations, describes a world permeated by spies and repression – by corruption, deceit, and insensitivity to the plight of all but a handful. A rigid and backward-looking autocracy reigned, at whose head was a mean-spirited and willful Emperor (Franz I [1792–1835]). The guiding spirit of this regime was, of course, Clemens von Metternich.[25]

Eduard von Bauernfeld, Schubert's friend, described life in the 1820s this way in his 1872 memoir: "Today's youth cannot imagine the humiliating pressure on our creative spirits under which we, as young people – aspiring writers and artists – suffered. The police in general and censorship in particular weighed on us all like a monkey we could not get off our back."[26] The impression is not only of a police state in the sense of the application of control from above. Perhaps the crucial consequences were the deformation of personal behavior, the inability to trust, the reluctance to speak directly and honestly, and the relentless uncertainty that prevailed. One's private life could be invaded at any moment and one's sense of security undermined. Schubert himself was arrested.

But the fate of his friend Johann Senn in 1820 offers the best case in point.[27] A mixture of outward subservience, internal resentment, and self-loathing accompanied the will to survive and to avoid the heavy hand of state retribution and interference. Johann Mayrhofer, who wrote texts for forty-seven Schubert songs and with whom Schubert lived from 1818 to 1820, understandably succumbed to the temptation to acquiesce.[28] He became a censor at the end of 1820. From that point on, his relationship was no longer the same with his friends, who were able to maintain some residue of distance and resistance. After one unsuccessful attempt, Mayrhofer (who remained in the service of the state) committed suicide in 1836.[29]

The social circles in which Schubert traveled in the 1820s were the most traumatized by the politics of the era. The regime provided and controlled employment for literate and educated Viennese. Many of Schubert's friends and admirers were themselves civil servants. Rapid growth of bureaucracy in government and commerce was a hallmark of the era. Members of this "second society" were at once privileged and impotent – educated, cultivated, and also cowardly. They were, as one scholar put it, "obedient rebels," whose philosophical aspirations and everyday behavior constantly came into conflict.[30] Successful co-optation and tacit collaboration had their psychic costs.

One barometer of Viennese sensibilities with regard to the political and historical conditions of the 1820s was the striking success enjoyed by Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Not only was the work performed often, but excerpts from it found their way into the most unusual places.[31] Until

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1848, *The Magic Flute* maintained its popularity as an object of nostalgia, an innocent satirical weapon, and a screen for the oblique expression of dismay, detachment, criticism, and discontent.[32] Schubert's first dramatic essays around 1811–14, *Der Spiegelritter* (D11) and *Des Teufels Lustschloss* (D84), were "magic operas," works whose roots can be traced back to *The Magic Flute.*

In 1826, the year Stifter arrived, Grillparzer wrote a hilarious satire in response to the dissolution by the police of the *Ludlamshöhle*, a club of which Schubert may have also been a member.[33] Grillparzer's house was searched. In retaliation, he played upon the nostalgia for Joseph II and invented a "Part II" for *The Magic Flute.*[34]

But why *The Magic Flute*? It was the classic local example of serious political argument and critique masked as nearly incomprehensible childish fantasy and fairy tale. Written in German for the wider public of the Theater an der Wien rather than for the two imperial theaters – the Burgtheater and the Kärntnerthor Theater – it evoked the liberal ideas of the mid 1780s in Vienna – of Josephinism, Freemasonry, faith in reason and enlightenment, and the triumph of good over evil (symbolized in the triumph of humanist tolerance and compassion on behalf of the political community evident in the union of Tamino and Pamina). This ideological climate seemed more distant in time to the Viennese of the 1820s than the actual passage of time since the first performance might have suggested. The Metternich regime (particularly after the 1819 assassination of the writer August von Kotzebue that led to the hated Carlsbad Decrees) was in direct conflict with the claims of Emanuel Schikaneder's libretto and Mozart's idealism, so disarmingly communicated by the music. The picture *The Magic Flute* painted (most poignantly in the union of Papageno and Papagena) of the domestic harmony and personal happiness that devolved on all individuals from enlightened and benevolent government was perhaps most painful. This was the utopian symbiosis of the public and the private that Grillparzer turned on its head.

The crises of the early 1830s, which followed the July Revolution in Paris, and the March revolution of 1848 had their roots in the resentment and anger that festered in Schubert's Vienna in the 1820s. Metternich and Count Josef Sedlnitzky, the president of the Bureau of Police and Censors in Vienna from 1817 to 1848 (who perfected the system of spies, informers, and censors), understood this discontent well. He attempted to limit and control the development of *Vereine* (societies) and clubs, with the sole exception of charitable organizations dedicated to alleviating the sufferings of the poor (often through the sponsorship of benefit concerts, such as the one held on March 7, 1821, that saw the premiere of *Erlkönig*). Censorship became stricter as the 1820s wore on. Yet societies and clubs

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thrived. They were new social formations and the concrete evidence of change and the creation of a new kind of public realm. The state saw them as the direct heirs to the Freemasons of the late eighteenth century.[35]

Schwind's 1823 pencil drawing entitled *Loneliness* (*Einsamkeit*) appears initially as mythic and ahistorical. This eloquent expression of an interior isolation that was widely felt among Schwind's compatriots seems explicitly detached from any historical reference to the present by virtue of Schwind's generic landscape and the naked figure. Yet the image evokes a critique of the present. The figure is bent over a sword. The weapon signals both the recognition of the inherent possibility of resistance and its actual absence. The sword harks back to the Middle Ages – to the autonomy and public role associated with knighthood, a historical condition of individual self-realization inaccessible in the contemporary world to the office-holder and artist.[36] Schwind's image merits comparison to Schubert's song of the same title (D620), written in July 1818, which Schubert described as "the best I have done" (*SDB* 93).

Participation in the spread of literacy, the growth of bureaucratic functions, and the appearance of modern commerce and trade were restricted to a small segment of Viennese society. But that exclusivity only strengthened an allegiance to a central political and philosophical claim associated with the French Revolution: the legitimacy of privacy and the concept of individuality. A sense of cultural and stylistic enfranchisement was shared by Schubert's compatriots.[37] That belief stood in contradiction to the absolute power of the state to regulate life and the ongoing traditions of the high aristocracy.[38] What was most disturbing was the consciousness – in part enhanced by the growing market for books, music, amateur musical societies, and concerts – of a new public in society that was at once articulate, yet powerless and oppressed from above.

The discontent and ambivalence demonstrated by the strata of Viennese society located between the high aristocracy and the illiterate working poor took their toll in the private sphere. Much has been made of the evolution of a bourgeois ethos and morality, of a culture of respectability and domesticity in the years between 1815 and 1830. The painting and literature of the era certainly sought to portray a new urban, private, non-aristocratic world characterized by work, cultivation, marriage, and family. The self-image of the middle-class *pater familias* ensconced in his home, surrounded by wife and children – an ideal of rectitude, decency, manners, and morals – remained incomplete. However, even the notion that home and family were sacred was undermined daily by the state apparatus. The proud assertion of a distinct way of life marked by a culture that had grown up independently of inherited aristocratic status was humiliated by the monopoly of power.

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In the context of political repression, the arenas for the free expression of individuality were limited. Music, the art form least susceptible to political and ideological interpretation, flourished.[39] Future generations may look back at the outings to the countryside, the gatherings in inns, the reading societies, and the Schubertiades of the 1820s with envy and nostalgia. But the romanticized picture, best exemplified by Moritz von Schwind's famous retrospective *A Schubert Evening at Josef von Spaun's*, executed nearly half a century after the fact, in 1868, tells only one part of the story. In these close-knit circles – the evenings and afternoons of song, poetry, theater, and talk – suspicion, fear, and resentment were never far from the surface. The contradictions between the divisive and tightly regulated public sphere, and claims to friendship, intimacy, and spiritual nourishment through art and culture in the private and semi-public spaces of the 1820s took their toll.[40]

Moritz von Schwind's 1822 illustrations for *Robinson Crusoe* reflect not only his affection for the book but its local popularity.[41] The attraction to the tale of the lone shipwrecked individual, creating his own world, self-reliant, in command of not only the interior of his soul but external reality, also extended to the allure that America held for Schubert and his generation. America offered a stark, distant, and fantastic alternative to the grim absence of freedom in Vienna. What books did Schubert ask for on his deathbed? The novels of James Fenimore Cooper (*SDB* 820).[42]

The urban bourgeois of the 1820s internalized the gap between appearance and reality, between aspiration and possibility, by replicating external contradictions within the home. Schubert's peers and audience became an enthusiastic market for pornography. Pornography was a subcategory of an aesthetic genre central to Schubert's aesthetic: fantasy. In a culture of rising expectations hemmed in by autocracy, the literature of fantasy became wildly popular. The limitations of reality were circumvented by reading, seeing, and listening to the patently unreal; hence we find the continuation of the model of *The Magic Flute* in the fairy tale and farce theater of Raimund and Nestroy. This form of comedy did more than elude the censors. Unlike the tradition of high-art theater, particularly the forms of tragedy pursued by Heinrich von Collin and Grillparzer, it acknowledged a deeper realism behind mere representation.[43] It also underscored the existence of an individualized and protected private realm by permitting readers, observers, and listeners an indeterminate space for their own sentiments.[44]

Since secrecy and camouflage were essential tools of survival in the public world, the audience for fantasy in both theatrical and musical settings – as well as in the visual art of the period – was asked to respond to

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mental acts familiar to it in daily life: the creation of secrets, communication through codes, and the conjuring up of a shielded world. Pornography offered a comparable pleasure: the expression of desire and fantasy that undermined claims of public morality and decency that seemed to thrive as helpful ideological collaborators of repression.[45]

No consideration of art, music, and literature from the Vienna of the 1820s can be complete without taking into account the peculiar intrusions of the political into the personal lives of artists. The fact that much of Schubert's music was written for use in the social settings of his own local world makes the search for precise connections between his music and the political culture especially pertinent.

Conditions of life

The urban reality of the Vienna of the 1820s did not merely inspire fear. As Stifter recounted, the city exemplified death and disease. Without ever having seen the place, Stifter recognized the terrifying danger to his life. In an 1810 tract on the "medical topography" of the city, the following assessment of Vienna was offered:

> The tall houses placed alongside narrow streets and the oppressive living quarters possess air that is essentially trapped. This is made even worse by the breathing of many people, horses, and domestic animals. Through their lack of caution and various excretions – along with the outflows of activities tied to workshops – the situation is fouled to the highest degree. And one can surmise with certainty that no one takes in air that was not shortly before in the lungs of someone else. Apparently one needs only to breathe this air four times in order to transform the most necessary life giving substance into a frightful poison.[46]

In the 1820s, air was understood as the key to health. And nowhere was air more dangerous than in the city. Fear of the spread of disease was widespread well before the cholera outbreak of 1831.[47] The poetic attachment to the natural phenomenon of wind, for example, reflected an obsession with what was considered (not entirely without reason) the bearer of both death and defense against disease. The physical development of Vienna in the 1820s only helped to deepen the linkages between putrid air, mortality, and city life. The periodic flooding reminded the Viennese of their special vulnerability to the vagaries of nature.

Between 1810 and 1820, the population of Vienna grew by nearly twenty per cent, from 224,100 to 260,225.[48] No other city in the Empire matched it in size. Despite new construction, the occupancy of buildings in the city, which had averaged thirty-two in 1810, increased to thirty-

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four persons per structure. Overcrowding was a reality. At the time of Schubert's birth in 1797 the population of Vienna was 228,279, a number nearly comparable to the level of 1810. The years of the Napoleonic conflict interrupted a dynamic of population growth beginning in the mid eighteenth century. However, despite the wars, as in England, improvements in agriculture paralleled sustained growth in population, leading to a drift toward the cities, particularly within the Austrian lands of the Habsburg Monarchy in which the legal opportunity for internal migration had been liberalized after 1780. The post-1815 migration to the inner city and its immediate suburbs was perhaps most acutely felt in the summer, when heat exacerbated the decay of food, the stench from sewage, and the sense – precisely in the air – of a foul place. All this was made worse by the fact that the city was filled with animals, including stray dogs, whose danger to humans did not go unnoticed.

Since the size of the city decreased between the years 1805 and 1810, for Schubert's generation the growth after 1810 was even more striking. By the time of his death, Vienna had grown to over 300,000, and the density of occupancy had increased to thirty-eight persons per house.[49] Most of the population growth took place in the so-called suburbs of the old inner city, the ring of neighborhoods that are now integral parts of modern Vienna north and west of the Ringstrasse.

If one compares a map of Vienna in 1800 with one after 1830, one can see the gradual erosion of green areas in these suburbs. The immediate environment around Schubert's birthplace in Himmelpfortgrund, as well as in Rossau and Wieden where he later resided, retained many reminders of a rural past. Throughout Schubert's lifetime the city, despite its growth, was an unplanned and irrational mixture of the rural and the urban; the oldest and entirely urban part, the inner city itself, was circled by a large green area, the Glacis.

In the mid 1820s, the population (approximately 50,000) of the inner city (where Schubert lived continuously from 1818 to 1823 and from the autumn of 1826 to the summer of 1828) – the walled-in center of Vienna – was segmented in the following manner: nine per cent were members of the aristocracy and twenty per cent were servants. Forty-six per cent of the total population were dependants, women, and children. Fifteen per cent worked in the industrial sector, in artisan workshops, small factories, and mills. Six per cent worked in commerce and trade. The remaining five per cent were civil servants and professionals. Franz Schubert was part of this five per cent.[50]

During Schubert's lifetime, the city witnessed significant changes that clearly signaled a new age of industry and technology. Mechanized manufacture slowly made its appearance before 1830, particularly in textiles,

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creating a demand for workers. The system of manufacture, however, remained in the hands of artisan guilds. Metternich was against both political and economic liberalism and condemned industrial development in Vienna to stagnation by excessive regulation designed to strengthen the guild structure.

Yet modernity made its debut. The first chain bridge, the Sophienbrucke, was erected in 1825. In 1818, the first steamship could be seen on the Danube. These modern developments helped the circulation in the city but also deepened yet another source of fear regarding accidents resulting from urban street life. Any slight wound, internal injury, fall, or dog bite was ominous. But innovations continued. In 1820, the first balloon flights took place in the Prater. Most of the buildings by the leading architect of the era, Joseph Kornhäusel, were built in the 1820s. Other important new projects, such as the Polytechnical Institute and the Veterinary Science Academy, were set in motion.[51]

Between 1809 and 1820, the mortality rate in the city declined. But after 1820, it showed a reversal resulting from the city's growth, rising steadily until the mid 1830s. The obsession with death on the part of both Schwind and Schubert was, in this sense, commonplace and predictable. In the Habsburg Monarchy during the 1820s, the death rate ranged between twenty-eight and thirty per thousand per annum. (As a point of comparison, the death rate in 1949 was twelve per thousand.) In Vienna, the death rate was even higher, ranging between forty-four and fifty per thousand in the 1820s. (Again, as a point of contrast, in Vienna in the 1890s the rate was in the low twenties per thousand per year.) Death and its ceremonial rituals – requiems, funeral processions, and burials – were a visible and regular part of daily life.[52] Schubert's death at an early age was itself not extraordinary.

Changes in the character of the diet did not help the situation. Between 1826 and 1830, the price of beef increased precipitously, nearly thirty per cent, exceeding parallel increases in wages. In the last three years of Schubert's life, rising corn prices dramatically exceeded rises in wages.[53] Taking a longer view, between the late eighteenth century and 1830, the diet of the average Viennese, in terms of poultry, bread, butter, cheese, beer, fish, and wine, deteriorated. The supply of meat in Vienna showed either stability or decline between 1816, the year after the Congress of Vienna, and 1829, the year after Schubert's death. From 1823 to 1828 the drop in the level of meat consumption was greatest.

The aesthetic idealization of the rural world was not arbitrary fantasy; neither were the aestheticization of suffering and the obsession with the fear of death. As a result, the relationship of the individual to his or her own body and to those of others was ambivalent in a quite commonsensi-

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cal fashion. The body was an enemy. In a world without any relief from gastrointestinal discomfort or physical pain (with the exception of alcohol), with unequal access to clean water and rudimentary sanitation, the conception of pain and the definition of comfort or pleasure involved contrasts whose relationships to one another are different from our own. The popularity of social outings in the country among Schubert and his friends – in the open and windy air – can be explained in part by the sense that the danger of social contact was mitigated outside of the city. Both Schubert and Beethoven seized as many opportunities as possible to escape Vienna in the late spring, summer, and fall. They were conscious of desperate realities.[54]

The 1820s showed little improvement in other social conditions of life, particularly in an area dear to Schubert and his family: education. Despite formal legislation dating from 1805 requiring schooling, in part because of rapid population growth, by 1830 the situation had become intolerable. The regime was unsympathetic. The spread of even rudimentary literacy was suspect. Teachers were poorly paid and trained. The expectation for schooling, insofar as it existed, extended to only four grades. But there were few schools with four grades, and even fewer with two grades. The so-called remedial schools that were created to deal with those who did not or could not complete four grades were equally in short supply. In 1820 there were only sixty *Volksschulen*, 230 teachers, and 20,000 schoolchildren. Fifteen years later, despite a population increase of over thirty per cent, the number of schoolchildren had grown to merely 24,000, the number of teachers to 250, and the total number of schools to sixty-two.

The statistics for higher education give an even clearer picture of the extent to which the social circles in which Schubert traveled constituted a very small element of the city. In 1820, only 1400 students were in school beyond the age of twelve. The university's enrollment fluctuated during the decade of the 1820s between two and three thousand students, many of whom were not from Vienna itself.[55]

At the same time, Vienna remained impressive to its inhabitants. This unequaled urban center inspired a sense of beauty and awe. First, the attraction of the city, as Schubert expressed over and over in letters to his friends and family, was an antidote to a fear of loneliness (e.g. *SDB* 109 and 370). The city created for Schubert the unique opportunity for a social network that, despite its dangers, inspired the repression of anxiety about death and disease. Society hid from view the harsh facts and transmuted them as susceptible to both denial and aestheticization. Likewise, time – particularly in its smaller units – was precious, since a long and healthy life was never assured. The stability of personal existence that might give rise to a conception of time and expectations regarding the

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stages of life susceptible to rational planning and anticipation was, despite Benjamin Franklin's homespun advice, a phenomenon in Vienna, more characteristic of the mid nineteenth century after 1848.

Not surprisingly, in Schubert's Vienna, one of the most popular theories of health involved the invoking of moral standards. Luxury in diet (e.g. overeating and drinking) and clothes was suspect. Much in the spirit of Jean Jacques Rousseau's critique of progress and urban life, Viennese medical experts in Schubert's day, particularly the avid music lover Johann Peter Frank (1745–1821), cast a doubtful eye on the consequences of the so-called progress of civilization as realized in the sophisticated social character of urban life. Staying on the land and pursuing a simple life was healthy; living in the city, a modern daily existence was not. It was regarded as artificial. To live as Schubert and his companions did (e.g. diet, sleeping habits, socializing) was considered particularly dangerous in terms other than those tied to sexual behavior.[56]

But these theories contradicted the very appeal of the city. The apparent healthy appearance of Stifter's coachmen – whose employment, diet, and status made them logical victims of the unhealthy environment of the city – was evidence of the magical psychic power of the city, which resided not in the physical realities, but in the communal world and the enclaves of domestic surroundings. Stifter not only saw the hustle and bustle of happy people. He also recalled that as a student in the late 1820s he stood out in the cold gazing into the windows of the houses of members of the aristocracy and the "second society," imagining with envy the salon life to which he at that time had no access, but to which Schubert did.[57]

Furthermore, a new type of fantasy of perception and experience was inspired by the city. Stifter's young and eager visitors saw remnants of natural beauty to the right and left of the spire of St. Stephen's. What they saw were the familiar rural qualities of nature: mountains and meadows. The immediate physical impression was to surround modernity (e.g. Vienna) by representations of the absence of change. Modernity disappeared from view, shielding the danger. The threat presented by urban modernity to personal health and the world of nature – now cherished nostalgically as emblematic of things past – spurred the explosion of two forms of aesthetic expression in the 1820s: landscape painting and drawing, and fiction centered on the natural environment. The numerous contemporary depictions of natural phenomena and the prevalence of group portraiture set in the country – of the flight to the countryside to escape the stifling city – offered, through the act of viewing while trapped indoors in the city, an occasion to daydream beyond reality. Such landscapes hung in the apartments of Schubert's Viennese social equals. In

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their surface realism, these art works offered a psychic exit. Beneath the benign surface of repose was a longing, not only for an escape from the urban, but for an interior flight from the mundane.

Painting did not function as mere representation, but as a stimulus to personal emotion and thinking. In this sense painting was not dissimilar to music. As in the musical setting and instrumental accompaniment of an overtly bucolic narrative line in Schubert's Lieder, two levels of communication were at hand. For example, the Viennese viewers of Jakob Alt's 1836 *Blick aus dem Atelier des Künstlers* or landscapes by Thomas Benedetti or Schnorr von Carolsfeld from the 1820s – themselves migrants from villages and farms – were gazing out on a threatened, familiar world located in the past. They were reminded of the costs and broken promises of progress and the modern urban world.

Music and daily life

What has all this to do with Schubert's greatness as a composer?[58] In the first instance, one must consider the role of music-making in the political and social context of Schubert's Vienna.[59] The iconography of music-making from the visual art of the 1820s and 1830s points to three distinct but interrelated uses of music in Vienna to which Schubert responded. Music was a vehicle of a dialogue with oneself.[60] What differentiated music-making from reading was that it was not silent. Music alone retained a social character by being audible. What protected music's function as private communication, however, was its opaque meaning, particularly in its instrumental genres. Grillparzer's lone violinist in *Der arme Spielmann* or the young female at the piano were in dialogue with themselves, but at the same time were (often inadvertently) audible to others. Unpacking the meaning inherent in what was heard was as difficult as protecting the player from public exposure with respect to the expression of dangerous sentimentality.

Second (as was alluded to earlier), music functioned as the nominal and seemingly politically neutral occasion for social gatherings. One thinks not only of the Schubertiades but of the development in the late 1820s of public dancing halls.[61] Dancing, even under the repressive state apparatus, could not be eliminated. Music therefore developed as a language of social communication among contemporaries, often of covert messages at odds with surface meanings. Schubert participated in this aspect of musical life.[62] The silent moments of recognition and understanding that became part of the Viennese response to Ländler and waltzes were crucial to the popularity of dancing.

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Beyond the dance, the role of music in, for example, the Schubertiades was to provide a vehicle of communication that was relatively incorruptible. In a world where one could not trust even one's friends, music offered the possibility of circumlocution and secret communication without dishonesty, something hard to achieve with ordinary language. Music provided an ideal vehicle for making a point without having to admit having made it.

In this sense, public concerts were the least significant social occasions for music. Their function in Schubert's life was marginal and limited, however much they helped to further his local professional reputation. Likewise, music contributed to the effectiveness of Viennese theater. Raimund and later Nestroy, for example, wrote with intermittent musical accompaniments in mind. Given Schubert's lack of success as a composer of music for the theater, what emerged as significant for him was his popularity in the marketplace *vis-à-vis* printed sheet music. In a world of censorship, printed music possessed advantages over other forms of printed material. It was bought and sold in a climate less characterized by fear, even though it, too, had to receive official approval.

In the close analysis of Schubert's massive output of songs, it might be helpful to apply the kind of reasoning articulated by Leo Strauss in his essay "Persecution and the Art of Writing."[63] Schubert's musical settings of texts renders them, on the one hand, more radical than their linguistic content might suggest. Texts on love and nature, which seem entirely apolitical, can assume political character by virtue of their transformation through music. Alternatively, texts with narrative content that might possess overt political significance can be rendered apparently innocent by music. Schubert's innovation in song form may constitute a complex response to the need to communicate beyond the arena of private and psychological concerns; rather, the private realm is transformed and endowed with public meaning through music.[64] In this sense, Schubert may have manipulated his remarkable genius for originality, accessibility, and simplicity in melodic invention to use those very virtues, covertly, for communicating thoughts entirely at odds with accepted verities endorsed by surface qualities.[65]

The third function of music in Schubert's age was as a dimension of intimate and domestic life. The minimal unit in this regard can be considered two people. The use of music in courtship and seduction is well documented. Perhaps one of the most popular instruments across all layers of society in Schubert's day was the guitar. Schubert's contemporaries in the 1820s recognized the fact that it was relatively inexpensive, portable and easy to maintain (by comparison to a violin). It required less skill to make it palatably usable. Error was less excruciating to the ear, yet the

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instrument provided a minimal harmonic accompaniment for the voice.[66]

Beyond the communication between two lovers, music created codes of friendship. The ubiquity of four-hand music and of chamber music, particularly the string quartet, mirrored the perceived importance of music as a family activity. This was especially true in Schubert's Viennese surroundings. Insofar as he was part of a culture that held to the notion of family as a sign of moral health, cultivation, and upward social mobility, one can point to the composition of Schubert's early quartets for use with his brothers and father. The borderlines between the use of music within the family and in semi-public settings and public concerts were not strict in the 1810s and 1820s. Instrumental chamber music offered the most fruitful and complex structure for protected interpersonal communication that was both direct and ambiguous.

In Schubert's lifetime, published reviews in journals of his music, particularly in Vienna, focused on three striking qualities. What observers noticed as distinctive was Schubert's capacity to use music to paint the external world and internal sensibilities with uncanny subtlety. The metaphor of painting recurs in the critical literature throughout his lifetime.[67] Second, Schubert was understood as having a penchant for extreme harmonic contrast.[68] Sudden, seemingly unprepared modulations and unexpected relationships signaling shifts in mood are described in detail. The highlighting of these two qualities by contemporaries suggests that they were aware that Schubert was reinventing the form of the song in order to expand its communicative vocabulary. The logic behind and impulse for this ambition may have been clear to Schubert's Viennese contemporaries.[69] However, reviewers from outside the context of Vienna discussed Schubert's innovativeness using a traditional framework of reference to past musical practice. Schubert's craft was deemed an aesthetic issue involving matters of comparative skill and a command of extant traditions.

A third quality noticed by Schubert's contemporaries was his use of the "fantasy" form. Insofar as formal procedures in sonata form, particularly in the use of established harmonic patterns, had become familiar through the work of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven and their lesser contemporaries, these procedures, by tradition, could have developed into ideological signifiers and been assumed to have comprehensible norms.[70] In Vienna, however, the breaking up of formal expectations and the use of the "fantasy" form, particularly in music for solo piano, was not understood as a phenomenon motivated by the quest for mere aesthetic originality. As the reviewer in the *Wiener Zeitung* of 1823 observed, the overt freedom of the fantasy from formal expectations mirrored the need

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to be "freed from the shackles" of past expectations.[71] The language of criticism took on meaning that permitted a wider ideological interpretation. The fantasy form allowed new music to elude facile linkages between music and ordinary meaning, particularly in terms of well-established norms and ideas. The need to develop a distinctive form of expression and communication, protected from the state but yet capable of illuminating the real in life, inspired Schubert to originality not only in song form but in instrumental genres as well.

The source of Schubert's extraordinary expansion of the expressive vocabulary of the song, particularly the relationship of accompaniment to the vocal line, as well as his experiments in patterns of text-setting, points to the effectiveness of the song as a means of achieving authentic musical communication within the particular circumstances of Vienna. Schubert's explicit attachment to Vienna hints at his recognition of a nexus of unique inspirations that derived from the contradictions and difficulties of existence within the city. The surface of the song in the Schubertian oeuvre lends itself to the depiction of contradictions between appearance and reality. The song form possesses natural dualities: between voice and accompaniment, between text and tonality, and contrasts between tonality and mood over time. The major–minor alternations and the parallel shifts between the real and the supernatural are perhaps the most obvious examples of Schubert's rendering of contradiction and paradox in music.

If a central issue for Schubert's generation was the tension between internal isolation and the consequences of adaptation – between past and present, rural and urban, the internalized legacy of expectations of freedom and individuality, and the external realities of autocracy – then the song, in Schubert's hands, was supremely useful and adaptable. Schubert's song literature therefore constituted a major step in the differentiation of realist strategies in the making of art. Raimund and Nestroy resorted to satire, fantasy, and farce. Stifter and Grillparzer struggled to adapt conventional prose narrative and dramatic forms. In the short form of text and music, Schubert created his own complex system of illuminating the real. The overt – the representational – was communicated as a conduit to an often contradictory underside. The experience of independent and opposing dimensions of life, perhaps possible only in music with text, fitted the real demands that emerged from daily life in the Vienna of the 1820s. Schubert invented a means of psychic and representational realism that helped to catapult music into a preeminent role, outstripping both literature and the visual arts in the culture and society of the Vienna of his time.

The chronological biographical narrative of Schubert's life can

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support much of this speculation. In his poem entitled "Time" written in 1813, the sixteen-year-old Schubert linked time, music, and social communication. Music is not only a conventional means for the praise of God. Music captures a fleeting moment and renders it permanent (*SDB* 31–32). In 1816, Schubert responded to Mozart's music by noting how it showed "a bright, clear, lovely distance" caught in the "darkness of this life" (*SDB* 60). In a diary entry from the same year, Schubert mused on the hypocrisy of ordinary speech. Good character is hard to reveal through speech. Speech is easily misunderstood, and often "honest language" is derided. The September 8th diary entry from 1816 is filled with reflections on how human nature carries within it seemingly contradictory qualities (*SDB* 70–71.) By 1820 Schubert asserted that music offers a "godlike" insight into the "frail and human world."[72]

The references to music throughout the 1820s by Schubert and his closest companions consistently pointed to the power of music to reveal the truth in speech; to make words function as they should, and to render genuine human communication possible. In Schubert's lost notebook from 1824 the composer credited his understanding of music to his ability to rescue good from the evils of life.[73]

By 1821, Schubert's recognition of the special function of music in maintaining friendship was firmly established. The capacity for the private and secret communication essential for friendship was best realized through music. Music was a necessity within an imperfect world, a transitional experience perhaps rendered moot by a utopia: "As brothers quietly united strive for a freer, better earth, be this my theme. The plan I cherish, which once attained, my song may perish." Music was essential in a painful and terrifying world. "Rend our ears with hideous chords; only where the tempests are raging shall we find concordant words."[74] Vienna had left its painful but redeeming mark.

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