PART II

Schubert's music: style and genre

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6 Schubert's songs: the transformation of a genre

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In the late eighteenth century the composition of Lieder was principally an amateur pursuit, taken up by composers who concentrated their efforts on this genre alone. Composers of the more acclaimed public genres, whether instrumental music or opera, only occasionally turned to song as a diversion, which explains why there are so few truly distinguished songs by Mozart and Beethoven. Even the most memorable of their songs only marginally challenge the amateur status of the genre, or else, like Beethoven's *Adelaide*, they resemble Italian aria more than the simple folk manner of the German Lied. Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98, is the only attempt by a composer of stature to compose a more ambitious work from songs so deeply invested in the *Volkston*. Yet significantly, the immediate roots of Beethoven's only song cycle lie much less in the tradition of the north-German Lied, with which he had had contact from his earliest years in Bonn, than in his extensive confrontation with British folksong resulting from the arrangements he was commissioned to provide for the popular series of Irish, Scotch, and Welsh folksongs issued by the English publisher George Thomson.[1] (Haydn, too, had been enlisted in this enterprise.) The deep association of Lied with the naïve and heartfelt expression of folksong must have served as a form of restraint as well as inspiration for Beethoven, defining both the character and the outer limits of the genre.

The songs that would eventually be published by Franz Schubert as his Opus 1 and Opus 2, *Erlkönig* (D328) and *Gretchen am Spinnrade* (D118), had already been composed when Beethoven's cycle went to press in 1816. While both composers lived and worked in Vienna at the same time, they were of different generations, different national origin, and brought up in somewhat different musical environments. Beethoven was forty-six when he wrote *An die ferne Geliebte*, an isolated work in his career, Schubert only seventeen when he composed *Erlkönig* and *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, the works with which he would launch his reputation, and it is Schubert's songs, not Beethoven's, that have been credited with elevating the stature of the genre.

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Although by the later eighteenth century it was instrumental music that was celebrated as the highest form of musical art by avant-garde critics, the public vocal genres of opera, and to a lesser extent Mass, never really lost their former prestige. The Lied, on the other hand, suffered from being understood as amateur *Hausmusik*, a status fostered by the eighteenth-century ideal of strophic song which held musical invention to a modest scope, giving priority to the expressive powers of the singer over those of the composer. It is significant that Schubert's debut works are both very dramatic in character: neither Goethe's ballad "Erlkönig" nor Gretchen's song from *Faust* lent themselves to the contained forms of strophic Lied. This is not to say that Schubert avoided strophic settings, but the ideals of *Volkston* and strophic song were not for him aesthetic constraints as they so often were for Beethoven, rather only one option among many expressive possibilities (an option he would continue to draw on whenever it suited his purpose for the rest of his career). Interestingly, when Josef Hüttenbrenner reviewed *Gretchen am Spinnrade* for the *Sammler* in May of 1821 he was concerned to establish that Schubert's song was *equally* as original as Beethoven's *Adelaide* and Mozart's *An Chloe* and *Abendempfindung*. It was these composers he hoped to align Schubert with, not the *Liederkomponisten* like Johann Rudolf Zumsteeg or Johann Friedrich Reichardt, many of whose works had served Schubert as direct models (*SDB* 177).

Numerous compositional models for Schubert's earliest songs have long been recognized and documented. There are the big dramatic *scenas* of Zumsteeg (their reputation forever fixed as "songs that influenced Schubert" by Eusebius Mandyczewski's decision to reproduce them in an appendix to the Schubert song volumes of the old Breitkopf und Härtel edition [*ASA*]); the strophic folk-like songs in the tradition of Reichardt and Carl Friedrich Zelter; the ballads, and modest dialogue songs, usually involving an opposition of major and minor for the two characters, abundantly represented among the Lieder of Zumsteeg. The proliferation of songs that behave as recognizable types – whether or not we can identify specific models for them – continued for quite a number of years, even after the composition of songs as original in formal and harmonic innovation as *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, *Erlkönig*, *Rastlose Liebe* (D138), and *Nähe des Geliebten* (D162), all written by 1815. (Can it be coincidence that so many of the most original early songs are settings of Goethe?)

Yet the recognition that the genre itself was undergoing a radical transformation must have come fairly early. Robert Schumann not only acknowledged it but located the development after Beethoven when he observed that the only genre to have made true progress since Beethoven was song.[2] Today it is above all the two song cycles to texts by Wilhelm

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Müller, *Die schöne Müllerin* (D795) and *Winterreise* (D911), that are celebrated as Schubert's greatest achievement. We must remember, however, that in Schubert's day these songs were more frequently performed individually than as complete cycles – at least in public. While there is no doubt that Schubert performed the cycles in entirety for the circle of friends who always served as his first audience (such a performance of *Winterreise* is documented), the first complete public performance of *Die schöne Müllerin* did not take place until 1856.[3] Even at its publication in 1824, the work was released in multiple volumes issued months apart. Unlike either *An die ferne Geliebte,* or the later song cycles of Schumann, all of the songs in the Schubert cycles can stand as independent songs on the basis of their structure and formal closure, although only relatively few are actually effective performed alone. Schubert's transformation of the Lied began with the individually composed song and this remained the basis of his conception even in the song cycles.

Like many other early nineteenth-century composers of Lieder, Schubert devoted considerable practice to inventing memorable melodies and discovering ways to emphasize the meaning of striking images in a poem through expressive changes in declamatory style, texture, figuration, or harmony. Leafing through the earliest song volumes of the old Breitkopf edition[4] can seem like browsing through a lexicon of expressive devices cued to poetically charged images. The music responds with infinite inventiveness to each new image or mood. At the other extreme, it is also true that some of Schubert's most frequently performed songs do not exceed the expectations of even the most modest parlor song: with all its naïve charm and memorability, the lovely *Heidenröslein* (D257), also to a poem by Goethe, stays entirely within the bounds of an amateur aesthetic.

However, the most ambitious of the early songs show that the impressive large-scale continuity of ideas that would eventually lead Schubert to the sustained expression of the two great Müller cycles was already at his command at the age of seventeen – even if inconsistently. As is well known, Schubert sometimes set the same poem more than once over a distance of some years. The multiple settings of the Mignon and Harper songs from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* register Schubert's shifting and increasingly personal conception of the genre. Even more stark is the difference in compositional strategy between the two settings of *Am Flusse* (D160 and D766, a Goethe text composed in 1815 and again in 1822), where what we might call an additive effort to mimic textual images in striking harmonic and textural changes in the earlier setting (two measures of arpeggiated chordal accompaniment at "you [my songs] sang only of my love," answered by two measures of operatic

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pathos – "but she now scorns my constancy" – and, later, bitter recitative – "you were inscribed in water, so flow away with the stream") gives way to a long-range cumulative conception that allows poetic nuance to be registered without interrupting the larger sweep. In the later song, the sustained figuration in the piano evokes the continuously flowing river, its motion subtly modulated by the two swerves to a distant tonic which dissipate before they resolve ("Flow away, beloved songs, *into the sea of oblivion*"; "*You were inscribed in water,* so flow away with the stream") and the unsymmetrical wave-like phrase structure that gives musical expression to Goethe's symbolic image of the poet's songs dissolving into oblivion. The perpetual motion of the river's flow is the background image that pervades the poet's reflection. Schubert has conceived an analogous musical flow, a symbol that fuses the river with the poet's songs "inscribed in water." In the greatest of the early songs hints of this latter technique are already very much in evidence. (For a discussion of *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, perhaps the most masterful early example, see Charles Rosen's chapter "Schubert's inflections of Classical form" in this volume.)

Indeed, Schubert's control in the most impressive of the early songs already extended to a remarkable range of compositional parameters that had never before been turned with such concentration to the modest genre of song (and which he himself would not master with the same success in purely instrumental genres for several years to come). The command of harmonic implication in *Nähe des Geliebten*, for example, in which G flat, so remote from the opening harmony, is gradually revealed as tonic, is hardly less sophisticated than the carefully directed root motion by fifths that underlies the dissonant surface of the opening phrase of *Dass sie hier gewesen* (D775), progressing inexorably toward the dominant of the pure C major that will sound in the refrain (see Exx. 6.1 and 6.2).[5] One of the most concentrated and exotic-sounding songs Schubert ever wrote, the Rückert song was composed some seven years after *Nähe des Geliebten*, in 1822. In both songs the focused progression from a remote point to a sharply defined tonic through a mass of surface dissonance is used to capture a similar poetic idea: the mental act of conjuring a beloved – distant in *Nähe des Geliebten*, near enough to have left behind a scent on the breeze and to induce a lover's tears in *Dass sie hier gewesen* – into a vivid and sensual presence.[6]

The imagination with which Schubert was able to conceive and control musical motions that would stimulate an analogy with some physical or mental act was unmatched by any of his contemporaries (although others before him had experimented with some of the requisite techniques, including the perpetual motion figurations so characteristic of Schubert's most famous songs).[7] Schubert's harmonic ambition and originality in

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Example 6.1 *Nähe des Geliebten* (D165), mm. 1–5

Example 6.2 *Dass sie hier gewesen* (D775), mm. 1–18

the songs was remarked from the moment they first began to appear in print in the early 1820s – admittedly, not always with admiration.[8] (Only about a third of the roughly six hundred songs ever made it into print during Schubert's lifetime.) The rich palette and extreme economy of Schubert's modulatory technique allowed him to register minute nuances of feeling without breaking up the larger flow of events. Whether in the fluid modulations of the Friedrich Schlegel setting *Die Gebüsche* (D646),

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a song which seems designed to test how far the pull of a tonic can extend, or in the frequent shifts in mode in *Winterreise*, carefully calibrated to distinguish events as the wanderer's memories, fantasies, or present experience, modulation through tonal space is used with unparalleled effect to mimic the movements of inner experience. We shall want to return to this point presently.

But first, another technical innovation of Schubert's songs – the originality of his placement of the voice in the texture – deserves a separate discussion. In contrast to the folksong-based style that even Beethoven rarely exceeded in his songs – in which the singer's melody dominates and the piano is largely given the role of accompaniment, often doubling the melody in the right hand – Schubert's songs are full of remarkable inventiveness in the positioning of the voice within the texture. (Again, we may discover occasional earlier precedents for Schubert's departure from the rigid identification of the vocal line with the melody: the pedal G sustained by the singer while the piano has the tune in *Wo die Berge so Blau*, the second song in *An die ferne Geliebte*, is a rare exception for Beethoven, for which an even earlier model may be found in Reichardt's *Erlkönig*.) Schubert frequently delighted in exploiting the restless and uncanny effect of a vocal line treated as a functional bass, sometimes doubling it in the left hand to create a more hollow sonority. The technique is sustained through the entire first stanza of the exquisite *Der Wanderer* (D649), on a text of Friedrich Schlegel, in which the moonlight advises the wanderer always to stay on the move, never to seek a home: "Ever onward to others you shall pass, you shall wander, nimbly escaping all complaints." The stable chorale-style counterpoint of the introduction is suspended the moment the singer enters – a wanderer whose path is guided by the bright light of the moon. The feeling that the harmony is ungrounded comes from a combination of the unusually high register of the bass line and the avoidance of contrary motion between the outer voices, so fundamental to a perception of harmonic stability: even when the singer and left hand supply the bass notes it sounds as if the true bass has dropped out (see Ex. 6.3).

In the expansive and marvelously original *Im Walde* (D708), based on a poem by Schlegel celebrating imagination and creativity, a similar device emerges without preparation from a more typical accompanimental texture and is used in conjunction with a series of fluid modulations marked *ppp*, to seize a mysterious image in the poem: the gentle sound of the rushing streams that transform pain into creative blossoms. The harmony just prior to the textural change is inflected expressively up a half step from the tonic E major to F. Suddenly the left hand leaps up into the tenor register where it takes command of the harmony, staking

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Example 6.3 *Der Wanderer* (D649), mm. 1–7

out a path to the leading tone of C major. The broken chords in the right hand oblige with a protracted dominant seventh before the voice reenters in C, mysteriously doubling the left hand's false bass line beneath the continued broken chords in the right for a full seven measures. Exquisitely beautiful, the passage is also painfully unstable. The magical transformation is completed when the singer again splits off from the left-hand tenor, and the true bass gradually returns (see Ex. 6.4).

Later in the same song the poet's powerful image of creative energy as a breeze that courses through the soul ("Schöpferische Lüfte Wehen fühlt man durch die Seele gehen") is rendered in another series of astonishingly free harmonic turns governed by the tenor. This time singer and left hand work together in contrary motion, but it is the tenor seizing control of the harmonic direction through a series of chromatic descents beneath the rapid figuration in the right hand that allows for the fluid modulations – from A flat to C flat to D in the space of ten measures. While the bass does not actually drop out this time, with each repetition of the phrase it merely doubles the harmonic initiative of the tenor line. Metaphysical states are represented in so many of these songs by a sudden loss of the true bass, the voice that grounds the harmony.

There are many subtle examples of left hand and singer working together in the song cycles, often doubling each other's lines for significant stretches, as for example in the songs *Auf dem Flusse* and *Die Krähe* from *Winterreise*. In the former, the expressive power of the melodic doubling of the voice in the left hand turns on an extraordinary sensitivity to

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Example 6.4 *Im Walde* (D708), mm. 68–83

68
Gott hin - auf ge - fo - - - dert.

mf *ff* *f*

72

p *dim.*

75
E - wig's Rau - schen sanf - ter Quel - len zau - bert Blu - men

ppp

78
aus dem Schmerz, e - wig's Rau - schen sanf - ter Quel - en

81
zau - bert Blu - men aus dem Schmerz, Trau - er doch in

ppp

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Example 6.5 *Auf dem Flusse* (D991, 7), mm. 1–12

Example 6.6 *Auf dem Flusse* (D991, 7), mm. 41–47

the register in which the doubling sounds. The heart-stopping effect of the hushed drop of the harmonic foundation down a half step to D sharp minor at "wie still bist du geworden" ("how still you have become") is reinforced by the dramatic drop of the left hand into the lower octave. At the rhyming phrase "erkennst du nun dein Bild?" ("do you now recognize your image?") the effect is magnified as the bass drops still another octave while the singer pushes upward to make an emotional cadence an octave above the earlier phrase (see Exx. 6.5 and 6.6).

One of the most celebrated instances of a vocal line departing from its conventional role as melody-bearer occurs in *Die liebe Farbe* from *Die schöne Müllerin* where the interaction between singer and left hand beneath the pulsing F♯'s in the right hand is poignantly expressive: the vocal line begins by providing the functional bass, with the left hand outlining the same contour mostly in thirds above; after the first phrase the

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Example 6.7 *Die liebe Farbe* (D795, 16), mm. 1–11

Etwas langsam

1. In
2. Wohl-
3. Grabt

1.Grün will ich mich klei - den, in grü - ne Trä - nen - wei - den: mein Schatz hat's Grün so gern,
2.auf zum fröh-li - chen Ja - gen! wohl- auf durch Heid und Ha - gen! mein Schatz hat's Ja - gen so gern,
3.mir ein Grab im Wa - sen, deckt mich mit grü - nem Ra - sen: mein Schatz hat's Grün so gern,

two lines cross, allowing left hand and singer to exchange positions. As the left hand descends below the voice into the true bass register in preparation for the first cadence, nostalgic horn-fifths are created between the two, a musical reminder of the distant beloved, tinged with the painful (if only half conscious) memory of the hunter's disturbing presence ("Mein Schatz hat's grün so gern") (see Ex. 6.7).

There are equally striking examples in which it is the right hand that interacts with the vocal melody in ways that depart from the normative model of simple melodic doubling. In the exquisite *Nachtviolen* (D752), on a poem of Johann Mayrhofer, the interaction of the upper voices is controlled with remarkable subtlety. The right hand traces the outlines of the melody slightly out of phase with the voice, reaching above the vocal line at the expressive cadences at "into the velvety blue," where the two voices momentarily intertwine. (For the text and a translation of the poem see Table 6.1.) The unsynchronized doubling is brought to an extraordinary heterophonic climax on the final line of text, "and in silent nights the sacred union flowers forth": left and right hands, both in treble clef, sound rhythmically varied versions of the same melody an octave apart; the singer is sandwiched between them, a vibrant inner voice singing an outline of the same melody with added upward reaches that negotiate the space between the two hands (see Ex. 4.13, pp. 000–00). (Sung by a tenor rather than a soprano the earlier voice-crossings are less acute but the resonance created by variants of the same tune replicated in three octaves at the climax is even more remarkable.) The originality of

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Example 6.8 *Sehnsucht* (D516), mm. 6–9

6

Der Ler - - che wol - - ken - na - - he Lie - der er - schmet - tern zu ___ des

Win - - ters Flucht, ___

the invention lends the intimate imagery of the text a surprisingly personal stamp. We shall see later that this device is part of a much larger compositional conception, for Schubert almost certainly also had a hand in fashioning the text.

Yet another form of interaction between upper voices is developed in an earlier song *Sehnsucht* (D516), also on a Mayrhofer poem. The lark's ornate song, entering half a measure behind the voice in the upper register of the right hand, is a continuation of the nocturne-like tune initiated by the singer, displaced into the bird's octave; when the lark enters the singer becomes a subsidiary inner voice. The actual melody is neatly divided between singer and the right-hand lark, its continuity masked by the registral leaps (see Ex. 6.8). (In Schubert's composition autograph both voices are notated on a single staff so that even the page gives the appearance of a single voice splitting into two with each interjection of the lark.)

One of the most characteristically Schubertian strategies from the earliest songs to some of the latest is the representation of an inner experience through an analogy with some outward physical motion or sound. There are countless familiar examples: Gretchen's increasing distraction from her activity as she remembers Faust is given a measurable presence through the astonishingly realistic representation of the action of the spinning wheel, ceasing to spin at her climactic memory of his kiss. In *Gute Nacht*, as elsewhere in *Winterreise*, the plodding steps of the poet-wanderer, called up by the insistently plodding rhythm, force the events of the cycle into the present, heightening the emotional force of his depar-

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ture from the town by defining it as an intense recollection: when the song begins, the protagonist has long left behind the house and the gate he paints so vividly. The brook's final song in *Die schöne Müllerin* is conceived as a monotonous lullaby that blends the soothing lapping of water with tolling bells and distant horn calls in a harmonic setting completely devoid of all tension. The earlier poems – and songs – have all been sung from the perspective of the miller and, indeed, it is the virtual identification between brook and miller reinforced in Schubert's setting that makes this final song so intensely moving: at the close of the cycle, miller and brook have quite literally merged into a single indistinguishable voice. Each of these songs draws on the imitation of an outside physical movement or sound to create the effect of immediate, present experience, and in each of them the core of that experience consists in a powerful act of imagination or memory. The literal actions of the present moment – the spinning, the walking, the gently lapping water – become a continuously evolving symbol through which the interior life finds expression.

The early Goethe setting *Rastlose Liebe*, from 1815, is an especially revealing example of this Schubertian tendency to create an experiential perspective because both the persona and the action of the poem are conceived in greater abstraction. In *Gretchen am Spinnrade* we are drawn into Gretchen's fantasy through the motion of the wheel; in *Erlkönig* it is, as Donald Francis Tovey perceptively observed, the boy's terror during the gallop through the night that is captured in Schubert's setting (not the father's, as in Carl Loewe's setting);[9] in *Winterreise* we experience events as if through the wanderer's psyche as he plods through the landscape. The situation in *Rastlose Liebe* is more complicated in that no lyric subject is defined for the entire first stanza. We come upon an experience already underway, as if we had walked in late on a film screening, suddenly finding ourselves surrounded by violent storms with no characters in sight: we enter upon the scene as if this were our own experience. The poem opens with a rapid succession of images of stormy weather landscapes, formulated to give a vivid impression of a subject moving through them with great determination and force:

Dem Schnee, Dem Regen Dem Wind entgegen, Im Dampf der Klüfte, Durch Nebeldüfte, Immerzu! Immerzu! Ohne Rast und Ruh!	Through snow, through wind Headlong into winds, Into steamy ravines, Through fragrant mists, Ever on! Ever on! Without halt or rest.
Lieber durch Leiden, Wollt' ich mich schlagen	Rather through suffering Would I battle,

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Als so viel Freuden	Than to endure
Des Lebens ertragen.	Such of life's pleasures.
Alle das Neigen	All this inclining
Von Herzen zu Herzen,	From heart to heart,
Ach, wie so eigen	Oh, how singularly
Schaffet es Schmerzen!	It brings about pain.
Wie, soll ich fliehen?	How shall I flee?
Wälderwärts ziehen?	Dash for the forest?
Alles vergebens!	All for nothing!
Krone des Lebens,	Pinnacle of life,
Glück ohne Ruh,	Happiness without rest,
Liebe bist du!	Love, art thou.

Everything in the opening lines unites to drive to the end of the stanza: the enumeration of harsh elements, the relentless rhythm of the first four lines, the quickened pace and emphatic repetition at "Immerzu, Immerzu" and, above all, the withholding, even to the end, of subject and verb. Who is it who passes through this kaleidoscopic array of landscapes?

We learn in time, through the ironic reflections in the second stanza, then more explicitly in the last, that this vivid series of stormy landscapes is neither the representation of a direct present action nor a powerful memory, but an elaborate simile for the turbulence aroused by passionate love. Goethe's scene shifts back and forth between the storms the poet creates as outward images of inner life and his reflections on those scenes. The persona of the poem is revealed as a poet – the poet? – engaged in vivid imagination. The immediacy of the image encourages our identification with it.

Schubert's *Rastlose Liebe* seizes upon and sustains the impulsive, driving motion of Goethe's first stanza with only a slight slackening of pace in the middle. The song drives to the ecstatic celebration of love that spans the final twenty-seven of the singer's measures. A pounding anapestic rhythmic figure in the left hand enters together with the singer, comes into sharp relief at "Immerzu, immerzu," then continues to pulsate through to the end of the song. At the same time, a long harmonic sweep reinforces the effect of the rhythmic pulsing, sustaining tension through to the exuberantly set final lines: the broad wash of tonic harmony at the opening, tinged with the minor mode through the poignant inflection of minor ninths (at "Regen" and "Klüfte"), drives to a firm cadence in the dominant at the end of the first stanza; that arrival is almost immediately left behind by a wonderfully Schubertian turn of harmony to the flat mediant on the ironic "Freuden"; this in turn sets up the rising sequence on the following couplet (the phrase is merely wrenched up a half step, a simple but powerful device for creating a feeling of urgency), which leads,

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again just a few measures later, to the dramatic cadence to the relative minor at "alles vergebens!" The return to the tonic in the ensuing measures comes like a great sigh, and the remainder of the song is given to a lengthy celebration – in an unambivalent *major* tonic – of Goethe's laconic conclusion: "Krone des Lebens, Glück ohne Ruh, Liebe bist du!" The weight of the entire song is thrown to the end. It was clearly something in the idea of Goethe's opening lines, the powerful evocation of inner movement through an imprecise but suggestive parallel with powerful external manifestations of nature's turbulence, that fired Schubert's imagination.[10] Other aspects of the poem, while not ignored, are subsumed in the larger vision.

This conception, highly personal almost to the point of obscuring a crucial aspect of Goethe's poem, reveals a good deal about Schubert's own compositional disposition. For unlike Schubert's *Rastlose Liebe*, Goethe's poem does not sustain the impression of driving motion through to the final lines. Instead, it modulates between two distinct lyric temperaments – or voices. The one, impassioned and restless, is written as if in the midst of the experience. It spans the entire first stanza, as we have noted, disappears during the middle couplets, then resurfaces at "Wie soll ich flieh'n? Wälderwärts zieh'n?" and in the feigned exasperation of "alles vergebens!" The posture of the second voice is distant and removed: a poet surveying the scene, commenting ironically on the events called up in the active lines. While the first couplet of the middle stanza, "Lieber durch Leiden wollt' ich mich schlagen, als so viel Freuden des Lebens ertragen," can perhaps still be understood to grow out of the breathless passion of the moment (despite its artfully constructed inversion of affect), the second couplet surely cannot. With a sophisticated ambivalence the lyric persona in these lines universalizes his sentiment, casting it in the language of a naïvely simple, folklike maxim: "Alle das neigen von Herzen zu Herzen, Ach! wie so eigen schaffet es Schmerzen!" The self-consciously distant poet stands detached from the passionately engaged images of the first stanza, drawing a lesson in the universality of human experience from his position of remove. He is interrupted once again by the impassioned voice at "Wie soll ich flieh'n?" but the universalizing poet has the final say, abstracting from his individual experience a proverbial truth about the nature of love.

Schubert's setting gives dramatic continuity to Goethe's conflicting voices, subordinating the reflective, universalizing lines to the sweeping motion of the passionately engaged persona. The uninterrupted focus for him is on the restless movement, culminating in an affirmation of love that explodes Goethe's ironic closing formulation into some thirty measures of impassioned experience.[11]

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The effort to convey an impression of immediate experience through music is, as we have remarked, a pervasive characteristic of Schubert's style over much of his career. The extent to which this was a matter of calculated compositional choice becomes even more apparent when we examine the poetic texts of some of the songs that differ significantly from the poems on which they are based. When textual revisions attributable to Schubert go beyond small changes undertaken for metric considerations or minor alterations that may be explained as slips of the pen or memory, encompassing the excision of entire lines or stanzas or even the rewriting of portions of text, they shed considerable light on the impulses governing Schubert's compositional decisions.

A particularly revealing example, worth examining in some detail, involves Schubert's revisions to *Nachtviolen*, a song touched upon earlier. *Nachtviolen* was composed in April 1822, to a poem by Schubert's friend, Johann Mayrhofer. The song was never published during Schubert's lifetime, but it has survived in an autograph manuscript with a text that diverges significantly from two extant versions of the poem by Mayrhofer,[12] the earlier in a hand-written collection of poems entitled *Heliopolis*, dated in the manuscript September and October of 1821.[13] A heavily revised version was published in a larger collection of Mayrhofer's poems by Friedrich Volke in Vienna in 1824, well after Schubert's setting. Table 6.1 shows the variants between the versions.

A comparison of Mayrhofer's published text with the poems as they appear in the poet's autograph manuscript reveals that *his* revisions, although numerous, do not radically alter the poems. For the most part, we find Mayrhofer laboring over the right word: there is some waffling between dative and accusative cases in the last line of the first stanza; in the second verse, "blicket" is replaced with "schauet"; "schweigend" becomes "ahnend" (roughly equivalent to a change from "look" to "gaze" in the first instance and "silently" to "knowingly" in the latter); and the mild spring air becomes summer air. The most substantial revision is Mayrhofer's replacement of the apocalyptic, not entirely coherent, image in the final line, "Und die Welt erbleicht und sinkt" ("And the world pales and sinks") with "Und die Welt erreicht sie nicht" ("And the world can reach it not"), a more firmly rational, if considerably blander, formulation, but one which nonetheless barely alters the effect of the line. Both versions entail a sudden shift in perspective, serving to distance the outside world from the central experience of the poem.

The text of Schubert's song agrees with Mayrhofer's autograph manuscript in all of these discrepancies in wording, and, with one minor exception ("versinken" instead of "vertiefen" in the third line), it is true to Mayrhofer's manuscript text in every detail. However, several additional

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Table 6.1. *The poetic transmission of "Nachtviolen"*

Mayrhofer manuscript *Heliopolis*; Sept./Oct. 1821	*Gedichte von Johann Mayrhofer,* Vienna: Bey Freidrich Volke, 1824	Schubert, D752; manuscript [April 1822]	Schubert's text in translation†
	Nachtviolenlied		
Nachtviolen, Nachtviolen!	Nachtviolen, Nachtviolen!	Nachtviolen, Nachtviolen!	Nightviolets, Nightviolets!††
Dunkle Augen, Seelenvolle, –	Dunkle Augen, Seelenvolle, –	Dunkle Augen, Seelenvolle, –	dark eyes, soulful ones –
Selig ist est sich vertiefen	Selig ist est sich vertiefen	Selig ist est sich **versinken***	How blissful to immerse oneself
In dem sammtnen Blau.	In **das sammtne** Blau.	In dem sammtnen Blau.	In the velvety blue.
Grüne Blätter streben freudig	Grüne Blätter streben freudig	Grüne Blätter streben freudig	Green leaves seek cheerily
Euch zu hellen, euch zu schmücken;	Euch zu hellen, euch zu schmücken;	Euch zu hellen, euch zu schmücken;	To illuminate you, to adorn you.
Doch ihr blicket ernst und schweigend	Doch ihr **shauet** ernst und **ahnend**	Doch ihr blicket ernst und schweigend	Yet you gaze earnestly and in silence
In die laue Frühlingsluft.	In die laue **Sommerluft.**	In die laue Frühlingsluft.	Into the mild spring air.
Ja, so fesselt ihr den Dichter	Ja, so fesselt ihr den Dichter:		
Mit erhabnem Wehmuthsstrahle	Mit erhab**nen** Wehmuthsstrah**len**	Mit erhabnem Wehmuthsstrahle**	With a sublime ray of melancholy
Trafet ihr sein treues Herz.	Trafet ihr sein treues Herz.	Trafet ihr **mein** treues Herz.	You have struck my faithful heart.
Und nun blüht in stummen Nächten	Und **so** blüht in stummen Nächten	Und nun blüht in stummen Nächten	And now, in silent nights,
Fort die heilige Verbindung:	Fort die heilige Verbindung:	Fort die heilige Verbindung.	The sacred union flowers forth.
Unaussprechlich, unbegriffen, –	Unaussprechlich, unbegriffen,		
Und die Welt erbleicht und sinkt.	**Und die Welt erreicht sie nicht**		

* "versenken" in the posthumous publication issued by Gotthard in 1872 (where the song appears in A♭).

** "Mit erhab'nen Wehmuthstrahlen" in Gotthard's publication.

† The three lines omitted by Schubert might be rendered "Yes, you thus captivate the poet" and "Inexpressible, uncomprehended – And the world pales and sinks," the final line replaced in Mayrhofer's 1824 edition with "And the world can touch it not."

†† Properly "Dame's violet" in English but the literal name is central to the meaning of the poem.

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revisions of an entirely different nature have been made. As none of them are reflected in Mayrhofer's later publication (and none of the poet's later revisions are reflected in Schubert's text) we may infer that they are almost certainly Schubert's own modifications. Three entire lines of Mayrhofer's poem – the first line of the third stanza, and the final two lines of the poem – have been omitted from the setting, and the remaining pairs of lines in the third and fourth stanzas are treated as a single new stanza. In accordance with the first cut, the pronoun "sein" has been changed to "mein." The result is a very different poem. What Schubert's text omits are lines which, in one way or another, create a sense of distance from the intimate experience related in the poem. The directness of expression is considerably heightened by the change of the pronoun to the first person: it is no longer the third-person *Dichter* who loses himself in the dark violets and who later stops to reflect on the world's reaction to this association, but the poetic "I" whose heart has been captured and who revels in the immediate experience – or, better, in the vivid memory – of their union. Never mind Mayrhofer's veiled circumscriptions about the nature of the relationship – "inexpressible, uncomprehended" – and never mind the world's response, or inability to respond: Schubert was interested purely in a representation of the experience itself.[14] His focus on this experience is what generates the obsessive motif that pervades the song: the concentrated establishment of a stable identity, an obsessively repeated motif sounding within a restricted range, prepares the expressive explosion of texture and register in the climactic final lines. To set Mayrhofer's full text would have meant destroying the vividness of the experience.

We have come to recognize something peculiarly Schubertian in this approach to music and experience. Robert Schumann would later learn how to conjure complex emotion in a song by exploiting harmonic ambiguity, or to trigger sentiment by invoking musical styles laden with associations – a sudden outburst of waltz music, distorted *stile antico* counterpoint – but no other composer of song has ever surpassed (or even demonstrated the ambition to match) Schubert's ability to represent the inner movement of experience in sound. Schumann's language is that of an ironist, Schubert's profoundly, if sometimes deceptively, naïve. Is this what has drawn so many critics in recent years to try and discern in his music a trace of the composer's own experience?

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