

*For Alan Rawsthorne who enthused about this essay and kindly wrote a glowing review about it*

## **SCHUBERT**

by Dr David C F Wright

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*When this article first appeared on a website there were many replies but these replies did not address Schubert the man or his music but were abusive attacks upon me accusing me of writing drivel, that I should not be a doctor of music, that I did not know what I was talking about and that I should die a horrible death of the same VD that killed Schubert and burn in hell.*

*All that I say in my articles can be verified.*



I have always been puzzled as to why some refer to Franz Schubert as a great composer. He may be a popular composer in some quarters but greatness is certainly not an accurate way to describe him. As we shall see, he was very limited as a composer and much of his work is so naive that it is very poor.

Very often, but not always, poor quality in music can be correlated with a poor quality of life style or health problems some of which may be self-induced. Schubert was a rake, a libertine, a regular customer at brothels and contracted syphilis that caused his death it clearly did. As one biographer put it Schubert's illness was the illness that could not be named even to his friends. He was grossly immoral and decadent and this is inherent in his music. Those who adored and worshipped Schubert, and some still do today, say that his vile lifestyle was not his fault but that he was lead astray by Franz von Schober (1796-1882), but that is a feeble excuse.

As a composer Schubert was very inadequate. He had little or no sense of form or structure and his music is so repetitive as to be often downright boring and tedious. He could not develop his material as could great composers such as Haydn, Mozart and particularly Beethoven.

Let me quote one example. Take the A flat Impromptu, the second of the set known as D935. He writes a tune of about eight bars then repeats it an octave higher. Then he repeats the theme and the octave higher version and so we have the tune four times in succession all in the same key. Then he has about 13 bars of chords which go nowhere and what does he then do? Repeat the tune and then again the same tune an octave higher. He repeats the bars of chords and the tune another twice. So the main tune comes eight times in three minutes. It is all the same and tedious and the tune is not varied rhythmically nor is there a change of key or any development.

There follows a trio section of 12 bars of nothing but broken chords. What does he do next? Repeat the 12 bars of broken chords. Another 34 bars of boring broken chords continues the piece. What follows that? Those 34 bars of broken chords again followed by eight bars of....broken chords. The tune in A flat returns and is immediately repeated an octave higher. There follows those bars of purposeless chords and the tune again and yet again that slight tune an octave higher. The tune is still in the same key and rhythmically the same. The music is so tame; it shows no invention, skill or development. There are no interesting harmonies. It is all so bland as well as being painfully boring and monotonous, And it is so juvenile and undeniably amateur! And do you really want to hear 90 odd bars of broken chords?

There are so many other examples which will prove the point! Schubert may have written some pretty tunes but nothing else!

Take the opening movement of the Symphony no. 5 in B flat. The theme appears so many times in about eight minutes and it is always in the same key, same rhythm and same pitch. Schubert does not know what else to do but keep playing the same old tune over and over and over and over and over and over and over again!

His music is superficial. It has no real substance. A lot of it is primary school work, wrote one famous pianist.

Study his songs and notice that most of the time the piano part is merely vamping, merely common chords repeated. Vamp, vamp, vamp. In one extended passage in the Piano Trio in E flat the left hand of the piano has only three notes which appear and appear and appear. Some of his songs are really dreadful. Look at the piano part of Death and the Maiden for example. It is so sterile, unimaginative and, frankly, very poor.

However, people would rather believe a beautiful lie than an ugly truth. If the myth is better than the truth, believe the myth.

Franz Theodor Schubert was a schoolmaster who taught at a Carmelite school in Leopoldstadt where his brother Karl was headmaster. He was very rigid in his principles and a devout Catholic who believed in severe punishments for any indiscretions or anti-Catholic position. He married a domestic, Elisabeth Vietz in 1783 whose father was in prison for debt. He had to marry her since, Catholic or not, he did not have high morals. Elisabeth was seven months pregnant. They had fourteen children of whom only five survived.

Franz Peter Schubert was born on 31 January 1797 and, as a child, he adored his mother. He developed a preoccupation with all things feminine and in a very unnatural way. But it was his father who encouraged him in music since he played the cello modestly and his sons Ferdinand and Ignaz both played the violin and Franz the viola. And so they had a string quartet. The family were all something of rebels. Ignaz the firstborn had very strong and somewhat dangerous radical views but he did teach Franz to play the piano and his father taught him the violin. They sang in the church choir at Liechestal. In 1808 Schubert won a competition at the Imperial and Royal Chapel. One of the adjudicators was the kappellmeister, the great Anton Salieri. Schubert was admitted to the Seminary known as the Konvikt where he received a good education. He was encouraged to compose but most of what he wrote was destroyed.

His early work is noted for its embarrassing simplicity and the weak characteristics we have already mentioned. By 1811 he was sketching a Symphony in D. He would keep note book of musical remedies.... for example how to modulate from C minor to G major in five bars and many other progressions and so the trouble is that when he wished to modulate from C minor to G it was always the same way. It is this predictability in his music which is yet another serious weakness. He was also obsessed with death and grief and this pervades so many of his songs and was exacerbated in 1812 with the death of his mother of what was said to be a nervous fever. Theodor remarried in 1813 and had five children with his new wife, Anna Kleyenbock the 29 year old daughter of a silk merchant.

It is surprising that Schubert's work is so poor when you consider his brilliant teachers. Wenzel Ruzicka (1757- 1823) was a viola player and taught the piano and organ at the Konvikt. Then Schubert went to the great Salieri (1750- 1825) who is sadly only remembered for his alleged opposition to Mozart. But the fact is that Leopold Mozart disliked Salieri since Salieri was a finer musician and always obtained the posts that Leopold wanted for his son, and this was simply because Salieri was a far greater musician than either of the Mozarts. In his youth Salieri had been a friend of such composers as Gassman and Gluck and he went on to teach Beethoven, Liszt and Hummel. The first two turned out to be great composers and Hummel was a good composer. But that cannot be said of Schubert who was a Salieri pupil from 1812 to 1816 and which pupil took part in the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of Salieri's arrival in Vienna.

In 1813 he wrote his Symphony no. 1 in D and some string quartets. In 1814 he entered the Normal School of St Anna to train as a teacher. He was present at the first performance of Beethoven's only opera, Fidelio. Schubert composed what may be considered his first acknowledged String Quartet, that in B flat (D.112). He completed his Symphony no. 2 in B flat and his Mass no. 1 in F. He set Goethe for the first time with the song Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel. But all these works lack invention, originality or any innovation and just a cursory study of the music reveals that the pieces are both juvenile and amateur. There is nothing remarkable, original or arresting in any of these works.

I have mentioned Schubert's weird and unnatural fascination with all things feminine a serious personality weakness that both Elgar and, to a lesser extent, Britten possessed. He had a preoccupation with the Virgin Mary which explains most of his religious works and he absorbed the curious Catholic teaching that she was the Mother of God and therefore preceded God in power and authority since she was greater than God Himself. While this confused him, as it has thousands through the centuries, he developed a habit of putting all women on a pedestal but, like Chopin, was only interested in them for one reason..

He said that he fell in love with Therese Grob in the autumn of 1815 when he was eighteen. She was a year younger. But it was sex, not love. He was very demanding, crude and vulgar and she ended the short affair and married a baker, Johan Bergman in 1820. She lived another 55 years but had no children and there are those who explained that Schubert's treatment of her was so gross that she had no interest in marital intimacy. Therese said that she was a ruined maid at Schubert's hands. Chopin was another composer who treated women merely as sex objects.

The political scene in Vienna in 1814 gave rise to student riots and there was formed a Schubert circle

where certain friends tried to obtain performances of his music.

Schubert wrote an opera *Des Teufels Lustschloss* (The Devil's Pleasure) in which a hero suffers many indignities at the hands of a tyrannical father in law. It was badly written and Salieri recommended many changes whereas he would have done better to tell Schubert to scrap it. But the work is significant because it reveals the composer's character which included a sort of paranoia and persecution complex. Schubert's opera *Der Spiegelritter* (The Looking Glass Knight) is an example of poor music lacking ideas with nothing but common chords and uninspiring vocal lines.

In 1815 Schubert, hoping to gain fame by jumping on the bandwagon of Goethe's success set many of his words to music including *The Earl King* which is yet another example of his weakness as a composer. The piano part is another vamp. Apart from the last three bars, the rest of the piano part is non stop triplets in four beats in a bar. There is no rhythmic contrast just a pounding twelve equal notes in each bar. This same worrying vamping feature is in the song *Omnipotence*, Op 79 no. 2. In the song *Secrets*, Op 14 no. 2 the boring and feeble accompaniment is crotchet, quaver, quaver rest repeated repeated and repeated. There is no letting up, no contrast and it is so tedious. It is this dependence on a device that ruins so much of his music. In a famous song, *Hark, hark the lark*, there is little variety in the piano part. It is so stereotyped and shows his lack of ability to do anything different. The song *Who is Sylvia?* has a continual vamp. The whole of the right hand consists of bars of eight quavers pounding out its monotonous and unimaginative accompaniment. You do not find these weaknesses in the songs of Brahms or Liszt. Wolf would not have written like this. Schubert was very poor as a composer and you can check all this information out for yourself.

Some of the vocal lines in his songs are also very amateurish and banal. Some are so bad that they are like five finger exercises on a piano. Some are no better than television commercial jingles and what compounds the issue that people deny all of this and will not accept the evidence. They have only to look at the printed music. Compare the songs of Liszt and see the variety within each song both in the vocal line and the piano part. Note the variation of rhythmic interest and the skill in developing the material, the contrasts, the tension, the excitements and often the sublime beauty as in *Oh quand je dors*. Another example which shows up the terrible weakness in Schubert's songs are the excellent songs of Tchaikovsky where vocal and piano parts are not just juvenile formulae but are wonderfully inventive and full of contrast.

A famous conductor once said, "You never find excitement or sparkle in Schubert!" with which his orchestra readily agreed. That is over the top!

But it was his compositional methods that further indicates what a poor composer Schubert was. He would rule lines on plain paper to make manuscript paper and put in bar lines then he would compose the opening bars and leave many bars blank but the bars would be numbered. Sometimes there were a vast number of blank bars. He would compose a few bars, then there would be another stretch of blank bars and so on. There are examples of this procedure in the Schubert museum. That is not the way to compose. It is like laying the foundation of a house, then building the third storey then the fifth. The further trouble with Schubert was that when he filled in the blanks it was with repeated material or merely padding. For example, the *Piano Sonata in D* has in the first movement pages of nothing but broken chords, and in Richter's performance it goes on for over five minutes!

You can check the 'compositional methods' in the appropriate museum in Vienna.

A great composer formulates in his mind the bulk of what he is going to write. He plans it out thoroughly. A few composers have a different technique. Edmund Rubbra, for example, would start a piece and not know where it was going but he still composed one bar after another!

To return to 1815 Schubert began work on his *Symphony no. 3* and wrote well over 50 songs, encouraged by Goethe. He was also a fast and careless worker and would write on the manuscript how long it took him to compose a song as if that were significant. He was a speed merchant and this is another reason why his music is so uninteresting. Schubert wrote a song in an hour. He was not concerned with quality but quantity. Brahms set the same text and took four weeks and it is obvious which setting is best!

About this time Schubert had many male friends. Josef von Spaun (1757-1840) had befriended him from the early days at the *Konvikt*. He became a government worker and founded the Schubert circle and introduced the young composer to Franz von Schober. There was also Ferdinand von Mayerhofer (1798- 1869) who was studying law in Vienna. All were interested in music and studied with Professor Heinrich Watteroth (1756- 1819) who taught law but was fascinated by music. He had a huge following of students but was not liked by the authorities. Musical parties were held in his house. Another friend of Schubert was Anselm

Huttenbrenner (1794- 1868) who came to Vienna to study law and studied composition with Salieri. There were three other Huttenbrenners, Josef, Andreas and Heinrich who were involved in the disappearance of the Unfinished Symphony.

Schubert tried to emulate Beethoven and wrote his own Prometheus as a cantata. It was premiered in July 1816 with Schubert attempting to conduct, and repeated with a piano accompaniment early in 1819 for which Schubert was paid 100 florins. Thereafter the score was lost. But June 1816 saw the celebrations in honour of Salieri. There was a service in the cathedral, the award of a gold medal and a concert in the evening in which many of Salieri's pupils took part. Schubert's piece was a flop and he believed that he would never earn a living as a composer or musician and so he intensified his affair with Therese Grob since if he married her he would never want for money. Schubert was turned down as a music teacher in Ljubjana as he was not suitable. In fact, Schubert was a surly fellow. It was an offer of hospitality from the Schobers that relieved his financial problems. He was impressed with the music of Dittersdorf which he had not encountered before. Inspired by this fine composer, he composed his Symphony no. 4 in C minor, known as the Tragic, and the sunnier Symphony no. 5 in B flat which shows his move from his gloomy mood to a cheerful one. As for the Tragic Symphony the best parts of it are obviously derived from Beethoven. But the symphonies were not popular. No one wanted to publish them and, in fact, they were not published until fifty years after Schubert's death.

The Symphony no. 4 is still considered his least popular symphony yet we must credit Schubert with an effort to break out of his boring mould of composition. The Symphony no. 5 in B flat reverts to all the weaknesses in his compositional methods. The first movement has an attractive theme but it is played without variation over and over and over and over again. There is no rhythmic contrast or harmonic variation or significant modulation. There is a lack of musical skills and malleability.

Schubert was a hypocrite as was his father. He had certain religious feelings but they did not govern his personal morality. He rejected 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' and other aspects of the Decalogue. He did not believe in miracles and did not have a strong faith as did Haydn for example. In his religious works Schubert shows a lack of commitment and understanding. When he did try to be original he failed hopelessly. His fugues are simply dreadful and Salieri gave up on Schubert as he was not a good pupil. Schubert wrote three short masses, the G major (D.167), the B flat (D.325) and the C minor (D.452). He abandoned the fugue as he realised he could not write one. But these works are full of cliches. He wrote over a dozen more liturgical works including two settings of the Stabat Mater, four of the Salve Regina and three of Tantum Ergo. The solo version of the Salve Regina (D.223) was written for Therese Grob hoping to win favour with her and "to get her out of her tight corsets again, and out of everything else!"

Schubert suffered from extreme and unreasonable jealousy. Marie Pachler, born Marie Koschak in 1794 was a stunning pianist who impressed Beethoven in 1817. This privilege had not be extended to Schubert and he was a lousy pianist. Marie with her husband Karl (born 1789) kept open house for musicians and musical evenings. Schubert dedicated his Four Songs, Op 106 to her.

Another serious weakness now began to appear in his music and that concerned its length. And this weakness continues for the rest of his life. The String Quintet in C of 1828 is very long and too long to sustain the material. The Octet in F for strings and woodwind of 1824 is another case as are the late Piano Sonatas. The D major sonata has already been referred to and the B flat Sonata (D.960) is both poor and very long as is its predecessor the Sonata in A (D.959). Some wit has referred to the Trout Quintet by saying, "It takes too long to catch that fish!"

Schubert turned his hand to other forms but with no success. He tried to write a Concerto in D for violin and orchestra (D. 345) but it would be kind for me to say no more about that. There is an Adagio and Rondo in A for violin and string orchestra (D.438) which does not work either. As with Chopin's concertos the soloist dominates and it is a waste of time the orchestra turning up! In 1815 he wrote four operettas namely Der vierjahrige Posten, Fernando, Claudine von Villa Bella and Die Freunde von Salamanka. The speed at which he wrote them indicates their poor quality. All the critics at the time said that the librettos were more interesting than the music!

Perhaps the weaknesses in Schubert's piano works and accompaniments is due to the fact that he was a terrible pianist. Inspired by the fine piano writing of Beethoven, Schubert felt he could do as well and so began a series of Piano Sonatas in 1815 with the E major (D.157) and the C major (D. 279) neither of which have finales. He tried to write a Sonata in mixed keys (D. 459) which is ghastly.

The Sonata in A minor (D.537) fares better although it is not well written for the piano but the middle movement in E is quite good and, surprising, has some variation of material. The B major sonata (D. 575) attempts to be concise. The E minor Sonata (D. 506) he called number 1 as if he wanted a fresh start. It is modelled on the Beethoven Sonata Op 90 but it is also incomplete having no finale. The D flat Sonata (D 567) of 1817 is marked by the composer as Sonata no. 2 and Beethoven again is the model. There is no finale here either.

Many biographers state that Schubert broke with Salieri because Salieri was not impressed with Schubert's fondness for German literature. But, in reality, it was because Schubert would not learn or take instruction but, rather, pursued his own course of poor compositional methods. He was also influenced by the poetry of Johann Mayrhofer which was psychologically grim. Schubert's other great friend was Schober who shared his belief that women were only on the earth to serve one purpose a view which I find utterly deplorable. Mayrhofer told Schubert that a composer has a mission in life so vitally important that the powers of darkness tried to undermine it. Schubert was greatly affected by this nonsense.

But Schubert, having been found out about his mistreatment of Therese, now sought the services of prostitutes and frequented brothels. He became well known in this environment and he eventually turned his back on liturgical works, writing only five of any substance after his self-introduction to brothels. Curiously his final Mass, number 6 in A flat is one of his best works, although flawed.

In 1817 he began his Symphony no. 6 in C. Like all of Schubert's works it is not original and is clearly written in the style of Beethoven's Symphony no. 1 in C, almost as if Schubert wanted another fresh start but, as I have said, it is mere imitation of Beethoven and other composers. The opening movement has four bars clearly taken from Beethoven's Prometheus Overture. Bars 12 -15 is clearly from Rossini's La Gazza Ladra overture. Bars 31 —38 step out of the pages of Haydn's Symphony no. 100, bars 77-78 comes from Beethoven's symphony no. 2 and Symphony no. 4 respectively not to mention the Piano Concerto no. 1. From bars 134 Beethoven's Symphony no. 1 is obviously there and from 349 onwards there is Leonora Overture number 3. The second movement is taken from Rossini's Barber of Seville (it must be remembered that at the time Rossini was all the rage). The third movement is Beethoven with the Moonlight Sonata, the Symphony no. 1, the Prometheus Overture and Egmont. The finale is taken from Beethoven Symphony no. 1 and his Symphony no. 7.

I have supplied all the musical evidence to Roger Fiske who has incorporated it in his editions of Schubert scores

With this further evidence and all that has gone before the case for Schubert not being a good composer let alone a great composer is surely proved!

Of course people will accuse me of merely rubbishing Schubert since they will not accept the evidence supplied.

In October 1818 Schubert's brother Ferdinand said that the Overture: Claudine von Villa Bella had been replaced at a public concert by Mozart's Overture : Cosi fan tutte since the Schubert piece was so incredibly poor. Nonetheless when a composer's music is heavily criticised it often draws outpourings of sympathy and Schubert's rise to fame was due to a countering of the reactions against his music's poor quality. He returned to school teaching in 1817 and his father was appointed to a prodigious teaching post as well although one has to question their suitability to teach in view of their own morals.

But then things took another turn which suited Schubert's libido. In the summer of 1818 Count Johann Esterhazy was seeking a music tutor for his two young countesses Marie and Caroline aged fifteen and twelve respectively. Karl Unger recommended Schubert and with the prospect of teaching two attractive pubescent girls Schubert was off to the estate at Zseliz like a shot. When he was there he embarked on a torrid sexual affair with a chambermaid, one Papi Pockelhofer. His fortunes changed, he returned to a religious work since God had smiled on him and given him Papi. He worked on his Trauermesse, his German Requiem. As usual, not having any ideas of his own he composed a Piano Sonata in F minor (D.625) in which he filches from Beethoven's Appassionata Sonata, but again there is no finale.

He was only in Zseliz for four months in which time he wrote his major works for piano duet for the young countesses. But it was a mere ruse to practise one part with one of the girls and alternate with the other girl sitting close to them on the piano stool. That they showed no interest in him, he longed for Vienna where he could take up his old and immoral haunts but the Count and the young Countesses wintered in Vienna and so Schubert's services continued. A local theatre asked Schubert to write some music for a farce, Die Zwillingbruder (The Twin Brothers). There is an overture and ten numbers and the music is best forgotten.

But a better commission came his way with *Die Zauberharfe* (The Magic Harp). This was an overture and thirteen numbers but the music is repetitive and does not match the drama of the play. Only two items are played nowadays and the overture is now entitled *Rosamunde*.

It has been said, and with truth, that Schubert holds the record for composing the most flops and he is top of the leader board by miles.

Schubert was aware of the lack of drama in his music and so, in 1820, he began work on a cantata *Lazarus* which he never finished. This is a pity since the work is not altogether without promise.

But Vienna suffered more political unrest. It was a city always changing its ideals and now some young men were regarded as fanatics. One of Schubert's friends, Johann Senn, was arrested and Schubert involved himself in the fight. After a period of difficulty some of Schubert's songs became popular but, as it was said at the time, their popularity was due to the fact that the texts were by Goethe. Some of his songs when performed were greeted with silence, others with disdain and mutterings.

Schubert having failed with the symphony and concerto and with sonatas chamber music and operetta he wanted a new start and between 1821 and 1823 he dedicated most of his time to opera. The first was *Alfonso und Estrella* followed by *Fierabras* both of which were turned down by opera houses and theatres. He also wrote *Die Verschworenen* another failure.

I repeat that it has been rightly said that Schubert holds the record for writing the most flops!

In January 1821 there was the first evening devoted to Schubert songs which some have called the first Schubertiad. He also began his *Symphony no. 7 in E* but all that survives is a sketch in open score and the so-called *Great C major symphony* was often referred to as number 7 but it is now known as number 9. In 1822 he wrote the two movements of the *Symphony no. 8 in B minor* known as the *Unfinished*. He also wrote the *Wanderer* fantasy for piano.

The two movements of the *Unfinished Symphony* were written in a few weeks in the autumn of 1822 and a lot of nonsense has been written about it. I have heard that Schubert did not finish it since at one performance a woman cried and at another a woman laughed. There is talk that it was written to obtain a *Diploma of Honour* whereas Josef Huttenbrenner thought the work was a personal gift for him and owned the score. It was planned as a four movement work. It is not a masterpiece as some would have us believe. The music is repetitive and very ordinary. I do not think the composer was satisfied with it and put his efforts into his *Symphony no. 9 in C*.

Around this time Schubert became ill and this was due to his indiscreet sexual liaisons. It was venereal disease complete with the burning pain on urinating, aching limbs, nausea and dizziness. Friends referred to the illness as a fever and some as typhus. He was prescribed rest and a diet and he did not wear his wig over his baldness. Progress was slow but his absence from sexual activity improved his health. He spent some time in a hospital where he read Sir Walter Scott and where the true nature of illness was a closely guarded secret. In October Schubert met Weber and was offensive about Weber's glorious opera *Euryanthe*. Schubert's *Rosamunde* Music failed miserably

Wilhelmine von Chezy (1783-1856), nee Klenke, was a German playwright and author who visited Vienna from Dresden in 1823 for a performance of *Euryanthe*. She wrote the play *Rosamunde* while in Vienna and Schubert wrote the incidental music.

In 1824 he delayed his departure to accept another invitation to join Count Esterhazy in Zseliz partly because he wanted to hear Beethoven's *Symphony no. 9*. He had first visited Zseliz in 1819 and now about six years later Countess Marie was 21 years old, a good pianist and Caroline an impressionable 18 year old but, like Schubert, she was unhappy and this drew them together. He became fascinated by the young girl and would fantasize about her in bed at nights and stimulate himself. He referred to her as 'the certain attractive star'. His gloom is pictured in the *String Quartet in A minor* (D.844) a work full of all the usual weaknesses and uninventiveness. After this followed the *String Quartet in D minor* known as *Death and the Maiden* because one movement is based on his song of that name. It is another gloomy work but not without some merit. *Death* is his fear, a fear extenuated by his syphilitic condition and the disfigurement it had left on his private person and because the maiden, the lovely Caroline, who, because of his condition would reject his advances. The *Octet in F* is very long and a poor imitation of Beethoven's *Septet Op 20*. As with most Schubert the music is inconsequential and its length is merely padding.

Incidentally, Caroline married Count Karl Folliot in 1844 but the marriage was later annulled.

But by October Schubert had returned to Vienna with the secondary ailments of his venereal disease and

he was also distressed that Weber had rejected the opera Alfonso because it was so badly written. Still he did not learn or heed the advice of professionals any more than he had from that of the most professional he had ever known, Anton Salieri.

His desire to be great which he thought was achieved by writing extended and long works had misled him into writing two song cycles *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise*. The first of these, *The Fair Maid of the Mill* had appeared about 1821 and was a backlash against Therese Grob since it tells of a fickle maid and the pure love of the young miller. Nauseating, isn't it? Schubert used these songs to texts by Wilhelm Müller to his own advantage and the music technique he uses is primitive. *Winterreise* is so pessimistic a song cycle and his last major vocal work. Some of it was written while on his deathbed. Again the texts are by Müller..

In 1825 he had a further stay in hospital. On Lake Traun in June he worked on the *Symphony no. 9*. In the following year, 1826, Schubert pleaded with the Emperor for the position of vice-kapellmeister at Court. He was rejected. He begged publishers to publish his music but they refused. He worked on a new opera *The Count of Gleichen* but this was banned by the censors. He dedicated his *Symphony no. 9* to the Philharmonic Society solely to ensure a performance of it.

Schubert's popularity with his circle of friends began to wane. Many knew the nature of his illness but the circle of friends disbanded around 1825 over another moral matter. Franz von Bruchmann (1798-1867) was wealthy and a patron of the arts. He was deeply upset when it was discovered that his sister, Justina, was having an affair with Schober and matters became very acrimonious and sides were taken. Since Schober had the same appalling attitude to women as Schubert did, it could be that Schober was syphilitic as well and could have infected Justina. The circle of friends was no more.

1827 was a momentous year in music. Beethoven was very ill. In March he was visited by Schubert, a mere few days before he died. The funeral was on 29 March attended by thousands as the procession moved to Währing. There were both torch and pallbearers and Schubert was one.

Schubert expressed to his friends that now Beethoven was dead he was his legitimate heir and that only he could continue to compose music worthy of Beethoven. Such a remark is a gross insult to Beethoven and shows the arrogance of Schubert. The fact of the matter is that Schubert failed to make any impression outside Vienna whereas Beethoven, Mozart and Haydn made an impact everywhere they went. To add to Schubert's woes his *German Requiem* was a flop being universally described as sentimental and weak. In 1828 the *Fantasie in C* for violin and piano was yet another disaster. By September his health has declined. The syphilis was back and with a vengeance. Obsessed with death he underwent a walking holiday with friends to visit the grave of Haydn. Almost certainly aware that he was dying, he took music lessons on counterpoint with Josef Lanz, a clear admission of his acceptance that he was a very inadequate composer. By mid November Schubert is covered with syphilitic sores and hallucinating and relapsing into a coma. He died on 19 November.

I have Sir Adrian Boult's permission to quote some of his public remarks. Of Schubert's *Symphony no. 9*, Boult said, "The first two movements are passable but you need the stamina of a long distance runner to contend with all the repetitions, but the last two movements are an insult to musicians everywhere!"

There is a curious twist in this story. Franz Paul Lachner (1803-1890) was the organist at Vienna's Lutheran Church from 1823 onwards. He knew Schubert and did his best to promote his chamber works. Lachner was a very fine composer but afflicted with modesty and therefore drawing attention to another. He wrote a great deal of music including some fine symphonies which, hopefully, one day we might hear. In 1836 he joined Munich opera and was admired universally. It is said that Schumann admired Schubert but then it was fashionable to do so. My own view is that Schumann was interested in Schubert and his music rather than admiring it. I have an interest in Schubert or I would not have written this essay but I do not like his music and that is Schubert's fault. Brahms is said to have admired Schubert's music but, as he was a brilliant composer, he must have surely recognised all the weaknesses in Schubert's music.

Schubert is not a great composer, nor even a good composer and there is boundless evidence in this essay which all musicians can check out and confirm to be true, and I invite them to do so.

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