

Piano Four Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire

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For Will

In the wake of the now famous paper by Maynard Solomon about the homosexual implications of Schubert's biography, the journal *19th-Century Music* ran a special issue on the topic. The editor of that issue, Lawrence Kramer, stated in an introduction that one of his aims was

to help establish a reasonable tone for discussion of this and similar questions, a tone free of both oversimplification and mystification, both sensationalism and homophobia.¹

Rita Steblin, one of the contributors, has since drawn a parallel in the correspondence columns of the *New York Review of Books* between what she calls the "promotion" of Schubert as a homosexual composer and the Nazis' abuse of him, without making any distinction at all between Nazism and the Lesbian and Gay movement:

Perhaps we should study what it is about Schubert that makes him so attractive to fashionable political ideologies. Why did the Nazis abuse Schubert to promote their theories of pure Aryan race? . . .

¹ Maynard Solomon, "Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini," *19th-Century Music* 12 (1989): 193-206. The special issue, entitled "Schubert: Music, Sexuality, Culture" was volume 17, no. 1 (1993); see p. 4 for Lawrence Kramer's quotation. I would like to thank several friends and colleagues who have helped me with this essay, especially Suzanne Cusick, George Haggerty, Genevieve Jones, Jeffrey Kallberg, Lawrence Kramer, Susan McClary, Ruth A. Solie, W. Anthony Sheppard and Elizabeth Wood. It originally appeared in *19th-Century Music* 21 (1997): 149-76.

And why, when the evidence is so questionable, is Schubert being promoted now with such passion as a homosexual composer?²

Such willful lunacy shows the hopelessness of Kramer's decent hope, and incidentally reveals the problems inherent in cleaning up an author's text, as he evidently must have done, to preserve a "reasonable tone" to which Steblin does not subscribe. It also indicates the anxiety, if not the desperation, surrounding the attempt to reclaim Schubert for the purely heterosexual, and therefore for full status within the German musical canon. Strikingly apparent to anyone sensitive to such issues is that no lesbian or gay scholar has so far entered the debate. What many of *us* want to know, I think, is why some members of the straight "classical" music world are so interested in projecting "Schubert" in their (and the canon's) own image, disallowing him (and it) even what might be considered the open human possibility of sexual activity of various kinds.

Scholars like Steblin like to advertise their allegiance to fact. But fact can rarely be separated from or understood without interpretation. The following statement in her article, for instance, will be chilling to gay men and lesbians who have any historical and social awareness:

The lenient legal penalties and low number of cases indicate that the police did not persecute homosexuals in Schubert's Vienna, and that "fears of surveillance, of arrest and persecution, of stigmatization and exile," as mentioned by Solomon (p. 205), are overstated. Thus, there would seem to be little reason for "a clandestine realm" to develop.³

² *New York Review of Books* 41, no. 17 (20 October 1994): 72. Charles Rosen begins his reply by finding the "attempt to bracket Nazi cultural policy and gay rights . . . morally repellent."

³ Rita Steblin, "The Peacock's Tale: Schubert's Sexuality Reconsidered," *19th-*

The history of Western nations is so replete with stories of ruin and suicide brought on by mere revelation of homosexual activity that the internalization of oppression for most homosexuals can often be as damaging as any overt police action against them. Any kind of social, never mind sexual, activity among homosexual friends will therefore tend to be furtive. Consider the following true story. Robert Rosenkrantz, a boy of seventeen, was spied on by his brother and a friend, who broke into a clandestine party of gay friends that Robert held after his high school graduation at their parents' beach house—he told his brother he was taking his girlfriend there. The two intruders, yelling abusive names, attacked Robert, breaking his nose and burning him with stun guns. They then disclosed Robert's homosexuality to his Democratic, forward-thinking, wealthy parents who "weren't ready for this." Robert pleaded with both boys to change their story, and his brother agreed to do so. The schoolfriend, Stephen Redman, did not. Robert was as a result banned from his home by his father. A week later, the boy bought a semiautomatic rifle with the intention of shooting holes in Redman's car and then killing himself, but ended up arguing with Redman one more time, and then shooting him to death. Robert was sentenced to seventeen-years-to-life in prison for second-degree mur-

Century Music 17, no. 1 (1993): 11. For a much more detailed and thoughtful account of the evidence and its implications, see Kristina Muxfeldt, "Political Crimes and Liberty, or Why Would Schubert Eat a Peacock?" in the same issue of *19th-Century Music*, 47-64, especially the passage on p. 63 pointing out that the threat of nonconformist sexual behavior lay in its implicit challenge to the ruling moral order, and that therefore associations (whether merely homosocial or vaguely homosexual) of like-minded, educated people in societies for seemingly harmless purposes would be much more threatening to a repressive regime like that of Metternich than isolated homosexual acts.

der.⁴ This is not a story of the 1930s or 1950s. The shooting occurred in Southern California in 1985, and Rosenkrantz was still imprisoned in late 1994, his earliest possible release date being January 23, 1996. For the murder only seven years earlier of San Francisco mayor George Moscone and openly gay supervisor Harvey Milk, ex-policeman Dan White served merely five years. It is against a historical framework of events such as these that any "facts" regarding homosexual or male same-sex activities have to be read.

More problematic than Steblin's penny-plain attempt at reappropriation of Schubert for sexual orthodoxy, which Solomon had little difficulty in refuting in its own terms, are other elements of that issue of *19th-Century Music*. James Webster's dismissal of Susan McClary as "essentialist," and his bracketing of her with Steblin, is a problematic example.⁵ A respected scholar whose work argues in other contexts for a thorough contextual and theoretical knowledge of terms, Webster here uses "essentialism" in a derogatory sense without reference to its binary partner, social construction, or to the long-standing debate around these polar terms in feminist and lesbian and gay studies, especially those concerned with the history of sexuality. He entirely ignores McClary's positioning of Western music in general and tonality in particular as elements in the negotiations surrounding the social construction of desire and subjectivity. This misrepresentation, as well as the attempted separation of an "artistic persona," and male scholars' speculations about it, from an "actual personality," which a

⁴ Aslan Brooke, "Legacy of a Gay-Bashing: Growing Up Behind Bars," *Frontiers Newsmagazine* 13, no. 14 (18 November 1994): 52-58.

⁵ James Webster, "Music, Pathology, Sexuality, Beethoven, Schubert," *19th-Century Music* 17, no. 1 (1993): 89-93.

woman dares invoke, amounts to an attempt at policing the critical act that will inevitably suggest misogyny and homophobia to those familiar with the debates surrounding gender and sexuality while appearing open-handed, judicious, and purely academic to readers who are not.⁶

More threatening still to an open view of sexuality and its relation to music is Kofi Agawu's attempted demolition in advance of any possible critique of Schubert's music from a gay point of view. This is done by imposing impossible conditions on it, such as declaring that "the linking of homosexuality to a particular creative faculty says little if it does not ultimately show a uniquely gay way of writing rondo, variation, or sonata forms," and by noting, ominously, that "*we can, in fact, talk about more and less productive ways of musical listening.*"⁷ The emphases here are mine, and they are aimed at pointing up the rhetorical effect of juxtaposing the plural subject

⁶ The notion of an "artistic persona" derives from the separation of work and author in New Criticism of the post-War era: Webster derives it largely from Edward T. Cone, whose *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974) in turn acknowledges Wayne C. Booth's classic *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961). Since such a persona was always by implication heterosexual this was a particularly effective way of dealing with actual gay or lesbian authors in those days. It should be added to the eight other types or means of dismissal of the interpretive significance of homosexuality in literature and art listed by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick after her rhetorical question about there ever having been a gay Socrates, Shakespeare, or Proust in *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 52-53—several of these eight have predictably turned up in the Schubert debate. Webster's concluding evacuation of the possible interpretive importance of same-sex desire by confining it to the realm of the sexual (i.e. ignoring the social, cultural, and theoretical aspects that lesbian and gay studies have explored so thoroughly in the last quarter-century) turns out to be merely another assertion of the autonomy of instrumental music.

⁷ Kofi Agawu, "Schubert's Sexuality: A Prescription for Analysis?," *19th-Century Music* 17, no. 1 (1993): 80-81.

with a problematic adverbial phrase in the same sentence: there is no “fact” here and no “we” except the reality and community the author would like to invoke without contest. Few gay scholars would be interested in the line of inquiry prescribed; many would consider it irrelevant and counterproductive both politically and musically (in so far as those can be distinguished).

Having heard and read Agawu’s condemnation of the privileging of rhythm in the treatment of “African” music, and his arguments for trying to understand the various kinds of music on that Continent by means of the same paradigms as any other music, I begin to apprehend the difference between our points of view.⁸ If I am correct, his tactics are aimed at gaining for a Third World music the position that comes from subsuming it under, or attaching it to, a system that produces powerful universal values, and that depends on a notion of “musical autonomy and transcendence” resting on “the indisputable fact that musical composition is recomposition.”⁹ Composers like Schubert from whose works these paradigms have been constructed cannot therefore belong to an order as chaotic and alien as that of the “African,” nor be allowed to be using musical symbols to make “extra-musical references.” My own tactics for dealing with any music with which I identify is to insist on the possibility of its difference, to hear its separateness rather than its indebtedness to models, to emphasize the value of distinct critical hearings of it, and to try gently to disrupt any totalizing vision as being characteristic of a dominant ideology that has for much of my life contested my right to a valid sentient experience. A good deal unites us,

⁸ Principally in Agawu, “The Invention of African Rhythm,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (1995): 380-95.

⁹ Agawu, “Schubert’s Sexuality,” 81.

Agawu and me, particularly in our understanding of and concern about power. The gay white male is the sitting duck of the academic range in this regard, I realize, because of the privilege and power he has traditionally exercised—and “got away with” (a situation exacerbated in music by the large number of homosexuals, not all of them nice, who flock to it). That particular form of privilege and power, however, rests upon the maintenance of the “open secret” and what Alan Sinfield calls the “discretionary model” of homosexuality.¹⁰ It has been my understanding that those of us who label ourselves publicly as gay absolutely forfeit and opt out of those supposed advantages. It is also my experience that the discretionary scholars are those, on the whole, whose fear and loathing of, or simple anxiety about, critical engagement with a “homosexual” Schubert, based on its threat to the privilege-enabling status quo, is likely to loom all the larger because it cannot be fully articulated outside the private sphere (except obliquely in the dismissal of the “quality” of such work). I am aware of the danger that arises in enforcing (an essentialized) “difference” as a means of devaluing formerly colonized peoples—and other minori-

¹⁰ D.A. Miller first theorized this mechanism, which has been much explored since, in *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988): “The fact the secret is always known . . . never interferes with the incessant activity of keeping it,” and the resulting paradox “registers the subject’s accommodation to a totalizing system that has obliterated the difference he would make—the difference he does make, in the imaginary denial of this system ‘even so’” (206-7). Alan Sinfield, “Private Lives/Public Theater: Noel Coward and the Politics of Homosexual Representation,” *Representations* 36, no. 3 (1991): 43-63, especially p. 48: “[D]uring those decades of discretion we should not imagine homosexuality as *there*, fully formed but obscured by the closet, like a statue shrouded under a sheet until ready for exhibition. The closet (as discreet homosexuality was named when it came under scrutiny in the 1960s) did not obscure homosexuality; in the form that dominated for the first two decades of the century, it *created* it.”

ties.¹¹ Perhaps Agawu would want to see me (wrongly I hope) in that light, where I would wish gently to ironize his position as a faculty member, at various stages of his career, of at least three of the central institutions of the world of Anglo-American musical scholarship. In the context of theorizing about African music, he can say that “a collective ‘us,’ whether a reference to Westerners, white males, or ethnomusicologists, is no more valid than a collective ‘them,’ which lumps together people with different abilities and levels of knowledge about tradition and culture,” but he quickly changes his tune when it comes to enforcing scholarly standards on the West, which he is in a good position to do.¹²

As the temperature of his rhetoric rises toward the end of his article in *19th-Century Music*, he forces a more particular burden and implied motive onto those who would raise the matter of Schubert's homosexuality. If they don't prove what he wants them to prove in the way he wants them to prove it, then “we [that giveaway plural pronoun again] will be fully justified not only in contesting [the] validity [of Schubert's homosexuality] but also in reading an opportunistic and perhaps mischievous intent on the part of its advocates.” This is not a call for scholarly cooperation but bullying, which must be firmly resisted. Couched in those terms, “our communal effort

¹¹ The early theorists of “gay liberation” recognized the contingency of homosexuality: “our homosexuality is a crucial part of our identity, not because of anything intrinsic about it but because social oppression made it so,” wrote Denis Altman in the Marcuse-inspired conclusion (“Everyone is gay; everyone is straight”) to *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation* (New York: Discus Books, 1971; new edn. 1993), 240, 246. Agawu is of course referring to the totalizing “difference” assigned to any group as a way of eliminating differences between individuals of that group and thus most often of demonizing or dehumanizing them as a group.

¹² Agawu, “Representing African Music,” *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (1992): 260.

to understand art works” is something I know that I am always already excluded from, and therefore want no part of.¹³ In those circumstances I would rather have Schubert incontestably heterosexual, the golden nightingale confined to his classical music cage.

In endeavoring to address Schubert, then, I wish to enter the topic from as different a position as I can from those outlined by Agawu. His model of the musical community is explicitly that of composer-work-listener (“poietic-neutral-esthetic”) worked out by Molino and Nattiez.¹⁴ Significantly, it reifies the work, never validates a specific listener, and omits the expression without which the work only lamely exists—the performance. In emphasizing musical praxis—in a particular rather than general way—I am quite ready to acknowledge my debt to the community of ethnomusicology, a happier place for a gay man and musical scholar to play than the confines of the unpluralistic and monotheistic musicology that still insists on using the plural pronoun to erase difference and enforce discipline.

I

A paragraph from *The New Grove* will serve to introduce the topic:

Piano duet. Piano duets are of two kinds: those for two players at one instrument, and those in which each of the two pianists has an instrument to himself. Although the one-piano duet has the larger repertory, it has come to be regarded as a modest, essentially domestic branch of music compared with the more glamorous two-piano

¹³ Agawu, “Schubert’s Sexuality,” 82.

¹⁴ Ibid., 80; see Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 3-37.

duet. . . . Schubert was the one great composer to write extensively for the medium.¹⁵

“Essentially domestic” is one way of characterizing the Schubert who, standing apart from the heroic Beethoven, seems epitomized by the intimate, the bourgeois, the Biedermeier, the “tamed Romanticism” of the drawing room and the Schubertiad, where the tubby, diminutive Schubert accompanied Vogl in songs or played piano duets with his usual partner, Josef von Gahy (1793-1864). The domestic space that Schubert so typically occupied is also the sphere of the feminine in the West, and part of the power of a homoerotic Schubert is focused in the incoherent nexus of ideas that connects gender liminality with deviant sexuality.

Furthermore, two people at the same piano in a domestic setting is a situation that, as Charles Burney (whose four sonatas of 1777 were the first duets to be published) noted, could cause some embarrassment by “the near approach of the hands of the different persons.”¹⁶ How much quicker might Tolstoy’s Pozdnyshev have murdered his wife if the sensually marked musician he invited into the household had played, rather than Beethoven’s “Kreutzer” Sonata, Schubert’s Rondo in D, at the climax of which the four hands interweave?¹⁷ Ros-

¹⁵ “Piano Duet,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980) 14: 680.

¹⁶ Article on “Ravalement” in *Rees’s Cyclopaedia* quoted in *New Grove* 14: 680.

¹⁷ In his fascinating discussion of the psycho-sexual dimensions of Tolstoy’s tale, Richard Leppert points out, however, that Pozdnyshev is relatively inured to the kind of salon music genre to which Schubert’s Rondo in D, Op. 138, belongs, being enraged (because his identity is challenged) by the “fundamentally masculine, even phallic” character of the first movement of the Beethoven; see *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 168-77 (quotation on p. 176). For more on the nexus of sexuality and masculinity in both

sini naturally capitalized on the very thing that embarrassed Burney. In the *Petite fanfare à quatre mains* found among his *Péchés de Vieillesse*, not only are the assignations made of “La Droite à Mademoiselle” and “La Gauche à Monsieur,” but the composer further invites the pair to play his fanfare “with love,” adding in parenthesis “of hands and knees.”¹⁸

The piano duet also bears heavily the mark of the inauthentic so condemned by modernism because, along with the more extravagant two pianos *eight hands*, it is the chief repository of the literature of transcription. But where two-piano eight-hand music brings with it the elements of a certain excess and also of competition—the relation between players often taking on the flavor in my experience of team sports—piano duets tame the concert-hall repertory of symphonies and chamber music for the drawing room, and substitute private intimacy for their busy public rhetoric.

The function of the piano duet in an era that lacked the means of mechanical reproduction is clear. Less clear is why, under pressure from modernistic ideals and technology, the piano duet did not quietly go away. Most keyboard players play piano duets today, but few of us talk about it. It is, not to put too fine a point on it, a closet activity with all the attractions that term suggests. When a radio is left on, the assault on the ear that results from the typical orchestral sound pumped out by classical

Tolstoy's “Kreutzer Sonata” and Beethoven's, see the discussion in Lawrence Kramer, *After the Lovedeath: Sexual Violence and the Making of Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).

¹⁸ The piece, which is no. 12 of vol. 9 in the autograph manuscripts of the *Péchés de Vieillesse* in Fondazione Rossini at Pesaro, was kindly brought to my attention by Marvin Tartak. The terminal note reads “Je prie mes interprètes de vouloir exécuter *avec amour* (des mains et des genoux) ma petite fanfare. G. Rossini.” (Emphasis in original.)

cal music stations becomes very quickly tiring on the passive body. When that body acts in such a way as to produce the sound, inauthentic though it may be, the results are far more satisfying. Most piano duet partners will vary their repertory between original works and transcriptions, therefore, without making too much fuss about the difference.

Partnership is the essence of piano-duet playing, but like all relationships this most intimate of musical ones can run the gamut of human possibilities, even with the same couple, and in ways that affect the music. Parent-child, teacher-student, pursued-pursuer, even adult-adult, all these can enrich the texture of a musical partnership that also often comes under scrutiny from other members of the household in interesting ways. A respected modern observer, Edward T. Cone, spells out some of the possibilities and implications with curious eloquence in what turns out to be a climactic moment at the end of the sixth chapter of his book, *The Composer's Voice*.

The duettist's position is anomalous. His role, like the duo-pianist's, might seem to be that of a unitary agent, but if it is, it is singularly incomplete. He shares his very instrument, over which he thus loses a measure of control. . . . The implied agents often move back and forth between him and his partner, for their parts in general seem determined more by convenience of keyboard position than by musical continuity. What all this suggests is that the aim of four-hand music should be to evoke a single persona, not by the interaction of two agents, but by the blending of two players into a single four-handed monster. Each must sacrifice more of his individuality than in a normal ensemble, for four-hand playing is a marriage rather than a mere friendship. Such a performance is thus a peculiarly intimate

affair, and when it is undertaken in public, the auditor may feel at best an intruder, at worst a voyeur.¹⁹

The rather obsessive male pronouns have the effect of suggesting, perhaps unintentionally, an exclusively male setting; and the “marriage” that produces a “monster” has a long history in veiled allusions to same-sex desire. Reading backward, as it were, from that point, the focus on “position” rather than “continuity” adds a counter-hegemonic touch; and the notion of one who both “shares his very instrument” and “loses...control” suggests further subtextual vistas of an almost racy kind as does the reference to the “voyeur.” This is surely as close as musicology of a perfectly respectable kind can come to exploring the (deviant) sexuality surrounding music without advertising what it is doing.

The piano duet in a frankly homoerotic context opens up a rather different set of possibilities. For one thing, in place of the one-to-one relationship between the listening or playing subject and music suggested by Suzanne Cusick's remarkable lesbian-inspired model, there is, when the playing subjects are male, an enactment of the classic Western homosocial triangle in which two men engage in intimacy as each supposedly focuses on the female body, here represented by the music.²⁰ A

¹⁹Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 134-35. For drawing my attention to this passage I am indebted to Suzanne Cusick.

²⁰Suzanne G. Cusick, “On a Lesbian Relationship to Music: A Serious Effort Not to Think Straight,” in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary C. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994), 67-84. The homosocial triangle was theorized and exemplified by Eve Sedgwick in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). For a critique and extension of the theory see Terry Castle, “Sylvia Townsend Warner and the Counterplot of Lesbian Fiction,” in *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 66-91.

displacement of sexual energy can, in a specifically gay male context, be supplemented by a kind of self-consciousness and irony that either verges on or evokes camp. Negotiation of the roles of top and bottom, for instance, so loaded with significance that the single book on Schubert's duets bans them in favor of *primo* and *secondo*, can be charged with sexual innuendo as well as musical play.²¹

My piano duet partner from 1992 to 1994 was a gay man two generations younger than myself. Our first duet dates centered on repertory in which he felt most comfortable—French music, specifically the well-known duets of Fauré and Debussy, to which a little later in our one and only public appearance we added Poulenc. In the spirit of this inquiry I should report that ours was largely a monogamous four-hand relationship: a brief encounter I could not avoid without impoliteness, I found out later, had caused disquiet, and my partner, if he had similar infidelities, never revealed them. (I have since reclaimed the musically more natural state of promiscuity: a gay writer with whom I recently enjoyed a one-session stand—he is a very keen pianist—delighted me by exclaiming right out, the moment after we exchanged those come-hither four-hand signals, that so far as duets were concerned he was a top; or was it a bottom? The details pale, as in sex, beside the general feeling, which on that occasion was of pure if temporary pleasure.) The way duet relations click, so to speak, is in my experience owing to a similar sense of phrasing, tone-color and, more than anything else (because it determines whether the pair can literally stay together), a common sense of rhythm and rubato. In this music, our differences could

²¹ Dallas A. Weekly and Nancy Arganbright, *Schubert's Music for Piano Four-Hands* (White Plains, NY: Pro/Am Music Resources, 1990).

easily be submerged in either soaring lyricism or as biting an irony as we could manage, and our sense of both was achieved with joy and little effort.

Schubert was not so easy. My partner, in the full flush of coming out, was eager enough to embrace the music of someone who had recently been presented to him as a gay composer, but the tortuous nuances of early nineteenth-century Viennese lyricism tended to elude him. My role became slightly more didactic as a result. After a period with the Rondo in D (D. 608), whose Rossini-like bravura and high spirits served as a transition, we settled down to a few pieces, such as the late Rondo in A (D. 951) and Fantasy in F minor (D. 940), which we learned to play in a spirited if inaccurate manner.

But our efforts with Schubert came to focus more and more on the Fantasy. We worked hard on the fugue and produced from time to time an extraordinarily exciting account of the final pages with a driving accelerando that reminds me (when I think of it, as I often do) of the remarkable, as well as messy, aspects of the charge of the Gadarene swine toward the precipice of that awesome silence seventeen measures before the close. Devotees of the work will recall that this precipitous gap heralds a coda in which, to quote William Kinderman, “the lyrical theme, recalled in a final brief reminiscence, is obliterated by the funereal theme, which dominates the entire closing section of the work.”²²

We were also attracted to another piece with a complicated coda that occurs after a general pause, the slow movement of the Sonata in C (D. 812)—duet players can afford the irrational luxury of preferring the part

²² William Kinderman, “Schubert’s Tragic Perspective,” in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 82.

to the whole. If my partner ultimately preferred the totalizing tragic-Romantic vision of the Fantasy, he was good enough to indulge my liking for the rather special social story that lies behind this other piece. It is in the context of reviewing the posthumously published score of the entire work, entitled "Grand Duo" by the publisher and dedicated to Clara Wieck, that Robert Schumann, in an extraordinarily ambivalent critical statement, labels Schubert indelibly for the nineteenth century:

To one who has some degree of education and feeling Beethoven and Schubert may be recognized and distinguished, from the very first. Schubert is a more feminine character compared to the other; far more loquacious, softer, broader; compared to Beethoven he is a child, sporting happily among the giants. Such is the relation these symphonic movements bear to those of Beethoven, and, in their inwardness, they could not have been conceived by any other than Schubert. To be sure, he brings in his powerful passages, and works in masses; and still he is more feminine than masculine, for he pleads and persuades where the man commands.²³

Schumann's gender binary, with its subsidiary oppositions of childhood/adulthood and inwardness/externality, suggests, even as it partly conceals, the complexity surrounding the issue of gender in the early nineteenth century. The cult of feeling that swept Europe in

²³ Robert Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, ed. Konrad Wolff, trans. Paul Rosenfeld (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 116-17. The following sentences show Schumann gathering himself after this characteristic anxiety attack brought on by Beethoven's super-masculinity: "But all this merely in comparison with Beethoven; compared to others, he [Schubert] is masculine; indeed, the boldest and most freethinking among the newer musicians. With this conviction we should take up the duo." Susan McClary draws attention to another notable example of gender-related "anxiety" in Schumann's celebrated essay on Schubert's C major Symphony; see *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 18; and Lawrence Kramer to a third example in *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

the later eighteenth century made it possible for the domesticated and emasculated male to serve a broad cultural function that has been described by a number of cultural historians in terms of domestic ideology.²⁴ The story that has only begun to be told, however, concerns the ways in which the lachrymose and hypersensitive male also signals a culture of male-male affection that historians of sexuality have just begun to explore.²⁵ The best kept secret of the age of sensibility has been the love that men of feeling share. There has been unanimity about Schubert's belonging to a circle of male friends; and even Newman Flower let slip the notion that "[i]t would require more than the common bond of friendship to make of these opposites a *coterie* so united."²⁶ When we discover that the composer fell under the influence of, and eventually lived with Johann Mayrhofer, a man ten years his senior devoted to the love of classical Greece the picture seems complete, since Hellenism and homosexuality were never far distant in the language and culture of Winckelmann, that "prime idealogue of pedagogic

²⁴ Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

²⁵ For an overview, see Jean H. Hagstrum, *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) and *Eros and Vision: The Restoration to Romanticism* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1989). See also George Haggerty, "O *lachrymarum* fons: Tears, Poetry, and Desire in Gray," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no. 1 (1996): 81-96, who says of Gray, along lines we might apply to Schubert, allowing for the differences, "what needs to be explained is not how this reclusive eighteenth-century figure kept his sexuality hidden, but rather how he could write it so large as to make it indistinguishable from values that were celebrated in the culture at large" (82).

²⁶ Newman Flower, *Franz Schubert: The Man and His Circle* (London: Cassell and Co., 1928), "new edition" (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1935), 114.

eros" in Richard Dellamora's account.²⁷ It is a modern categorical obsession that draws an unhelpful line be-

²⁷ Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), in the chapter "Arnold, Winckelmann, and Pater," 110. Linda Dowling's *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) adds enormously to the theoretical complication of Hellenism as both a transcendent alternative to Christian theology and also a homosexual counterdiscourse justifying male love in ideal terms, and points out that for John Stuart Mill and other liberals, the "Hellenic ideal represented no direct recovery of an ancient model so much as the powerfully mediated version of Greece produced by eighteenth-century German Hellenism" (60). The German scene itself was outlined by Paul Derks in *Die Schande der heiligen Päderastie: Homosexualität und Öffentlichkeit in der deutschen Literatur, 1750-1850* (Berlin: Verlag Rosa Winkel, 1990); many of the refreshingly complicated ideas about sexuality presented by various authors in *Outing Goethe and His Age*, ed. Alice A. Kuzniar (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), arise in reaction to Derks's more straightforward approach. See also Denis M. Sweet, "The Personal, the Political, and the Aesthetic: Johann Joachim Winckelmann's German Enlightenment Life" in *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe*, ed. Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1989), 147-162, in which "a profound stylization of Winckelmann in Goethe's hands" (48) (and those of others who later pressed him into the service of German nationalism) is contrasted with Giacomo Casanova's account of finding him having sex with a boy in his rooms in Rome; also Robert Aldrich, *The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art, and Homosexual Fantasy* (London: Routledge, 1993), chapter 2, 41-68, which complements an account of Winckelmann with one of August von Platen (1796-1835). The political and sexual implications of Schubert's settings of Platen are clearly demonstrated by Kristina Muxfeldt in "Schubert, Platen, and the Myth of Narcissus," *JAMS* 49, no. 3 (1996), 480-527, and Lawrence Kramer, *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song*, note the puritanical reaction of Ludwig Robert toward the cult of male friendship in a review of Platen's poetry of 1829, quoted by Muxfeldt on pp. 507-8. Solomon, in a portion of "Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini" that has not so far as I know been assailed, notes that Johann Mayrhofer (1787-1836) "led a group of Schubert associates—among them Kupelwieser, Schöber, and the poet Johann Senn—in forming a clandestine association of young male idealists, one 'without statues, without names, without formalities' . . . they published two volumes of a journal entitled *Beiträge zur Bildung für Jünglinge*, dedicated to awakening 'true and manly patriotic sentiments' in their contemporaries" (205). Clearly

tween same-sex sexual acts and other forms of homoerotic activity, like playing Schubert duets.

My partner and I were not aware of the part this piece played in Schumann's weird need to establish degrees of male subjectivity in Romantic music, or of his attempt, related to his gender anxieties in its blatant move to drag the Grand Duo by hook or by crook out of the drawing room into the concert hall, to label it the transcription of a symphony, in spite of his knowledge of Schubert's manuscript designation "Sonata for Four Hands." Tovey swallowed this theory; modern Schubert scholars appear to reject it.²⁸ A noteworthy part of Schumann's stratagem is the linking of the Adagio with the second movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 in D, a correspondence often repeated since. Later critics tend not to complicate their response to this movement further. Kathleen Dale echoes the common view, and does

one of the more important figures in the composer's life, Mayrhofer is the subject of interesting and careful speculation on the part of Graham Johnson in the booklets accompanying *The Hyperion Schubert Edition: The Complete Songs*, vol. 11, CD J33011 (1990), 22-24, 29-32; and vol. 14, CD J33014 (1991), 4ff., 18-38. Calling him "almost certainly homosexual," and drawing a loose parallel between his relationship to Schubert and that of Auden and Britten, Johnson convincingly draws attention to the tradition of Uranianism (leading to Karl Friedrich Ulrich's adoption of the term in his pioneering sexological work of the 1860s) behind what may be the coded message of "Uranien's Flucht" (D. 554). I am not invested in seeing the relationship of poet and composer as anything beyond the Platonic affair that Johnson suggests, but if he is trying in a manner so delicate one cannot be sure, to intimate that "Der Zürnenden Diana" (D. 707), one of the most ambitious of the Mayrhofer settings, ends with a hymn to anal penetration, then who am I to contradict him?

²⁸ For a reasoned view, linking the theory to the nonexistent "Gastein" symphony, see Brain Newbould, *Schubert and the Symphony: A New Perspective* (London: Toccata Press, 1992), 209-11. See also Ernest G. Porter, *Schubert's Piano Works* (London: Dobson, 1980), 153-57, which notes the alterations Joachim, Antony Collins and Karl Salomon each had to make in order to orchestrate the work as further evidence that Schubert was writing for the piano.

her bit to perpetuate the “heavenly length” topos, also derived from Schumann, by saying that “when the players reach the last bar, they may feel they have completed a timeless wandering through the Elysian fields.”²⁹

Our reading starts out as close to those Elysian fields as we are able. We want the listener to exclaim, as we have done, “What beautiful part-writing!” (ex. 1). But even in the third measure it is hard to avoid the catch-in-the-throat signaled by the slightly nervous preparation in the tenor for the inevitable feminine cadence. The next phrase begins anxiously by repeating the cadential gesture twice, before gathering itself to reach for the highest note so far, a G \flat that I lovingly emphasize to complement my partner’s slight stress on his G \flat in measure 3. If there is going to be a drama queen in this plot, G \flat has already started thinking about auditioning for the part. But all is yet tentative. In the world created here every little climax or departure seems to require a double approach, as though effort must be made to be assertive. Our aspiring star sinks back to his bass role in the next phrase and gets pushed aside by a radiant melodic climax on A \flat accompanied (or rather left momentarily in the lurch) by a madrigalian sigh from my partner. And this begins to suggest that G \flat cannot aspire to diva status after all, but must be content as one of those impetuous transvestite sopranos who work hard to enable the plot (Sextus in *Giulio Cesare*, even the *Rosenkavalier* herself). For what this local climax suggests is that G \flat ’s double insistence in the bass during the two preceding bars (mm. 10-11) has the effect of highlighting G-natural’s reappearance during m. 12, in a context that lends the D \flat harmony a deeply poetic Lydian hue, so redolent of Roman-

²⁹ Kathleen Dale, “The Piano Music,” in *The Music of Schubert*, ed. Gerald Abraham (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1947), 131.

tic yearning.³⁰ The effect is consolidated in the last phrase, where the D \flat is tonicized and the play between G \flat and G \sharp reiterated several times.

Most significant of all in this third central phrase is m. 14, however, for climaxes or attempted climaxes are rarely as important in Schubert as what follows them. Here we have a first essay at tonicizing the submediant, a gesture that both holds up the action and leads to the reappearance in the bass of the neighboring G \flat on the weakest beat in a diminished-seventh chord changing back, chameleon-like, to the by now familiar 4-2 dominant of D \flat that heralds the accustomed cadence, in which the nervous tenor flourish, returning yet again, begins to sound like the characteristic affectation of the (specially qualified) man of feeling—it is very hard to capture an appropriate nuance for this gesture in performance, as well as to coordinate it with the other parts. The effect of vacillation is further enhanced by the lifting of A \flat to A \sharp in the alto voice complementary to the F–G \flat in the bass, but not exactly synchronized with it. To contemplate an alternative (merely for four beats), that avoids the G \flat (while preserving A \sharp and F \flat), continues the root movement, and lands on a 6-4 in a typically Mendelssohnian way, is to realize the significant potential of this bar (ex. 2). This is not a drama of neighbor notes: after Beethoven anyone worth her salt could be counted on to devise an entire movement out of that ingredient. What Schubert elevates (sometimes to a structural principle, but here so far in a series of poignant moments) is a fluctuation, a vacillation, a carefully constructed

³⁰ The effect is pursued in a different manner in the second section (in E), where a persistent A \sharp (beginning at m. 37) refuses at first its traditional role of announcing the dominant, B, only reaching it at m. 43 after a second attempt.

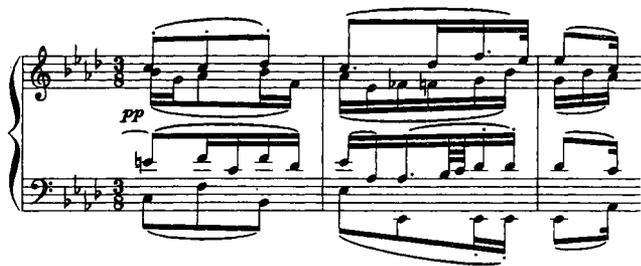
This musical score is for a piano four-hands piece, spanning measures 7 to 14. It is written in a 3/8 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked "Andante".

The score is divided into two systems of four staves each. The first system (measures 7-10) features a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) at the beginning of each staff. The second system (measures 11-14) features dynamic markings of *sf* (sforzando) and *pp* (pianissimo) at the beginning of each staff. The notation includes various rhythmic values, slurs, and dynamic hairpins.

Measure 7: *p*
Measure 8: *p*
Measure 9: *p*
Measure 10: *p*
Measure 11: *sf*
Measure 12: *pp*
Measure 13: *pp*
Measure 14: *pp*

The musical score is presented in two systems, each with two staves (treble and bass clef). The first system begins at measure 14. The upper staff features a melodic line with various articulations, including slurs and accents, and dynamic markings of *pp* and *f*. The lower staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines, also marked with *pp* and *f*. The second system begins at measure 20. It continues the melodic and harmonic development, with dynamic markings of *pp* and *decresc.* (decrescendo) indicating a gradual decrease in volume. The notation includes slurs, accents, and dynamic markings throughout.

Example 1: Grand Duo, Andante, mm. 1-25.



Example 2: substitute for mm. 14-15.

undecidability—as in his rapid-fire mode switches in such pieces as the G-Major String Quartet, op. 161—that affects the very identity of more than notes.³¹ Out of it can be woven dramas of public and private, illusion and reality, and more precise and important still, the “not-knowing-which-is-which,” the intense confusion of thought and feeling that is connected with the image of the emasculated male in the age of sensibility and that, for different reasons, homosexual children and adolescents grow up with today. On supersensitive days, our *pianissimo* rubato here has been *breathtaking*.

³¹ The critical commentary on Schubert's major-minor contrasts or inflections is legion; in “Schubert's Tragic Perspective” in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 65-83, William Kinderman discusses it in relation to the Fantasy in F minor for Piano Four Hands (D. 940), which he sees as pursuing “a latent symbolism analogous to that of *Winterreise*” (82) in the exploitation of thematic, tonal, and modal contrast, as “one aspect of a more profound thematic juxtaposition suggesting the dichotomy of inward imagination and external perception” (75); but even that dichotomy seems too tangible in a musical account like this one, which suggests rather a hopeless, entangled confusion between the two.

A variant of the cadence in mm. 3-4, with an added chromatic note in the fall from G \flat to the dominant in the bass, allows the nervous tenor to flourish yet again. And the final phrase, with its many extensions, continues the cyclical, reiterative effect by starting like the second one (but a fourth up), then telescoping the climactic gestures of the third (as already hinted) to come to a similar conclusion in a mere four measures. The repetition covering the lower octave; the metrical hiatus that packs three V-I progressions (replete with nervous tenor) into the space of two 3/8 measures (the reverse of the traditional hemiola effect that suggests a broadening *before* the cadence); a final cadence covering all registers: these might suggest leisurely completion, but I think we have sometimes heard and tried to play the passage as though it were the speech of a person who bursts out with a thought (the telescoped subphrase) only to lapse distractedly into silence bit by bit, reiterating one or two words almost compulsively in the process. (One might imagine a sensitive country squire judiciously and absent-mindedly reiterating "Just so!" in response to his wife, children, or servants while day-dreaming about an attractive new gamekeeper on the estate). An air of distraction is yet another manifestation of sensibility, and is also a familiar ploy (and sometimes irritating characteristic) of modern gay men, among others, when they need to escape the present into an imaginary life. In playing the passage, however, we don't need to advertise any impending musical or social disintegration that might result from such hints, because part of our effect is to tend the sunny side of the rhetoric, to make this measured exposition seem uncomplicated. We are both past masters in the art of keeping it (almost) together—aren't we?

The ending of this first section and the four measures it takes to shift to the next key area are the only

straightforward moments of closure and transition in the movement, as it turns out. The second section, with its sprightly staccato theme butting heads with an internal pedal of B or F#, ends in a passage that the hesitation and vacillation of m.14 might have prompted, the question of current identity being displaced on to B \sharp and B \flat . We play this passage for its teasing, irresolute quality—there is an element of flirtation here as well as of that crippling indecisiveness of those who do not spontaneously know their own feelings and whose social experience makes all choice both revealing and dangerous (ex. 3).

The third section sets off once again with Schubert's characteristic repeated notes, in a passage that must constitute the main connection to the slow movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 noticed by Schumann—it is similar in rhythm and accompaniment to the closing theme of the exposition, although the comparison tells one little except that Schubert in this instance has more complicated designs on his material (ex. 4). The optimistic tenor melody with which the bottom asserts leadership, and which (unlike Beethoven's neatly turned but self-enclosed tune) becomes the subject of contrapuntal play, is something my partner is ready for at this stage of the game. I like the way he usually hurries a little impetuously down that impressive scale that dumps us right out of Beethoven's world. But the climax we generate on the local dominant at m. 77 immediately disintegrates into an even more poignant tonally dissolute wandering in the very interior of the section. This dominant, far from being a reassuring arrival, is wrong-footed metrically and immediately beset by terrors and fears, heart palpitations, and by a further reflection of the paralyzing indecision between key areas already encountered in the

54

fp > *dim.* *pp >* *cresc.* *fp >*

fp > *dim.* *pp >* *cresc.* *fp >*

59

dim. *pp >* *cresc.*

dim. *pp >* *cresc.*

Example 3: Grand Duo, Andante, mm. 54-62.

Musical score for Example 4 (a), Beethoven, Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 36, Larghetto, mm. 82-86. The score is written for four staves: Vn. I, Vn. II, Vla., and Vcl. (Basso). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/8. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, with dynamic markings such as *p* and *f*.

Example 4 (a): Beethoven, Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 36, Larghetto, mm. 82-86.

Musical score for Example 4 (b), Schubert, Grand Duo, Andante, mm. 62-66. The score is written for four staves: two for the right hand and two for the left hand. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/8. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, with dynamic markings such as *p*.

Example 4 (b): Schubert, Grand Duo, Andante, mm. 62-66.

previous section. Out of this set of ingredients a cadence is pulled together in the local tonic, allowing the counterpoint to resume (in stretto, what's more). This cover-up gesture is even more poignant than the irresolute wanderings that have preceded it. Virtuosos in the art of "passing," and of pleasing all and sundry as a way of apologizing for who we are, my partner and I manage to produce a particularly smug cadential gesture here while both, I suspect, feeling its latent pain and incongruity (ex. 5).

All this is repeated unproblematically by Schubert in the reprise, except for the excision of part of the second section, which ends with indecisive play between cadences on C and A \flat , a reengineered version of the more tense alternatives of B and E \flat earlier on. This means not only that the third section that follows can be repeated note-for-note in the tonic, but also that the disintegrating drama after its climax on the dominant revolves around the identity of the G \flat /F \sharp , which takes on all its old harmonic roles and adds some new ones, so that we can actually be made to believe in its disruptive powers, the display of which is not yet over.

What is quite new and most notable about the reprise, however, is the failure of the first section to close graciously. In one of those violent moves typical of Schubert, the tune is wrested out of joint so as to end in A minor. And at this point a new transition occurs that transforms the innocent-sounding opening of the second phrase of the main theme into an ominous bass pattern that lurks upward out of the depths against the inevitable throb of the by now obsessive repeated notes to effect the key transition to the second theme. As each rising chromatic step in the bass prompts a similar step at the

Musical score for Piano Four Hands, measures 77-88. The score is written for two hands on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The music features complex textures with many beamed notes and chords. Measure 77 includes a *pp* dynamic marking and a *decresc.* instruction. Measure 78 includes a *pp* dynamic marking. Measures 79-88 show various articulations, including accents (*^*) and slurs, and dynamic markings such as *pp* and *f*. The notation includes many beamed notes and chords, with some notes marked with accents (*^*) and slurs.

86

8

8

pp

ff>

pp

ff>

fp

pp

ff>

fp

90

p

cresc.

f

p

p

cresc.

f

p

Example 5: Grand Duo, Andante, mm. 77-94.

146

..... cresc.

..... cresc.

p

f

f

p

The image shows a musical score for a Grand Duo, measures 134-50. The score is written on four staves, with two staves for each instrument. The music is in a 2/4 time signature and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The dynamics range from piano (*p*) to forte (*f*). The score includes two instances of a crescendo, marked with "..... cresc.". The first instance occurs in measures 134-135, and the second in measures 148-149. The score is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic in measures 134 and 148, and a forte (*f*) dynamic in measures 135 and 149. The music is characterized by a complex interplay of rhythmic figures and melodic lines, with some measures featuring a dense texture of notes.

Example 6: Grand Duo, Andante, mm. 134-50.

upper end of the figure, G \flat makes another appearance, transforming itself to F \sharp for its B-minor role shortly before another occurrence of the painfully self-conscious cadence from the middle of section 3 (ex. 6). Producing C major like a rabbit out of a hat, it allows us to share the satisfaction of all good boys in its complementary relation with the E major with which the first statement of the second section began vis-à-vis the A \flat tonic. Producing modulations to third-related keys was second nature to Schubert, however, and the real question is, why the disruption of the previously untroubled close to the main theme and the conjuring up of such an ominous subterranean voice to effect it in this instance? The story is not turning out so well.

If my partner often surprises me by the intensity he wrings out of the yeasty, fomenting bass line of this transition, it is only when we get to the coda that our playing gets quite out of hand. After the thoughtful pause (quite different from the precipitous silence in the F-minor Fantasy) that ensues after a single G \flat has disrupted the otherwise satisfactory concluding tonic, all hell breaks loose with the return of that ominous dark twin of the sunny second phrase of the movement, now robbed of its sprightly dotted rhythm, stripped down to the rude essence of its diminished fourth, and presented in a musical space that is bare, cold, and yet violent. There is nothing we can get out of any instrument that will adequately express the opening eight bars, which are what make us return again and again to the piece. Hands spread at opposite ends of the keyboard, the top slashing away percussively and the bottom getting every ounce out of those inadequate hammers and aging strings on my 1890s Broadwood, there is no teasing now as the G \flat shows its true colors in direct confrontation with the F pedal in a texture as reductive, nihilistic, and terrifying as

anything in nineteenth-century music.³² Sensibility has lost all its manners here and stands on the edge of the abyss of the sublime. For us in our different ways, I think, the brutal dissonance and hollow timbre represent the sheer rage of the powerless subject who is hopeless, the out-of-control moments that are never revealed, or the terrifying fantasy of their revelation (“Is this what would happen if I really let it all out?”). These are feelings that can unite a person who has bitterly contended with the superior attitudes the British mete out to those of the wrong class and sexuality with one who has survived a Californian fundamentalist Christian upbringing, and—I like to imagine, but am not stuck on the idea—a nineteenth-century Viennese ephrophile recently diagnosed with syphilis.³³ At any rate, I applaud Edward T.

³² The passage lies somewhere between (or beyond) the “two sides of the coin of harmonic experimentation in the early Romantic period” (“rich chords and interesting progressions, deriving new expressive force by means of novel spacing, [etc.]” and “paradoxical single notes . . . parallel and hollow sounds of all descriptions”) which Joseph Kerman usefully examines in his “A Romantic Detail in Schubert’s *Schwanengesang*,” *Musical Quarterly* 48 (1962), 36-49; repr. in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch; quotations on p. 56.

³³ The term “ephrophile” is that of D. J. West, *Homosexuality Re-examined* (4th edition of *Homosexuality* [1960]), (London: Duckworth, 1977), 211-15. Although not historical, it suggests rather well the Greek-inspired model in its modern European form of love of adolescents as a prime focus not precluding other kinds of homosexual attachment. On the subject of anger, Newman Flower records a potentially revealing incident (of 1822 or later): while helping a young lady to alight from a carriage Schubert continued to talk, presumably to himself: “Above all things I must not get angry. For God’s sake I must not get angry. For if I do get angry I knock all the teeth out of the mouth of the poor wretch who has angered me.’ . . . ‘And have you often been angry?’ she asked nervously. ‘No,’ said Schubert. ‘Never yet!’” (*Franz Schubert: The Man and His Circle*, 145) I have not discovered the origin of this story: Flower may have found it among material that Deutsch rejected for his *Schubert: Die Erinnerungen seiner Freunde* (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1957), trans. Rosamund Ley and John Nowell as *Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends* (New York: Macmillan, 1958). A

Cone (who, writing before Solomon's disclosures, mentions Oscar Wilde in the same breath) and Susan McClary for hazarding a guess about the connection of music, emotional life, and disease in other Schubertian contexts.³⁴ Whatever it means, this is a moment that, at any

sizable amount of evidence about Schubert's anger (released with the help of alcohol) and his depressions (to which swallowed anger would have contributed) nevertheless exists, even outside the music, into which Schubert channeled considerable violence. Hugh Macdonald, in "Schubert's Volcanic Temper," *Musical Times* 119, no. 1629 (1978), 949–52, discusses some notable examples in works other than this one: he points very perceptively to "the emergence of a violent and disturbingly elemental pressure under certain seismic conditions very hard to predict," of "the sense of it being uncontrolled and partly uncontrollable," of the eruption being "often repressed or diverted" or "quickly suppressed . . . as though Schubert was consciously holding in check a tendency of whose potential force he may well have been aware" (951). Macdonald convincingly links this violence with "other obsessional features of his music, particularly modulation and rhythm," the latter being manifest in "the insistent pulse" that can "quickly generate an obsessional, even hysterical atmosphere" (952). Interestingly, "it can happen at any stage of his career, from 1812 to 1828" (951), so it is not simply a reaction to syphilis. Elizabeth Norman McKay, in her recent *Franz Schubert: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), chapter 6, advances a diagnosis of cyclothymia (a mild form of the bipolar condition in which periods of elation alternate with periods of depression) to account for his behavior patterns as reported by his friends and contemporaries. This strategy accords with a long history of medicalizing awkward social issues as a way of avoiding or controlling them. The social mechanisms by which anger, submerged along with other invalidated feelings, becomes a factor of crucial importance in the emotional lives of gay people in modern times, contributing to depression, physical ailments and worse, are discussed in the last chapter of my *Benjamin Britten: Peter Grimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 193–95.

³⁴ Edward T. Cone, "Schubert's Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics," *19th-Century Music* 5, no. 3 (1982): 233–41; reprinted in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch, 13–30. Susan McClary, "Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert's Music," in *Queering the Pitch*, 205–34; and "The Impromptu That Trod on a Loaf: or How Music Tells Stories," *Narrative* 5, no. 1 (1997): 20–35. The narrative implications are interesting to compare with those McClary discerns in the Impromptu in E \flat Major, op. 90, no. 2

event, cannot be paralleled in the *Larghetto* of Beethoven's Second Symphony, a public statement that tidily confines its darker recognitions to the development section and elsewhere gets stuck in those Elysian fields of the bourgeois myth where no one (one knows) has AIDS or is HIV positive (and if they did we wouldn't talk about it, would we?).

More recognizable still as the work of someone fully conscious of society's negation of his feelings from an early age is the damage control that attends this phantasmatic outburst. First, the phrase in mm. 18-20 is brought back in augmentation, with a significant variant that allows the $A\sharp$ from m. 14 to enter radiantly as the third of an untrammelled F major chord only to be pushed down to $A\flat$ in order to serve as the first note of the nervous tenor gesture, that old giveaway tick. We tread carefully across the keyboard here, every note of every chord asking and testing whether all systems are under control, whether feeling can still be mimed, whether life can yet go on. An affirmative subdominant cadence (who are we persuading but ourselves?) allows a decorated version. This time, however, the cadence comes out minor and leads to a complementary phrase in (Lydian) A major—its distance from the preceding $D\flat$ being the diminished fourth of the elemental bass theme at the start of the coda, expanded into a harmonic relationship enabled by the respelling of $F\flat$ as $E\sharp$. We now realize, if we think about it, that the smoothness of third relations can have their darker side after all when respelled as diminished fourths. The complementary Lydian augmented fourth becomes excruciating here ow-

(1827), another piece that begins with a blithe enough tune in the major, this one containing a moment of frivolous ornamentation that eventually unleashes violence and ends like a snuff plot.

ing to its dissonance with a pedal on the fifth degree lifted out of its previous tenor range and presented in the soprano. Then, after a reference to the disruptive bass theme in a milder, socialized form and an almost inevitable slip (via the almost equally inevitable German sixth) back to the dominant 6-4, occur final taut gestures of a lyrical kind as the singing bird is stuffed back into the cage. A painful mirroring of the top's conventionally poignant, ecstatic, Romantic gesture by the bottom allows the chameleon quality of expressive notes (in this case $F\sharp$ and $F\flat$) to be rehearsed yet again in a manner that seals the subject's fate. An excruciating, long-drawn-out cadence, quite unlike the complacent closures in the middle sections or the cadences of the main theme with their worried tenor, ends the movement with a final despairing and halting chromatic rise in the tenor range terminated by a reminder of the bass theme and the disruption it signaled. On our better days we have played those last three staccato chords as if we were automata, lacking all grace and hope, and without energy of any kind (ex. 7).

The musical score is written for two systems, each containing four staves. The first system (measures 211-216) features a piano (p) dynamic in the first two measures, followed by fortissimo (ffz) and fortissimo (ff) dynamics. The second system (measures 218-223) begins with fortissimo (ff) dynamics, includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking, and ends with piano (p) and fortissimo (ff) dynamics. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 7: Grand Duo, Andante, mm. 211-250 (beginning).

Musical score for Piano Four Hands, measures 225-232. The score is written for two grand staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The music features complex textures with multiple voices in both hands, including chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines. Dynamics include *pp*, *sf*, and *fp*. Measure numbers 225 and 232 are indicated at the start of their respective systems.

238

Musical score for measures 238-243. The score is in G major with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a piano accompaniment with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *fp* (fortissimo piano) and *pp* (pianissimo).

244

Musical score for measures 244-250. The score continues in G major. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *p* (piano), and *ff* (fortissimo).

Example 7: Grand Duo, Andante, mm. 211-250 (conclusion).

II

Before proceeding with the implications of our homosexual or homoerotic reading of this powerfully enigmatic music, I want to turn to an image of Schubert and his reception emanating from his home town at the end of the nineteenth century. In the late 1890s, an important Greek industrialist, Nikolaus von Dumba, who loved Schubert and collected autographs of his works, had the three main rooms of his first-floor apartment in the First District of Vienna decorated each by a different artist. The choice for the music room was Gustav Klimt, who produced over-door paintings which, though now destroyed, exist in reproduction. Best-known is the one of Schubert seated at the piano surrounded by four standing figures, a man and three women, one of whom has her head inclined over her music (figure 1).³⁵

³⁵ A severe person with a mustache sat for the figure of the pianist, who became recognizable as Schubert only in the final version. For an account of the history of the painting and illustrations of several sketches, see Christian N. Nebehay, *Gustav Klimt: From Drawing to Painting*, trans. Renée Nebehay-King (New York, 1994), 43-47. For further sketches and more detail, see Fritz Novotny, "Zu Gustav Klimt's 'Schubert am Klavier,'" in *Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Galerie* 7, no. 51 (Vienna, 1963): 90-101. Erich Lederer (1896-1985) told Nebehay that "the girls in the painting had borrowed dresses from his mother Serena Lederer . . . one of the best-dressed women in Viennese society"; this is a transformation of the Schubertiad into an opulent turn-of-the-century setting, needless to say. An analysis of both Klimt's pictures for the Dumba music room, the one as social and historical, the other—a Greek priestess with a kithara—mythic and psychological (and, one might add, gendered), is contained in Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 220-21, where the Schubert painting is characterized as "a lovely dream, glowing but insubstantial, of an innocent, comforting art that served a comfortable society. One is reminded of Schubert's own song, 'An die Musik,' in which the poet offered thanks to 'the sublime art' for 'transporting [him] into a better world.' For Klimt and his bourgeois contemporaries, the once-hated age of Metternich was recalled now as the gracious-simple age of Schubert—a Biedermeier Paradise Lost."



Figure 1: Gustav Klimt, The Dumba Music Room “Schubert”

Among contemporary critical reactions to this portrait is a very interesting one by Hermann Bahr (1863-1934), an important Viennese author and critic who contributed his support to the Secession artists of whom Klimt was one of the leaders. Interestingly, the assertion that “Klimt’s *Schubert* is the finest painting ever done by an Austrian” leads Bahr directly into the question of Austrian identity as the indefinable quality and essence of the painting:

I only know that I get angry when someone asks if I am German. No, I reply, I am not German. I am Austrian. That is no nation, comes the answer. We have become a nation, I say, but we are different from the Germans, we are ourselves. Try defining that! How can one define it? Well, by beholding this Schubert. This tranquility, this softness, this radiance, this domestic simplicity—therein lies our Austrian nature! Here we have our Austrian creed: that every human being, be he ever so small, has in him a flame that no storm can extinguish. Each of us has his own holy sanctuary, and no destiny can crush it. Whatever the turmoil, we can come to no ill, the flame cannot blow out, no one can deprive us of our inner worth. It is this that I mean by the Viennese feeling for life.³⁶

The relation between musical repertory and identity formation is well enough explored by now for Bahr’s words to cause no surprise.³⁷ Furthermore, the substitution of “homosexual” for “Viennese” or “Austrian” would only confirm a long-standing tradition that was already well

³⁶ Quoted in Nebehay, *Gustav Klimt*, 46-47 from Hermann Bahr, *Secession* (Vienna: Wiener Verlag, 1900), 122-23.

³⁷ Significantly, work in music tends to center on *German* identity; see, for example, Sanna Pederson, “On the Task of the Music Historian: The Myth of the Symphony after Beethoven,” *repercussions* 2, no. 2 (1993): 5-30, and “A. B. Marx, Berlin Concert Life, and German National Identity,” *19th-Century Music* 18, no. 2 (1994): 87-107; and Celia Applegate, “What is German Music? Reflections on the Role of Art in the Creation of the Nation,” *German Studies Review* 15 [special issue on German Identity] (1992): 21-32; I am indebted to Françoise Forster-Hahn for the last citation.

established by the time that Maynard Solomon's articles appeared.

In planning this essay I realized one day that the homosexual Schubert had been a very real part of my existence for about thirty years. As a young Cambridge don, I taught undergraduates in the private tutorial system that is the hallmark of the Oxbridge system. The central event of what was known as the weekly supervision was the reading aloud of an essay. One day, an undergraduate who came to me from another College read an essay on Schubert that focused entirely on the male circle in which the composer lived and for which he composed. I knew what I was being told but, firmly locked in the closet and maintaining a painful asexual exterior, I was unable to respond in any but the most ridiculous and trivial way—like a real musicologist, I have since supposed. A week later, I learned from the Dean of the other College that my student had attempted suicide by sealing his room and turning on the gas fire. Unwilling to hear about Schubert then, I have found myself strangely reluctant to deal with him even now, after Solomon's pioneering and imaginative work has opened a hermeneutic window. But this event in which I failed, like a fuse smoldering inside me, has been the motive behind many of the subsequent public moves of my career. It is ultimately to a homosexual Schubert that I owe my coming out professionally and making an issue of sexuality in music.

Perhaps it is a projection upon the historical Schubert, perhaps not. What the composer clearly did not exemplify was a homosexual "identity" of the kind that was gradually constructed over the nineteenth century and during his time available only in certain limited (and very different) forms, such as the working-class "molly" of London, or the more aristocratic type found across

Europe among such as August von Platen, and England's notorious William Beckford, whom Byron called the "Apostle of Pæderasty."³⁸ On the other hand it is clear that Schubert took on anti-religious, pro-Classical, anti-authoritarian, and pro-sensualist attitudes of the kind that homosexuals have often tended to espouse. Others have done the same, but not with the special edge produced by the constant negation of their feelings by all institutions of society—the courts, the police, the armed forces, all religious sects and all medical authorities (until recently), the educational system, the family. He found a refuge in music and art, suffered profound depressions, and had problems expressing anger, all tell-tale signs of a social sense of exclusion in the modern period in Western countries. He belonged to circles of affectionate men some of whom were erotically involved with each other at one level or another. Hellenism was a strong force among many of them, including Schubert, and though the *Knabenliebe* it inspired was often idealized rather than acted out sexually in Europe at the time, Schubert hardly seems the type who would have insisted on drawing the line that excluded physical relations. In addition to all this there is Solomon's informed and persuasive interpretation of biographical details. So if it is a projection, it is at least a recognizable and understandable one that has served its purpose for generations of closeted homosexu-

³⁸ See Randolph Trumbach, "The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr. (New York:Meridian, 1989), 129-40, and George E. Haggerty, "Beckford's Pæderasty," in *Illicit Sex: Identity Politics in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Thomas DiPiero and Pat Gill (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 123-42. Beckford was a musician as well as writer who used "wild musick" and "strange stories" in the scandalous seduction of his young cousin, William Courtenay.

als on the look-out for support from the past, or in my case, administering a nasty jolt in a timely manner. And it has to be admitted by everyone, I should hope, that it is no more or less a projection, and therefore no more or less reductive or vulgar or essentialist, than an exclusively heterosexual Schubert (why is it that some straight people are so ready to import the category of heterosexuality back into history uncritically while insisting on agonizing historical and epistemological difficulties the moment they sniff homoeroticism in any form?), or than the false idol of autonomy that insistently separates music of this kind from lived experience and social values. To reduce a movement such as the one I have discussed simply to its meaning as recomposition of a certain set of historically determined procedures is as meaningless to me as Schumann's defensive and evasive reading of the entire sonata is revealing.

But how can this argument, and the rest of my interpretation, signify at all in a discipline predicated on compulsory reproductive heterosexuality, one that has never known queer desire to be represented *as such*? The historical circumstances of the Grand Duo offer pitifully little resistance to the prevailing model. The piece was written in the summer of 1824 on Schubert's second visit to the Esterházy estate at Zseliz in Hungary during which, according to the Baron Schönstein, a house guest at the same time, a "poetic flame . . . sprang up in [the composer's] heart for the younger daughter of the house," the seventeen-year-old Countess Caroline to whom he later dedicated the F-minor Fantasy (D.940), having earlier declared to her that "everything is dedicated to you anyway."³⁹ The binary model of sexuality gradually developed over the course of the nineteenth

³⁹ Deutsch, *Memoirs*, 100.

century and established in the twentieth tends to preclude more complicated thoughts on music written for the teenage aristocrat to play with her sister or teacher.⁴⁰ With homosexuality/heterosexuality as with other apparently symmetrical twin terms, the one is not only subordinate to the other but also tends to dissolve whenever the default position is asserted. Such an "infatuation" as that of Schubert for the Countess Caroline therefore automatically accrues more identificatory power than the male relations everywhere else so evident (one reason why relations with unattainable women have been so convenient for male homosexuals who wish to retain a semblance of social respectability). The price of credulity in this system, however, is that the deeper complexity of nineteenth-century sexualities is abandoned to the wishful thinking that substitutes either/or for the more reasonable both/and. Beckford and Byron, after all, had female liaisons and, unlike Schubert, both were married, yet that has not stopped them from being notorious representatives of same-sex desire. At this point, however, everything starts going round in circles, for precisely the same argument about the complexity of the historical situation vis-à-vis sexuality has been used, in the direc-

⁴⁰ For András Schiff, in an article significantly entitled "Time to Put the Record Straight," *BBC Music Magazine* (March 1997), 27-29, these duets are in themselves sufficient "counterproof to Schubert's alleged homosexuality" (28). Even Elizabeth Norman McKay, who in her biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) stresses the "ferne Geleibte," idealized the nature of the relationship with the Countess (223 and passim), and appears open-minded on the topic of the homoerotic, nevertheless constructs her main exploration into Schubert's personality around his "Two Natures" (chap. 6). This leads her to move ineluctably to homosexuality (157-58) from chronic manic-depression, alcoholism, tobacco- and opium-smoking; and a half-hearted attempt to recover from this classic pathologized view merely leads to the construction of another problematic dualism between "healthy sexual desires and drives of either persuasion" and "the sexual passions of his 'dark,' guilt-ridden nature" (160).

tion of alternatives to the supposed norm, by those invested in keeping Schubert straight.⁴¹ For many people in that category, my words will automatically be meaningless, beyond the limits of the allowable. I simply hope that they will be willing to consider whether they need musical perception ultimately to reinforce their own sense of self, and whether they will be truly consistent in extending their rejection to all *other* styles, scholarly and critical, residing outside the present range of the discipline. At one level, after all, this article adopts a traditional narrative mode of criticism: the method is time-honored, but not the narrative framework or the gay male subject position. Objections phrased in terms of the one will inevitably suggest more fundamental (if displaced) objections to the other—objections that are not tolerable in modern scholarly and critical discourse.

It will be no surprise to find me throwing my lot in with criticism, but I do so for a particular reason: Joseph Kerman's championing of it, whether he intended it or not, produced the only antidote to musicology's tendency to seek authority wherever it may be found outside the subjective. This baleful tendency also has its roots, I believe, in the psycho-sexual realm. Since writing about the connection of musicality and homosexuality as social

⁴¹ In a recent article in *Musical Times* 138 (1997), 13–19, on Schubert's unmarried transvestite friend "Nina" (whom she identifies as Johann Karl Smirsch), Rita Steblin, in answer to the question "Was Smirsch homosexual?", goes so far as to say that "I, for one, do not feel qualified to make such a judgment about a person's sexual orientation in an era so remote from our own and especially when sexual categories are still so ill-defined" (18). No such abdication of the scholarly responsibility to interpret, however, prevents her from asserting or implying that Schubert and his friends were exclusively heterosexual—assertions and implications of which it is equally true to say that they are "reflective of our own narcissistic society and do little to enlighten us about the composer and his era" (19).

mechanisms in *Queering the Pitch* I have come across the devastating passage in Havelock Ellis which opens with the clarion call, “it has been extravagantly said that all musicians are invert,” goes on to quote Oppenheim to the effect that “the musical disposition is marked by a great emotional instability, and this instability is a disposition to nervousness,” and finally comments, “the musician has not been rendered nervous by his music, but he owes his nervousness (as also, it may be added, his disposition to homosexuality) to the same disposition to which he owes his musical aptitude.”⁴² No wonder, with sentiments like this floating around since 1910, that musical studies have had to be firmly policed out of the possibility of expressing “inversion” by the removal, for many years, of almost anything personal at all.

Neither Kerman nor myself is immune from the tendency to seek authority ourselves I admit. We both backslide a good deal in pinning some hope on history in this role, although perhaps he might allow me to invoke Collingwood (discussing Oakeshott) to the effect that “there *is* no past, except for a person involved in the historical mode of experience; and for him the past is what he carefully and critically thinks it to be.”⁴³ Others want

⁴² Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Inversion: The Psychology of Sex*, Studies in the Psychology of Sex, vol. 2, part 2 (New York: Random House, 1936), 295. This four-volume Modern Library reprint derives from the third edition (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1913). The first edition is 1897, the second 1901. I am indebted to Susan Leigh Foster for drawing my attention to this passage.

⁴³ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), 155, on Michael B. Oakeshott, *Experience and Its Modes* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1933). Collingwood himself proposes a third alternative “to the disjunction that the past is either a dead past or not past at all but simply present”: it is “a living past, a past which, because it was thought and not mere natural event, can be re-enacted in the present and in that re-enactment known as past,” but that is because Collingwood wants history to be “not in [Oakeshott’s] sense a mode of experience, but an integral part of experience itself” (158). More

to find authority in the notes and therefore decide that their form of immanent criticism is science. Still others want to spread the (white man's) burden and listen for the authentic voice of the native; but ethnographies end up with critical opinions too, and they are no more or less authoritative for being attributed to communal judgment. Criticism is radical in musicology because it is personal, and has no authority whatsoever. In this I disagree profoundly (at last) with Edward Cone, who in an essay marked perhaps by a greater number of "shoulds" and "musts" than any piece of writing since the Pentateuch, turns from pillar to post, from present to past, from impression to conception, in an anxious attempt to remedy the contradiction of his title. At least Cone withdraws from the position of requiring "eternal truths" and single interpretations, those final resorts of the bankrupt authoritarian.⁴⁴ But there is no room in his scheme for the oppositional, for keeping works of art alive, especially during this crisis-time for "classical music" (its record-buying public now lower than 3 per cent of the total market), by opposing them and their makers, and for stopping the hagiographic industry's wheels by jamming skeptical words into the spokes. I am too fond of "Schubert" to want to adopt that approach in this instance, but at least I am not trying to speak for him or his music (a courtesy I also extend to my partner by writing of my reactions and feelings, not his intentions—though I note

recently in this country, Hayden White has drawn attention to the effect of literary genre on the representation of history in the absence of any historical reality or corresponding form of historical narrative that is *sui generis*; see especially *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973) and *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

⁴⁴ Edward T. Cone, "The Authority of Music Criticism," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34, no. 1 (1981): 1-18; quotation on p. 18.

with amusement my occasional lapse into the plural that couples and politicians affect when talking about themselves). In other words, through the device of describing a performative moment from the inside, I think I can get at certain aspects of meaning without attributing them to some higher power. Too much of a historian (even when it is “not my period”) to ignore completely the contemporary scene, I attempt to engage with it in some sort of dialogue—by imagining it in this instance as personified in the man of feeling, a historical friend, recognizable in the notes and gestures, with whom I can maintain a conversation even as I acknowledge I am talking to myself. To endorse the personal is to take a stand against the authoritative (and authoritarian). It is to connect to a cross-cultural and possibly transhistorical desire to gossip about performance, either as performer’s own powder-room talk, or the voyeur/fan’s excited chatter. “Historically, music has been defined as mystery and miasma, as implicitness rather than explicitness, and so we have hid inside music,” writes Wayne Koestenbaum: “In music we can come out without coming out, we can reveal without saying a word.”⁴⁵ Perhaps the need some of us have now is not to stop talking about this “condition” of music so that the “Love that Dare Not Speak Its Name” really can become the “Love That Won’t Shut Up” until the difference is erased, and no one cares; or, more simply, we’re here, we’re queer, get used to it.

III

The question of whether or not we can or should hear a homosexual Schubert has in any case been taken out of

⁴⁵ Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen’s Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993), 189-90.

the hands of mere academics, as such things always are. The use of his music in a significant manner in the British film, *Carrington*, named after the artist who devoted herself to the care and company of Lytton Strachey, shows that the question has really been settled at the level of middlebrow culture.⁴⁶ Since the film's source is not a book about Carrington herself, but Michael Holroyd's biography of the male, the Bloomsbury writer inevitably becomes the central figure, his homosexuality (and Bloomsbury's "bohemian" sexual mores) highlighted by his cozy domestic arrangement and only heterosexual involvement—and, as will become apparent, by Schubert.⁴⁷ In order for this to work, Carrington's status as a self-supporting artist is de-emphasized, and all mention of the lesbian affair which she had with the glamorous Henrietta Bingham has to be suppressed. Carrington's own biographer views this as her "first real sexual passion," and gives it due weight as "the first time in her life . . . [that she] was in active pursuit of a particular lover."⁴⁸ Holroyd, on the other hand, responds to a particular phase of this pursuit with "yet these passions did not seem to worry her," quotes a letter to Alix Strachey (11 May 1925) in which Carrington says that she has "seldom felt more self-possessed, and at peace with my

⁴⁶ *Carrington*, written and directed by Christopher Hampton (1995). The other film with which Hampton is connected (as screen writer) is *Total Eclipse*, a drama about the relationship between Rimbaud and Verlaine.

⁴⁷ Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: The New Biography* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994); the publication history of the many versions of this book is outlined on the copyright page; the front cover of the paperback edition (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1995) contains the following in addition to the author's name and title "NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE CARRINGTON STARRING EMMA THOMPSON AND JONATHAN PRYCE."

⁴⁸ Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, *Carrington: A Life* (New York: Norton, 1989), 209-210.

lower self,” and comments “perhaps this was the outcome of approaching middle age” (Carrington was 32 at the time).⁴⁹ It is no surprise that her husband, Ralph Partridge, and her other male lovers, the impetuous Mark Gertler, Ralph’s friend Gerald Brenan, and Bernard Penrose (“Beacus”), are all the additional sexual footage she gets.

The film has an original score by Michael Nyman, whose music has the virtue of suggesting a general passionate state of being without indulging in contrast, climax or any of the teleological moves characteristic of classical or Romantic art music. Its minimalism suggests Carrington’s free-flowing sexual passion and possibly her frustration. There is no other music of significance except Schubert, which enters the soundtrack as the result of the following passage in which Holroyd sets up the move from the Mill House at Tidmarsh, the first house that Carrington found for her and Strachey to share, to the grander Ham Spray House they lived in from 1924:

Tidmarsh would always have a special place in [Lytton Strachey’s] memory. One night in July 1928, he almost wept as some music on the phonograph recalled their life there. “Among others, there was a string quartet by Schubert, which brought back Tidmarsh to me with extraordinary vividness. I felt the loss of that régime very strongly, and in fact . . . nearly burst into tears. I hope and pray that our new grandeur . . . won’t alter anything in any way.”⁵⁰

A scene in the film recreates the Tidmarsh idyll. Ralph Partridge and Gerald Brenan, both with their special de-

⁴⁹ Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey*, 535.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 531-32. I am indebted for this reference to Byron Adams, whose prodigious memory overcame the common refusal of books such as this to index composers as persons. They are apparently regarded as synonymous with their works, so one has no way other than reading from cover to cover of discovering the musical interests of biographical subjects whose literary tastes, of course, are painstakingly indexed.

mands, have gone, leaving the two alone at last. Schubert plays away on a 78 r.p.m. record (the needle authentically placed), and Carrington asks how to spell "intangible" (her spelling was atrocious), and later looks out at Lytton sitting on a deck chair deep in the garden wrapped in a blanket and reading. But the Schubert we hear in simulated preelectric reproduction is not a quartet. The director stretched the authentic envelope that characterizes the film to make the inspired and revealing choice of the slow movement of the String Quintet in C (D. 956).⁵¹

What we hear from the phonograph on this occasion is a fragment from the second main phrase of the decorated reprise of this ABA movement (m. 83 to the first beat of 87). A slightly longer excerpt (the entire phrase, mm. 78-87) has given us some idea of its significance a little earlier. Carrington's long relationship with Gertler, who pestered her for sex, began seriously to deteriorate when she gave up her much-discussed chastity to sleep with Lytton, and even more so when she eventually relented and slept with Gertler himself. The film shows both these events. The second contains elements of the violence she associated with sex, and after we hear a cry of pain from her, the camera shows her miserable face as she submits to him. At this point Schubert takes over, and the camera literally transcends the scene (by dissolving onto the view of a decorated apse-like ceiling) and then comes down to show a concert at which the work is being played. Carrington and Lytton are in the audience, and she asks him in a whisper if he meant it

⁵¹ In the booklet accompanying the soundtrack recording (Argo 444 873-2), Michael Nyman reveals that Carrington's relationship with Lytton Strachey is represented by material derived from his String Quartet No. 3 "at Christopher Hampton's request": the director is therefore all the more likely to have chosen the Schubert of his own accord.

when he said they should live together in the country. He assents. The scene shifts to her exploring Berkshire on a bicycle, looking at houses. The cadence finds Lytton, who has earlier described himself as “a perfectly respectable elderly bugger of modest means” at the Mill House saying, “Yes. But a pound a week. I don’t see how I can manage.”

To describe the context, as often with music, is to delineate an emotional meaning even more direct than the one represented by the images. Closeness with a homosexual of wit, knowledge, and refined taste brings a special warmth to the life of a person like Carrington who prefers it to the tug of war with a sexually aggressive male partner. The film is equivocal on this matter, of course. And here surely it makes the association between Schubert and non-aggressive masculinity in a homosexual context that McClary explored in her controversial essay.⁵² No other piece of Schubert could have been more suited, both to the purpose and to its juxtaposition with modern minimalism than this *Adagio* from the Quintet in C. For though it lacks Nyman’s repetitive patterns, it shares with his music a vagrant, non-directional ethos when compared with other music of its own period. Its conforming to the general expectations of early-nineteenth-century music, however, gives it a special aura in the soundtrack—one of Romantic nostalgia that is abetted in the chosen phrase by the immediate turn to the dominant minor, and thence to the major chord of the flattened seventh degree of the scale. All this is principally projected in the sustained and neutral flux of sound in the three middle instruments: Peter Gülke, in phrases that might have resonated with the movie makers, calls this “subtle melodic current . . . the musical

⁵² McClary, “Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert’s Music,” 205-34.

equivalent of a Platonic idea . . . [that] hovers like a perpetual promise over the actual notes," and he says also that the key "points towards transcendental rapture."⁵³ Do we sense that Carrington's own subjectivity is enshrined in the first violin part, the only really active agent at this point in the score? If so, it reflects the ambivalence the film preserves about her circumstance, allowing us to see it at times from her point of view, at times from other points along a continuum from there to the homophobic Gertler's view of her wasting her life on a disgusting old pervert. The lyrical *arco* gesture that occurs around the second and fourth beats of each long 12/8 measure, beginning as a single note (answered by a yearning leap in the second half of the measure), opens up to a rising third, and then expands to a full octave. Its fragmentary utterance is further disrupted by the pizzicato chords that punctuate it. The assertive Amadeus quartet (assisted by cellist Robert Cohen), whose recording is used in the film, give these chords an extra edge. Those who know Norbert Brainin's playing will envision him leaning into the notes to generate more resonant plucked sounds than one thought possible from the instrument—and producing with their sheer percussiveness a profound layer of discomfort that edges the lyrical haze toward (but not into) an abyss of hysteria. The regular up-beat-downbeat pizzicato of the second cello is a ground, not an answering voice, coordinated not with the lyrical gesture but with its disquieting aftermath (ex. 8).

The third appearance of Schubert's music accompanies the suicide with which homosexual dramas tradi-

⁵³ Peter Gülke, "In What Respect a Quintet? On the Disposition of Instruments in the String Quintet D. 956," in *Schubert Studies: Problems of Style and Chronology*, ed. Eva Badura-Skoda and Peter Branscombe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 181.

tionally end. The twist in this instance is that suicide is the outcome of loving a homosexual too well, and takes on a Romantic *Liebestod* aspect precisely as a result of the elevated score. At last we hear the *entire* reprise of the Adagio, and the brilliant choice of this particular movement becomes at last apparent (ex. 9). In the variation of the opening that comprises the first phrase (mm. 64-78), the second cello finally becomes active, sinuously curving its way upward through the texture like the polymorphously perverse serpent in the Garden of Eden, and surely signifying the responsive Lytton that Carrington would have preferred, the Lytton suggested brilliantly and consolingly by the dying author himself while she was bathing him: "Carrington, why isn't she here? I want her. Darling Carrington. I love her. I always wanted to marry Carrington, and I never did."⁵⁴ The first violin answers with expressive scales and appoggiaturas that rise to an ecstasy of yearning previously unheard. How appropriate that during this passage Carrington, having jettisoned her paints and brushes, makes a funeral pyre of Lytton's belongings.

The second phrase, which we have heard before, marks the film's almost obsessive attention to the detail of the book's account of her final morning, with the abortive gunshot occurring on the final cadence (m. 91). She has forgotten to slip off the safety catch, and does so during the coda. The camera, having followed her compulsively almost without cutting or fading, withdraws decently to the garden during the final dominant chord. It moves nervously through hedges to display the frontal view of Ham Spray House. The music ceases. The shot is heard. The film ends. Minimalism returns for the credits.

⁵⁴ Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey*, 678, with the comment, "It was not true."

Musical score for measures 78-80. The score is written for five staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass). Measure 78 begins with a forte (>) dynamic and includes markings for *pizz.* and *arco*. Measures 79 and 80 are marked *ppp*. The notation includes various rhythmic values and articulation marks.

Musical score for measures 81-84. The score is written for five staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass). Measure 81 begins with a forte (>) dynamic and includes markings for *arco*, *pizz.*, and *arco*. Measures 82, 83, and 84 are marked *cresc.*. The notation includes various rhythmic values and articulation marks.

Example 8: String Quintet in C, Adagio, mm. 78-82.

The image displays a musical score for a string quintet, specifically Example 9 from the String Quintet in C, Adagio, measures 64-68. The score is arranged in two systems, each with four staves. The first system (measures 64-68) features a Violin I staff with a melodic line starting on a half note G4, followed by a series of eighth notes. The Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass staves provide harmonic support with sustained notes and moving lines. The second system (measures 66-68) continues the melodic development in the Violin I part, with the other instruments maintaining their harmonic roles. Dynamic markings include *pp* (pianissimo) in the first system and *pp* in the second system. The notation includes various note values, rests, and slurs.

Example 9: String Quintet in C, Adagio, mm. 64-68.

Looked at one way, Classical music has performed yet again for modern society its transcendental trick, helping to universalize a domestic tragedy as a tragic love—and helping this odd couple to become a successful counterfeit of the heterosexual norm in which Carington, as an angel of the house with an unusual talent for interior decoration, becomes the idealized complement to Strachey the literary lion and dominating wit. But it is Schubert, and the tragedy is a version of the homosexual tragedy; its moral, phrased in the traditional terms of Western drama, is “look what happens to a perfectly passionate and talented woman when she devotes her life to a pervert in a non-sexual partnership.” No film at the end of the twentieth century could quite aspire completely to exemplify either of those two extreme positions, of course. We will leave the cinema with admiration for the acting and perhaps some involvement and investment in the characters, as well as a voyeuristic relation to the sexual dramas on which the busy camera seems to insist. But those traditional elements are there, and they indicate a double listening on the part of the director to Schubert as both a pillar of the “classical music” canon and a newly arrived if anciently recognized homosexual in our midst. Were my friend and I to play the Andante of the Grand Duo now, then, or our too, too tragic version of the Fantasy, we would not merely be acting out some shared personal fantasy of homosexuals finding refuge in High Art, but celebrating, as only men of feeling can and should, a publicly acknowledged and newly validated view of the composer and his music in middlebrow culture. Schubert, we find somewhat to our surprise, is really one of us after all. In view of the uses to which this new acceptance has been (and will likely be) put, I shall probably remain more surprised than pleased.