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## Die Schöne Müllerin: The Creative Genius of Wilhelm Müller and Franz Schubert

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DIE SCHÖNE MÜLLERIN: THE CREATIVE GENIUS OF  
WILHELM MÜLLER AND FRANZ SCHUBERT

by

David C. Rayl  
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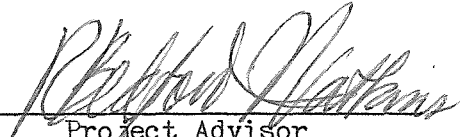
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Submitted for Honors Work  
In the School of Music  
Illinois Wesleyan University  
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Project Advisor

## PREFACE

Die schöne Müllerin is a cycle of twenty songs for solo voice and piano, with poetry by Wilhelm Müller and music by Franz Schubert. It is the romantic story of a young miller who befriends a stream which leads him to a mill. He falls madly in love with the miller's beautiful daughter who eventually rejects him in favor of a hunter. In despair, the young miller drowns himself in the stream which has been his companion throughout the cycle.

On February 17, 1977 I sang Die schöne Müllerin in its entirety. The occasion was my Senior Honor Recital, given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music degree. This performance marked the culmination of nine months of rather intense work--learning the music, studying the poetry, and reading about the songs. It was in this last area that I encountered the greatest difficulty. I discovered that, while there are many books that say some things about Die schöne Müllerin, there is really no single complete source of information about the work. This paper was written, at least partially, as a reaction to this dilemma. Somehow I needed to compile and assimilate a large body of information acquired from a wide variety of sources. I soon realized that a comprehensive work on all aspects of Die schöne Müllerin could easily run into a rather large volume. Consequently, it has been necessary to limit the scope of this study to only a few areas.

The paper begins with a short biography of Wilhelm Müller and an examination of his reputation both among his own contemporaries and among critics today. The actual creation of the poems is then discussed, and the structural elements which give the cycle unity are dealt with. The same approach is used with the songs--

a discussion of the details of their composition and then an analysis of Schubert's techniques of unification. Lastly, I conclude with a look at Müller and Schubert and their relationship to each other and to their time.

This preface would be incomplete if I did not express my gratitude to the members of my hearing committee, Dr. David Nott, Miss Ruth Erickson, and Dr. John Heyl for their interest in this project. And a special thanks goes to Dr. R. Bedford Watkins, project advisor and chairman of the committee, without whose encouragement and advice I would never have completed this paper.

DIE SCHÖNE MÜLLERIN: THE CREATIVE GENIUS OF  
WILHELM MÜLLER AND FRANZ SCHUBERT

The poet Wilhelm Müller lives on today almost exclusively through the song-cycles Die schöne Müllerin and Winterreise, set to music by Franz Schubert. Were it not for Schubert, his name would probably be buried in obscurity--an interesting (and ironic) fate for one to whom the Vienna Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater, und Mode referred as "the most noble of poets."<sup>1</sup>

Müller was born on October 7, 1794 in Dessau, into a shoemaker's family beset with illness and poverty. One biographer points out that his "alert mind and poetic tendencies asserted themselves even during the school years, when he was known to cover the slate boards with verse."<sup>2</sup> He entered the University of Berlin in 1812, but his studies were interrupted the next year by the political situation, and he served for a year in the Prussian army. In 1814 he returned to Berlin where he studied philology and history. In 1818 Müller found himself back in Dessau where, because of a lack of funds, he was forced to take a teaching position. The following year he exchanged this activity for a position as Imperial Librarian, which he held until his death on October 1, 1827.

Müller's literary achievements were extensive. He wrote commentaries on a wide variety of literary subjects, including a number of English poets, for the journals of the day. He was also a translator from English and was noted especially for his translation of Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus (1818). In light

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<sup>1</sup>Otto Erich Deutsch, The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents, trans. by Eric Blom (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1947), p. 366.

<sup>2</sup>Alan P. Cottrell, Wilhelm Müller's Lyrical Song-Cycles (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 3.

of this it is particularly interesting that the opening words of one of the poems from Die schöne Müllerin, "Ungeduld" ("I'd carve it in the bark of every tree. . ."), recall Edmund Spenser's "Colin Clout's come home again" of 1591 ("Her name in every tree I will endosse.").<sup>1</sup> As will be discussed later, such "borrowing" is common in Müller's poetry.

Another of Müller's great accomplishments was the editorship of the first ten volumes of the Bibliothek deutscher Dichter des 17. Jahrhunderts. This "represents a distinct contribution to the rediscovery of the then neglected Baroque literature and is a clear example of the intense scholarly activity which complemented Müller's own poetic creation."<sup>2</sup>

Apparently, both Müller and his poetry were highly regarded by his contemporaries. Heinrich Kreissle says of him: "He was known as one of the best of men, a scholar of very versatile acquirements, and one of the best lyric poets."<sup>3</sup> Those elements of his poetry which the twentieth century finds distasteful (his sentimentality and naiveté) were the very things which were appealing in those early days of German Romanticism. As Richard Capell points out, "There was nothing ridiculous thenadays in being soft-hearted and woe-begone."<sup>4</sup> Vienna's prestigious Theaterzeitung, in a review of Schubert's Winterreise, wrote:

Müller is naive, sentimental, and sets against nature a parallel of some passionate soul-state which takes its color and significance from the former. Schubert has understood his poet with the kind of genius that is his own. His music is as naive as the poet's expression; the emotions contained in the poems are as deeply reflected in his own feelings, and these are so brought out in sound that no one can sing or hear them without being touched to the heart.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Deutsch, The Schubert Reader, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup>Cottrell, Müller's Lyrical Song-Cycles, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Heinrich Kreissle, The Life of Franz Schubert, trans. by Arthur Duke Coleridge (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1869), Vol. II, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Capell, Schubert's Songs, 3rd edition (London: Duckworth and Co., Ltd., 1973), p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>Deutsch, The Schubert Reader, p. 758.

It is fashionable today (among certain literati) to belittle Müller's poetry in comparison with Schubert's settings. One contemporary writer has even gone so far as to suggest that "with these songs, even the literary-minded listener would do better to let the words serve as a general background . . ."<sup>1</sup> However, Alan P. Cottrell, in his outstanding study, Wilhelm Müller's Lyrical Song-Cycles, draws a different conclusion. While admitting that "Müller's works abound with clichés, conventional imagery, and motifs drawn from all manner of sources . . .",<sup>2</sup> he goes on to state that "many of the poems are of the most lilting musicality and show a naive and original manner of expression which cannot be accounted for simply in terms of a dilettante's juggling of conventional themes."<sup>3</sup> and praises Müller as a lyric poet of depth and sensitivity.

The final version of Müller's cycle, Die schöne Müllerin, published in 1820, has an interesting developmental history. An opera by Paisiello, La Molinaria (1788), had appeared on the German stage as Die schöne Müllerin. Using this as a source of thematic material, a group of Müller's friends devised a parlor operetta (Liederspiel) to be written jointly by all members.

The various characters of the play were assigned to the various members of the group. Each person was to write the poems necessary for his part according to the predetermined plot. The play was centered around Rose, the pretty miller's daughter (Hedwig von Stägemann). She was loved by the miller (W. Müller), a gardener (Luise Hensel), a hunter (W. Hensel), and a nobleman (Fr. Förster). At first she preferred the miller, but changed her mind and chose the hunter. As the story is now known, it ends when the miller drowns himself. Friedländer reported that originally the miller's daughter followed the miller to die in the stream and that the hunter closed the story as he sang to the two lovers.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jack M. Stein, Poem and Music in the German Lied from Gluck to Hugo Wolf (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Cottrell, Müller's Lyrical Song-Cycles, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cottrell, Müller's Lyrical Song-Cycles, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Don L. Earl, The Solo Song Cycle in Germany (1800-1850) (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1977), p. 76.



This version of "Rose, the lovely maid of the mill," labelled by Alfred Einstein a "semi-dramatic vaudeville,"<sup>1</sup> was performed by the group in 1816-1817.

The composer Ludwig Berger was also a member of this group and had set ten of the poems (including five of Müller's) to music. These were published in 1818 as: Gesänge aus einem gesellschaftlichen Liederspiele "Die schöne Müllerin."<sup>2</sup>

It was Berger who encouraged Müller to evolve his own set of poems on the plot established by his friends. The end-result was the lyric cycle Die schöne Müllerin, consisting of twenty-three poems plus a prologue and an epilogue. The cycle, which Müller called a "monodrama," was published in 1820 as part of a collection of Müller's poetry entitled Sieben und siebenzig Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines reisenden Waldhornisten (Seventy-seven Poems from the posthumous Papers of a travelling Horn Player). As Einstein points out, "It says much for Wilhelm Müller that Heinrich Heine thought highly of him and dedicated to the 'horn player' a copy of his Lyrisches Intermezzo, with the request that he 'should honor it with his attention.'"<sup>3</sup>

The young miller, the fair maid, and the hunter were favorite figures in Romantic poetry (as were such inanimate objects as the mill itself and the lute.) According to Maurice Brown:

Goethe himself toyed with the idea and wrote in 1797 to Schiller: "There are pretty things of the sort in a certain older German period, and much can be expressed in the form (i.e. lyric conversations) . . . I have begun such a conversation between a lad who is in love with a miller's maid, and the mill-stream, and hope to send it soon."<sup>4</sup>

In spite of the fact that these figures were conventional literary motives, Einstein

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Einstein, Schubert: A Musical Portrait (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 257.

<sup>2</sup>Earl, The Solo Song Cycle, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>Einstein, Schubert, p. 258.

<sup>4</sup>Maurice J. E. Brown, "Schubert Songs," BBC Music Guides (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), p. 33.

maintains that the "chief inspiration behind Müller's conception was the folk-song, on the model of Des Knaben Wunderhorn"<sup>1</sup> (a collection of anonymous rustic verse, published in 1805 and edited by Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano). It is noteworthy that the opening lines of the second poem of the cycle, "Wohin?" ("Ich hört' ein Bächlein rauschen/Wohl aus dem Felsenquell"), are patterned after lines from one of Brentano's folksongs: "Ich hör' ein Sichlein rauschen/Wohl rauschen durch das Korn."<sup>2</sup> Cottrell points out that such borrowings are frequently found in Müller's poetry.

In spite of its length, Die schöne Müllerin is a highly unified literary work. Cottrell states that ". . . architectural stability of form is a cornerstone of the workings of Wilhelm Müller's poetic imagination."<sup>3</sup> Müller uses two basic techniques to achieve unity and coherence within the cycle. First of all, the poems are held together because they describe a series of related incidents within a definite story. Secondly, the poems are connected to each other by means of textual repetitions and textual inferences.<sup>4</sup> The most important of these "linear links" are discussed below.<sup>5</sup>

In the poem "Wohin?" the miller asks the brook:

"Ist das denn meine Strasse? O Bächlein, sprich, wohin?"  
("Is that, then, my road? O brooklet, say . . . whither?")

The answer to this question comes two poems later in "Danksagung an den Bach":

"Zur Müllerin hin! So lautet der Sinn."  
("To the maid of the mill, it seemed to say.")

Another of these "linear links" is found between the poems "Halt" and "Danksagung

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<sup>1</sup>Einstein, Schubert, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup>Cottrell, Müller's Lyrical Song-Cycles, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Cottrell, Müller's Lyrical Song-Cycles, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Cottrell, Müller's Lyrical Song-Cycles, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Earl, The Solo Song Cycle, p. 78.

an den Bach" (the third and fourth of the cycle). The former ends with the words:

"Ei, Bächlein, liebes Bächlein, war es also gemeint?"  
 ("O brooklet, lovely brooklet, was it meant to be so?")

The latter opens with an exact repetition of this line:

"War es also gemeint, mein rauschender Freund,  
 Dein Singen, dein Klingen, war es also gemeint?"  
 ("Was it meant to be so, my rippling friend?  
 Your song, your music, was it meant to be thus?")

Another linking device is the color green, which Müller uses throughout the last half of the cycle. Because it is the favorite color of the maiden, the miller gives her the green ribbon from his lute as a symbol of his eternal love. But green is also the hunter's color and consequently becomes the symbol of the miller's unhappiness.

Of course there are other more subtle techniques used to unify the poems, but these are given ample treatment in Cottrell's superb book. Don Earl quotes H. M. Mustard's summation of Müller's cycle:

Die schöne Müllerin is more coherent in structure than any narrative cycle of this period (1815-1830). The narrative progresses smoothly and consistently, and the many inner thematic links help to unify the group. The symmetrical arrangement of the poems according to the various stages of the story gives the group balance and grace of proportion. Müller's successful treatment of this cycle seems to me to be due to two factors, first, the definite narrative outline which served from the beginning as a framework, and second, the fact that the poems were written specifically for this group and not simple collected and arranged as best they might. . . . Müller never again achieved the same perfection of form in any other cycle.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most attractive quality of Müller's poetry is its "freely flowing musicality."<sup>2</sup> During his life-time the Munich Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung referred to him as "the songful Wilhelm Müller,"<sup>3</sup> and in our own day, Cottrell has made much of his "unusually keen musical sensitivity."<sup>4</sup> Müller himself was aware

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<sup>1</sup> Earl, The Solo Song Cycle, pp. 79-80.

<sup>2</sup> Cottrell, Müller's Lyrical Song-Cycles, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Deutsch, The Schubert Reader, p. 795.

<sup>4</sup> Cottrell, Müller's Lyrical Song-Cycles, p. 10.

of this quality in his poems and spoke of them as "songs." He felt that a very strong relationship existed between his poetry and music, and was very much interested in the "musical animation" of his verses.<sup>1</sup> He wrote in his diary on October 8, 1815: "I can neither play nor sing--yet when I write verses I sing and play after all. If I could produce the tunes, my songs would please me better than they do now. But courage! A kindred soul may be found who will hear the tunes behind the words, and give them back to me."<sup>2</sup>

Several composers of the day had set his poems to music, among them the gifted song-composer Bernhard Josef Klein, musical director of the University of Berlin. On December 15, 1822 Müller wrote Klein a letter of thanks upon publication of two books of Klein's settings of his poems (including "Der Neugierige" and "Trockne Blumen" from Die schöne Müllerin): "For, indeed, my songs lead but half a life, a paper life of black and white . . . until music breathes life into them, or at least calls it forth and awakens it if it is already dormant in them. You it is, too, choosing my songs for preference for composition, who penetrate most deeply into them."<sup>3</sup> What a pity that Müller probably never knew that another "kindred spirit" had heard "the tunes behind the words" and had created one of the most beautiful works in the entire literature of song.

How did Schubert become acquainted with the Müller poems? Heinrich Kreissle's interesting, but unauthenticated, version of his discovery of them is recounted below:

One day Schubert visited the private secretary of Count Seczenyi, Herr Benedict Randhartinger, with whom he was on terms of great intimacy and friendship. He had only just entered the room when the secretary was sent for. He withdrew, after giving the composer to understand that he would return in a short time. Franz went to the writing-table, and found a volume of poetry lying there; after reading one or two of

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<sup>1</sup>Einstein, Schubert, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup>Newman Flower, Franz Schubert: The Man and His Circle, 2nd edition (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1928), p. 223.

<sup>3</sup>Flower, Franz Schubert, p. 227.

the poems through, he seized the book and went away, without waiting for Randhartinger's return. The latter, when he came back, missed his volume of poems, and went the next day to Schubert to fetch away the book.<sup>1</sup>

When his friend asked about the book, Schubert supposedly replied: "Do not be angry with me, dear Benedictus, the poems have so inspired me that I had to compose music to them. I have already seven poems sets to music. . . ."<sup>2</sup> The composer then showed him the first Müllerlieder which he had partly finished during the night.

Did Schubert have his own "fair maid?" That can only be assumed, for we know little of his heart's private affairs. However, it is known that he had been in love with his pupil, Countess Karoline Esterházy, but she apparently never returned his love, and it remained an "ideal passion." Perhaps she is Schubert's "fair maid." His friend Eduard von Bauernfeld calls the Müllerlieder and works like them "musical confessions, bathed in the glow of a deep and real passion, and transformed into genuine works of art proceeding from the lover's tenderest sentiments."<sup>3</sup> One of Schubert's biographers, Karl Kobald, also maintains that the cycle is, at least to some extent, autobiographical:

A beautiful memorial to the feelings of his own heart are the Müllerlieder. . . . One cannot help thinking that Schubert has drawn himself in the youth who clings to the love of a woman, though she has stabbed his young heart to death. . . . It is an outpouring of musical emotion; it is the lover's spring awakening, the glorified apotheosis of the artist's suffering caused by love.<sup>4</sup>

The songs of Die schöne Müllerin were composed during three periods of the year 1823. The first songs were written in May of that year, but the bulk of them were composed later that summer while Schubert was a patient in Vienna's

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<sup>1</sup>Kreicssle, Life of Schubert, pp. 316-317.

<sup>2</sup>Otto Erich Deutsch, Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends, trans. by Rosamund Ley and John Nowell (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1958), p. 202.

<sup>3</sup>Karl Kobald, Franz Schubert and His Times, trans by Beatrice Marshall (Pt. Washington: Kennikat Press, 1969), p. 201.

<sup>4</sup>Kobald, Franz Schubert, p. 200.

General Hospital. He was in the depths of gloom and despair over what he knew to be an incurable disease (syphilis), and his mental state surely influenced the tone and color of his songs. The cycle was completed by the end of 1823 and was published by Sauer and Leidesdorf (the latter having recently become a friend of Schubert's) in five books, the first two on March 24, 1824, the remaining three on August 12 of that year. It was published as: "Die schöne Müllerin--a cycle of songs with text by Wilhelm Müller and set to music for solo voice with pianoforte accompaniment. Dedicated to Karl Freiherr von Schönstein. Op. 25."<sup>1</sup>

Max Friedländer, in his fine critical edition of 1922, reveals that "von Schönstein was one of the most sensitive interpreters of Schubert's songs and rendered a great service in introducing Schubert's works into the leading aristocratic circles of Vienna. . . ."<sup>2</sup> The esteem with which von Schönstein was held by Schubert's friends is indicated by Joseph von Spaun who wrote: "Anyone who has heard Baron Schönstein sing the Müllerlieder . . . has something to take with him throughout his whole life and will never hear anything more beautiful."<sup>3</sup>

The announcement in the official Vienna Zeitung of the publication of the first two volumes of Die schöne Müllerin gives an indication of Schubert's status and reputation among his contemporaries:

True to our opinion that every excellent work carries its own laudatory recommendation with it, we prefer to refrain from any emphatic praise of these songs and merely remark that the most favorably known tone-poet has succeeded in these songs to an unusually high degree in combining the novelty of his melodies with that intelligibility by which a musical work of art at once favorably appeals to the connoisseur of art as well as to the educated musical amateur.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Einstein, Schubert, p. 256.

<sup>2</sup>Einstein, Schubert, p. 256.

<sup>3</sup>Deutsch, Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends, p. 139.

<sup>4</sup>Deutsch, The Schubert Reader, p. 327.

Apparently the work sold well. According to Spaun, "The five books of the Müllerlieder . . . brought the publisher such a large profit through repeated editions, that he was able to buy a house with it."<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, Schubert received very little for the work. His publishers generally treated him, as Newman Flower puts it, "as some under-dog to whom the smallest bone was a gift from God."<sup>2</sup> Spaun also informs us that "the singer, Stockhausen, took three times as much for a single performance of the Müllerlieder . . . as Schubert had received for composing them."<sup>3</sup>

As was mentioned above, Schubert's work was originally published in five books. These books were not altogether arbitrary subdivisions of the songs into equal parts. Müller's original cycle had contained twenty-five poems in all. Schubert (many critics feel wisely) omitted the prologue and epilogue and three poems from the main sequence, resulting in a total of twenty songs. Each of the three poems from the main sequence which Schubert omitted is from one of the three emotional phases of the cycle--hope, love, and jealousy. In effect then, he deleted one poem from each of the five short "acts" of the play. It is these five "acts" which the original publication attempted to present:

- I--arrival at the mill (songs 1 through 4)
- II--falling in love (5-9)
- III--a brief idyll of happiness (10-12)
- IV--jealousy and despair (13-17)<sup>4</sup>
- V--resignation and death (18-20)<sup>4</sup>

Having dealt with the details of Schubert's composition of Die schöne Müllerin, let us now turn our attention to the techniques he uses to give the work unity and coherence.

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<sup>1</sup>Deutsch, Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup>Flower, Schubert and His Circle, p. 129.

<sup>3</sup>Deutsch, Schubert: Memoirs by his Friends, p. 356.

<sup>4</sup>Maurice J. E. Brown, Schubert: A Critical Biography (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1958), pp. 151-152.

Both Die schöne Müllerin and Winterreise are commonly referred to as "song cycles." However, Walter Wiora draws a distinction between the true "lieder-cyclus" (such as Beethoven's An die Ferne Geliebte) and works such as the two Schubert cycles which he calls "liednovellen." In the Beethoven cycle, six poems by A. J. Jeiteles are linked without a break "into a superbly poetical and musical entity by means of longer or shorter interludes, and by the device of reverting again to the beginning."<sup>1</sup> With the composition of Die schöne Müllerin, Schubert in fact had created a new art form, described by Richard Capell as "a drama . . . revealed to us in a series of lyrical moments."<sup>2</sup> Alfred Einstein calls it a "scenic drama, through which runs a persistent, though not immediately obvious, connecting thread."<sup>3</sup>

This "connecting thread" is the character of the brook (the "liebes Bächlein"), represented by the semi-quaver figure in the accompaniment. This accompanimental figure, in its various guises, appears in no less than half of the twenty songs. It is present in the opening song ("Das Wandern") even though

Musical Example #1: "Das Wandern"--mm. 1-4

**Mässig geschwind (Allegro moderato)**

<sup>1</sup>Paul Henry Lang, "A Review of Das Deutsche Lied. Zur Geschichte und Ästhetik Einer Musikalischen Gattung," Musical Quarterly, LVIII, no. 1 (1972), p. 315.

<sup>2</sup>Capell, Schubert's Songs, p. 190.

<sup>3</sup>Einstein, Schubert, p. 258.

<sup>4</sup>This and all subsequent musical examples are taken from Schubert Songs, edited by Sergius Kagen (New York: International Music Co., 1961), Vol. I.



the miller really doesn't meet the brook till the second song ("Wohin?").

Musical Example #2: "Wohin?"--mm. 1-3

**Mässig (Moderato)**

Ich hört' ein Bäch - lein

In "Halt!" (III) the little stream drives the mill wheels, and the accompaniment is appropriately heavy and ponderous.

Musical Example #3: "Halt!" --mm. 1-4

**Nicht zu geschwind (Allegro ma non troppo)**

Again, in "Am Feierabend" (V) the stream drives the mill wheels.

Musical Example #4: "Am Feierabend"--mm. 5-8

Hätt ich tau - send Ar-me zu

In "Danksagung an den Bach" (IV) and "Der Neugierige" (VI) it ripples and gurgles along on its way, without answering the lad's questions about the young maid.

## Musical Example #5: "Danksagung an den Bach"--mm. 1-4

**Etwas langsam (Poco lento)**

War es

## Musical Example #6: "Der Neugierige"--mm. 23-26

**Sehr langsam (Molto lento)**

Bäch - lein meiner Lie - be, wie bist du heut so stumm! Will

In "Des Müllers Blumen" (IX) its presence is felt, although it is only mentioned in passing. Here the figure is modified to graceful quavers in 6/8 time.

## Musical Example #7: "Des Müllers Blumen"--mm. 7-10

1. Am Bach viel klei - ne Blu - men stehn, aus hel - len, blau - en Au - gensehn; der  
 2. Dicht un - ter ih - rem Fen - ster - lein, da will ich pflanzen die Blu - men ein; da  
 3. Und wenn sie tät die Äuglein zu und schläft in sü - ßer, sü - ßer Ruh, dann

We see the young couple together for the first time in "Tränenregen" (X) and once again the brook chortles in the background.

## Musical Example #8: "Tränenregen"--mm. 10-13

sam - men hin - ab in den rie - seln - den Bach.  
 Bil - de, nach ih - ren Au - gen al - lein.  
 un - ter in sei - ne Tie - fe ziehn.

In "Mein!" (XI) the lad tells all of nature of his happiness. The presence of the brook is once again made evident by the quick-moving quavers.

## Musical Example #9: "Mein!"--mm. 1-5

**Mässig geschwind (Allegro moderato)**

In his anger over the appearance of the hunter, the miller again turns to the brook which now wildly rushes on its way following a storm.

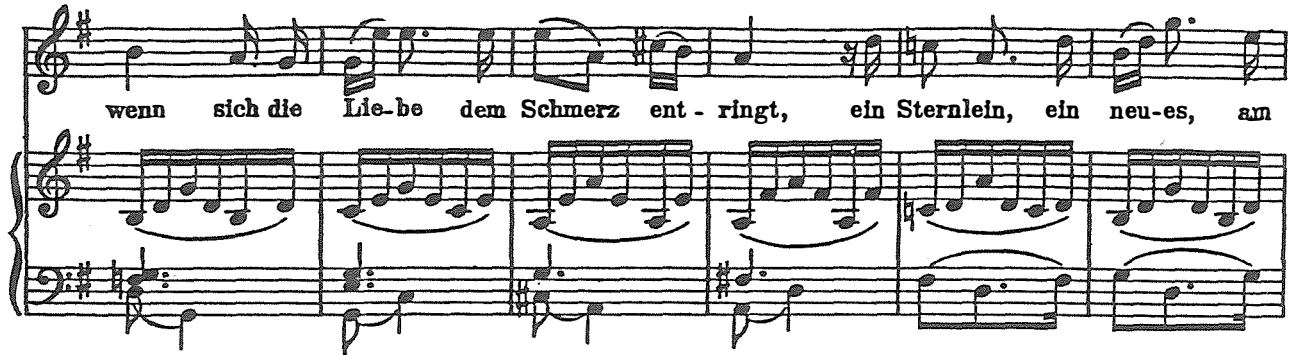
## Musical Example #10: "Eifersucht und Stolz" (XV)--mm. 1-5

**Geschwind (Allegro)**

Wo - hin so schnell, so

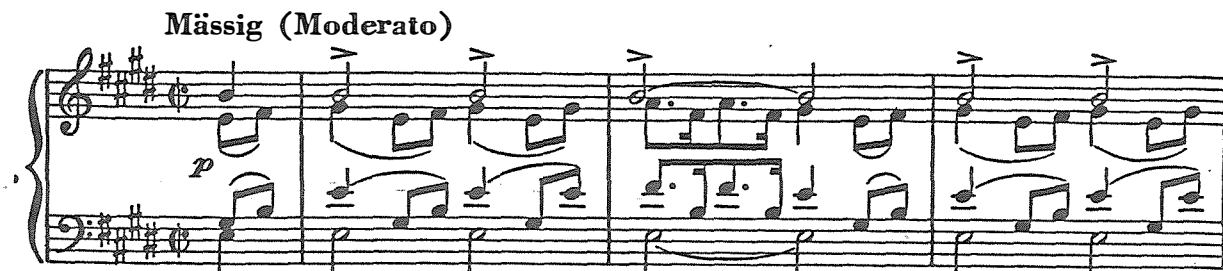
Realizing that all hope of winning the love of the maid is gone, the lad seeks solace in the brook. In "Der Müller und der Bach" (XIX) the brook tries to comfort the boy. But his mind is made up--he will end his life in the brook that has been his friend and mentor throughout the cycle.

Musical Example #11: "Der Müller und der Bach"--mm. 29-34



The brook then sings a gentle lullaby, "Des Baches Wiegenlied" (XX), and rocks the lad to sleep, sheltered from the cares of the world. Here, the semi-quavers are again modified to quavers to depict the gentle rocking of the waves.

Musical Example #12: "Des Baches Wiegenlied"--mm. 1-3



All of these suggestions of running water are clearly derived from the stock figurations of Viennese keyboard technique of the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Schubert's genius lies not in his choice of accompanimental figures, but in the subtlety and imagination with which he uses them to reflect the wide variety of imagery and emotion in the poems. Amazingly, though they all share this common

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Hutchings, Schubert, revised edition (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1973), p. 160.

accompanimental figure, there is little resemblance between any of the songs, except that they are all equally effective in evoking the idea of water.

There are other means besides the "brook music" which Schubert uses to attain

which belong together:

- 1) "Des Müllers Blumen" (IX) and "Tränenregen" (X) are both in the same key (A major/minor) and have the same time signature (6/8).
- 2) "Pause" (XII) and "Mit dem grünen Lautenbände" (XIII) are both in B-flat major. (The B-flat chord which begins the latter is unnecessary and, according to Alfred Einstein<sup>1</sup> and Gerald Moore<sup>2</sup> should probably be omitted when the cycle is performed in its entirety.)
- 3) "Die liebe Farbe" (XVI) and "Die böse Farbe" (XVII) give us, so to speak, two sides of the same coin, and so they are also linked by key. Both fluctuate between B major and B minor, the former leaning toward the minor, the latter towards the major. Moore even suggests a relationship in tempo: "Die böse Farbe" ( $\text{♩}=63$ ) should be twice the speed of "Die liebe Farbe" ( $\text{♩}=63$ ).<sup>3</sup>

The character of the hunter also helps unify the second half of the cycle. In "Der Jäger" (XIV) the accompaniment, with its three-voice texture gives the listener "the brassy suggestion of the hunting horn."<sup>4</sup>

Musical Example #13: "Der Jäger"--mm. 1-4

**Geschwind (Allegro)**

1. Was

<sup>1</sup>Einstein, Schubert, p. 258.

<sup>2</sup>Gerald Moore, The Schubert Song Cycles, with Thoughts on Performance (London: Hamish Hamilton, Ltd., 1975), p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>Moore, Schubert Cycles, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup>Moore, Schubert Cycles, p. 45.

In the middle of "Eifersucht und Stolz" (XV) the hunting horn again appears in the accompaniment at the mention of the hunter returning from the chase.

Musical Example #14: "Eifersucht und Stolz"--mm. 34-45

Stra - ße sehn? Wenn von dem Fang der Jä-ger lu-stig zieht nach Haus,  
da steckt ein sitt-sam Kind den Kopf zum Fenster 'naus, wenn von dem Fang der Jä-ger

The hunter, symbolized by the color green, has become an obsession with the lad, as we see in the next two songs, "Die liebe Farbe" and "Die böse Farbe" (XVI and XVII). In the former, the miller is numb with pain. He can only repeat over and over again: "My love is so fond of green." In the background, the repeated F-sharps of the piano part (played 536 times in the course of the song) hammer away, softly, but relentlessly, saying to him: "Death, Death, Death."

Musical Example #15: "Die liebe Farbe"--mm. 1-3

**Etwas langsam (Poco lento)**

*p*

In the middle of the latter song, at the mention of the hunting horn, the three-voice "horn-call" texture again appears, but this time, Schubert gives it a deeper meaning. The upper voice contains those repeated F-sharps that were heard in the previous song, and again they whisper "Death" to the young miller.

Musical Example #16: "Die böse Farbe"--mm. 43-45



The final song of the cycle, "Des Baches Wiegenlied", is "the finest example of Schubert's delicately balanced psychological sense."<sup>1</sup> In it he artfully combines: (1) the quaver figure, representing the gentle rocking of the waves; (2) a tonic-dominant pedal which suggests the open fifths of the hated hunting horn; and (3) the repeated dominant in the treble, heard previously in "Die liebe Farbe" and "Die böse Farbe."<sup>2</sup> In this final song, it becomes "a dulcet chime whose tolling lulls the dear lad to his final rest."<sup>3</sup>

Schubert, like all other artists, was, to a greater or lesser extent, a product of his environment; he was influenced by the Zeitgeist of his era. His best friends were poets, and it is no wonder that his personal philosophy was very much influenced by the Romantic movement in German literature which had begun in the late eighteenth century (the "Sturm und Drang" period). Müller, too, was a part of this literary movement. Therefore, it should not be

<sup>1</sup>Einstein, Schubert, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup>See Musical Example #12, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Moore, Schubert Cycles, p. 72.

surprising that Schubert was attracted to Müller's poetry, because their philosophies had much in common.

It should also not be surprising that Schubert was attracted specifically to the Die schöne Müllerin and Winterreise poems--the story of a young wanderer. He saw life as a journey, believing that "man travels ever onwards towards a destination that dissolves and vanishes before him."<sup>1</sup> He, too, saw himself as a traveller, a wanderer. As Capell points out: "To feel oneself an exile upon the earth, wandering in perpetual dissatisfaction . . ."<sup>2</sup> was an extremely fashionable sentiment among all true "Romantics."

As was pointed out earlier in the paper, we know little of the "inner life" of Schubert. The use of a composer's songs to fill in some of these "psychological gaps" is at best a tenuous procedure. With Schubert, however, this seems to be an acceptable approach. His songs, more than those of any other composer, express what he felt within his heart. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau uses this same approach in his recent book, Schubert's Songs, A Biographical Study. He writes: "He (Schubert) needed to imagine what he could not experience. That is why he loved poets above all others. . . . The texts of his songs hint at the bitterness within him. . . . Sorrow and happiness, humility and arrogance, modesty and pride, contemplation and passion speak to us out of the music."<sup>3</sup>

An examination of the text to one of Schubert's best-loved songs, "Der Wanderer" (composed in 1816), reveals that it expresses a philosophy identical to that of the Müller poems, especially Winterreise:

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<sup>1</sup>Marcel Schneider, Schubert, trans. by Elizabeth Poston (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1959), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Capell, Schubert's Songs, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup>William Bender, "Follow the Lieder," Time, CIX, no. 16 (April 18, 1977), p. 86.



I come hither from the mountains,  
 The valley is steaming, the sea is roaring,  
 I wander still, without joy,  
 And sigh, as if asking "Where?"

The sun seems to me to be cold here,  
 The blossoms withered, and life old,  
 And men's speech, empty sound:  
 I am a stranger everywhere.

Where art thou, my beloved land,  
 Sought and envisaged, but never known?  
 That land, that land so green with hope,  
 That land where my roses bloom,  
 Where my friends go walking,  
 Where my dead shall rise again,  
 The land that speaks my speech,  
 O land, where art thou?

I wander still, without joy,  
 And sigh, as if asking "Where?"  
 In ghostly whisper, the answer returns to me,  
 "Where thou art not, there is happiness!"

--S. von Lübeck<sup>1</sup>

Another interesting similarity exists between the respective philosophies of Müller and Schubert in their concepts of death. It is significant that the young miller's death in the peaceful, flowing waters of the brook, corresponds strikingly to Schubert's own view of death. He saw death "not as a biblical manifestation of God's wrath, deserved of our sins, but death who becomes friend, confidant, and comforter, the figure opening to us the translucent portals of the world beyond."<sup>2</sup> Schubert described that world as "that clear-shining and distant future in which our whole hope lies."<sup>3</sup> In 1817 Schubert had composed a beautiful setting of Mattias Claudius' poem "Der Tod und Das Mädchen" ("Death and the Maiden") which expresses a similar concept of death:

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<sup>1</sup>Capell, Schubert's Songs, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>Schneider, Schubert, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Otto Erich Deutsch, Franz Schubert's Letters and Other Writings, trans. by Venetia Savile (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1928), p. 26.

Give me your hand, lovely and tender child!  
 I am your friend, I come not to chasten.  
 Be of good cheer! I am not to be feared,  
 You will sleep sweetly in my arms!

--M. Claudius<sup>1</sup>

(An interesting sidelight, from which the reader may draw his own conclusions, is that both the songs mentioned above as expressing significant elements of Schubert's philosophy, were also used as the basis for two of his greatest instrumental works--the "Wanderer Fantasy" in C major for piano and the "Death and the Maiden" string quartet in D minor.)

The story of Die schöne Müllerin may seem rather silly and sentimental--certainly not the material from which great art is made. But much of Schubert's music is deceptively simple. After nearly a year of "living" with this work, I am convinced that it is one of the most beautiful and moving works of the nineteenth century. One stands in awe of Schubert's genius! Words fail to express the overwhelming beauty of these twenty songs! Igor Stravinsky perhaps came closest to an explanation of the beauty of Schubert's music:

Schubert's music evokes heaven . . . a heavenly state of innocence, candor, tenderness, the place where those meet together who loved each other well on earth. Schubert's music is an aspiration towards this lost paradise. In this lies its power to move us and hold us spellbound, it is in this sense that it is like no other music, communicating with us in a language all its own. . . .<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Schneider, Schubert, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Schneider, Schubert, p. 5.

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