CHAPTER I

In the beginning: Schubert and Heine

> That the greatest composers of the Past and Present have set these poems to music I know; and that HEINE is untranslatable I know; yet I have tried to translate twelve of his most familiar songs, and to set new numbers to them. Having done this deed with a light heart, I can only deprecate impossible comparisons, and hope that what has given me so much pleasure may give my friends no offence.

A minor British composer named Louis Napoleon Parker wrote these words in 1891 as a preface to his *Twelve Songs by Heine*, complete with lush Victorian translations of well-known poems from the *Buch der Lieder* (Book of Songs). (For example, "Lieb' Liebchen, leg's Händchen aufs Herze mein" becomes "Lay softly, beloved, thy hand on my heart; – / Ah, list how it throbs in its chamber apart!" The hints of bodily transposition downwards are comical.[1]) So much of note about the Heine juggernaut in its latter days is on display in this apologia, in particular, the continuing attraction for composers of the poet's early poems and the heavy weight of the musical legacy with which later songsters had to cope if they were to proceed with the pleasure of setting this poetry to music. The inheritance of Heine songs from the past was, of course, dominated by Schubert and Schumann, and Parker follows in Schumann's wake with his own settings of "Ich will meine Seele tauchen" (Let me bathe my soul), "Morgens steh' ich auf und frage" (Every morning I wake and ask), "Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'" (When I look into your eyes), and "Lieb' Liebchen, leg's Händchen" (Just lay your hand on my heart). Throughout the last half of the century, Schumann was the model above all others for song composers, and his obsession with Heine in 1840 guaranteed the perpetuation of this poet for the duration.

But Parker did not appropriate any of Schubert's chosen poems. Very few composers after 1830 set three of Schubert's six Heine texts, and when they did so, oblivion was the usual reward for their temerity. Who nowadays knows the settings of "Ich unglücksel'ger Atlas" (I, unhappy Atlas) by Richard Burmeister, Robert Emmerich, and Reinhold Glière? Or Thorvald Otterström's, Rudolf von Liechtenstein's, and Nicolai Kasanli's versions of "Still ist die Nacht" (The night is still)? Ninety-three composers found their way to "Du schönes Fischermädchen" (Lovely fisher maiden), in part because the poem lent itself to the fashionable barcarolle genre, and "Ich

stand in dunklen Träumen" (I stood in dark dreams) was also a frequent choice for musical setting, although it could not compete with such best-sellers as "Was will die einsame Träne?" (Why this solitary tear?) and the ubiquitous "Du bist wie eine Blume" (You are like a flower).[2] As the century wore on, either courage or the foolhardiness of youth, rushing in where angels fear to tread, was required of composers who wished to appropriate the words of creations as dark and complex as "Der Doppelgänger."

Schubert made it his practice to look for poetry hot off the press, and the young Heine's skills as a self-publicist guaranteed that the composer, even in Metternich's Vienna with its censors and spies, would have access to this genius's words. "People here are so backwards where culture is concerned – they don't know that a poet often benefits more from blows than gentle, caressing praise," Heine wrote in a letter of 30 September 1824,[3] and he was able to chivvy the literati into action either on his behalf or in opposition to him. Without a Maecenas, without a profession (but he was not really suited for any job other than writer), a Jew whose conversion would never obliterate the fact of Jewish birth in anti-Jewish Germany, he had to ensure that his works would garner notice, and he brought all of his innate brilliance to bear on the matter. Some two-thirds of the poems in the *Buch der Lieder* appeared in periodicals and in his 1822, 1823, and 1826 anthologies before the larger volume was published in 1827, and reviewers were quick to take note of a startling new voice on the literary horizon. In fact, Heine became so famous so fast that none of the major critics, such as Adolph Müllner and Wolfgang Menzel, could afford to ignore each new work by this comet in the literary heavens. "Heine-Begeisterung," Heine enthusiasm, was a widespread phenomenon in the 1820s throughout the German-speaking world.

Infamy is Fame's surly younger brother; it is difficult to have the one without the other (my apologies to Ogden Nash). Heine, conscious of Fame's paradoxes as few have ever been, courted both from the beginning. When he concocted phrases such as "geistreiche Hüften" (witty thighs) and imitated the sentimental versifiers of his day in order to undermine them, he offended all those who touted purity (*Reinheit*) as poetry's prime attribute (see chapter 4). But supposed offenses to morals always attract readers; when Heine's truth-telling about bourgeois sexual codes, outworn poetic language, and institutional hypocrisy prompted critics to cries of outrage, Heine could expect higher sales. "One doesn't write about these things," said the prim and proper critics, but even they had to admit that Heine could make language jump through hoops as only true poets can do. "Better a Muse's steed that must be reined in," a purveyor of purple prose named Friedrich Gleich wrote in his review of the first volume of the *Reisebilder* (Images of Travel), "than the old, lame mares of the candied poem manufacturers, who for so many years have been trotting in circles around our Parnassus, enveloped in a fog of vague, pallid, purified feelings,

and who suffer from the debilitating catarrh of our times: treacly-mawkish sanctimoniousness."[4] No one, to my knowledge, has ever accused Heine of sanctimony.

When Romantic poets of the mystic-Catholic persuasion sought to bring Heine back into the fold of ineffable spirits and pure hearts, he mocked their attempts as only he could do. One imagines him doubled up with laughter upon reading Friedrich de La Motte-Fouqué's admonition, "An H. Heine. Am 21. Mai 1823" (To H. Heine, on 21 May 1823), published in the Cologne literary periodical *Agrippina* for 30 May 1824,[5] in which the older man urges the younger man to mend his blasphemous ways. "Don't play with serpents . . . return to God," Fouqué pleads, and one wonders whether he was aware of Heine's Jewish origins. Certainly both direct references and coded "asides" about "Hebrew" or "Israelite" identity appear in the critical responses to this poet from the beginning, despite "Harry Heine" cloaking his identity under the signatures "H. Heine" and, from 1825 on, his Christian baptismal name of "Heinrich Heine." Draping himself in the mantle of an elder statesman of poetry, Fouqué confides that he too once shook his fist at the heavens and proclaimed that "*dort* ist nicht *hier*!" ("*there* is not *here*" – a citation from Schiller's "Der Pilgrim," in which a spiritual quest leads to nihilism), but now he knows better and dispenses pious counsel. Heine, mightily amused, trumps his contemporary in the thirty-fifth poem of *Die Heimkehr* (The Homecoming): "I called the devil, and he came . . . he is a charming man, worldly, courtly, diplomatic . . . his favorite poet is forever Fouqué."[6] Great poets can consign their adversaries to literary Hell for all eternity.

Fouqué may have been shocked by Heine's boldness, but other men and women found it irresistible in spite of themselves. When they admitted their attraction in print, the Heine adversaries fought back, no doubt prompting readers as yet unacquainted with Heine to seek out the cause of the controversy. Karl Simrock published three epigrams on the subject of Heine in the *Musenalmanach für das Jahr 1826* (The Muses' Almanac for the Year 1826), culminating in a "Capitulation": "Sing whatever pleases you, whatever you bid your friend the Muse give to you: sing it, we will sing it after you."[7] This surrender to all that is so compelling in Heine's poetry elicited a scathing response in the form of six epigrams – double Simrock's number – by one August Beyfus in *Der Gesellschafter* (The Companion) for 13 February 1826 ("H. H---e," "H. H---e noch einmal," "Und abermals H---e," "Genie und Wahnsinn," "Anwendung ut supra," and "Abschluß"; H. H---e, H. H. yet again, And once again H---e, Genius and madness, Practical application of the above, In closing). "No poet was ever as abominable as you," he wrote, "The madhouses of German literature have enough 'originals'."[8] Beyfus could not bear to write out the hated name in full, but there was no need for him to do so. His readers knew of whom he was speaking.

Capitulation, condemnation, and everything in between: the range of responses to Heine's early novelties is wide indeed. An unidentified critic for the Braunschweig *Mitternachtblatt für gebildete Stände* (Midnight Album-leaf for the Cultured Classes) for 4 September 1826 wrote in a review of the *Reisebilder* that Heine's unique poetic personality had won him the approval of the ladies. "I know many a pretty mouth that longs to kiss away the bitter mockery from his lips and heal his bleeding heart," the writer declares archly.[9] The eighteenth century had seen explosive growth in literature tailored to women, thus giving misogynists another means by which to deride those writers they disliked. Some two months later in the same almanac, the tragedian Adolph Müllner invoked "Spree-Thee-Gesellschaften" (tea parties on Berlin's Spree River) at which the ladies would rhapsodize about Heine, exclaiming, "He is a true poet!"[10] The Catholic Müllner was probably also venting a soupçon of subterranean anti-semitism in this passage, as several of Berlin's foremost literary salons were the province of cultivated Jewish women, including Heine's friend Rahel Varnhagen von Ense. Müllner conceded, however, that the young poet was one of the most ingenious humorists since Jean Paul (as the more perceptive George Eliot pointed out, Jean Paul's humor and Heine's wit have nothing in common[11]). Not all women, however, swooned over Heine's love poetry. Amalie Caroline von Voigt, a friend of the Tiecks, castigated him for dirty-mindedness in the Jena *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* of September 1826, in which she proposed "love of Nature and homage to its Creator" as worthier poetic material than Heine's irony. "Too often," she says severely, "the wit is banal, the joke trivial, common or mannered," although she approved – somewhat – of his "naïve" imitations of folk poetry and narrative poetry.[12] Heine, of course, is never naïve, whether in the Schillerian or any other sense, and he used folk poetic models to idiosyncratic ends, pouring new wine into old bottles. Recognizing that Heine was no longer sympathetic to the pseudo-medieval strains typified by Tieck, she scolds him for his refusal to fall into line with the Romantic program.

Others also demanded that Heine write more conventional poetry and that he curb his propensity to slanderous sexual matter. In a parody of Goethe's nocturnal scene in Faust's study, the eccentric satirist Baron Gotthilf August von Maltitz (he kept his coat-of-arms in his chamber pot) devises a dialogue between "The Poet" and his Genius, who lurks just behind a bust of Schiller. "There is nothing more boring in the entire world than having a Genius, except perhaps loving platonically," the fictive Heine says, but as his Genius continues excoriating him, he comes around to repentance in the end. The scolding encompasses calls for worthier content in nobler forms – an anodyne example of an ode to Nature is appended – and admonitions that Heine should be manlier than the homosexual poet Count August von Platen-Hallermünde, Heine's target in the third volume of the *Reisebilder*.[13] "I have given you so much," Genius declares, "wit, soul,

understanding . . . did I lend you eagle's wings that you might crush a big fly with them?" Despite Maltitz's demands for Heine's reformation, one notes the differences in nobility and size between the winged creatures that are Heine's and Platen's stand-ins. Heine's unbridled slurs on his contemporary's homosexuality – the suffering it occasioned fills Platen's diaries – are in part polemics against a poetic aesthetic that Heine damned as artificial, but his gift for invective and his own sensitivities about masculinity led him to cross well over the line into the hurtful.

Most of the early critics, however, point with enthusiasm to "the new and curious thoughts," "the living expression of passion," "the mixture of learning, sentimentality, humor, and coarseness" (phrases out of a review in the Minden *Sonntagsblatt* for November 1826), and the originality of Heine's verses, despite occasional charges that he owed too much to Byron. The Minden reviewer, wishing to identify for his readers the hallmarks of Heine's unique style, cites a prose passage from the first volume of the *Reisebilder*, and the traits visible here are also on display in the poems Schubert, Schumann, and all the rest set to music: the opposition of condemnable Christian asceticism to praiseworthy classical sensuality, the love of masks, of the antique world, of paradox. "The older woman's face was like a palimpsest codex in which, beneath the newly-black monastic script of a patristic sacred text, there lurks the half-obliterated lines of an ancient Greek love-poet,"[14] Heine writes, invoking a bygone world he loved. Like Schiller but in his own way and for his own ends, he too asked, "Schöne Welt, wo bist du?" ("Beautiful world, where art thou?", words Schubert set to music in "Die Götter Griechenlands," The Grecian gods). No wonder the literary world snapped to attention and no wonder that composers took immediate notice. Here was a new repertory to mine for musical gold.

When they did so en masse, however, they unwittingly created the grounds for later critics' denigration of Heine's earlier verse as somehow inferior to the poetry of the 1830s and 1840s, although that trend is, happily, in abeyance. In a brilliant essay, Jeffrey Sammons borrows a phrase from Schiller – "in des Lebens Fremde" (into life's strangeness) – as the entrée to a discussion of Heine's many transmogrifications at posterity's hands, although he does not invoke the specifically *musical* strangeness to which Heine was harnessed during his own lifetime and beyond.[15] The tale begins with a bang, with three composers in Vienna who pounced on the new poetic repertory with alacrity, and, in Schubert's case, with immortal results, but the surfeit of later settings in parlor style was in part responsible for dismissal of these words as outdated, shopworn, and sentimental. The very popularity of the *Buch der Lieder* was enough to ensure that some would consider it ineligible for the Parnassus of poetry, fatally tarred by hoi polloi's approval. Heine's later dissections of German history were deemed worthier of critical examination than the early poems appropriated for song, exemplifying in yet another way the nineteenth century's relegation of song

to second-class status. But songs do work far outweighing their small size. They were often the laboratories for radical experiment in nineteenth- and twentieth-century music, and they are topical social documents in which we hear individualism's inner conflicts and clashes between the self and society. Critics tend to shudder when anyone invokes the word "universal," but the teenage and twentyish Heine (how did he know so much so young?) created poems that tell of perpetual problems of human nature, however culturally contingent their expression might be. Suppressed desire turns to hatred ("Sie liebten sich beide", "They loved one another"); something unbearable is borne, but how is forever a mystery ("Anfangs wollt' ich fast verzagen", "At first, I almost despaired"); and past loss haunts present poem and bleak future alike (take your pick from among many candidates for that particular summary).

But what I can only say after the fact in dry, scholarly prose, Heine could order into unforgettable art. After all, the poet in his later years called the *Buch der Lieder* "mein Hauptstück" (my foremost work),[16] and one motivation for this book is sustained admiration of the brilliance of this poetry. If Heine's composers always have their own musical agendas, if those agendas are often at cross-purposes with the words, if generations of musicians passed by numerous poems in the Book of Songs and focused only on a chosen few, they nevertheless knew when they were onto a good thing. They still know it.

YET AGAIN, SCHUBERT AND HEINE

What little is verifiable about the genesis of Schubert's six Heine songs has been told and re-told many times, and I shall only summarize it here.[17] At some mysterious moment, Schubert came across the huge poetic cycle *Die Heimkehr* either in the first volume of Heine's *Reisebilder* (1826) or in the 1827 *Buch der Lieder*, in which Heine gathered together the best of his youthful poems. Both volumes were published by the firm of Hoffmann and Campe in Hamburg, and one notes that Schubert referred to the poet as "*Heine of Hamburg*" [his italics] when he offered the Leipzig music publisher Heinrich Probst several of his compositions in a letter of 2 October 1828, including several Heine songs "which pleased extraordinarily here."[18] Both the *Reisebilder* and the *Buch der Lieder* are named in the few documents that have any bearing on the birth of these songs but without any decisive indication of which one was Schubert's source. We know that Schober reinstated the former reading circle in January 1828 at his and Schubert's lodgings at Unter den Tuchlauben beim blauen Igel and that the group met on 12 January 1828 to discuss the "Reiseideen von Heine" (Travel Notions by Heine), which Franz von Hartmann summed up in his diary in lukewarm fashion as "Some pleasant things. Much wit. False tendencies."[19] The latter, according to Deutsch, was probably an allusion

to Heine's veneration for Napoleon (see chapter 3), of which the Austrian literati disapproved.[20] Hartmann refers only to *Ideen*: *Das Buch Le Grand*, the wittily embellished prose reminiscences of the poet's boyhood in the second section of the *Reisebilder*, not to the homecoming poetry in part 1. What pleased Hartmann most "so far" – the reading was not finished on that occasion – were the poet's recollections of his youth in Düsseldorf. Was Schubert not present? His attendance at the reading circle seems to have been spotty, as there are references by Hartmann to sessions of tandem pub-crawling and readings at Schober's (several featuring works by Kleist, with whom Schober was evidently much taken) where Schubert's name is not mentioned. In the diary entry of 19 January, where Hartmann notes that the reading of Heine's *Travel Notions* was completed, Schubert does not appear, unless he was among the "thirteen acquaintances" who packed into a tavern later that evening.[21] If Heine's boyhood in Düsseldorf was known to the reading circle and Schubert was present, why would he subsequently invoke the poet as "Heine of Hamburg," not "Heine of Düsseldorf"?

Given this composer's propensity to pounce on the latest poetry, did he discover *Die Heimkehr* earlier than 1828? The chronology is complicated by Carl von Schönstein's reminiscences written in January 1857, almost thirty years after Schubert's death. According to Schönstein, the Heine songs were not "Letzlinge" (last works), but were composed earlier. How much earlier and precisely when, he does not say, but he decried the appellation "swan song" as inappropriate for these six songs, and he refers to a dog-eared copy of the *Buch der Lieder* (not the *Reisebilder*) in Schubert's possession.[22] Because so much time elapsed between the events themselves and Schönstein's chronicle, one must take his account with a grain or two of salt. For the elderly who look back at their youth, Time expands and contracts in willful ways, and yet, one wonders whether the dedicatee of *Die schöne Müllerin* might not have been right in his recollections. The autograph manuscript is of little help in the matter, as the date "August 1828" on the first folio containing "Liebesbotschaft" (Love's message) could indicate the date at which Schubert began copying out the Rellstab songs in cleaned-up versions or a retrospective date of some sort, as Richard Kramer has pointed out in his thoughtful analysis of the autograph's fascicle structure. In the midst of committing "In der Ferne" (Far away) to paper, Schubert evidently added a last gathering of double leaves to the compilation in order to include the Heine songs, so they must have been conceived and, conjecturally, well along before he finished copying the seven works on words by Rellstab.[23] More than that, we cannot know at present. The fair copy was assuredly preceded by earlier endeavors, but there are no extant sketches or working papers for any of the Heine songs. Perhaps somewhere, in a Viennese attic or a distant archive, there are manuscripts of whose existence we are presently unaware that will clarify some or all of these mysteries in the future.

Another controversy has to do with the question of cyclicity and ordering of these six songs. Much heat but relatively little light has been generated over the matter (after all, we only have Schubert's fair copy as concrete evidence one way or the other), with Maurice J. E. Brown, Harry Goldschmidt, and Richard Kramer proposing the order of encounter as we find it in Heine's anthology and other scholars arguing against the proposal.[24] In the poet's *Die Heimkehr*, we encounter (and I will use Schubert's titles for the sake of convenience) "Das Fischermädchen" (The fisher maiden) first (no. 8 in Heine), followed by "Am Meer" (By the sea, no. 14), "Die Stadt" (The town, no. 18), "Der Doppelgänger" (The ghostly double, no. 20), "Ihr Bild" (Her portrait, no. 23), and finally "Der Atlas" (Atlas, no. 24), an ordering that *can* be construed – with some mental exertion – as the vaguest of narratives, without names, without pre-history, without background, without clear connectives between stages of disaster. In Kramer's lovely phrase, the design of Heine's massive cycle of eighty-eight poems is "a convolution, a whorl,"[25] and yet, there is a misty, foggy progression of cause-and-effect states of being that one can trace (with some effort) throughout the poems as one encounters them in Heine, a descent from one circle of hell to the next until finally the persona – but is there only one? – understands that there is no escape. At the beginning, a song of seduction ("Das Fischermädchen") is followed by the poisonous disaster of sexual intercourse ("Am Meer"), with its sentence of irrevocability: this cannot be undone. Rupture happens somewhere in the interstices between "Am Meer" and "Die Stadt," but we see neither the moment of separation nor its cause. Afloat in an ocean of despair, the persona stares obsessively at the site of erotic catastrophe in "Die Stadt" in order to rub salt in the wound of loss. That obsession becomes massive trauma in "Der Doppelgänger," followed by a bleak epiphany at the end of "Ihr Bild." Finally, the weight of a world of misery becomes the persona's eternal lot in "Der Atlas." But other "narratives," equally imprecise (an understatement), are possible in Schubert's ordering, for example, a failed erotic experience over which the persona agonizes in "Der Atlas" and "Ihr Bild" before a new and lighter dalliance in "Das Fischermädchen." Ultimately, one concludes that imprinting stories on these songs is a problematic venture in whatever ordering, given Heine's lack of direction in the matter. If there are groups of poems unified loosely by theme, such as the sea poems and homecoming poems from which Schubert chose his six texts, this does not equal narration. There are other ways of viewing the songs as linked should one decide that they are a cycle, in particular, tonal and musical links.

But there too, one can find bonds both in Kramer's proposed ordering and in Schubert's fair copy as well as songs sundered by tonal relationships no one could construe as close. (Schubert does this in both of his Müller cycles, grouping some subsets tightly together by key and breaking others apart.) In the re-ordered set, the A-flat major tonality of "Das

Fischermädchen" is followed by an augmented sixth chord containing the pitches A-flat and C at the beginning and end of "Am Meer," which is set in C major with passages in C minor, while "Am Meer" in turn is followed by "Die Stadt," a song obsessed with C. The huge C major chord near the end of "Der Doppelgänger" – one of the most shattering moments in all lieder – briefly recalls the regnant tonic of the previous two songs, while the B-natural tonic pitch of "Der Doppelgänger" foreshadows the importance of its enharmonic twin C-flat in "Ihr Bild" and harks back to the C-flat major middle section of "Das Fischermädchen." In Schubert's ordering, however, other bonds obtain. In the familiar sequence, the cycle is framed on either side by songs in which a figure contained within a diminished fourth dominates, songs furthermore with middle sections or important passages in the major mode key on the raised third degree, this in minor mode (G minor and B major in "Der Atlas," B minor and D-sharp major in "Der Doppelgänger"). Robert Morgan has argued that the unresolved diminished seventh heard so obsessively throughout "Die Stadt" is actually resolved at the beginning of "Am Meer" just after it, and Martin Chusid writes that the massive C major chord in root position (not a first inversion Neapolitan) near the end of the final song in Schubert's order acts to link "Der Doppelgänger" more closely to the two preceding songs.[26] Because my purpose in this chapter is not a rehashing of the "cycle question" but an examination of the complex relationships between older, borrowed traditions and futurity in these songs, I will abjure further consideration of the matter and will present my discussions of the individual works in the familiar order. That is, after all, how Schubert chose to give his settings of "Heine from Hamburg" to the world.

Because these songs are so magnificent, virtually everyone who encounters them is moved to ask why there are only six such treasures, given that much more of Heine's poetry was available to Schubert. *Die Heimkehr* contains eighty-eight poems, and the *Buch der Lieder* has a total of 238 – but we have only these few inimitable songs. In his reminiscences, Schönstein writes that when he spotted the *Buch der Lieder* in the composer's room and asked whether he could borrow the volume, Schubert gave it to him, saying that he "*had no more need for it*" [italics mine]. From the evidence both of Schubert's literary acuity elsewhere and the music of his Heine songs, it is clear that he understood the genius on display in this poetry, and it is impossible that he would have failed to recognize the quality of his own music to Heine's words. Surely if a poet's verse awoke music of such brilliance, its creator might well have wanted to keep going, quite Hugo Wolf-like, and yet Schubert had nothing more to do with Heine after the six swan songs. Many who feel cheated by the composer's early death have fantasized about further Heine settings had Schubert only lived longer, but scholars such as Martin Chusid have surmised that Schubert soon came to dislike Heine's youthful verse as incongruent with his own

nature, and I agree.[27] However multifarious the poet's masks and poses, there is a world-view visible in Heine's homecoming poems with which the composer could not concur.

One notes, for example, that Schubert shunned the entire final three-quarters of the poetic cycle in the wake of such poems as "Der bleiche, herbstliche Halbmond" (The pale, autumnal half-moon), with its savage deconstruction of pious family life as a proper subject for the sort of poetry Heine despised, nor is there any text anywhere in Schubert characterized by the sort of intimate contempt one finds in "An deine schneeweiße Schulter" (Upon your snow-white shoulder). A sample of the kind of poem one cannot imagine this composer finding acceptable either for music or poetic pleasure is "Da droben auf jenem Berge" (Up there on yonder hilltop), one of three poems that come between "Das Meer erglänzte" (The sea glittered, Schubert's "Am Meer") and "Am fernen Horizonte" (On the distant horizon, "Die Stadt") in *Die Heimkehr*. Here, Heine fashions an ironic riff on a famous folk poem, "Müllers Abschied" (The miller's farewell), included in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.[28] The poem is peopled by three lovely ladies in a castle and a miller lad who yearns for the love of the one "belle dame" not invoked by name, but the insuperable differences in social rank lead to their parting. Heine's persona, however, names all three of the women he has "enjoyed" and is piqued when none of them invites him to their weekly soirée. The busybodies and gossipers will have a field day, he realizes. In this flippant transformation of tragedy, Heine both pokes fun at those contemporary poets who appropriated folk poetry and notes with irony aforethought the intermingling of erotic congress and social life, but Schubert would not have it. Furthermore, while the composer was not particularly pious (he omitted doctrinally requisite portions of the Mass texts and joked about ignorant, mucky Hungarian priests), he would not, one feels sure, have echoed Heine's lines "Gestorben ist der Herrgott oben, / Und unten ist der Teufel todt" (The Lord God up above has died, and down below the devil is dead), much less set them to music.[29] Indeed, resistance to the poet sprang into being as he was composing his six Heine songs, and his counter-arguments are evident in the music alongside a depth of understanding matched by few of Heine's literary critics. Perusing these songs, one can track both that resistance and its Siamese twin, acute recognition, throughout Schubert's compositional decisions.

There is, of course, cause for regret in Schubert's repudiation of Heine. In his last years, this composer profoundly re-conceptualized various traditions of song composition that others took for granted, and the Heine songs were a prime site for his transformations of the familiar into the unfamiliar, the old into the new. It is one purpose of this chapter to investigate what conventions he chose for metamorphosis in each song and to speculate why he might have done so. The fashionable genre of the barcarolle undergoes