Lieder began with words, with the composer's discovery of a poet and a poetic work, but the study of lieder has tended to bypass those origins. Schubert's choice of poets has traditionally come under fire for the preponderance of mediocre talent, and yet many of these writers were highly esteemed in their day. The author has chosen four such poets – Gabriele von Baumberg, Theodor Körner, Johann Mayrhofer, and Ernst Schulze – in order to re-examine their lives, works, and Schubert's music to their verse. Schubert gravitated to different poetic repertoires at different times and for different musical purposes, such as the anticipations of *Winterreise* one hears in the Schulze songs or the radical tonal experimentation of the Mayrhofer songs. All four poets were vivid inhabitants of a vivid area, and their tribulations afford us added insight into the upheavals, the manners and the mores, of their day.

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Schubert's poets and the making of lieder

SUSAN YOUENS

Professor of Musicology
Department of Music,
University of Notre Dame,
Indiana

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Preface

IN THIS BOOK, I have borrowed the resonant nineteenth-century notion of *Charakterbilder* (character portraits) in music in order to turn it upside down and transmogrify it as scholarship. Rather than words engendering music to depict such symbolic archetypes as Faust and the commedia dell'arte figures, or real-life artists en route to mythification in their own medium (Chopin and Paganini in Schumann's *Carnaval*), I wish to paint "character portraits" of a different sort – biographical and poetic – in order to create richer associations around a body of music: four groups of songs by Franz Schubert on texts by four different poets. Organizing a book on lieder around a song composer's poets is perhaps a novel approach, but song, after all, begins with poetry. The assumption that music is at the center of lied creation requires, I believe, a more nuanced account in which words share the stage at all times and thereby permeate the music. It is my hope that a portrait gallery in language which begins with matters seemingly extraneous to lieder will conclude by conducting the reader back to the song, there to discover aspects previously veiled from sight and sound.

I do so against prevailing notions of song scholarship. Poets and even their poetry are too often regarded as somehow ancillary to the study of lieder, as if poets are merely the provisioners of fodder for music. Once the names and dates, perhaps a capsule biography, of the poets are given, one can rush forward to the heart of the matter: the songs themselves, or rather, the *music* of the songs. Even when the poet is of the empyrean likes of Goethe or Schiller, musicians seem curiously uninspired to delve into literary waters, to discover the when, where, how, what, and why of the verbal text. When the poet is not a household word, not one of Germany's literary gods, it is all too customary to decry his or her works as unworthy of scrutiny and thereby excuse oneself from the task of discovering anything further about the poet's life, literary and historical context, themes and preoccupations, strengths and weaknesses, or the precise nature of the attraction these poems had for song composers. Thousands of people know and love Schubert's "Im Frühling" (In the spring), D. 882, composed in 1826, but Ernst Schulze, the poet who made it possible, is a faceless name for all but a few. Who was he? What were his experiences in life, and what did those experiences have to do with the verse he created? What

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did he write? How was his poetry received in his own day and later? What was the attraction for Schubert of *this* verse at *that* time? What did Schubert choose for musical setting, and what did he reject? Can we speculate why? Did other composers set this poetry and if not, why? In sum, what was the pre-history of the song? What of that pre-history might Schubert have known? Even in those frequent instances where we cannot ascertain with any certainty who or what he knew of the personal history surrounding the poetry he set to music, we should remember that these poets were his contemporaries. The possibility that he heard "through the grapevine" both gossip and fact which neither he nor his friends bothered to record for posterity should not be discounted.

There are over a hundred poets whose poems were set to music by Schubert. Even if one discounts the truly obscure writers of whom we know little or nothing, there are still too many for a comprehensive study. Not wishing to pick at random from among such a horde, I relied on the following criteria as the basis for inclusion, starting with chronology: I wanted to discuss poets important to Schubert at different times, extending from the very beginning of his compositional life to the final years. In doing so, I am not attempting to demonstrate some sort of "development" but rather to show that there is a correlation between his attraction to a particular poet and the vicissitudes of his own situation at different turning points in his life. Thus, the first poet to appear in these pages is possibly the first poet who inspired Schubert not only to set her verse to music but to pursue an artistic calling, and I have ended with the poet of a group of songs in 1825–26 which paves the way for the late masterpiece *Winterreise*, D. 911. Because creative artists, no matter how avowedly apolitical, do not create in a vacuum, I also chose poets whose lives were particularly vivid and whose activities provide what I judged to be the greatest insight into the larger cultural-social-historical milieu in which poetry and lieder are born. As Roger Parker has observed, *petites histoires* and minor figures in many ways recreate their age more faithfully than the great can now do for us. Reading these poets' works, their diaries and letters, the chronicles of those who knew them, one discovers a rich social world in which poets and composers hobnobbed with one another, fell in love, created poetry and music side-by-side, and responded in a variety of ways to the upheavals and aftermath of the Napoleonic wars – the Chinese curse "May you live in interesting times" comes to mind often when one reads these accounts. One need not deny the self-sufficiency of the artistic work or fall into the trap of confusing the poet/composer with the persona of a lied in simplistic ways if one acknowledges that the extra-musical factors impinge on creativity and even appear, whether blatantly or covertly, in the works themselves.

Furthermore, I have chosen poets little-known to modern readers, underrated and misunderstood where they are known at all, writers exiled from what Jane Brown amusingly dubs the "Goetheandschiller" ambitus of those whose reputations have endured to the present day. Three of the four members of my portrait gallery were not, however, obscure in their own times; one in particular (Ernst Schulze) was highly esteemed throughout much of the nineteenth century, before later critics besmirched his name or dropped him from the canon altogether. When read in

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fuller knowledge of their varying purposes and contexts, however, these poets emerge as more interesting, even more skilled, than their detractors past and present would have us believe. We, after all, read with great approbation, even enthusiasm, many late twentieth-century writers who will certainly vanish from sight when the cultural winds shift; post-post-post-modern historians might have as much difficulty reclaiming reasons for our interest in these "marginal figures" as present-day scholars have with Schubert's attraction to mediocre poets and poems. Those "mediocrities," I would argue, had much to offer Schubert, who knew them better than we do.

The portrait gallery begins with two poets who belong to the history of Schubert's youth: Gabriele von Baumberg (1766–1839), known to musicians only (if at all) for Mozart's passionate setting of her poem "Als Luise die Briefe ihres ungetreuen Liebhabers verbrannte," K. 520 (As Luise burned her faithless lover's letters), and Theodor Körner (1791–1813). This book began many years ago when I first asked, "Who is Gabriele von Baumberg?" – there are, after all, only a few women among the Schubert poets (Caroline Pichler, Karoline von Klenke, Wilhelmine von Chézy, and Marianne von Willemer are the others) – and then discovered a riveting tale of intrigue, with no less than Napoleon and Metternich as players in the drama. Gabriele's life will seem particularly grim to present-day feminists: this woman, who believed fervently in her poetic destiny and claimed Olympian status as a poet, was silenced long before her death as a consequence of her marriage to a fellow-writer, an ardent Jacobin whose political activities ruined both of their lives. Schubert subsequently found in her poem "Lebenstraum" the inspiration for one of his earliest compositions and, speculatively, a source of artistic self-assertion. He also received direct encouragement for his creative aspirations from the subject of chapter 2, Theodor Körner, whom the young composer met in 1812. Körner, a battlefield martyr before his twenty-second birthday, was one of the most idolized figures of the War of Liberation, his every word and deed recorded in great detail and hymned throughout the nineteenth century and beyond; as late as the 1980s, there was yet another novel telling the tale of the Lützower Volunteers and Körner's death at Gadebusch. The story of his battlefield extinction is a reminder to musicians of the wartime turbulence that is the insistent backdrop to much of what is recounted in this book. Of all the connecting links between these four tales, the war is the most tragic.

The latter half of the portrait gallery belongs to Schubert's maturity. If the Baumberg and Körner songs are admittedly small repertoires within this composer's gigantic song oeuvre, the same is not true of Johann Mayrhofer (1787–1836), perhaps the single most important influence on Schubert's thought between the years 1817 and 1820. Mayrhofer's poetry was the inspiration for many of Schubert's greatest lieder, such as "Auf der Donau" (On the Danube), D. 553; "Freiwilliges Versinken" (Voluntary descent), D. 700; and "Auflösung" (Dissolution), D. 807, to cite only three of the forty-seven Mayrhofer songs, more than any other poet except Goethe and virtually all of them representative of Schubert at his best. And yet, the tormented poet, whose lifelong depression culminated in suicide in 1836, is still little known, his best poetry not appreciated as it should be for its proto-Expressionistic power,

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radical experimentation with form and meter, and Romantic appropriation and warping of Greek mythology. From the tangled strands of his own complex, difficult being, he devised either overtly autobiographical verse in futuristic forms or poems in which gods, goddesses, and Homeric figures tell of *his* distress, his rare joys, and his wish for transformation into pure spirit in a "gentle land" beyond death's frontiers. For these often vatic words, Schubert devised songs which run the gamut from the smallest and gentlest of miniatures ("Schlaflied," D. 527) to immense, heaven-storming lieder, including some of this composer's most intellectually challenging works. The enigmas of Mayrhofer's life and verse, the two closely interwoven, and Schubert's music to such powerful words deserve re-examination.

Beyond a plea for recognition of poets now lost from view, I have been captivated by the complex alliance of life and art in these tales, life borrowing from art which in turn borrowed from life in a fusion both selective and transformative. One sees the phenomenon at its most pathological in Ernst Schulze (1789–1817), the last and perhaps most tragic of the four portraits. Despite a posthumous biographical cover-up designed to save the dead young poet's reputation from tarnish, Schulze had already versified his own case history of delusion in the poems Schubert set to music; if his distressing prose diary and even more distressing letters were not accessible to the reading public for a long time, the poems were. When one realizes the intertwining of art and near-madness in his poetry, that knowledge forever changes the way in which one hears these songs. The discovery is hardly a cheerful one, but it is closer to the truth than the longstanding myth of Schulze the grief-stricken, sickly-sweet, pure-hearted poet-minstrel of Romantic love. Lawrence Kramer, in *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (University of California Press, 1984), pp. 143–44, points to "An mein Herz" – "a breathtakingly banal poem by Ernst Schulze" – as evidence of a "tepid, ruminative, resigned poem" crushed by music that is "distraught, manic, defensive, duplicitous." But Schulze, who would nowadays either be jailed or hospitalized as a "stalker," was indeed distraught, manic, defensive, duplicitous and more, the indices of mental illness writ large in his poetry. Schubert, unlike his later critics, read Schulze's entire *Poetisches Tagebuch* in search of composable poetry; he did not fail to observe the poet's desperate condition, minutely recorded in that quasi-autobiographical collection, and to incorporate that knowledge into his settings. In each of his nine completed Schulze songs (a tenth was abandoned in fragmentary form), he registers every twist and turn of a diseased mind. Madness or incipient madness has often fascinated composers because of its beckoning to extremity and hence to virtuosity, also because of the delicate balancing act required of the composer – how does one portray the looming loss of control in a controlled artistic form? Whether for those reasons or others, Schubert found in Schulze's poetic diary the forerunner for his second Müller cycle, *Winterreise*, D. 911, in which one can hear many instances of "harking back" to the devices of the Schulze songs.

It will already be apparent to the reader that this book is centrally concerned with the interplay between those Siamese twins, life and art. The recent swirl of publicity about Schubert's sexuality and how it might or might not pertain to his music, a discourse which has run the gamut from valuable to vitriolic, has re-opened

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the old question of how later generations judge the relationship between an artist's life and personality and the work he or she creates, and has revealed yet again how deeply scholars' passions can be stirred by the imputation of human foibles to particularly beloved figures. The issue of life vis-à-vis art, vexed wherever it occurs, is further complicated in the nineteenth century by the mythology of the Romantic artist, which converted real-life creators either into Promethean demi-gods (the Beethoven model) or frail, misunderstood, refined "shrinking violets" (the Chopin model) or *gemütlich* inhabitants of operetta plots (the Schubert model) and postulated direct connections between the weather and what a composer wrote that day. Infuriated by simplistic equations between the "dancer and the dance," scholars revolted, and the pendulum for a time swung to the opposite extreme, the denial of any connection whatsoever between the life and the oeuvre; such was the creed when I was in graduate school. But the transactions between art and life not only exist but assume numberless idiosyncratic guises, all the more complex when both a poet and a composer share the stage. In an attempt to sort out those transactions in the four case-histories which follow, I have arranged each chapter along similar lines, beginning with an introduction to the lives-and-works of the poets and culminating in an examination of their effect on Schubert and commentaries on selected songs to texts by those poets. The space devoted to biographical matters, then to musical matters, necessarily shifts from one chapter to the next – we know relatively little about the reticent Mayrhofer's life while Schulze poured out his misery in page after page of documentation – but the order is the same, duplicating that of real life: to bring the poet onstage first, then the composer.

Where the repertoires are small, as they are with the Baumberg, Schulze, and Körner songs, I have discussed all of them, but only the most encyclopedic dimensions would permit commentary on all forty-seven of the Mayrhofer settings. After earlier drafts of this manuscript in which I greedily attempted to find a place for vast numbers of songs, reason returned, and ruthless selectivity became the order of the day. My decisions about which Mayrhofer lieder to include and which to omit were dictated by considerations both of variety and quality; only the best – but not all of them – and/or the most representative works have found a home in these pages. Even with a shortened list, reproducing examples from each Schubert song I invoke would swell the book to unmanageable girth, and therefore, I have only included a limited number of examples pertaining to less well-known songs; elsewhere, I have assumed that readers will consult both the old and new Schubert editions as they read my discussions of the music. I am grateful to Dover Editions, Inc. for permission to print examples from the old Breitkopf & Härtel Schubert edition and to Professor Walther Dürr and Bärenreiter-Verlag for permission to reproduce passages from the *Neue Schubert-Ausgabe*.

Examples from works long out of print, however, abound. Because I believe, in company with many scholars, that the fullest possible knowledge of the context surrounding a work can only enhance understanding and appreciation of it, one of the primary purposes of this book is to place Schubert's songs in the company of other lieder and to reintroduce neglected, and often very lovely, songs to texts by

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these same poets. I do so for a variety of reasons: Schubert was not only of his era in gravitating to these poems, but on certain occasions, especially in his youth, took his cue from an existing work; for example, I believe that the Viennese composer Stephan Franz's *Sechs Gedichte von Theodor Körner* perhaps influenced Schubert in his choice of five of the same texts for musical setting. Because Körner and Schulze were popular with so many composers, I could not include examples from all of the extant lieder to their verse and therefore have chosen what I considered to be the most representative and interesting specimens as a set of *Albumblätter* of fragments in chapters 2 and 4; perhaps an anthology of these songs in their entirety can follow after this book someday. Many scholars are now discovering treasures within the vast repository of neglected nineteenth-century song, and it is a trend I hope will continue to flourish in future years.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to the many people and institutions who have supported me throughout the work on this book. The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded me a travel grant in the summer of 1992 for a research trip to Budapest and a research fellowship for the academic year 1994–95; without its generosity, it would have been far more difficult for me to locate either the financial resources or the time necessary to complete this book. The American Philosophical Society and the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts at the University of Notre Dame funded a research trip to Berlin and Vienna in October 1993; during my stay in those two cities, the curators of the Bartsteingasse music collection of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, the music collection and theater collection of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, and both houses of the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek graciously allowed me access to all of the manuscripts and printed material I wished to consult. I am especially grateful to Johann Ziegler of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek for his unfailing helpfulness and courtesy.

I also owe debts of gratitude to the Library of Congress, the British Museum, the New York Public Library, the Beinecke Library at Yale University, the Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library at Harvard University (my special thanks to Millard Irion), and the Newberry Library in Chicago for coping both with large orders for photocopies and microfilm and, on numerous occasions, with my presence. The Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Göttingen, the Niedersächsische Hauptstaatsarchiv in Hannover, the Stiftsarchiv at St. Florian bei Linz, the Genealogisch-Heraldische Gesellschaft in Göttingen, the Niedersächsischer Landesverein für Familienkunde, the Deutsche Zentralstelle für Genealogie Leipzig, the Lutheran Kirchenbuchamt Göttingen and the Stadtarchiv in Göttingen have aided me enormously with various genealogical investigations; this book would not have been possible without their involvement. I am also grateful to the curators of the Galerie der Romantik at the Schloß Charlottenburg in Berlin for photographing Georg Friedrich Kersting's beautiful painting *Theodor Körner, Friesen und Hartmann auf Vorposten* for me and granting permission to reproduce it in chapter 2. In 1993, I sent a preliminary version of the chapter on Schulze to the British pianist Graham Johnson in order that he might use some of the information therein for his essay on "Schubert and

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the Strophic Song" in vol. 18 of *The Hyperion Schubert Edition* (Hyperion CDJ33018), which appeared later that year; this unfurling edition-in-sound of Schubert's entire lieder oeuvre is one of the most valuable Schubert projects of them all, and I felt very honored indeed to play a small part in it. The discussions I so enjoy with my friend and fellow-Schubertian, the brilliant coach-accompanist John Wustman, are woven into the fabric both of this book and my life. Brae Korin has been my collaborator in the German translations, as with my previous books; both her bulldog tenacity in researching early nineteenth-century usage and her desire to reflect each poet's style as clearly as possible in English translation have proven an invaluable aid to me these past six years of our friendship. Roger Parker, who helped me in my struggles with an early draft of an earlier book, generously agreed to sign on for a second shift at the same exercise; there are no words sufficient for my gratitude. Whatever may be felicitous in my writing reflects his generous tutelage. My graduate assistants Maryalice Mohr and Aaron Gauthier have helped with everything from sorting piles of photocopied lieder to researching publication dates for nineteenth-century sheet music, dates notoriously difficult to pinpoint, to the tedium of proofreading and checking translations. I could not have asked for more willing or able assistance. Lisa Feurzeig of the University of Chicago, my student, friend, and colleague, whose work on the Schlegel songs of Schubert confirms for me that the next generation of Schubert song scholars will be a brilliant one, has generously run various errands for me in Vienna during her stay there as a Fulbright scholar, and I am deeply indebted to her for such selfless and time-consuming aid.

Finally, this book, in company with my previous endeavors, is dedicated to the memory of my friend and mentor Paul Amadeus Pisk, who died on 12 January 1990 after a long and brilliant life as a composer, musicologist, critic, and teacher *extraordinaire*. It was from his example that I learned to be skeptical of received opinions, especially where they are dismissive in nature, and to trust my own intuition that the lives and works of artists are not nearly so disjunct as I was formerly taught. From his profound insight into human nature, I too became fascinated by artists as people and came to see their works not solely as isolated artifacts but as creations woven into the very warp and woof of their lives. On better days, when optimism about this book runs higher than usual, I like to think that he would have enjoyed reading about the colorful dramatis personae who appear in these pages, had he only lived to do so.

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