Introduction

MATTHEW GARDNER AND CHRISTINE MARTIN

In diaries, letters and memoirs written by his friends and contemporaries, as well as in visual representations, Schubert is most frequently depicted at the piano encircled by friends. His association with this instrument spanned most of his life and covered a wide range of musical genres including fantasies, sonatas, dances, variations, marches and character pieces (such as those in the Hungarian style), in addition to his cultivation of the piano duet (music for piano four hands). In his Lieder – one of the genres with which Schubert is chiefly associated today – and his instrumental chamber music, the piano also takes on a significant role, almost always extending far beyond the function of an accompaniment to the voice or solo instruments. Given the predominant position of the piano in his output, it could be surmised that it was his instrument of choice. Yet despite Schubert's diverse use of the piano, previous research on his music for the instrument has tended to focus almost exclusively on the sonatas (for two hands), analysing their musical form, harmonic disposition and Schubert's approach to thematic development in contrast to the 'classical' piano sonata and to a certain extent in the shadow of Beethoven's piano sonatas.[1] Prominent pieces in other genres such as the 'Wanderer' Fantasy (D760), the Piano Trios (D898 and D929) or the Impromptus (D899) have also been mostly considered from an analytical perspective, in terms of sonata-like concepts of form and their thematic development.[2] Perhaps as

[1] See, for example, S. Clark, *Analyzing Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); D. Damschroder, *Harmony in Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); E. Badura-Skoda and P. Branscombe (eds.), *Schubert Studies: Problems of Style and Chronology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); A. Godel, *Schuberts letzte drei Klaviersonaten (D958–960): Entstehungsgeschichte, Entwurf und Reinschrift, Werkanalyse* (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1985); E. Badura-Skoda, 'The Piano Works of Schubert', in R. L. Todd (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 97–146; S. Yin Mak, 'Schubert's Sonata Forms and the Poetics of the Lyric', *Journal of Musicology*, 23/2 (2006), pp. 263–306; H.-J. Hinrichsen, *Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung der Sonatenform in der Instrumentalmusik Franz Schuberts* (Tutzing: Schneider, 1994).

[2] See, for example, P. McCreless, 'A Candidate for the Canon? A New Look on Schubert's Fantasie in C Major for Violin and Piano', *19th-Century Music*, 20/3 (1996), pp. 205–30; A. Feil and W. Dürr (eds.), *Franz Schubert: Musikführer* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1999); B. Black, 'Lyricism and the Dramatic Unity of Schubert's Instrumental Music: The Impromptu in C Minor, D. 899/1', in

a consequence of the strong analytical approach taken in the past, pieces in genres other than the sonata (for example, chamber music, pieces for piano four hands, marches, variations and fantasies) have received little attention and in some cases, such as the dances, have been considered more from a socio-historical perspective, owing to their function as music for social gatherings in Biedermeier Vienna.[3]

The influence of the instruments available to Schubert on the development of his compositional style were discussed in Elizabeth Norman McKay's pioneering study *The Impact of the New Pianofortes on Classical Keyboard Style*: *Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (1987), but have since been rather neglected, despite an increasing interest in the pianos of the period, early nineteenth-century performance practice and historically informed performances of Schubert's music on period instruments, which differ considerably from modern concert grands.[4] The technical advancements in piano design and construction at the start of nineteenth century opened up a wide range of new tonal and technical possibilities for composers, which Schubert and his contemporaries creatively explored in their works for or including piano, and which deserve more thorough attention.

This book takes a different approach to previous scholarship by placing the Viennese piano of the early nineteenth century at the centre and considering the ways in which Schubert engaged with the instruments and resulting sound world of the period, as well as by contextualising the piano and its repertoire in Vienna. *Schubert's Piano* aims to cover a wide range of topics, such as the role of the piano in Viennese society during the

J. Davies and J. W. Sobaskie (eds.), *Drama in the Music of Franz Schubert* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2019), pp. 233–56; C. Rosen, 'Schubert's Inflections of Classical Form', in C. H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 72–98.

[3] See, for example, W. Deutsch and W. Litschauer, *Schubert und das Tanzvergnügen* (Wien: Holzhausen, 1997); M. Chusid, *Schubert's Dances: For Family, Friends, and Posterity* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2013).

[4] See E. N. McKay, *The Impact of the New Pianofortes on Classical Keyboard Style: Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert* (West Hagley: Lynwood Music, 1987); D. Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance: Compositional Ideas, Notational Intent, Historical Realities, Pedagogical Foundation* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2003). On eighteenth- and nineteenth-century piano-making, see, for example, M. Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music and the Pianos of His Time', *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 22 (1980), pp. 263–71; S. Pollens, *A History of Stringed Keyboard Instruments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); E. Badura-Skoda, *The Eighteenth-Century Fortepiano Grand and Its Patrons: From Scarlatti to Beethoven* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017); M. N. Clinkscale, *Makers of the Piano: 1700–1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); D. Carew, *The Mechanical Muse: The Piano, Pianism and Piano Music, c.1760–1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); B. Darmstädter, A. Huber and R. Hopfner (eds.), *Das Wiener Klavier bis 1850* (Tutzing: Schneider, 2007).

Biedermeier period and in the broader musical life of the early nineteenth century; the instrument's meaning for Schubert and his contemporaries; its role in Schubert's compositional and creative process; aspects of organology and performance practice (such as the sound of instruments, playing techniques and developments in piano-making); audience reception; and Schubert's own piano-playing as soloist, a partner in duets, an accompanist and an improvisor, and how these roles fed into his compositional style. These are placed alongside ideas surrounding Schubert's sound-world and his use of musical imagery, reflecting his adoption of contemporary aesthetic themes such as 'the Gothic' or 'the brilliant'. By covering the range of genres for which Schubert employed the piano, *Schubert's Piano* offers new insight into the overlap and exchange between his writing for solo piano, Lieder and chamber music, leading to a deeper understanding of the fluid exchange between instruments, composition, performance, reception and contextualisation.

The fifteen essays in this collection are divided into four parts, focusing on different aspects of Schubert's engagement with the piano. Part I considers the piano in Schubert's world and opens with two chapters on Schubert as a pianist. Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl begins, in Chapter 1, by exploring Schubert's relationship with the instrument throughout his career, highlighting that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he was a competent but not a virtuoso performer, turning instead to the instrument primarily for composition, and in performance in the more private confines of Schubertiads as a song accompanist, for dances or as one of the players in pieces for piano four hands. Using contemporary documents, she investigates Schubert's performances at the piano to re-evaluate his piano playing. Following directly on from this, Lorraine Byrne Bodley, in Chapter 2, considers a different aspect of piano performance by tackling the previously overlooked topic of Schubert's improvisations at the piano, placing them in the broader context of his education with Antonio Salieri. By assessing how Schubert's skill as an improvisor developed over his career and the ways in which he put improvisation into practice, the chapter reveals not only a different side to Schubert as a performer but also new details about Schubert's 'improvisatory' compositional technique. In Chapter 3, Andreas Dorschel turns to Lieder by examining and comparing the texts *An mein Klavier* (D342) and *Laura am Klavier* (D388), which take the piano as their theme and both of which Schubert chose to set in 1816. In placing the texts in the broader context of aesthetics in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, while also making reference to instrument construction, development and sound, the chapter reveals some of the

notions associated with the term *Klavier* around 1800 and Schubert's interpretation of them. Chapter 4 closes Part I of the book with a survey by Thomas Christensen of Schubert's music for piano four hands. Like his Lieder and music for solo piano, this repertoire spanned his entire career. The chapter circles back to the thread of Schubert as a pianist found in the first two chapters, by emphasising his interest in this genre as a congenial form of music-making among friends – he did not have to perform as a soloist, but as one part of a duo at the keyboard. The chapter, however, also demonstrates how music for piano four hands acted as a conveyer of chamber and orchestral music through published transcriptions for performance by amateur and professional musicians alike, which was important for the public reception of Schubert's oeuvre following his early death.

Part II of the book shifts the focus to instruments and performance practices. Matthew Gardner begins, in Chapter 5, with a survey of the instruments available to Schubert and how the differences in construction, sound, touch, playing technique and pedal effects relate to his compositional output. Using the limited documentary evidence that survives, the chapter also re-evaluates what is known about Schubert's preferences for particular makers and styles of instrument. In Chapter 6, David Rowland tackles a tricky issue of performance practice in Schubert's music – the simultaneous execution of triplets and dotted rhythms. Using a wider range of sources than have hitherto been considered, including contemporary treatises and musical sources (and its engraving practices) relating not only to Schubert's works but also to those of his contemporaries, the chapter contextualises the issue within the broader scope of notation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, providing some new conclusions about the relationship between sources, notation and performance. In Chapter 7, which closes Part II, Mario Aschauer considers to what extent pianoforte treatises from Vienna and further afield reflect Schubert's pianistic audience in Vienna, presenting new findings about what the Viennese 'taste' for piano music might have been, how Schubert engaged with this in composition and how it related to Viennese performance practices in the early nineteenth century.

Part III of the book looks in more detail at how Schubert engages with the sound of the piano, especially through his development and use of musical imagery. Laura Tunbridge begins, in Chapter 8 on Lieder, by focusing on two of the twenty-eight ballads that Schubert set to music ('Die Nonne' and 'Edward') and comparing the latter with Carl Loewe's setting of the same text. In so doing, she highlights the approaches taken by

Schubert in setting contrasting poetic images to music in addition to the significance of the piano in guiding a listener's imagination. In Chapter 9, Marjorie Hirsch offers a broader analysis of musical imagery within Schubert's Lieder, demonstrating the ways in which the development of the piano is closely tied to Schubert's expansive cultivation of the Lied. Using select examples drawn from across his career, the chapter considers how Schubert exploits the new expressive capabilities of the piano to create musical imagery. Chapter 10 considers Schubert's sound-world and musical imagery from the specific perspective of death and the Gothic. Joe Davies explores Schubert's engagement with these themes across genres involving the piano, considering funereal elements, textural sparsity and voices from the past in pieces such as the *Grande marche funèbre* in C Minor for piano four hands (D859), the Impromptu in C Minor (D899), and the Fantasy in F Minor for piano four hands (D940), placing them in the context of the Gothic in literary and visual arts. Part III closes with Chapter 11 by Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen, which turns again to the sound of the piano itself and considers how the new sonorities of instruments in early nineteenth-century Vienna were explored. By using the *una corda* effect as a case study, this chapter compares the evidence of its application in select pieces by Beethoven, Schubert and Mendelssohn to demonstrate its use as a structural device or as a refinement to the mood of a piece.

Part IV revolves around the ways in which Schubert wrote for the piano and provides four chapters that suggest how his writing for the instrument might be understood from different perspectives. The *style brillant* flourished between 1820 and 1830 and Schubert assimilated it into his virtuoso chamber music. As Christine Martin shows in Chapter 12, the Fantasy in C Major (D934) and the Variations in E Minor on 'Trockne Blumen' (D802) provide good examples of how Schubert integrated the *style brillant* into works where the piano functions as an equal partner with the solo instruments, while also taking into account the application of ornamented variation techniques. Variation technique is also the topic of Chapter 13, by Anne Hyland, which uses a close analytical reading of the drafts and final versions of Schubert's last piano sonatas to better understand his approach to variation techniques as a particular form of thematic development. Schubert's dance movements have received little serious attention in previous research, perhaps because of their brevity and their original use as pieces to be danced to in Viennese drawing rooms rather than for concert performance. Yet Schubert's voluminous output in the genre reveals some details about his writing for the piano. Chapter 14, by James William

Sobaskie, uses examples drawn from the *Originaltänze*, *Valses sentimentales*, *Valses nobles* and the *Zwanzig Walzer* to exemplify the ways in which Schubert's writing for this genre conveys impressions of physicality and flow, perceptions of distance and disturbance, as well as aspects of sonority and spatiality. The book closes with Chapter 15 on how Schubert's writing for the piano was understood after his death through the eyes of one of his admirers, Franz Liszt. Andrea Wiesli shows how Liszt received Schubert's music, both through the careful editing of his works and the adaptation of his music for the pianos of the late 1830s and 1840s, while also considering the impact of the new genre of song transcription.

Reconsidering Schubert's music for the piano in terms of performance practice and improvisation, the specific sound of period instruments and the contemporary aesthetics of style, formal design and musical expression, *Schubert's Piano* aims to increase awareness of Schubert's multifaceted oeuvre dedicated to his preferred instrument, the piano.

PART I

The Piano in Schubert's World

1 Franz Schubert as a Pianist

ANDREA LINDMAYR-BRANDL

'Like Mozart in the 1780s, Beethoven is the shining meteor among Vienna's piano players in the 1790s.'[1] Thus Eduard Hanslick wrote in his still valuable history of the concert scene in Vienna, published in 1869. These two leading musicians of the Viennese Classical period were in the public limelight at least as much as pianists as for their compositions. The bulk of the repertoire they performed consisted of their own piano works, and their fame as virtuosos also enhanced their reputation as composers. In the second section of the same book, covering the period 1800–30 and promisingly subtitled 'Epoche: Beethoven – Schubert', Hanslick again discusses Beethoven the pianist as well as many other local piano players, including those of the younger generation, sometimes adding extensive biographies.[2] Franz Schubert is, however, not among them. He is treated only at the very end of this section as a composer unrecognised in his day, one who, at the time of publication (1869), still awaited a 'general and fair assessment'.[3] Schubert as a pianist was clearly beneath Hanslick's notice. This chapter aims to uncover the reasons why Schubert was unable to follow in the footsteps of his forebears Mozart and Beethoven, who made names for themselves not only as composers but also as pianists in Vienna's concert life. Did he have pianistic shortcomings or perhaps a lack of proficiency altogether? Or did he simply choose not to pursue this career path? What consequences did this have for his status as a creative young musician?

Before continuing, the fundamental problems of research into Schubert's life, which are particularly relevant to the issues at hand, need to be addressed. The source material that forms the basis of his biography is extremely incoherent and of varying reliability. The most trustworthy documents from Schubert's lifetime are concert programmes, reviews, publishers' announcements and personal records such as diary entries,

[1] E. Hanslick, *Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1869), p. 127; there, it reads 'das [*sic*] glänzende Meteor'.
[2] Ibid., pp. 208–27. [3] Ibid., pp. 283–5, especially p. 285.

family chronicles and letters between family members and friends.[4] Even though the latter sources are highly subjective, they record direct experiences. Schubert's life was too short, however, and his travels, which would have offered opportunities for writing letters, are too limited to provide sufficient material from which valid personality traits and biographical details might be derived.

For this reason, scholars are forced to draw on the many problematic sources that Otto Erich Deutsch collected and published in 1957 under the title *Erinnerungen seiner Freunde*, followed in 1958 by an English translation under the title *Memoirs by His Friends*.[5] Deutsch, who had previously published a volume of documents on Schubert's life and work, was very much aware that this was source material of a special kind and therefore commented on it extensively. The numerous documents in his collection mainly date from the second half of the nineteenth century and comprise obituaries, biographical and personal notes, anecdotes and memoirs, as well as correspondence and notes on Schubert's works. Each of these groups of sources has its own set of problems. While the obituaries were written at a time close to Schubert's life and deal particularly with his personality, they may only present the recently deceased in the best light, according to the adage 'De mortuis nil nisi bene'. There was a similarly dangerous tendency towards glorification with regard to his afterlife as a composer.

A different problem arises with the biographical material collected in the late 1850s by Ferdinand Luib (1811–77), mainly for an unrealised Schubert biography.[6] Luib, a civil servant who also served as a music journalist and editor of the *Wiener Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, sent questionnaires to Schubert's by then elderly friends and acquaintances, asking them to remember events from their youth, events then more than thirty years old. These reports, some of them extensive, are suspected of being clouded by a simplifying memory. In addition, over the years their memories may have developed lives of their own through multiple retelling and transformed into 'stories' or anecdotes. Finally, it should also be considered that particularly committed friends deliberately (or unconsciously) wanted to

[4] *Documentary Biography*. For the printed documents, see also T. G. Waidelich (ed.), *Franz Schubert: Dokumente, 1817–1830* (Tutzing: Schneider, 1993); E. Hilmar (ed.), *Franz Schubert: Dokumente, 1801–1830* (Tutzing: Schneider, 2003).

[5] *Memoirs*.

[6] A. Rausch, 'Luib, Ferdinand', *Oesterreichisches Musiklexikon online*, www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_L/Luib_Ferdinand.xml, accessed 9 December 2020.

use their answers to reinforce or even 'correct' the Schubert image common at the time.

In order to address these problems, a critical approach to the sources will be taken throughout the following discussion and the knowledge gained from them placed in its broader context – knowledge whose validity can only be perceived when the documents are considered en bloc. Despite these caveats, no biographer of Schubert can avoid using this material. Without the memoirs of Schubert's friends, our image of the composer would be hazier and his biography much more meagre.

Music Education: A Mozart Prodigy at the Piano?

Even though Luib himself never made use of the answers to his questionnaires, they largely formed the basis of the first detailed biography of Schubert in book form, published in 1865. Luib left his material to the music writer Heinrich Kreissle von Hellborn, who shaped the image of Schubert in the nineteenth century.[7] As usual in biographies of that time, the author begins with the family background of his hero. It seems significant that the same paragraph that states Schubert's birth and describes his closest family relations also mentions the piano. Kreissle proves the boy's musical inclination with a story according to which a travelling carpenter often took little Franz to a piano workshop: 'Franz went through his first exercises without any guidance on the instruments there and on the worn-out piano in his parents' house, and when he later received music lessons as a seven-year-old boy, it soon turned out that he had already acquired what the teacher wanted to teach him.'[8] This report is said to come directly from Schubert's sister Therese Schneider (1801–78), who, being his junior, was certainly unable to remember it personally and must have drawn on narrations that circulated within the family. What at first appears to be a rather dubious story – why would any travelling carpenter take the boy to a piano maker? – could be clarified and to some degree substantiated by Rita Steblin.[9] This travelling carpenter was a relative named Johann Gottfried Schubert, who is documented in Töplitz in 1807 and later went

[7] H. Kreissle von Hellborn, *Franz Schubert* (Vienna: Carl Gerold's Sohn, 1865; reprint New York: Georg Olms, 1978). In fact, Kreissle (1822–69) published a sketchy initial biography of Schubert as early as 1861, written without any knowledge of Luib's material.

[8] Ibid., p. 4.

[9] R. Steblin, 'Unbekannte Dokumente über Schubert und die Klavierwerkstatt von Conrad Graf in Währing', *Schubert durch die Brille*, 12 (1994), pp. 49–53.