Interpretation and Performance:

An Investigation into Franz Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major D959

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Abstract

The investigation is based on the understanding of the role of the performer as narrator in the performance of early nineteenth-century piano music in general and Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, in particular. In addition to considering aspects of the musical and cultural context as well as piano construction in Schubert's own time, this dissertation highlights and examines two general areas. The first area contains three central themes – tempo, articulation and dynamics. The second area will shed light on a 'paradigm shift' between what Lawrence Zbikowski termed 'static form' and 'dynamic form'. The traditional sonata-form represents the 'static form' which consists of balanced structure built from regular sub-units with clear harmonic connections between each other. The 'dynamic form' was conceived as 'form as process' where the emphasis was given to a performer in defining the musical structure throughout a piece. This creative role of a performer in giving shape to music suggests the idea of narration and Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, particularly in the first and second movements, presents an interesting example for musical narration in early Romantic music.

There appears to be no consensus as to a 'stylistically correct' rendition of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, and it possesses some unique musical features which invite performers and researchers to conduct an investigation of the sonata. Hence, a consequence of this investigation would be a deeper understanding and awareness of the problems of interpretation in this work as well as the unique characteristics of the sonata.

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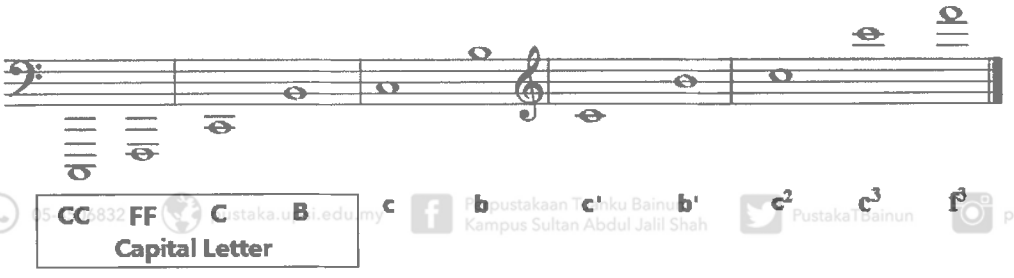
Last but not least, my sincerest thanks for the warm support and guidance given by my beloved parents and my family members. Without all of you, I would not be able to study that for which I have the greatest affection – Music!

Note on the Musical Examples and Identification of Pitch

This dissertation has included musical examples throughout, which have been taken from the *Neue Schubert Ausgabe* (New Complete Edition of Schubert Works) published by Bärenreiter-Verlag (Kassel). Editorial policy in the examples has been to interfere as little as possible.

Throughout this dissertation, note pitches are described as using the system below:



Chapter 1: Introduction

> *It isn't fair. The closer we get to old music, the more it seems to elude us. The more we strive to get it right, the more we seem to distort it.*[1]

This quotation could be regarded as a warning to musicians who attempt to re-create a performance of a work as originally conceived by the composer. Interestingly, Howard Mayer Brown writes that 'most of the performances of early music before the late nineteenth century were probably quite un-selfconscious about authenticity'. He suggested:

> Either the older music had never been dropped from the active repertory and was therefore performed in the same manner as any other music (presumably the case with sacred vocal music), or else concerts were designed to introduce audiences to unfamiliar music or unfamiliar sonorities, and once the primary aim was satisfied the necessary adjustments were made to ensure the success of the enterprise, without any finicky regard for authentic details.[2]

Brown points out the different approaches of the performers before the late nineteenth century where they had more flexibility in performing the repertoires of the past and rarely questioned the issue of 'authentic' performance. However, the publication of Arnold Dolmetsch's work[3] was considered as one of the stepping stones in the growth of interest in the historical performance movement. In exploring the music of past centuries, Dolmetsch focused on written sources such as pedagogical or teaching treatises,

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[1] Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 353.
[2] Howard Mayer Brown, 'Pedantry or Liberation? A Sketch of the Historical Performance Movement', in Nicholas Kenyon (ed.), *Authenticity and Early Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 34.
[3] Arnold Dolmetsch, *The Interpretation of Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Novello and Company, 1915).

descriptive accounts of performers and performances as well as the revival of old instruments such as harpsichord. This approach has provided a good way for performers to expand their understanding and gain a fresh interpretation of a piece. Nicholas Kenyon states that 'the search for original methods and styles of performance has brought about a sea-change in our listening habits, and indeed in our approach to the whole question of repertory and tradition in classical music'.[4] As musicologists tried to identify and explain 'the whole question of repertory and tradition in classical music', it seems that more ambiguous issues and unanswered questions were raised, in particular the repertoires in which there are very few specific sources or almost no continuous performance tradition to which a performer could refer in order to realise notation in actual sound. For instance, in the construction of performance guidelines applicable to Franz Schubert's music, 'source data relating directly to Schubert performance in the composer's lifetime is relatively scarce; much has thus been made of wider contemporary treatises'.[5] David Montgomery has suggested several possible reasons for this:

> The pedagogical sources of Schubert's day reveal nothing about his own thinking, for he made no impact upon the theoretical world. With an actual publishing life of less than ten years (beginning with *Erlafsee*, D586, January 1818), and an influential publishing life of merely seven years (beginning with *Erlkönig*, D328, 1821), Schubert could not hope that his music would be included in the fashionable composition primers of the time. He had neither Beethoven's talent for self-promotion, Hummel's popularity as a performer, nor Carl Czerny's reputation as a teacher, and therefore he was excluded from the performance tutors as well. After his death, publishers neglected his instrumental music for about a decade, only after which some of the major works

[4] Nicholas Kenyon, 'Authenticity and Early Music: Some Issues and Questions', in Nicholas Kenyon (ed.), *Authenticity and Early Music*, 1.
[5] Ian Pace, 'Instrumental performance in the nineteenth century', in Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 646-648.

> began to appear; but by this time the generation of Hummel was also gone and Czerny was active mostly as a teacher to a new generation. Czerny's pupils, among them Liszt, Thalberg, Heller and Kullak, were fast creating new approaches to performance, not to mention the impact of Chopin, Hiller Moscheles and Clara Wieck-Schumann.[6]

The invention of new approaches to performance by Liszt and his contemporaries contributed to the further ignorance of Schubert's instrumental music in both the early nineteenth-century performance manuals[7] and in Viennese concert life. Their emphasis on musical virtuosity successfully attracted huge attention from the public in Vienna.[8] Consequently, Schubert's works, in particular his piano sonatas, were frequently treated somewhat indifferently (compared, for example, with Beethoven's piano sonatas). This is suggested by William Kinderman in his article on Schubert's piano music:

> Several factors contributed to their neglect: the fact that much of this music remained unpublished during Schubert's lifetime; the dominance, in these works, of musical expression over technical virtuosity; and the overpowering influence of Beethoven, whose works set standards that are not directly applicable to Schubert.[9]

[6] David Montgomery, 'Modern Schubert Interpretation in the Light of the Pedagogical Sources of His Day', *Early Music*, 25 (1997), 104.

[7] 'Although we know much about the instruments and ensembles of his day, that information is not specific to Schubert. And of the hundreds of performance tutors published during or since Schubert's time, few even mention his name.' David Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance: a brief history of people, events, and issues', in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 270.

[8] 'Like Rossini, Paganini dazzled his audiences with incredible feats of technique, musical effects, and highly ornamented versions of popular and national tunes. He heightened the effect by playing the role of a diabolical, supernatural, and inspired performer. For his efforts, his receipts were tremendous. Still financially comfortable, if to a lesser degree, were Vienna's own piano virtuosi, such as Johann Hummel, Carl Czerny, Ignaz Moscheles, and Sigismond Thalberg, whose music dominated Vienna's concert programs, private *musicales*, and musical publications.' Alice M. Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 188.

[9] William Kinderman, 'Schubert's Piano Music: Probing the Human Condition', in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 155.

Particularly in some earlier literature, Schubert's piano sonatas have been criticised as using forms and structures which were constructed in an unusual way.[10] Despite the fact that 'the efficiency and success of Beethoven's forms provided an inescapable critical model for more than a century to come',[11] it is clear that taking Beethoven's works as models for Schubert's works can lead to a misconception of the uniqueness of Schubert's music.[12] The innovative approach of Schubert in the construction of musical structure was discussed by Robert Schumann (1810-1856) in his article on Schubert's Symphony No. 9:

> Let me state at the outset: he who doesn't know this symphony knows little of Schubert. In view of what the world has already received from him this may seem hardly credible praise. It is so often said, and to the considerable annoyance of composers, that 'after Beethoven one should forgo symphonic ambitions', and it is true that most of those who have disregarded this advice have produced only lifeless mirrorings of Beethovenesque idioms, not to mention those sorry, dull symphonists who have managed a tolerable suggestion of the powdered wigs of Haydn and Mozart but not their heads. One may make an exception for single important orchestral works, but they have been more interesting for the light they have had on the development of their composers than for any influence they have had on the public or on the evolution of the symphony … I had suspected and hoped – and probably many others, too – that Schubert, who had shown such a sure

[10] 'Complaints of an alleged looseness of organization in Schubert's music, as expressed by critics like Theodor W. Adorno, who once described Schubert's thematic structure as a "pot-pourri", have often arisen from an inadequate understanding of the aesthetic idiom of these works.' William Kinderman, 'Schubert's Piano Music: Probing the Human Condition', in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 155.

[11] Charles Rosen, 'Schubert and the Example of Mozart', in Brian Newbould (ed.), *Schubert the Progressive*: *History*, *Performance Practice*, *Analysis* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 15.

[12] 'In Beethoven's music we never lose our bearings, we always know where we are; Schubert, on the other hand, puts us into a dream. Beethoven composes like an architect, Schubert like a sleepwalker. This is not to say, of course, that Schubert's craftsmanship is shoddy, or that Beethoven's music remains prosaic: I mean that the attitudes of the two masters to the problems of composition were different by nature.' Alfred Brendel, *Alfred Brendel on Music*: *Collected Essays* (London: JR Books, 2007), 45-46.

> sense of structure, such invention and such versatility in so many other forms, would also tackle the symphony from the flank and find the spot from which he could get at both it and the public.[13]

This article was considered as one of the earliest attempts in recognising the uniqueness of Schubert's instrumental works.[14] While Beethoven concentrated more on the unity of the whole work, for example, by utilising a tiny motif in his Fifth Symphony, Schubert was more concerned with presenting ideas as spacious continuous lines. His expansive thinking challenges traditional structure; the soliloquy-like quality of his music runs against the formal pillars of traditional classical sonata-form; his ability (in the Lied) to suddenly change the focus of attention puts musical continuity at risk; and his taste for modulation, in particular the juxtaposition of major and minor key, may blur the identity of sonata-form sections. Such innovative procedures – mainly derived from Schubert's achievement in song – would ultimately be of great importance for the next generation of composers. In recent years, there has been a re-appraisal of Schubert's instrumental works such as piano sonatas because of a new understanding of how Schubert's forms hold these works together.[15] Some of this new understanding does not directly grow out of a traditional classical conception, but rather tries to elucidate how musical narration can be used to highlight Schubert's innovative procedures in expanding the sonata form

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[13] Henry Pleasants (trans. and ed.), *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings* (New York: Dover Publications, 1965), 164.

[14] 'Schumann's criticism marked an interpretive high point in Schubert's reception. He recognized, valued, and extolled Schubert's genius as had no other critic to date; he repeatedly paired him with Beethoven and asserted that his music initiated a new era of Romanticism. Moreover, his criticism probed keyboard and instrumental music, not Lieder, which mostly go unmentioned.' Christopher H. Gibbs, 'German reception: Schubert's "journey to immortality" ', in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 247.

[15] 'In particular, the late works of Beethoven and Schubert manifest an increasing concern for gestural configuration and its structural role in thematic development and emerging form.' Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 121.

as well as loosening the harmonic and structural elements of traditional form. The central concern of this dissertation is to show how a performer might engage with the construction of narrative experiences in and through the performance of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959.

In his book *Nineteenth-Century Music*, Carl Dahlhaus presents a distinct picture of the early nineteenth-century virtuoso performance tradition when he described the rhetorical role of a performer within the fantasy genre:

> In contrast [to sets of Variations as well as Rondo form], the fantasy, based on a late-eighteenth-century prototype from the *Sturm und Drang*, was dominated by expressive rhetorical gestures, played with a subjective verve that swept over the cracks and fissures inherent in rhapsodic form … However, in historical context, the fact that the fantasy took on sonata-form traits, and that virtuoso pianism served as a vehicle of "large-scale form", was in turn part of a larger process that ultimately caused the virtuoso principle to be supplanted by the interpretation of works.[16]

Dahlhaus discusses the ambiguous role of the pianist between 'interpreting' and 'performing' large-scale piano works. 'Works to be interpreted' require an intimate understanding of the composer's intention and conception and allow for a direct sense of involvement between the listener and the work itself. 'Works to be performed' present the performer as a kind of conduit between listener and the music, and the performance mechanism itself becomes the focus of interest. It seems that the same perspective on the difference between 'works to be interpreted' and 'works to be performed' was suggested by Peter Walls:

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[16] Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 137.

> Thinking about the ambiguity of the term 'interpret' is quite a useful way of distinguishing between performances which are true to the music being performed and those in which something else (showmanship, for instance) gets in the way. We could, in fact, call the first kind of performance 'interpretation' (anchoring that word to its primary meaning) and the second kind 'appropriation' (since the musical work has, in a sense, become a vehicle for the performer's personal agenda).[17]

The idea of separation between 'interpreting' and 'performing' musical works was observed by Jim Samson, where 'from an intimately related, if not fused, pair in the eighteenth century, performance and text separated out through the nineteenth century and had been well and truly split apart by the early twentieth'.[18] This is due to the significant change in the status of a musical score during the nineteenth century, where 'the score began to represent the composer's authoritative text, the continuum that existed between the score and performances in earlier eras started to break down such that the notated music could now be understood to embody an autonomous musical artwork'.[19]

With regard to 'the composer's authoritative text', it seems that, in a musical work, composers generally set up boundaries such as notational details in order to preserve the work and provide guidelines for performers. Despite an increasing accuracy in the musical notation,[20] many problems remained as composers were unable to indicate all the

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[17] Peter Walls, 'Historical performance and the modern performer', in John Rink (ed.), *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 17-18.
[18] Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 67.
[19] Mine Doğantan-Dack, 'Phrasing – the Very Life of Music: Performing the Music and Nineteenth-Century Performance Theory', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 9 (2012), 8.
[20] 'The history of musical notation can be roughly generalized as the history of increasing precision.' Bruce Ellis Benson, *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 108.

subtleties of actual sounds that they intended.[21] For example, a performer might question the vague instructions by the dynamic and tempo markings[22] given in a score: what is the exact loudness implied by a *forte* or softness implied by a *piano*? Is there a different approach on executing a *forte* marking in a work between, say, Beethoven and Schubert? How fast is an *Allegro* and how slow is an *Adagio*? All these inquiries seem to reflect the allusive quality in a musical notation 'offering the performer hints alongside the instructions, and therefore depending on the musician's ability to understand these hints and allusions'.[23] That is to say, the 'hints and allusions' or the instructions given in musical notation subsequently provide an opportunity for a performer to consider the additional interpretative qualities of musical notation that arise in performance, and performers are subsequently considered as being integrally involved in the creative process. This creative role of performers in the rendition of a composer's work reflects the shift of emphasis in recent musicology, where the focus has been expanded from the musical text to the performer. Great attention has been given to the temporal character of music and thus perceiving performance as a process rather than as a final product. For example, John Rink states that 'because of music's time dependency, musical structure should be understood first and foremost as a process, not as 'architecture' – especially in relation to performance'.[24]

[21] 'Most easily specified are concrete instructions. Of course, even in terms of designating relatively quantifiable aspects such as tempo, composers often find it difficult to express exactly what they want. What are we to make of Beethoven's instructions from the opening of the *C Major Mass*: "Andante con moto assai vivace quasi allegretto ma non troppo"? How exactly should that *sound*?' Ibid., 81.
[22] Stanley Boorman, 'The Musical Text', in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds.), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 409.
[23] Ibid., 411.
[24] John Rink, 'The (F)utility of Performance Analysis', in Mine Doğantan-Dack (ed.), *Artistic Practice as Research in Music*: *Theory*, *Criticism*, *Practice* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), 129.

The idea of approaching the musical form as a process rather than a defined structure seems applicable to Schubert's instrumental works. Nicholas Cook observed that Janet Schmalfeldt's research on Schubert's piano sonata demonstrates 'how Schubert created the potential for musical processes without fully determining their exact nature: the performer is frequently 'in charge' of the musical process … a co-creator of the music alongside Schubert'.[25] The notion of 'a co-creator of the music alongside Schubert' seems to suggest the role of performer in 'directing the listener's attention (possibly overdidactically) to the structure and significance of events, although not changing or reordering the events themselves'.[26] The uniqueness of Schubert's musical structure in his piano sonatas offers a possibility for a performer to think in creative ways of treating the musical material so as to evoke a musical narrative. For example, a performer might bring out certain musical events that evoke something of significance in the music's shaping. These include how different thematic materials are constructed independently and how these materials relate with each other so as to create gestural energy. Consequently, such gestural energy:

> … can help shape the *expressive genre*, or the dramatic trajectory of a movement or work. Gesturally derived expressive meanings can motivate striking departures from, or manipulations of, typical formal schemes or conventional formal expectations. (These will often be achieved by means of rhetorical gestures.)[27]

[25] Janet Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming: Analytical and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); quoted in Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39.
[26] Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 226.
[27] Ibid., 177.

In other words, a deeper understanding of how musical narration seems to be implied in the rendition of Schubert's last three piano sonatas provides one of the potential interpretative approaches for a performer. As one of his last three piano sonatas, Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959 possesses a succession of intense emotional atmospheres by incorporating some compositional techniques such as 'rhetorical gestures'.[28] Such an approach – possibly derived from his achievements in Lieder – would seem to foreshadow his 'late' style.

1.1 Historical Context of Schubert's Last Three Piano Sonatas

The investigation of the concept of late style in a composer's output by scholars such as Theodor Adorno, Anthony Barone and Martin Cooper,[29] to name three in particular, has thrown new light on the definition of a distinctive compositional style. Their findings clearly indicate that the social environment as well as physical and mental condition influence a composer's work. Scholars like Julian Horton and Joseph Straus were cautious about defining the concept of late style. Horton has differentiated between the term 'late music' and 'last music'.[30] He stated:

[28] 'Rhetorical gestures, marked with respect to an otherwise unmarked musical discourse or flow … include sudden or unpredicted pauses, changes, or shifts.' Ibid., 136.

[29] Theodor W. Adorno, 'Late Style in Beethoven', in Richard Leppert (ed.), *Essays on Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 564-568; Anthony Barone, 'Richard Wagner's "Parsifal" and the Theory of Late Style', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 7 (1995), 37-54; Martin Cooper, *Beethoven: The Last Decade, 1817-1827* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[30] 'The former [late music] concerns the music's state of being, or ontology, and imputes a condition of critical self-reflection, a conscious attitude of leave-taking or a meditation on looming mortality. The latter [last music] is defined in merely chronological terms, encompassing the music a composer writes immediately before his or her death.' Julian Horton, 'Stasis and Continuity in Schubert's String Quintet: Responses to Nathan Martin, Steven Vande Moortele, Scott Burnham and John Koslovsky', *Music Analysis*, 33 (2014), 208-210.

> In brief: not all last music is late music, and not all late music is necessarily last music, because last music is not always critically self-reflective or written in awareness of mortality, nor is music which engages in stylistic self-critique always written at the end of a composer's life.[31]

The same perspective on the clarification between late music and last music was discussed previously by Joseph Straus,[32] who expanded the idea of lateness with disability:

> Late-style works are those that represent nonnormative mental and bodily states. The disabilities of their composers are refracted into a general sense of nonnormative bodily or mental function and inscribed in their music. That inscription then gives rise to the aesthetic category of late style. Both the music and discourse about it thus situate disability at the center of late style.[33]

The 'nonnormative bodily or mental function' seems applicable to Schubert, in particular his physical suffering with syphilis[34] in his last few years of life. Considered as 'an infection for which nineteenth-century medicine failed to produce a cure',[35] Matthew Jones explained:

> Extant rudimentary treatments included salves made with arsenic or mercury. These were often as debilitating as the infection itself. Whereas Beethoven's deafness was, for a time, a condition he could hide, Schubert's syphilis was written on his body: a genital chancre, red papules, a rash and hair loss. Eventually, syphilis progresses to a final stage, attacking the central nervous system. The resulting neurological damage is fatal. Until the mid-twentieth century, people with syphilis had

[31] Ibid., 210.
[32] 'Either way, I would argue that in the end there may be nothing late about late style in the sense of chronological age, the approach of life's end, or authorial or historical belatedness.' Joseph Straus, 'Disability and "Late Style" in Music', *The Journal of Musicology*, 25 (2008), 6.
[33] Ibid., 12.
[34] Barbara Barry, 'A Shouting Silence: Further Thoughts about Schubert's "Unfinished", *The Musical Times*, 151 (2010), 41-43.
[35] Matthew J. Jones, 'New Perspectives on Music, Disability and Illness', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 139 (2014), 424.

> little choice but to live with or accommodate its disfiguring physical symptoms and the attendant social stigma.[36]

Such physical suffering with syphilis also seems to have contributed to the dual personality which was discussed by Barbara Barry:

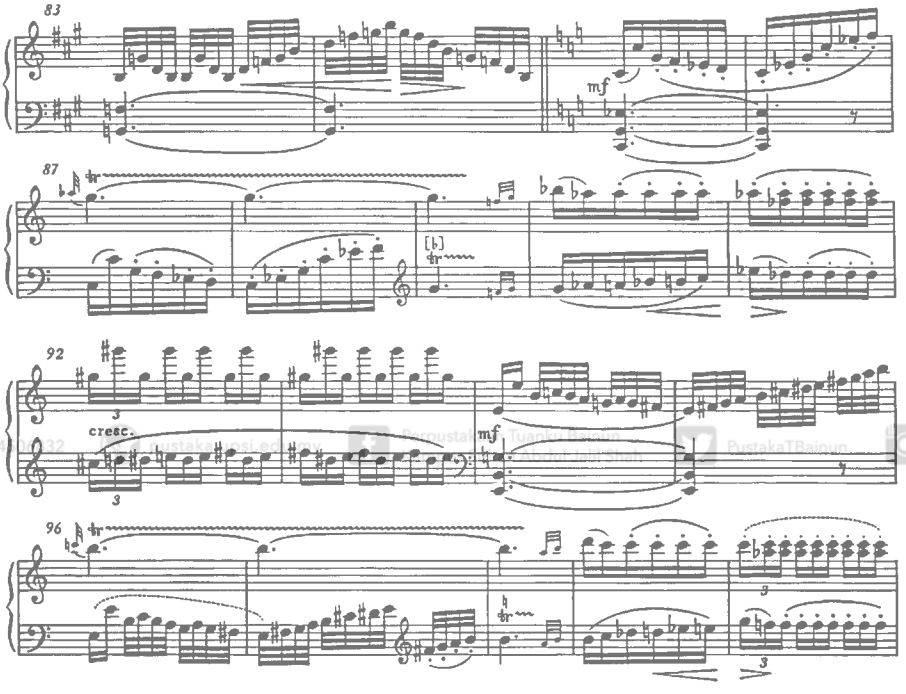
> The initial period of the disease [syphilis], from autumn 1822 to spring 1823, accordingly marks a forking in the road – for his health, which would become threatened in spite of periods of temporary well-being; for his personality, which would be affected by the mood swings that would intensify over the next five years, together with a sense of alienation and loneliness; and, inevitably, to some degree, for his music … One side of his personality was friendly, loyal, dedicated to composing every morning; the other, darker side was characterised by uncontrolled or self-destructive behaviour including outbursts of irritability, heavy drinking and promiscuity. These outbursts were not limited to bursts of anger against friends and publishers. They also appear in his music as sudden flare-ups of unexpected rupture and violence, like the shocking disruptions in the slow movements of the A major sonata D.959.[37]

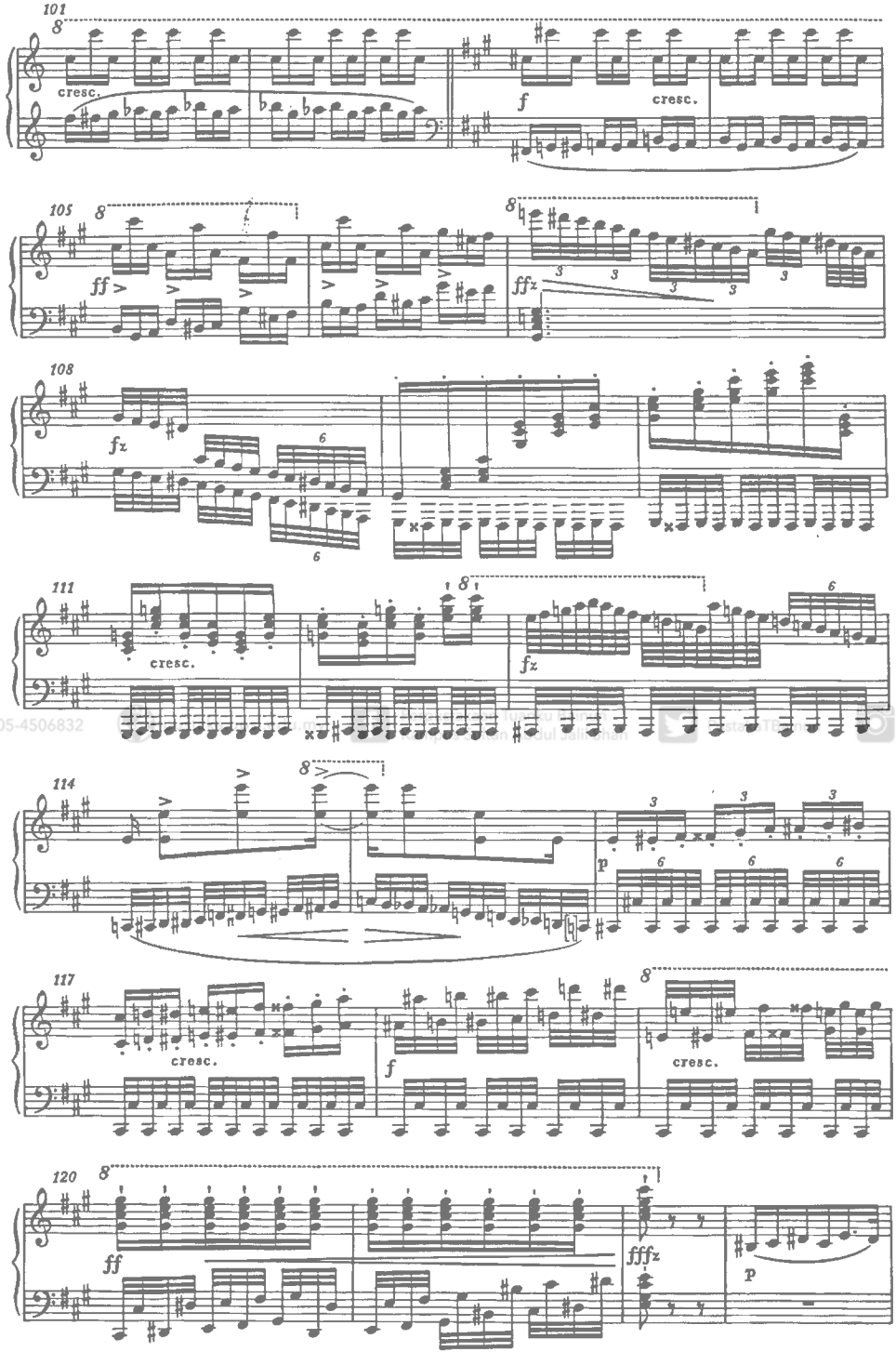
Barry points out the relationship between the characteristics of the music ('shocking disruptions in the slow movements') to a particular aspect of Schubert's personality ('uncontrolled or self-destructive behaviour'). This duality of character also gradually became a noticeable feature of Schubert's compositional style in his later instrumental works such as the String Quintet, D956, with its dramatic F minor middle section which was contrasted with the calmness in the outer section; the 'Unfinished' symphony which consists of the unexpected explosion in both movements during the secondary theme; and last, but not least, the shocking intrusion during the middle section of the second

[36] Ibid., 424.
[37] Barry, 'A shouting silence', 42-43.

movement of D959. With such contextual awareness, however necessary, it is still a challenge for a performer to deliver a coherent rendition of these late works, in particular the 'chromatic disruption' in the middle section of the second movement of D959 (Example 1.1).

Example 1.1: Schubert, Sonata in A Major, D959, second movement, bars 83-123





It presents not only the challenge of 'giving the music a sense of shape in time',[38] but also the balance in expressing the duality between external ('uncontrolled or self-destructive') and internal (inward or sorrowful) experience. It was also regarded as one of the most extreme musical experiences which Schubert composed during the *Biedermeier* period.

The *Biedermeier* period took place between the Congress of Vienna (1815) and the revolutions in Europe of 1848. Schubert, along with Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837), John Field (1782-1837), Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) and Louis Spohr (1784-1859), lived during the *Biedermeier* period. Mary Wischusen stated:

> Schubert was a teenager in post-Napoleonic Vienna, when Austrians wanted to put the wars behind them. He witnessed the exuberant days of the Congress of Vienna with its celebrations and gaiety, when so many of the Biedermeier ideals took root. These ideals of serenity, cheerfulness, simplicity, *Gemütlichkeit*, and "unpretentious sociability without politics", were fostered by the rising middle class, of which Schubert was certainly a member.[39]

The rise of middle-class status in the social hierarchy opened up greater opportunities for composers across Europe and enabled them to define their own musical style independent of any aristocracies or patrons. Carl Dahlhaus stated 'to be sure, composers were no longer dependent on patrons whose social and economic position enabled them to exercise an influence on the music'.[40] However, such freedom of expression in arts and other public activities was challenged and restricted by the heavy censorship of Metternich. Janet Schmalfeldt explained:

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[38] John Rink, 'Translating Musical Meaning: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator', in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds.), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 218.
[39] Mary Wischusen, 'Franz Schubert and Viennese Popular Comedy', in Barbara M. Reul and Lorraine Byrne Bodley (eds.), *The Unknown Schubert* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 97.
[40] Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 173.

> By 1815 the Congress of Vienna had marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars and established a German Confederation under Austrian control. But now, as Nicholas Marston puts it, "the repressiveness of Metternich's police state created a heightened sense of separation between public and private spheres of action and expression."[41] In his memoir of 1872, Schubert's friend Eduard von Bauernfeld looks back on life in Vienna in the 1820s and says: "The police in general and censorship in particular weighed on us all like a monkey we could not get off our back."[42] Within this corrupt urban environment, where overcrowding and disease were everywhere and death was a daily event, where your neighbor might turn out to be a spy, home became sacred; it was the one place of refuge, comfort, and privacy, the safe haven where secrets could be shared, and where the piano could accommodate performances of music from the genres that "turn inward."[43]

This natural reaction of turning away from the world of politics into the home might have contributed to another significant feature of the *Biedermeier* Period – the rapid development of music societies 'where secrets could be shared', with members mostly coming from middle-class backgrounds. Fostered by the Industrial Revolution, the dissemination of books and sheet music (for one's own reading and playing pleasure at home) as well as the large production of household instruments, especially pianos, 'created new opportunities for authors and composers, and lent new prestige and popularity to the genres that were best suited to private consumption'.[44] Music societies, such as the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (GdMf, or Society of the Friends of Music),

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[41] Nicholas Marston, 'Schubert's Homecoming', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 125 (2000), 248.
[42] Eduard von Bauernfeld, *Erinnerungen aus Alt Wien* (Vienna, 1923), 371; quoted in Leon Botstein, 'Realism Transformed: Franz Schubert and Vienna', in Christopher H. Gibbs (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 22.
[43] Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, 228-229.
[44] Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music, Volume 3, Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 63.

also served as a good platform for promoting these new genres of works as they frequently organised both private and public concerts. John Gingerich stated:

> No organization was more important to Schubert's career than the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (GdMf) and their two series of concerts, the public "society concerts" in a large hall with large performing forces, which took place four times a year, and the semi-public "evening entertainments" or *Abendunterhaltungen*, in a small hall, which during the 1820s put on between sixteen and twenty chamber concerts a year.[45]

In general, private concerts featured mostly intimate musical works such as piano solos whereas public concerts tended to combine different kinds of programmes such as some movements or scenes from an opera or a symphony, alongside some sentimental or virtuosic solo pieces.[46] Subsequent to this exposure, the demand of these pieces, especially the virtuosic pieces, became another distinctive characteristic of the *Biedermeier Period* – the virtuoso tradition. This was part of a more general musical environment that had moved away from serious high-brow revolutionary compositions (such as those by Beethoven) towards more entertaining programmes including Italian opera by Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) or Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835), virtuosic pieces by violinist Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840) and works by the pianist Franz Liszt (1811-1886).

The idea of some of Schubert's piano works (such as Dances or Moments Musicaux) or Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* being suited to the intimate setting of nineteenth-

[45] John M. Gingerich, *Schubert's Beethoven Project* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 177.
[46] 'The mixed programs of these concerts, cobbled together from symphony movements, opera fragments, and virtuoso or sentimental solo pieces, predominated roughly until mid-century, revealing that education and entertainment had not yet become separate functions.' Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 174.

century drawing rooms is the first challenge to confront in respect to modern concert hall performance, particularly the difficulties in the sound projection which the performer must overcome if this music is to be transferred from the drawing room to the concert hall.[47] However, Schubert's late works often indicate an indifference to *Biedermeier* culture and values. The dramatic middle section of the second movement of D959 shows the extremity in Schubert's musical expression that made him move away from the *Biedermeier* ideals – *Gemütlichkeit*. It also possess another kind of challenge in which a performer needs to find a balance in expressing the different personalities between external ('uncontrolled or self-destructive') and internal (inward or sorrowful) experience. One of the possible solutions in preserving both extreme personalities of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D959, and project within a wide open concert space is to investigate the physical characteristics of pianos that were available during Schubert's time. Despite the fact that a modern concert grand piano is better suited to large venues, it is still possible for interpreters to discover certain characteristics of the sounds without compromising the modern concert grand piano's ability to project and thus give an illusion for audiences to feel the different musical expressions (internal and external experience) of the piece.

[47] 'Even in our own century, music critics, particularly the serious ones, have paradoxically demanded of lied singers or pianists playing before audiences numbering in the hundreds, or even thousands, that they convey the aesthetic impression of performing in intimate private surroundings.' Ibid., 171.