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LIED: FROM HAUSMUSIK TO FILM On the example of Franz Schubert's *Winterreise***

Abstract: The inspiration to write this article came from a personal experience. A few years ago, I bought a successful visualization of Franz Schubert's *Lieder* cycle *Winterreise*, issued on DVD. This affected me in two ways: first, I began to develop a strong interest in this kind of approach, to a basically non-dramatic work (and continued my search for similar DVD products) and secondly, as a result of *watching* Schubert's *Lieder*, I almost stopped enjoying *Winterreise* in the usual way – by only *listening* to it. This acceptance of a newly invented, different mode of *Lieder* presentation made me wonder about the reasons that inspire various artists to enrich *Winterreise* with new layers and to supplement it with a scenic dimension. I was in the position to analyze the achievements of such artists (in the third part of this article) only after I had examined the attitude towards the performance of *Lieder* in Schubert's time (in the first part) and his own contribution to the disclosure of *Winterreise*'s dramatic potentialities (in the second part).

Key words: Franz Schubert, *Lied*, *Winterreise*, performing practice, *Gesamtkunstwerk*

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Franz Schubert left only a few clues regarding his aesthetic principles.¹ I must add, for the purpose of this paper, that he left only a few clues about his attitude towards the nature, the aesthetics and the performance of the *Lied*, as well. That is why we rely on the memories of Schubert's contemporaries, hoping to find something in them that will help us to understand Schubert's reasoning, acting and practice. One of such informative and potentially helpful testimonies is Leopold Edler von Sonnleithner's:

"[More than a hundred times] I heard him accompany and rehearse his songs. Above all, he always kept the most strict and even time, except in the few cases where he had expressly indicated in writing a *ritardando*, *morendo*, *accelerando*, etc. Furthermore he never allowed violent expression in performance. The *Lied* singer, as a rule, only relates the experiences and feelings of others; he does not himself impersonate the characters whose feelings he describes. [...] With Schubert especially, the true expression, the deepest feeling is already inherent in the melody as such, and is admirably enhanced by the accompaniment. Everything that hinders the flow of the melody and disturbs the evenly flowing accompaniment is, therefore, exactly contrary to the composer's intention and destroys the musical effect".²

With these words (written in 1857–58) Sonnleithner described Franz Schubert's expectations concerning the expressive and interpretative standards that ought to be applied while interpreting his *Lieder*. Sonnleithner in fact implied two important things: first, that in Schubert's time the singer was expected to perform the *Lied* according to some 'rules', and, second, that the expressivity of the *Lied* was primarily provided by the music (melody and accompaniment) and had to be credited to the composer. Sonnleithner's words, however, do not indicate something that later became almost a commonplace in musicology: in the time when Schubert had played (and rehearsed) *Lieder* in his friend's presence, the 'rules' of performance, Sonnleithner was speaking of, were not the same if compared to the previous century, the role of the singer underwent some changes, and the *Lied*, as a genre,³ was transformed.

Issues on the performance of the *Lied*

The eighteenth-century ideal type of the *Lied* was the one governed by poets and accepted by composers. The *Lied* in its "strict sense" meant an unvaried

1 Lawrence Kramer, *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

2 Quoted after: Rey M. Longyear, *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969) 53.

3 By modern *Lied*, I mean a German poem set to music. It dates from the middle of the 1740's. See James Parsons, "Introduction: Why the *Lied*?", in: *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. by James Parsons (Cambridge University Press, 2004) 6.

strophic song,⁴ “which [deliberately] held musical invention to a modest scope”.⁵ Poets preferred this simple form because it implied and mostly ensured the dominance of the text over its musical setting and helped in achieving the ultimate goal of the *Lied* – to make good verses generally known.⁶ Composers themselves were primarily interested in making their songs accessible to consumers and listeners, both accomplished performers and a broad clientele with only a modest musical competence.⁷ Their ultimate goal was to create a song which could bear the mark of the “unsought, the artless, the familiar”.⁸ For poets and composers alike, it was unquestionable where the expressivity of the *Lied* lay (in the text) and who mediated it to the listeners (the performer). In the eighteenth-century the singer was expected to deliver the *words* with the greatest precision and to provide a variety of expression by presenting the changing moods of different strophes to the audience. In a word, the expressive powers of the performer far exceeded those of the composer.⁹

In the first decades of the nineteenth-century, according to Sonnleithner, the situation was quite different: the role of the performer was limited (even diminished), and the composer, like Schubert himself, was not willing to negotiate with the singer over the priority in expressivity. The singer (as well as the piano player) was expected to become a mere vehicle during the *Lieder* performance, to refrain from everything that might endanger or at least overshadow the supreme expression of music,¹⁰ and, instead, to devote him or herself to the one and only

4 Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (University of California Press, 1989) 98.

5 Kristina Muxfeldt, “Schubert songs: the transformation of a genre”, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. by Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge University Press, 1997) 122. In the prefaces to some song collections, we can find several compositional instructions for making good *Lieder*. Composer Johann Abraham Peter Schulz thus urged, in the preface to his *Lieder in Volkston*, a melody whose “progression never rises itself above the course of the text, nor sinks beneath it, and whose declamation and meter cling to the words like a garment to body”, “singable intervals in a range suitable to all voices”, and the simplest possible harmonies. Quoted after: Richard Kramer, *Distant Cycles: Schubert and the Conceiving the Lied* (The University of Chicago Press, 1994) 4–5. Having in mind such compositional principles, some musicologists come to the conclusion that the eighteenth-century composer was deprived “of the two areas in which he could operate most freely and independently: interesting accompaniment and refined harmonic expression” (Ray M. Longyear, *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music*, 50).

6 Richard Kramer, *Distant Cycles: Schubert and the Conceiving the Lied*, 5. Considerable number of Goethe’s poems, for example, first appeared as songs. On Goethe’s *Lied* aesthetics and his ideal of the *Lieder* performer see Jack M. Stein, “Was Goethe wrong about the nineteenth-century Lied? An examination on the relation between poem and music”, *PMLA*, (Vol. 77, No. 3, 1962) 233–234.

7 Richard Kramer, *Distant Cycles: Schubert and the Conceiving the Lied*, 4–5.

8 *Ibid.*, 5.

9 Kristina Muxfeldt, “Schubert songs: the transformation of a genre”, 122.

10 Ray Longyear wrote in his book that Schubert even “refused to add expression marks to the voice parts of his songs”. Ray M. Longyear, *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music*, 50

goal: the proper delivery of the *music*¹¹ and, ultimately, the production of an exclusive 'musical effect'. In contrast with the eighteenth-century *Lieder* performing practice, it was the expressive power of the music and not the skilfulness and expressiveness of the singer that was decisive for the success of the performance. Listeners were already prepared to be captivated by the effect of the music and not by the performance.¹² Such an attitude towards the *Lied* performing practice resembled, in a way, the conservatism of the eighteenth-century poets concerning the *Lied* compositional practice.

Testimonies like the one by Sonnleithner capture something of the new emerging nineteenth-century *Lied* aesthetic. Many musicologists and other scholars who were interested in Schubert's contribution to the genre grounded their analyses on the premises of this aesthetic. Their observations regarding both the music expression and the role of the performer do not differ much from Sonnleithner's.¹³ One of the most influential musicologists, Carl Dahlhaus, made several, still widespread remarks about the status of Schubert's *Lied* (or "the" lied), the compositional means of achieving it and its 'tone'. Dahlhaus argued that Schubert had elevated the *Lied* from the status of an "artless" strophic song (albeit with "noble simplicity"¹⁴) to the new status of a work of art. Schubert had succeeded in this by making the musical structure of the *Lied* (previously the mere vehicle for a poem) a "work" in the strongest sense of the term.¹⁵ As for the lyrical 'tone' that identifies the *Lied* and is the crucial aesthetic postulate of a genre, Dahlhaus concluded that through the *Lied* it was the composer who was speaking – "not as himself but as the 'lyric ego' beyond the grasp of fact-hungry biographers". Dahlhaus did not express his opinion on the role of the performer.

11 In the first biographical obituary following Schubert's death, Leopold Sonnleithner praised opera singer Vogl for his "excellent declamatory delivery of [Schubert's] songs". Cf. Leopold Sonnleithner, "Franz Schubert", in: *The Schubert Reader. A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, ed. by Otto Erich Deutsch (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc, 1947) 857.

12 Many of Schubert's contemporaries testified that singer Johann Michael Vogl and composer (at the piano) were able to bring (both a female and male) audience to tears while performing some of Schubert's *Lieder*. Marie-Agnes Dittrich, "Für Menschenohren sind es Harmonien. Die Lieder", in: *Schubert Handbuch*, ed. by Walther Dür and Andreas Krause (Kassel etc./Bärenreiter and Stuttgart, Weimar/Metzler, 1997) 146–147.

13 Arnold Whittall thus stated that the goal of the nineteenth-century *Lied* composers, including Schubert, was to make the *Lied* "expression itself" rather than a work of art about expression. Arnold Whittall, *Romantic Music. A Concise History from Schubert to Sibelius* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987) 25–26.

14 This quality was attributed to the song by C. P. E. Bach. See Wesley K. Morgan, "Lied", in: *Grove Music Online*, ed. by L. Macy (www.grovemusic.com).

15 His artistic ambitions guided him to avoid not only "servility to the principles of strophic song" but also the dangers of "through-composed 'tone painting'", to a balance between variety and integration in musical structure. In Schubert's song output we find, however, examples of both formal designs, as well as works that emerged from various generic traditions. Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 98–104.

However, having in mind the enlarged role he attributed to the composer, and his statement that the listeners were incidental to the *Lied*, we can assume that, for him, the expressiveness of the singer was far from decisive.¹⁶

The notion that Schubert provided the expressivity of the *Lied* with a compositional design has been challenged lately, especially by scholars who approached the *Lied* more as an example of cultural practice than as a work of art.¹⁷ But even the most influential among them, Lawrence Kramer, agrees with Dahlhaus on something important: that Schubert revolutionized song and elevated it to the status of art, high art, to be more precise.¹⁸ However, if perceived from the perspective of cultural practice, Schubert's *Lieder* appear as more complex phenomena. By questioning the above mentioned notion, Kramer re-actualizes the issue of the role of the performer. He does not negate that for Schubert the singer was a vehicle for sincere expression rather than artistic display,¹⁹ but insists on the performer's importance in the process of evolving the meaning of the *Lied*. Kramer attributes to the singer, the capability to "ratify the character of the lyric ego housed in music or even to supply its identity". The singer had an important role in setting up the interpretative dramaturgy of the *Lied*, which presupposes the expressive dialogue between participants (poet, composer, and performer), "none of whom has automatic priority" over the others and whose intentions may even differ substantially. Such a staged interplay and collaboration of three distinct subjectivities made the performances of Schubert's *Lieder* a kind of "theatre of subjectivity".²⁰ In Schubert's lifetime this new-born theatre of subjectivity took place in the atmosphere and performing conditions characteristic for *Biedermeier*

16 *Ibid.*, 105.

17 See David Gramit, "Lieder, listeners, and ideology. Schubert's 'Alinde' and opus 81", in: *Music/Ideology. Resisting the Aesthetic*, ed. by Adam Krims (Australia, Canada etc.: G+B Arts International, 1998) 179-180.

18 Cf. Lawrence Kramer, *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song*, 3, 9. He even explains that with term *Lied* he refers to the genre "as transformed by Schubert, endowed with the status of a work of art". *Ibid.*, 10.

19 *Ibid.*, 3.

20 *Ibid.*, 5-11.

Vienna.²¹ However, Schubert's *Lieder*, both in their aesthetics and interpretative dramaturgy with new dynamics, deviated from the established compositional, performing standards and social norms. Even his unpretentious, musically the least complex and important *Lieder* played, according to Kramer, a role in the "socio-cultural processes of subject-formation so in ferment" during Schubert's lifetime.²² But in his most complex and powerful *Lieder*, in terms of compositional design, expression and meaning, like the almost testimonial *Winterreise*, Schubert exceeded the boundaries of the exploration of subjectivity, even the damaged one. He discovered new horizons beyond the miserable life in his own society and set new challenges for the performers and listeners, as well.

2. First (informal) performance of *Winterreise*

Bearing in mind Schubert's attitude towards *Lieder* performing practice (mediated to us by his contemporaries), it is difficult to ignore the problems he was facing with during the first performance of *Winterreise* – a "cycle of horrifying songs".²³ With these words Schubert announced the performance of *Winterreise* which took place in the usual environment and for the usual audience, in Franz Schober's house, most probably in autumn 1827, before a circle of friends. Although Schubert's sole task as a singer on that occasion, according to the existing rules, was to deliver his own music (and Wilhelm Müller's verses), he was not capable of "only relating the experiences and feelings" and resisting the temptation to impersonate the character whose feelings he was describing with his performance. As a matter of fact, on that evening he *was* the main character of *Winterreise*,

21 The majority of Schubert's songs were performed at *soirées*, cultural meetings arranged by the music-loving middle class. See: Edward F. Kravitt, "The Lied in 19th-Century Concert Life", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (Vol. 18, No. 2, 1965) 208. Carl Dahlhaus excluded Schubert's music from consideration under the term of *Biedermeier* (aimed to describe the adaptation strategies of the bourgeois circles, associations and institutions in the oppressive political and cultural environment), but nevertheless found it "tempting to view phenomena such as the convivial music-making of the Schubertiades [...] as expressions of the *Biedermeier* period" (Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 169; the opposition between Schubert's *Lieder* and *Biedermeier* spirit of Schubertiades is more stressed in: Carl Dahlhaus, "Romantik und Biedermeier. Zur musikgeschichtlichen Charakteristik der Restaurationszeit", *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* / Vol. 31, No. 1, 1974/ pp. 22–41, 28). In comparison with the *Biedermeier* concept used by Carl Dahlhaus, the one applied by David Gramit for the purpose of describing the prevailing aesthetics shared by the members of the Schubert circle was much broader and more ambitious because it did not exclude the paramount principle of the autonomy of art (David Gramit: "Schubert And The Biedermeier: The Aesthetics Of Johann Mayrhofer's 'Heliopolis'", *Music & Letters* [Vol. 74, No. 3, 1993] pp. 355–382, 365).

22 Lawrence Kramer, Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song, 5.

23 Quoted after Susan Youens, *Retracing a Winter's Journey: Schubert's 'Winterreise'* (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1991) 27.

who already seemed to explore the “mysterious language of some distant empire of spirits” – and was on his own journey to become one of them.²⁴

The mournful, gloomy tone of *Winterreise* songs caused “consternation” in the hearts of Schubert’s friends.²⁵ It is hard to believe that such a state of consternation was provoked only by the performed music. Schubert’s listeners knew very well that his health had seriously deteriorated by that time and also retained fresh memories of him as the torch-bearer at Beethoven’s funeral on March 29th, 1827.²⁶ As the sole performer of *Winterreise* later that year, Schubert might have appeared to his audience as a fading soul whose singing (and playing) revealed a longing for the torch that could lead him towards the eternal and immortal. Such a performance started to break the existing singing conventions and to position *Winterreise* in a genre of its own, in an area that was far beyond the *Lieder* tradition.²⁷

Emotionally intense, Schubert’s performance could be interpreted within his own *Weltanschauung* (expressed already in his earlier *Lieder*),²⁸ as the ultimate *Wandern* (wandering) inspired by the infinite *Sehnsucht* (longing) for the uncertainties of *Erlösung* (salvation) – which clearly transcends regular *Kunst* (art) but could also appear to be nothing more than the *Tod* (death) of the individual. It seemed as if the lonely and sick genius appeared before his friends in order to share with them his own, very last, artistic journey to the point of no return, to the spheres where art, life and death could finally merge and enrich the privileged witnesses with new intellectual challenges and sensual (i.e. acoustic and visual) experiences. There were no words at the time which could describe such an artistically profound and yet existentially disturbing performance.

Twenty-two years later, in 1849, when contemplating a reform of the opera and the rebirth of the ancient Greek tragedy (and tetralogy), Richard Wagner,

24 Schubert’s performance echoed the newly emerging Romantic aesthetics, which, at least with E. T. A. Hoffmann, perceived music as a “mysterious language of some distant empire of spirits” (E. T. A. Hoffmann: *Die Serapionsbrüder*, quoted after: Carl Dahlhaus and Norbert Miller: *Europäische Romantik in der Musik. Band 2: Oper und symphonischer Stil 1800–1850. Von E. T. A. Hoffmann zu Richard Wagner* /Stuttgart and Weimar: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 2007/ 281) rejecting all kinds of “stage ghosts from miraculous fairy-tales and spectral stories” (Carl Dahlhaus and Norbert Miller: *Europäische Romantik in der Musik*, 281).

25 Otto Erich Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader, A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, ed. by Otto Erich Deutsch (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc, 1947) 613.

26 Among Schubert’s friends (according to Spaun) the opinion was that the “‘Winter Journey’ songs [greatly] affected Schubert, both in the process of composition and in performance.” Spaun even “was of the opinion that these songs contributed to Schubert’s early death” on November 19th, 1828 (Cf. Otto Erich Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader*, 613). Spaun probably built this opinion on Schubert’s own statement that *Winterreise* “cost [him] more effort than any other of [his] songs (quoted after Susan Youens, *Retracing A Winter’s Journey*, 27).

27 Charles Rosen states that the type of *Lied* that led to *Winterreise* (one exemplified by *Gretchen am Spinnrade*) “has nothing operatic about its style, and owes little to theatrical tradition”. Contrary to that, the ballad type “derives to some extent from operatic formulas”. Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (London, HarperCollinsPublishers, 1996) 125.

28 Cf. Marie-Agnes Dittrich, “‘Für Menschenohren sind es Harmonien.’ Die Lieder”, 168–169.

another Romantic composer,²⁹ initiated the search for *Gesamtkunstwerk*. “Instinct, that recognizes itself as the one that can only be satisfied in community, resists modern community, this joining of voluntary self-interest, in order to afford itself satisfaction in solitary community with future mankind, as best as the lonely one can”.³⁰ For Wagner the best artistic means for achieving such a goal and for showing modern men, who live in a wilderness and confusion, what real “life”,³¹ i.e. “perfect human nature (*vollendeten menschlichen Natur*)” is, was *Gesamtkunstwerk*.³² Although he referred to ancient Greek tragedy³³ and even drama in general,³⁴ Wagner was never able to define what exactly *Gesamtkunstwerk* should be in concrete artistic terms. As a concept, it was obviously broader than drama;³⁵ as a modern work of art it had to be something different from the tragedy the Greeks used to play in ancient times.³⁶ Ambiguities forced Wagner to give up the term entirely, in spite of the establishment of the *Bayreuther Festspielhaus*, which could be accepted as his final and most sophisticated operationalization of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* idea.³⁷

If taken in its core meaning – as a synthesis of poetry, music and performing art with the purpose of *raising basic metaphysical questions* concerning the

29 There is no doubt that Schubert in his *Lieder* abandoned the “Classical spirit” and embraced the “new Romantic style” (Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style. Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, New York and London, W. W. Norton & Co., 1997, 516; see also Lawrence Kramer, “The Schubert Lied: Romantic Form and Romantic Consciousness”, in: Walter Frisch /ed./: *Schubert. Critical and Analytical Studies*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996, 200 et passim). *Winterreise* and its first performance could be seen as the culmination point of Schubert’s “negation” not of the Classical spirit only but of the *Biedermeier* one, as well.

30 “Der Trieb, der sich als einen nur in der Gemeinsamkeit zu befriedigenden erkennt, entsagt der modernen Gemeinsamkeit, diesem Zusammenhange willkürlicher Eigensucht, um in einsamer Gemeinsamkeit mit sich und der Menschheit der Zukunft sich Befriedigung zu gewähren, so gut der Einsame es kann.” Richard Wagner, “Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft” in: *Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen. Band 3*, ed. by Sven Friedrich (Berlin: Directmedia /Digitale Bibliothek Band 107/, 2004) 1115–1116.

31 Richard Wagner, “Das Genie der Gemeinsamkeit”, in: *Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen. Band 12*, ed. by Sven Friedrich (Berlin: Directmedia /Digitale Bibliothek Band 107/, 2004) 6500.

32 Richard Wagner, “Die Kunst und die Revolution”, 1115.

33 *Ibid.*, 1115.

34 Richard Wagner, “Das Genie der Gemeinsamkeit”, 6500.

35 What Wagner meant by “drama” – especially later, in the course of the seventies, when he spoke of drama as “deeds of music made visible” – is another problem that need not be raised here. (See Richard Wagner, “Über die Benennung ‘Musikdrama’”, in: *Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen. Band 9*, ed. by Sven Friedrich (Berlin: Directmedia /Digitale Bibliothek Band 107/, 2004) 306.

36 Dragana Jeremić-Molnar and Aleksandar Molnar, *Mit, ideologija i misterija u tetralogiji Riharda Vagnera. Prsten Nibelunga i Parsifal [Myth, Ideology and Mystery in Richard Wagner’s Tetralogy. Der Ring des Nibelungen and Parsifal]* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2004) 69–71.

37 Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 195. See also: Dragana Jeremić-Molnar, Rihard Vagner: konstruktor “istinske” realnosti. Projekat regeneracije kroz Bajrojtiske svečanosti [Richard Wagner: Constructor of “Genuine” Reality. Regeneration through Bayreuther Festspiele] (Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2007).

individual and mankind, life and death, perfection and decadence, etc. – the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* is broad enough to be applied to the first, Schubert's (informal) performance of *Winterreise* in autumn 1827. Schubert, of course, could not share the ideas (and ideologies) that were crucial for Wagner's initial dealing with the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. But he had treated in his musical works some of the same problems that later haunted Wagner for decades: the sense of alienation and isolation in modern society, unfulfilled love, the suicidal urge, redemption through the metaphysics of art, etc. That is why Schubert's own performance of the *Winterreise* songs remained only *Gesamtkunstwerk in nuce*. It showed death seeking man who despised modern society but never found consolation in earthly things, such as the mankind of tomorrow, morally superior human beings or even "wondrous" heroic deeds that should be praised and commemorated by numerous generations. The bonds that connected Schubert with his listeners were ones of mourning and resignation: he sang and played before them as the Wagnerian "perfect human nature" that has nothing in common with the modern world and has no other choice but to step boldly into the unknown, prepared for the possibility of disappearing in the void.

3. Contemporary filmed and staged performances of *Winterreise*

Deep into the nineteenth-century *Lieder*, including those composed by Schubert, were still considered an integral part of *Hausmusik*.³⁸ In January 1828 tenor Ludwig Tietze sang "Gute Nacht" in the Vienna *Musikvereinsaal*, thus initiating an almost century long practice of extracting individual songs from Schubert's cycle. The first singer who dared to perform *Winterreise* in concert as a whole (in 1860) was baritone Julius Stockhausen. Although in the second half of the nineteenth-century the prevailing opinion still was that song achieves direct emotional communication without mimetic gesture or scenery, without the singer who is an impersonator, there were some interesting, even daring ideas for reforming the performance of the *Lied*. Reformers, from moderate to radical, recommended that concert halls be lighted with dimmed lights or lights in different colours, even filled with various types of perfumes, whose selection (both lighting and fragrance) would depend upon the mood of the performed music and would contribute to the creation of a more intimate atmosphere. The most interesting, however, were suggestions for the concealment of the singers from the listener's view. Those who advocated this change had in their minds, as negative examples, the gesticulation and pantomime of the singers, in a word their exaggerated motions that belonged to theatre and had "no place in the execution of songs".³⁹ We have

38 Even at the beginning of the twentieth-century one could read in the press that songs are, "in the noblest sense of the word, *Hausmusik* and should be heard only at informal gatherings by musicians and music lovers who take part in their performance". Edward F. Kravitt, "The Lied in 19th-Century Concert Life", 216.

39 More on these ideas see in: *ibid.*, 217–218.

no information whether *Winterreise* was performed under recommended conditions or not, but, all the same, the above mentioned initiatives are significant for this paper for two reasons. First, they can be understood as indications that singers at the beginning of the twentieth-century could not refrain from performing *Lieder*, in Sonnleithner's words, with violent expression that was more appropriate to theatre. Second, some individuals interested, above all, in the elimination of all the singer's actions that disturb the paramount expression of the music started to question the existing modes of presentation and to explore the possibilities of supplementing the *Lieder* performance with new sensations.

In September 1968, approximately one century after the first public performance of the complete *Winterreise*, BBC Television producer John Culshaw proposed to tenor Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten a different approach to Schubert's cycle, supposedly more suitable for a TV audience.⁴⁰ After they had reached an agreement, Culshaw (together with designer David Myerscough) created the scenery for each of the twenty-four songs, and filmed Pears (dressed in a costume) as a solitary, but basically motionless (!) *Wanderer* against a sequence of abstract settings (Britten on the piano was kept entirely out of the spectators' view). Although Culshaw experienced a severe onslaught by the critics,⁴¹ he was the one who began the contemporary re-conceptualization and re-evaluation of *Winterreise* as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

However, the real breakthrough in *Winterreise* performance history occurred fourteen years later, in 1994, when American director David Alden made his film version of Schubert's work in order to bring it once more to the TV screen (again

40 The recording of *Winterreise* was broadcasted on BBC Two Television on November 15th, 1970.

41 One critic described Pears' costume as a "Pickwickian travelling coat" and the landscape as a "vastly magnified tortoise-shell". According to him "much of the setting was an uneasy compromise, dictated ultimately by a distrust of the audience. Either have a genuine traveller in a genuine landscape, getting more haggard as the days and unslept nights go on; or perform it straight, perhaps showing the score simultaneously, which would have been simple enough to do. As it was, the changing patterns of stylized trees or graves behind the singer were distracting - except for the crow, which looked endearingly like a duck." Cf. Keith Spence, "Television", *The Musical Times*, Vol. 112, No. 1535 (1971) 63. Another critic remembers how "Peter Pears, clad in Sherlock Holmes deerstalker, stumbled across the studio as paper snow was dropped all over him". Cf. Rupert Christiansen, "Shuffling around to Schubert", *Telegraph* (18 September 2003, www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/dance/3602889/Shuffling-around-to-Schubert.html). The bigger problem was, however, the age of the singer. Pears (aged 60 at the time of the recording) explained in the conversation with Britten that since his youth, he had been persuaded that the protagonist of *Winterreise* is an old, mature and experienced man. Cf. "Peter Pears & Benjamin Britten discuss *Winterreise*", *Schubert: Winterreise, Britten: Folk Songs* (DVD Video, DECCA, 2008). The performance of a costumed 60-year old singer strongly contradicted both Müller's and Schubert's idea of a young man's inability to overcome lost love and restore the meaning of life.

on British television).⁴² Alden's choice for the songs' protagonist was the tenor Ian Bostridge, who appealed to him both in his acting and transformation capabilities. The director's initial idea was to make *Winterreise* in the tradition of German expressionist cinema, and to present Bostridge as an anonymous, desperate and half-mad social outcast (even a serial killer) in the setting of a deserted and derelict, London mental hospital.⁴³ After both Bostridge and pianist Julius Drake had expressed some reservations concerning such an idea,⁴⁴ Alden reached a compromise with them. The fruitful discussions they had during the preparation and rehearsals of *Winterreise* reveal the gradual crystallization of the dramatization's central idea. Bostridge, dressed almost like a tramp, was positioned in a specially constructed, empty room (furnished only with a wooden chair, a picture frame, lifeless tree branches and a knife), through which he moved, which he leaves (in "Irrlicht") and in which he returns (in "Das Wirtshaus").⁴⁵ The moment of departure (from the house) was signalled by the visualization of the young man's vivid memories of musical gatherings that took place long ago – but are now accessible only to the silent ghosts (represented by the pianist and five actors) that reside

42 In the same year, the distinguished Czech filmmaker Peter Weigl directed the film *Winterreise*, which turned out to be a disappointment (he also wrote the script with a newly invented plot inspired by Müller's verses). Equally distinguished mezzo-soprano Brigitte Fassbaender, chosen for the main role of a nun (!) who through pantomime (and previously recorded music) expresses her anguish in deciding between her husband and her lover, could not save the project from failure.

43 Although not mentioned in the documentary "Over the top with Franz", Robert Wiene's motion picture *Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari* (1920) might have served Alden as a perfect model. Most of the plot in Wiene's silent masterpiece is presented as a series of "flashbacks" narrated by the main character (Francis), who, at the end of the film appears to be nothing else but the inmate of an insane asylum. Distorted houses, weird exteriors and other disturbed visions are in fact products of the mentally ill narrator's delusive perception. Alden's initial insistence on Schubert's illness (syphilis) and fears of becoming mad, drove him to the conclusion that the protagonist of *Winterreise* (Schubert himself) should be portrayed in the same manner as Francis and, to some extent, the somnambulist Cesare.

44 Both of them were sceptical about taking part in an ambitious project which could easily end on the threshold of opera. However, Bostridge said later that the *Lieder* performance is a specific form of musical theatre: "One of the great things about lieder singing as a form of musical theatre is that it's so easy to do different things, because it's so pared down, whereas in opera you're much more encumbered by the *mise-en-scène*. By doing something small differently, you can change the whole feel of a piece". Cf. Ditlev Rindom, "A Scholar's Art. Interview with Ian Bostridge:", *The Oxonian Review* 4.3 (15 June 2005, www.oxonianreview.org/wp/a-scholars-art-an-interview-with-ian-bostridge).

45 One critic remarks that "Alden [...] takes a literal view of the songs as a cycle, and has his singer return to the empty room like someone who has passed through mental trials of fire and ice and maybe is the wiser for it – although I'm not sure what wisdom there could be for the poet of *Winterreise* to collect". Cf. Michael White, "Music: Ian Bostridge saved me from the Messiah my Christmas", *The Independent* (4 January 1998, www.independent.co.uk/life-style/music-ian-bostridge-saved-me-from-the-messiah-my-christmas-1136691.html).

in his head.⁴⁶ His reappearance in the house – after a long journey through the white void in which he had slipped desperately – is announced (in “Der stürmliche Morgen” and “Täuschung”) by his new, also unsuccessful attempt to restore the joyous atmosphere of a musical gathering. The encounter with the only person to which the *Wanderer* really speaks, a mysterious hurdy-gurdy man (*der Leiermann*), was not dramatized. Instead, Alden shot the last song of the cycle in one frame, focusing on the numb and pale face of the exhausted singer and his only follower – the shadow, as the only imaginable visualization of the enigmatic harbinger of death.⁴⁷

By placing Bostridge on the chair near the piano player in those three songs, in which Drake also appears before the spectators’ eyes, Alden made a direct and obvious allusion to the *Schubertiade*,⁴⁸ thus suggesting that the character Bostridge actually impersonates and whose inward journey he presents is not some nameless *Wanderer*, but Schubert himself.⁴⁹ Alden skilfully combined in his production an extraordinary musical performance with purposeful visual events, balanced acting and suitable and atmospheric *mise-en-scène*. He successfully developed the *Gesamtkunstwerk* potentials of Schubert’s *Winterreise* and created a film version that is far more inspiring and provocative than others.

We do not know whether Alden’s reading of *Winterreise* gave an impetus to the other opera and theatre directors or not, but in the following years numerous artists attempted – with various degrees of seriousness and success – to bring Schubert’s work to the stage, supplementing it with dance or drama and even combining it with fashion (!). Due to the limited scope of this article, I shall illustrate this with four examples. On September 30th, 2001, at the Paris Théâtre du Châtelet, in front of a selected audience, soprano Jessye Norman performed *Winterreise* dressed in a glamorous (!) garment (totally inappropriate for the subject-matter of the verses) against a surrealist setting provided by Robert Wilson. A year later, in 2002, director/choreographer Trisha Brown, with baritone Simon Keenlyside, the pianist Pedja Muzijevic and several dancers from her company, presented an interesting and innovative performance of *Winterreise* on the stage of the John Jay College Theatre in New York. Uwe Eric Laufenberg’s dramatization of *Winterreise*, with baritone Jan Buchwald, pianist Cornelius Meister and three actresses, was performed in November 2004 in the Schlosstheater at the Potsdamer Neuen Palais. British director Katie

46 Cf. “Over the Top with Franz”, *Franz Schubert ‘Winterreise’* (DVD Video, NVC Arts, Channel Four Television Corporation, Warner Music Group, 2000).

47 One author insisted on parallels between Alden’s ending of *Winterreise* and Ingmar Bergman’s ending of *Virgin Spring*. In both cases, snow begins to fall and in a way covers the tragic events. “[...] the main character of the Wanderer has reached a breaking point, an inner death, and yet he has to go on living”. Cf. Maria Wagner, Ian Bostridge: *The Wanderer* (www.cinemaseekers.com/bostridge/winter.html).

48 Most drawings from Schubert’s time show that the singer Vogl performed songs, sitting near the piano player.

49 The costumes of all the participants (but especially of the “ghostly” guests) can serve as more evidence that Alden placed his film in Schubert’s time.

Mitchell created a theatre piece *One Evening*, in which she tried to illuminate Samuel Beckett's intense relationship with Schubert's *Winterreise*. The premiere of this joint performance of the (incomplete) song cycle and Beckett's poetry and prose (with tenor Mark Padmore, actor Stephen Dillane and pianist Andrew West) took place in Aldeburgh, England, in May 2009.

The aforementioned performance in Paris proved to be nothing more than a superficial *vogue*-happening that even placed Schubert's work in the second plan, subordinating it to the event as such.⁵⁰ Trisha Brown's choreography of *Winterreise* (supplemented with interesting lighting) provoked numerous, mostly positive reactions in the press,⁵¹ but added little to the work and sometimes drew the spectators' attention to the movement instead of to the music.⁵² Katie Mitchell's very interesting (and innovative) idea of the auditory presentation of those "sounds of nature" that neither Müller nor Schubert capture in their verses, i.e. music – but are, nevertheless, inherent in the winter scenery through which the *Wanderer* wanders – were greeted both with understanding and with disapproval.⁵³

Laufenberg's dramatization is distinguished from these scenic presentations of *Winterreise* by the director's completely different reading of the cycle that, unfortunately, strongly affected (and even changed) the work's central idea. Laufenberg re-located *Winterreise* in a different time – Germany after World War II. Instead of a *Wanderer*, he saw the cycle's protagonist as a German soldier who returns from war and

50 Representatives of the "beau monde", gathered in the audience, were scarcely familiar with the work of "composer – what's his name? – who did the incidental music for this splendid event". Moreover, "for much of the evening [...] the great soprano was operating on auto-pilot, bringing neither much interpretation nor expression to this crown jewel of the lieder repertory". Cf. Frank Cadenhead, "Jessye Norman in Paris: Schubert, *Die Winterreise*, Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, September 30", *Seen & Heard* (2001, www.musicweb-international.com/SandH/2001/Oct01/Norman.htm).

51 Critics especially praised Trisha Brown's idea to end the performance with the confrontation of the *Wanderer*, whose voice is virtually disembodied, with the lugubrious figure of the hurdy-gurdy man. Cf. Anna Kisselgoff, "Spare Look, Stark Poems and Sad Songs", *New York Times* (December 4, 2002, www.nytimes.com/2002/12/04/arts/dance-review-spare-look-stark-poems-and-sad-songs.html).

52 One critic complains that "The drama was [...] centered on whether or not an attractive young singer could keep pace with three professional dancers". Cf. Paul Driscoll: "December 2002 performance at John Jay College", *Opera News* (March 2003, www.simonkeenlyside.info/Articles/Perform/Recital/200212WinterreiseTBJJCTNY.html).

53 "A constant stream of electronic and handmade noise, in the style of an old-school radio play, underpinned the music. Dillane [...] breathed heavily into a microphone and mimicked the sound of feet crunching on snow. Padmore [...] busied himself turning a wind machine, rustling twigs, pouring water from a jug into a cup, and so on. [...] At times, it seemed as though *Winterreise* were being played alongside John Cage's *Water Walk* or some other exercise in conceptual composition". Alex Ross, *Nowhere Bound: A night of Schubert and Beckett* (4 January 2010, www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/musical/2010/01/04/100104/crmu_music_ross).

is still in uniform, carrying a knapsack and holding a machine gun.⁵⁴ According to the scenic and the dramatic means the director used,⁵⁵ it is not hard to assume his intention: to remind the audience how political manipulation and militarist perversion (that culminated in the Third Reich) – whose witness (and probably active participant) the soldier on the stage was – had destroyed the Romantic imagery of *Heimat* (still present in the time of Müller and Schubert) and rendered all mourning over its loss completely meaningless.⁵⁶ The director's idea was also to show that, with a German state (built upon militarist and nationalist foundations), its social life collapsed as well. That is why Laufenberg left his main character, until the very end of the performance, with a sense of complete loneliness: three women (a girl, a middle-aged woman and an old lady), who live in the same house, do not react to his presence and refuse to return his greetings.⁵⁷ But, while the soldier is singing the last song, lying on the bed and calling the hurdy-gurdy man, the old lady enters the room and approaches his bed in order to cover him with a blanket. With the old woman's gesture, as a sign of simple human feeling, Laufenberg restored (the soldier's and our) hope that rebuilding elementary social relations, as well as everything truly individual and personal is, after all, possible.⁵⁸ Having ended his dramatization with the kind gesture of a woman instead of a visualization of the hurdy-gurdy man, the director saved the protagonist of *Winterreise* from merciless oblivion and death, and opened for him the road to salvation.

* * *

Among contemporary performers, concert-goers and critics, the opinion still prevails that the usual performance of *Winterreise*, where the singer interprets and does not impersonate, is the best way to present it. That is why directors willing to 'borrow' Schubert's *Winterreise* and to present it in a more complex and ambitious artistic context – on stage or even on film – mostly receive moderate

54 It is not clear whether the soldier is returning to his family house or is coming to stay in somebody else's house. The words "Fremd bin ich eingezogen, fremd zieh ich wieder aus" can even raise the question: is he a Nazi who moves into some deserted Jewish family's house and who will soon be forced to move out?

55 For example, soon after the soldier has entered the deserted house (in "Gute nacht") a film begins to roll on the right wall of the room. The projected film consists of several archive recordings of great political events (both military parades and funerals) from Second and Third Reich history.

56 According to one critic, the soldier can't comprehend *Heimat* any more as a place, but only as a time – in the meaning "once upon a time". Cf. Peter Uehling, "Winterreise nach Kriegsende. In Potsdam wurde Schuberts Liederzyklus inszeniert", *Berliner Zeitung* (15. November 2004, www.berlinonline.de/berliner-zeitung/archiv/.bin/dump.fcgi/2004/1115/feuilleton/0015/index.html).

57 At the beginning of the performance, the soldier says "Hello". Later, while singing "Gute Nacht", he writes the same word on the head of his bed.

58 It is interesting that at the end of the play, the pianist also appears on the stage. (Until that moment, he has been placed in front of the stage, in the space between the singer and the audience.)

or negative reviews. However conservative and narrow-minded critics can be, in most cases, the directors are the ones to be blamed for such failures in performances.

The staged or filmed *Winterreise* projects are only rarely something more than mere visualizations of the director's personal impressions or simple attempts to make the work more communicable to different groups of contemporary audiences. Only a few performances with the scenic dimension succeeded in visualizing the hidden, but nevertheless existent ideological and meaningful layers of *Winterreise*, layers only implied but not fully expressed by its verses and music. Providing Schubert's work with a spatial dimension that illuminates its messages about human existence and the human striving to come to terms with both raw life and the uncertain hereafter – proves to be the best way for revealing those layers in *Winterreise*.

Драгана Јерemiћ-Молнар

LIED: ОД КУЋНЕ МУЗИКЕ ДО ФИЛМА. НА ПРИМЕРУ ШУБЕРТОВОГ ЦИКЛУСА ЗИМСКО ПУТОВАЊЕ

РЕЗИМЕ

Инспирисана успелом екранизацијом циклуса *Зимско путовање*, коју је 1994. године за британску телевизију BBC режирао Дејвид Алден (David Alden), ауторка се определила да у овом раду отвори и размотри питање изведбе дела Франца Шуберта (Franz Schubert).

У првом одељку „О неким питањима извођачке праксе *Lied-a*“, ауторка настоји да покаже да ли је у 19. веку заиста дошло до промене у начину извођења песме, на коју указују малобројни примарни извори, а коју истичу и радови појединих музиколога. Проучаваоци су сагласни у томе да се у 18. веку од аутора музике песме очекивало да мелодијски, хармонски и ритмички једноставном музиком (применљивом на све строфе текста) само пружи подршку поезији и још више истакне њен значај. Композитори су прихватили став песника да текст мора да остане неугрожен музиком и да је певач тај који примаоцима преноси изражајност стихова. Проучавања песама компонованих у 19. веку резултирала су, међутим, различитим закључцима истраживача. Саглашавајући се у ставу да је Шуберт песму уздигао на ниво високе уметности, аутори су се размимоишли приликом вредновања доприноса различитих чинилаца овог жанра. Неки од њих, попут Арнолда Витала (Arnold Whittall) и Карла Далхауса (Carl Dahlhaus), истакли су и пренагласили – и то превасходно руковођени представом *Lied-a* као музичког дела – улогу композитора, не проблематизујући питање значаја и улоге интерпретатора. Њихов приступ је у складу са сећањима Шубертових савременика, који су сведочили да је он сам захтевао уздржаност у интерпретацији како се не би угрозио експресивни потенцијал – не

више само поезије него и – његове музике. Други аутори, попут Лоренса Крејмера (Lawrence Kramer), чије је мишљење ауторки текста прихватљивије, сматрају да је песма у 19. веку постала дело чије значење заједнички производе сви његови творци – песник, композитор и певач.

Сматрајући валидним Крејмерово виђење *Lied*-а као својеврсног „театра субјективитета“, ауторка указује на могућност да је Шуберт у *Зимском путовању* превазишао истраживање субјективитета (чак и најпроблематичнијег, оног „оштећеног“) и ступио на (у песми никада испитану) територију која је и извођаче и публику ставила пред нова искушења. Тако се у другом делу текста, „Прво (неформално) извођење *Зимског путовања*“, указује на проблеме са којима је утисци неких од првих слушалаца *Зимског путовања* показују да буру емоција у њима није покренула само музика него и емотивно интензивна изведба самог композитора која је превазишла постојеће перформативне стандарде., али и следбенике у пракси измештања *Зимског путовања* из примарног извођачког контекста. Прво важно измештање дела – из кућног амбијента на концертну сцену – догодило се 1828, када су поједине песме изведене јавно. Наредни крупан корак у пласману *Зимског путовања* десио се током шездесетих година 19. века када је певач Јулијус Штокхаузен (Julius Stockhausen) интерпретирао цео циклус на концертној сцени. Готово век касније, 1968, Би-Би-Си је продуцирао прву, истина „примитивну“ драматизацију циклуса, и на тај начин иницирао богату и, испоставило се, континуирану праксу „извођења“ *Зимског путовања* са концертне сцене и (чешће неуспелог него успелог) „увођења“ у нове медије – телевизију, театар и филм. Алден је један од ретких визуелизатора *Зимског путовања* који је у сценским сликама успео да разоткрије скривене идеолошке и значењске слојеве дела који су имплицитно присутни у његовом тексту и музици, али нису у пуној мери изражени.

Кључне речи: Франц Шуберт, *Lied*, *Winterreise*, перформативна пракса, *Gesamtkunstwerk*