

## Annual Review of Schubert's Life

1818

By the end of 1817 Schubert was thoroughly dispirited. He had been forced to give up his comfortable accommodation with the Schobers and return to the teaching that he loathed. The move with his father to the school in Rossau in January 1818 was a further blow. He was now locked into an even stricter school regimen with little time left for leisure or composition. Relations with his father, always difficult, had deteriorated badly and his gloom deepened into what might have been close to a breakdown, as a result of which composition virtually dried up for many months. Fortunately he was able to complete, in February, the "Little" Symphony (No.6) in C Major (D589) which he had begun the previous October and was presumably well advanced. That apart, there was an abandoned Piano Sonata in C (D613) from April and sketches for an aborted Symphony in D (D615) in May, but otherwise there were to be just a handful of piano pieces and songs before his life began to change in July.

It was in these early depressed months of 1818 that the song *Erlafsee* (D586) appeared in print, as a free insert in an almanac in January, this being Schubert's first publication. In March the *Overture in the Italian Style in D* (D590) of the previous November was performed at the Roman Emperor Hotel, and this was first of his works so far to be reviewed – with reviews appearing in Vienna, Dresden, and Leipzig – and this might have gone some way to lightening these days for Schubert. Unfortunately the application he had made early in the year for membership of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* was turned down. To help relieve his gloom and to enjoy the good companionship of a friend, Schubert would visit Anselm Hüttenbrenner who had now come to live in Vienna. Anselm was a fine pianist and they could talk music, with Schubert helping him to consume his wine. Anselm Hüttenbrenner was neither an ex-Stadtkonvikt pupil nor a member of the *Bildung Circle* (who all seemed temperamentally foreign to him) but a private friend of Schubert who had come from Graz to Vienna as a law student, and who also studied composition with Salieri as did Schubert.

On one of his visits to Anselm's rooms Anselm let him know that his brother Josef very much admired his songs, and Schubert whilst somewhat tipsy wrote out a copy of *Die Forelle* (D550) as a gift for him – ending by pouring ink over it instead of sand. Three weeks later (14<sup>th</sup> March) Schubert, from memory as before, wrote out the "Trauerwaltzer" (D365/2) for Anselm.

Schubert's relations with his father at this time had reached a very low ebb – but salvation was to come unexpectedly. He had recently been introduced to Johann Karl Unger who, knowing that Count Esterházy of Galánta was looking for a tutor for his daughters (Karoline, 13 and Marie, 16), recommended the young Schubert to him. In July 1818 Schubert received his permit to stay in Zseliz and he was to remain there for four-and-a-half months. The work was not over-demanding, he received accommodation and food, and most importantly liberation from his previously restricted existence. He was also paid quite generously, of consequence as he had now lost the income from teaching. "Thank God I live at last," he was to write to his friends in Vienna, "it was high time, otherwise I should have become nothing but a thwarted musician". In that letter of 3rd August to Spaun, Schober, Mayrhofer and Senn he added, "I am well. I live and compose like a god, as though that were as it should be", and he alludes to his previous inability to complete any compositions over his months at Rossau. Schubert's eldest brother Ignaz wrote to him about his own continuing

unhappiness at the atmosphere in their father's school in Rossau where Ignaz was still having to work, "You happy creature! How enviable is your lot!".

Whilst the population of Zseliz was Hungarian, the Count and his household were German-speakers as were a number of families who had settled around Zseliz at the encouragement of the Count, and in consequence Schubert's lack of contact with the local people would seem to have precluded the possibility of any genuine Hungarian influence upon his music. He found other musical directions in which to expand, however.

Although missing his companions of Vienna Schubert was finding happiness in Zseliz and whilst there he wrote a series of piano duets, including the B-flat Major Duo Sonata (D617), for the two daughters of the Count. Some of these may have been intended for him to play the more demanding top part, and others designed for the two sisters to play together, but it is clear that the girls, Marie especially, must have been competent pianists. He also wrote vocal exercises for the two sisters and composed a few songs. He composed also a small 'German Requiem' (D621) for four voices with organ with the intention that his brother could pass this off as his own work in the hope that this would help Ferdinand in his career. It was also in Zseliz that Schubert sketched the romantic but incomplete F-minor Piano Sonata (D625).

By the autumn Schubert was ready to return to his friends in Vienna, but his father made it clear that he was not prepared to welcome him back into his house, and as he had nowhere else to go his brother Ferdinand proposed an arrangement to their father that did seem to pacify him. Schubert was to go to stay with the poet Mayrhofer whom their father trusted, believing that he could be a stabilising influence on Schubert.

Schubert left Zseliz with the Esterházy's for Vienna on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1818 where he then shared one single room with Mayrhofer, in fact Mayrhofer's only room. It appears that Schubert composed there in the mornings, often from six until one o'clock when Mayrhofer was away at his work. In his turn Mayrhofer worked on his poems in the afternoons – it was impossible for them both to work at the same time in this one small dark room – whilst Schubert would go out for a mid-day meal in a coffee-house and then sit over a small black coffee with the newspapers and smoke for an hour or two and, according to Anselm Hüttenbrenner, going to the theatre or the inn in the evenings.

They both found themselves producing work freely, but money problems were affecting both Schubert and Mayrhofer at this time, although Schubert was able to get some small income during the winter months for continued tuition to the Esterházy daughters whilst they were at their town house in Vienna for the winter. Schubert was also gladdened by the news that, whilst he had been at Zseliz, Vogl had negotiated a commission for him for a one-act opera for the *Kärntner-Theater*. Prospects for the new year were looking good.

### **Notable works of 1818:**

[D589 C Major Symphony 6 'Little Symphony in C' orch 1817 Oct-1818 Feb]

D599 Four Polonaises for Piano Duet:

D599/1 D Minor Polonaise 1818 Jul

D599/2 B flat Major Polonaise 1818 Jul

D599/3 E Major Polonaise 1818 Jul

D599/4 F Major Polonaise 1818 Jul

D602 *Trois Marches Héroïques* for Piano Duet (Op.27):  
     D602/1 B Minor *Marche héroïque* 1818 or 1824  
     D602/2 C Major *Marche héroïque* 1818 or 1824  
     D602/3 D Major *Marche héroïque* 1818 or 1824

D611 D minor *Auf der Riesenkoppe* Körner song 1818 Mar  
 D614 A major *An den Mond in einer Herbstnacht* Schreiber song 1818 Apr  
 D616 B minor *Grablied für die Mutter* Anonymous song 1818 Jun  
 D617 B flat Major *Sonata for Piano Duet* 1818 summer-autumn  
 D620 B flat Major *Einsamkeit* Mayrhofer song 1818 Jul  
 D621 *Deutsches Requiem (Deutsche Trauermesse)* Sop, Alto, Tenor, Bass, organ  
 1818 Aug  
 D622 D Major *Der Blumenbrief* Schreiber song 1818 Aug  
 D623 C Major *Das Marienbild* Schreiber song 1818 Aug  
 D624 E Minor 8 Variations on a French Song for Piano Duet 1818 Sep  
 D625 F Minor *Piano Sonata 11 (Fragment - 3 Movements Slow = D505)* 1818 Sep  
 D626 E flat Minor *Blondel zu Marien* song 1818 Sep  
 D627 E Major *Das Abendrot* Schreiber song 1818 Nov  
 D628 B flat Major *Sonett I* Petrarch song 1818 Nov  
 D629 G Minor *Sonett II* Petrarch song 1818 Nov  
 D630 C Major *Sonett III* Petrarch song 1818 Dec

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