

# Annual Review of Schubert's Life

## 1825

1824 had been a very difficult year for Schubert in terms of health, but extremely rewarding in terms of output. 1825 was to prove an altogether happier year, his health rather more robust, his finances in better order. The end of the previous year had seen the publication of his *A minor Quartet* and other works and he was clearly financially more comfortable. Early in the new year he moved out of the hated schoolhouse at Rossau and (for only the second time in his life) lived alone in a comfortable apartment overlooking the 'glacis', the open land outside the city. His close neighbours, only a couple of doors away, were the Schwind family, where his friend Moritz lived with his widowed mother and his sisters. Not too far away lived another friend, Wilhelm August Rieder, who, although musical (his father was a choirmaster and composer), did not possess a piano but arranged to hire one for his own and Schubert's use. Rieder agreed a signal with Schubert that if the curtain of a room was open the piano was available for Schubert's use, and if the curtain of the Gluck-Haus (the house was once occupied by Gluck) was closed he was working and did not want to be disturbed. Rieder, as well as providing a piano for Schubert's pleasure was in May to exercise another of his talents by painting in watercolour what is now one of the best loved portraits of Schubert.

The piano, by Anton Walter, with six octaves and two pedals (sustaining and una corda), soon gave voice to a new sonata from Schubert (the unfinished '*Reliquie*' Sonata, D840). At about the same time Schubert was working on a number of songs based on Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, and it is possible that he had seen Donizetti's *La Donna del Lago* in Italian or in German, there having been performances in Vienna in both languages over the previous year, and the ideas of Scott's romantic drama, and of its landscapes, took hold of his imagination.

1825 saw the break-up of the reading circle when Bruchmann withdrew from the circle after the disclosure of Schober's secret affair with Bruchmann's sister Justina, the members finding themselves taking sides and quarrelling.

The second Piano Sonata of 1825 was soon to follow the '*Reliquie*' (now abandoned), the composer choosing once again the key of A minor, but avoiding the starkness of the previous *A minor Sonata* (D784) of 1823 which had been rejected by the publisher. This new one (D845) was accepted immediately for publication by Pennauer, and the slow movement variations were admired when Schubert played them in Schubertiads on the summer trip that he was to share with Vogl in Upper Austria.

Before leaving to join Vogl in Steyr, where Vogl had already been for a month or more, Schubert carefully made copies of some of his Goethe settings and arranged for his publisher to send them to the poet with a letter asking for permission to dedicate these volumes to the great man. Once again (as in 1816 with the earlier Goethe settings) these were to be returned without comment.

Schubert joined Vogl and together they played and sang in both Steyr and Linz, both towns being visited several times on their trip. For six weeks they were in Gmunden on the edge of Lake Traun, and whilst there, as well as making music, Schubert began to sketch a new symphony.

Moving back to Linz Schubert stayed with the Ottenwalts, and Anton Ottenwalt in a letter to Spaun described him during his stay as "serious, profound and as though inspired" and he seems to have been in very good health. From there Vogl took him back to Steyr and then on to Salzburg where they were asked to perform for a prestigious aristocratic soiree, presumably for a fee. Vogl, suffering from gout, now wanted to move quickly on to Gastein where he wished to take the cure. There Schubert was inevitably moved by the terrifying grandeur of the scenery. In Gastein Schubert took up the new symphony again, and also sketched the vigorously virtuosic *D major Piano Sonata* (D850). Staying in Gastein at the same time as Vogl and Schubert was Mozart's widow Konstanze.

Vogl was now getting impatient to move on again this time back to Steyr, rather to the irritation of Schubert who had to cancel engagements made with friends. This presented a difficulty as Vogl was presumably paying Schubert's expenses. After a couple of weeks back at Steyr Vogl wanted to move on to Italy. Schubert set off ahead of Vogl towards Linz, with musical performances at the Ottenwalts at Steyrigg castle on the way, and more at the home of the Spauns in Linz where his Walter Scott songs were especially admired. Schubert's piano duet partner Josef Gahy also arrived, and he, having the use of a hired carriage, accompanied Schubert back to Vienna.

In September, whilst Schubert was still in Gastein he was elected as one of twenty deputies to the committee of the Gesellschaft, evidence of his growing musical reputation.

The symphony that he worked on whilst in Upper Austria was long thought to be lost. This '*Gmunden-Gastein*' Symphony as it came to be known (and given the D. number 849) was equated by some with the *Grand Duo in C* (D812), of 1824. It was only with more recent and accurate dating that it was recognised that this work was in fact the '*Great*' *C Major Symphony* (D944), previously, and inaccurately, thought to belong to Schubert's last year, 1828.

Whilst otherwise seeming to have been in good health throughout the remainder of the year, Schubert was unwell enough at the year's end to have been unable to attend a New-Year party.

### **Notable works of 1825:**

- D830 C Minor *Lied der Anna Lyle* Scott song 1825 early?
- D831 F Minor *Gesang der Norna* Scott song 1825 early?
- D837 D flat Major *Ellens Gesang I* Scott song 1825 Apr-Jul
- D838 E flat Major *Ellens Gesang II* Scott song 1825 Apr-Jul
- D839 B flat Major *Ellens Gesang III* ('Ave Maria') Scott song 1825 Apr
- D840 C Major Piano Sonata 15 'Relique' 1825 Apr
- D845 A Minor Piano Sonata 16 1825 May
- D849 C Major [*Gmunden-Gastein Symphony*] Identical with D944: 1825 Jun/Sep [D944 C Major Symphony no 9 "The Great" 1825]
- D850 D Major Piano Sonata 17 1825 Aug

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