

JOE DAVIES AND JAMES WILLIAM SOBASKIE (EDS), *DRAMA IN THE MUSIC OF FRANZ SCHUBERT* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019). ISBN 978-1783273652, 348 pp, £70.

The concept of drama in music can be hard to define. In *Drama in the Music of Franz Schubert*, edited by Joe Davies and James William Sobaskie, this difficulty is astutely addressed while remaining at times problematic for the project: dramatic music can be anything from music specifically for the theatre, to vocal or instrumental music that contains moments of notable excitement or contrast. Looking at Schubert's music for the theatre, one of his masses, his lieder, and his instrumental music, this volume, in part, aims to contribute towards correcting the record when it comes to Schubert's supposed lack of success in musical drama. Scholarship in the early twentieth century considered him a failure in the realm of operatic composition and weak in the area of long instrumental musical forms, while more recent scholarship has frequently sought to cast him as a more lyric and epic (rather than dramatic) composer. In response to these views, the editors seek to highlight Schubert's innovations in theatrical composition, shed new light on those of Schubert's lieder that have special claims on drama, and elucidate his unique approaches to drama in instrumental music. While the two essays on Schubert's operatic work do a great deal to address issues concerning the quality and importance of these compositions, the remainder of the volume is more valuable for the diversity and often innovative nature of the scholarship that it offers, rather than for presenting a single overall argument concerning the presence or success of drama in Schubert's lieder or instrumental music. In fact, there has been significant recognition of the various dramatic elements of the compositions under study in the previous scholarship cited throughout many of the essays, and the chapters do not downplay the importance of Schubert's often pronounced lyricism, even as they point to drama. In short, Schubert does not seem to need or receive the kind of defence that the editors imply in their preface. But what the essays do offer is a welcome variety of approaches to both well-known and lesser-known Schubertian works that are bound to stimulate new ways of listening and further methodological thought. The contributions also bring together historical, hermeneutic, and more strictly music-analytical approaches in fruitful ways.

The editors turn over the task of defining drama in music to Laura Tunbridge, the author of an introduction that follows the initial preface. Tunbridge points out that, for Schubert and his contemporaries, the term drama in music would have been used primarily to refer to music for the theatre. When it comes to drama in instrumental music, she shows just how easily the identification of drama with 'tension or conflict produced as musical narratives unfold' (p. 2) or with some element of alterity that is eventually resolved, can apply to practically all tonal music of the period. This makes

the identification of music that can clearly be deemed dramatic difficult. She also shows how some definitions admit the lyric as a major constitutive element of the dramatic, and she points towards the tendency of many of the book's essays to build on earlier scholarship on persona, narrative, and voice to locate drama.

A full listing of the contributions gives an idea of the diversity of topics and approaches in the book. Part I: 'Stage and Sacred Works' contains a chapter by Lorraine Byrne Bodley concerning the mixed presence of French and Italian operatic models in Schubert's work on *Claudine von Villa Bella*, one by Christine Martin on *Fierabras*, and a contribution by editor James William Sobaskie that offers a reading of the Mass in A-flat major D. 678 as a dramatic monologue. Part II: 'Lieder' features a 'rehabilitation' of Schubert's early ballad *Adelwold und Emma* D. 211 by Susan Wollenberg; a deep historical look at the unfinished lied-aria-scene *Gretchen im Zwinger* D. 564 by Marjorie Hirsch; a hermeneutic take on 'dramatic strategy' within *Ständchen* D. 899 ('Horch, Horch! Die Lerch!') and the later 'Ständchen', from *Schwanengesang* D. 957, again by Sobaskie; a chapter by Clive McClelland on the *tempesta* topic in Schubert's lieder; and a related essay by Susan Youens on the role of devices like the *passus duriusculus* and *saltus duriusculus* in *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus* D. 583. Part III: 'Instrumental Music' includes Anne M. Hyland's discussion of intergeneric dialogue between pre-Schubertian ballad lied approaches and instrumental formal principles in the String Quintet/String Quartet D. 8/8A; a chapter on 'lyricism and dramatic unity' in the Impromptu in C Minor, D. 899/1 by Brian Black; Xavier Hascher's rather discursive but intriguing poetic analysis and discussion of organicism in the first movement of the Piano Sonata in A Major D. 959; Lauri Suurpää's analysis of the concept of a virtual protagonist in the slow movements of Schubert's Piano Sonatas D. 958 and D. 960; and Joe Davies's chapter on stylistic disjuncture and the gothic in two slow movements, the Adagio from the String Quintet in C major D. 956, and the Andantino of the Piano Sonata in A major D. 959.

The remainder of this review focuses on some of the more innovative contributions to the volume. Christine Martin's chapter, 'Pioneering German Musical Drama: Sung and Spoken Word in Schubert's *Fierabras*', exemplifies the strong, insightful perspectives that characterize both contributions on Schubert's stage works in the book. Martin contextualizes Schubert's work on *Fierabras* in light of Viennese discussions of the direction that German opera should take during the period, including the degree to which it should build more on Italian versus French models. Before beginning work on *Fierabras* around 1823, Schubert had experimented with the 'idea of an all-sung drama' for *Alfonso und Estrella*, D. 732, composed in 1822 (p. 36). However, Schubert chose to include spoken dialogue in *Fierabras*, following contemporary conventions of the German stage. What Martin deftly shows, however, is that Schubert nevertheless worked in *Fierabras* to blur the boundaries between the

spoken and the sung through multiple innovative and effective musico-dramatic techniques. Even in purely sung numbers, Schubert gives the listener the impression of speech when relevant, drawing sometimes from his recitative writing for his ballad lieder, such as those on the poems of Ossian. Similarly, he writes music that comes close to melodrama, although the 'spoken' text usually remains technically sung. Schubert's approach thus comes across as innovative, responding to pressures to reform German opera but also to compose in light of existing conventions in an attempt to secure an immediate stage success.

Marjorie Hirsch's chapter on *Gretchen im Zwinger* D.564, '*Gretchen abbandonata: The Lied as Aria*', offers new insight into the genesis and dramatic properties of this 'other' Gretchen lied by Schubert, as well as an interesting set of speculations regarding why Schubert did not complete the work. The song is an incomplete setting of Gretchen's 'Zwinger' monologue in Goethe's *Faust*, part 1, which is based loosely on the *Stabat Mater* (Hirsch helpfully provides the reader with a textual comparison). Hirsch points out that the poetic structure of Goethe's poem inherently precludes a strophic setting, a factor which probably led Schubert to pursue the through-composed plan that he adopted. While her discussion of the lied-aria distinction does not take into account the full diversity of stage practices concerning the two genres during the period, and the intermediate genres between them, the ways in which she associates this composition with possibilities in the aria genre are fruitful. For example, she ultimately compares Schubert's aria style in this case with aspects of Gluck's approach, a musical affinity that would have been important in light of the aspirations of German opera and Schubert's own aspirations as an opera composer in that period. She concludes with very plausible speculations as to why this operatic lied remained unfinished, including the possibility that Schubert ultimately felt that it compared poorly with *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. Susan Youens's chapter, '*Re-entering Mozart's Hell: Schubert's "Gruppe aus dem Tartarus" D. 583*', focuses less on the role of genre and projected performance contexts in Schubert's more dramatic lieder, and more on other aspects of stylistic intertextuality that contribute to D. 583's effectiveness in staging its text. Youens vividly brings together Mozart's striking use of the *passus duriusculus* in *Don Giovanni* with Schubert's innovative treatment of the same device in the song, illustrating how both pieces paint divergent yet related visions of suffering in hell. This essay also delightfully preserves the conversational tone of the talk from which it was derived, a stylistic choice that, in Youens's hands, comes across as a refreshing moment in the volume.

Among the essays on instrumental music, Anne Hyland's '*"Zumsteeg Ballads without Words": Inter-Generic Dialogue and Schubert's Projection of Drama through Form*' stands out as an excellent contribution. Hyland's chapter re-evaluates aspects of Schubert's very early work for strings in light of his early engagement with ballad

lieder, especially those of Johann Rudolf Zumsteeg, and of previous orchestral music, including the orchestral overture to Luigi Cherubini's *Faniska*. Hyland calls the structural process that she sees at work in Schubert's String Quintet in C minor D. 8 (written in 1811 and later reworked as a quartet as D. 8A) as an instance of 'inter-generic dialogue', or 'the merging or interaction of features characteristic of disparate genres within a single form' (p. 205). While, as Hyland reports, Donald Tovey disparagingly called the dramatic juxtapositions of contrasting music to be found in Schubert's early instrumental works 'Zumsteeg ballads without words', Hyland reclaims this term as a way of showing how the Zumsteeg ballad model, which focuses more on a string of significantly contrasting and illustrative sections than on obvious markers of structural unity, was important not only to Schubert's own early ballad composition practices but found its way into this work for strings as well. Hyland's analytical account of the 'inter-generic dialogue' in this string work is innovative, precise, and argues convincingly for the merits and originality of this model of instrumental drama while not denying the importance that an epic-lyric model for Schubert's instrumental music can continue to have. Joe Davies's closing chapter for this section and the book, 'Stylistic Disjuncture as a Source of Drama in Schubert's Late Instrumental Works', also takes up the topic of moments of extreme stylistic contrast, in this case at points of striking rupture that have an affinity with the aesthetics of the gothic. Davies divides his chapter into an initial descriptive analytical account of the two movements under analysis, which is precise and illustrative; while some of the observations would be quite evident to attentive listeners, this section is most valuable when it brings less easily recognizable topical elements into the description. A convincing association of the analysed moments of stylistic disjuncture with the aesthetics of the gothic follows. Davies is also quick to attribute a fractured musical 'subject' to these musical utterances in Schubert's late works; while this mode of analysis certainly fits, it leaves the reader also wondering if it might be possible to describe this music as or even more effectively by leaving the language of persona behind.

These short profiles of individual chapters go some way in demonstrating the creativity and diversity of the scholarly voices and approaches in this volume. In sum, the book, which should interest musicologists, theorists, and performers alike, contains many valuable new insights into Schubert's music, an oeuvre that cannot be so easily pinned down by any traditional aesthetic category.

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