Schubert, Dance, and Dancing in Vienna, 1815-1840

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Introduction[1]

On 7 October 2009, I wrote the first entry for a blog named "Hearing Schubert D779n13." The goal was to "post and discuss a variety of readings of D779n13, not only the 32 from the Notre Dame conference ["Critical Perspectives on Schenker: Toward a New Research Paradigm," March 1994] but many others that I have generated since, a few of which were published in Neumeyer 2006" (Introduction). Ultimately, the total of readings reached ninety: see the tally here. *[Please note that this PDF document does contain some live links, which will take you out to web pages. Since the original version of this file was created in August 2012, however, I cannot guarantee that all these links in fact* are *still live.]* The idea of a menu of readings fit the broad goals of post-World War II academic criticism and analysis as they have been realized in both scholarly and pedagogical literatures. The point of the Notre Dame paper was to make more vivid through examples a critical position that had come to the fore in music theory during the course of the 1980s: a contrast between this widely accepted "diversity" standard and the closed, ideologically bound habits of descriptive and interpretative practice associated with classical pc-set analysis and Schenkerian analysis.

Blogs are inherently dynamic, and it is hardly surprising, I suppose, that the topics discussed on "Hearing Schubert" wandered off from the initial goal of a radical demonstration of music-theoretical Methodism. The principal topics of those "redirects" were two: (1) Schubert and the social environment of dancing in the early to mid-19th century; (2) form functions in music for social dancing and related listening in the same time period. I have gathered material relating to each of these in two PDF-based online publications parallel to this one; both may be downloaded from my personal website. The first of these documents is "Schubert, Dance, and Dancing in Vienna, 1815-1840." The second is "THEORY AND HISTORY OF TRADITIONAL EUROPEAN TONAL MUSIC: Formal functions for phrase, theme, and small forms, following William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford University Press, 1998), summary and examples with related information and data on dance musics and their performance in the same period."

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[1] The first two paragraphs here also open the PDF document on Carl Schachter's critique of rising lines in Schenkerian analysis; the first paragraph is also in the PDF document that gathers multiple analyses of Schubert, D779n13.

In the present PDF document I have gathered posts that are concerned with the contexts of Schubert's dance music: his playing for social dancing and the environment of his playing.

The "Hearing Schubert" [link] blog remained active from October 2009 throughout 2010, but went dormant after an entry on 13 January 2011. I have left the blog up for the sake of internet searches and assume it will remain available so long as Google supports blogspot.

The chapters given here are the individual blog entries, lightly edited to remove redundancies and to improve clarity of expression. Works cited in individual posts have been gathered into a single Reference section at the end of the document. I have left page citations as they were in the blog entries. If any confusion arises about the document being referenced, you can go back to the blog itself: the chapter titles are all live links.

Finally, please note that the order of the chapters follows a topical sequence, not the chronological sequence of blog posts. The first part concerns dancing in Vienna and dance music genres during the brief period between the Congress of Vienna and the July Revolution in France (1815-1830). The second part brings the focus down more locally to the Schubert-Kreis and Schubert's improvisation practice for dancing. Part 3 looks even more closely at some of the mechanics of that practice. Part 4, then, turns to the extant repertoire of Schubert's dances, with D779n13 as the fulcrum. Part 5 explores Robert Schumann's review of D365 and D783 and turns it back speculatively onto D779. Part 6 offers a short list of links relating to Schubert.

Table of Contents

Part 1: Dancing and Dance Genres in Vienna

Friday, January 1, 2010

Dance in Vienna circa 1820, part 1

This is the first in a series of four posts that reproduce the introduction from what was to have been the Schubert chapter in a book manuscript. The original version of this text was written nearly five years ago; a few of its details have already been updated in previous posts. As it stands, the text has been edited mainly for length.

Introduction. What Schubert found when he began composing waltzes about 1812 was not a simple, innocent country dance, as it is sometimes portrayed in an attempt to put as much distance between mass art and high art as possible. The waltz, and related turning dances, were primarily couple dances with a long history in the southern Germanophone countries. To be sure, they were still associated with rural or village settings in the early eighteenth century (Harris-Warwick) but, thanks to that association, they had appeared in pastoral settings of court theatricals as early as the seventeenth century. For their subsequent history, the decade of the 1760s was a critical juncture: figures based on the waltz were introduced into French contredanses, and it was in this context that the dance rapidly became popular throughout Europe (Nettl, "Waltz" 75). Elizabeth Aldrich attributes the addition of waltzing figures to the French contredanse to Marie Antoinette, who came to Paris in 1770 ("Social Dancing," 130-1). It is entirely possible that her influence enhanced the popularity of the *contredanse allemande*, but its figures had been in general use for at least five years before that.

By the 1790s, the waltz had thoroughly merged with the already existing middle and lower class dances. In Vienna (and elsewhere in the Austrian empire), this trajectory to a broad popularity at all levels of society was unquestionably aided by the Emperor's opening of halls controlled by him to public dances after 1772 (Litschauer, 19; Aldrich, "Social Dancing" 121). (NB: For obvious reasons, the information given here focuses on the Austrian Empire. For an excellent summary of social dancing and its contexts in Warsaw during the same period, see McKee, 107-17.)

Despite their acceptance in upperclass (including aristocratic) circles, the turning dances were regarded by some as troublesome because they were seen as sexually exciting or lascivious. There are several reasons for this concern.

First, the waltzing dances were path-breaking as the first of a long series of popular nineteenth and early twentieth century partner or couple dances. The most common form of the menuet was also a couple dance but the partners never (or rarely ever) touched one an-

other. Indeed, the opposition of the proper, stately menuet to the "uncivilized" bourgeois waltz was basic to criticism of the latter well into the nineteenth century.

Second, the ländler, with its moderate tempo and often elaborate figures with intertwining arms, had traditionally been regarded as a lovers' dance (Litschauer and Deutsch, 48-9).

Finally, and perhap most importantly, at the more rapid tempos associated with the deutscher, the two dancers needed to hold each other continuously in order to execute the whirling movements, which combined a compact turning figure requiring two bars inside larger circular movements down a linear or spherical line of dance (McKee, 123; Yaraman, 16-19).

One has to wonder whether those who criticized the waltz ever danced it themselves. At any but the slowest tempi, the two partners must keep a certain physical distance in order to execute the steps fluidly and must not look directly at each other or they will rapidly experience vertigo. In 1836, a dancing instructor named Donald Walker wrote "Vertigo is one of the great inconveniences of the waltz" (quoted in Aldrich, *Ballroom,* 154). It was not just dizziness, however, but specifically the sight of young women fainting or staggering due to vertigo that disturbed some observers and helped to give the waltz its bad reputation.

Saturday, January 2, 2010

Dance in Vienna circa 1820, part 2

The waltz, however, was protected by its very fashionableness, by the ubiquity of dancing as an element of evening entertainment in and outside the home, and by its crossing of the lines of class status. Long before 1815, when the Congress of Vienna seems to have been characterized as much by dancing as by diplomacy, the passion for dancing had swept past the occasional complaints and sporadic censorship. Litschauer and Deutsch give some idea of the remarkable extent of activity during this period, in terms of the range and character of venues, the dance's popularity among all social classes, and the intimate connection to the contemporary folkloristic movement (1-17). To the latter, they write that "the first decades of the nineteenth century distinguish themselves through an aesthetic intertwining of social dance and folk dance such as had never happened before in the history of European dance culture. The deutsche, the ländler, the schottisch, the polonaise and the mazurka, the Styrische, the Schwäbische, the Strassburgoise, the Anglaise, the Française, and the waltz are only some of the dance categories that contributed to this folkloristically vibrant era" (11; my translation).

The great public dance halls of Vienna––especially the Sperl (opened 1807) and the Apollosaal (1808)––could often hold a thousand people at a time (an astonishing six thousand in the Apollo-saal if one counts both grounds and dancehalls) and quickly became great gathering places for wealthier middle class citizens and occasionally for members of the aristocracy as well (Aldrich; Hanson, 163-7; Salmen, 98). In addition to the public venues, house balls and a wide array of private gatherings and dance parties were common and quite as

important to dance culture as they were to music—as we know, since these latter were the venues that nurtured Schubert.

We do not know if Schubert ever found his way into any of the large halls (friends certainly had the social status to facilitate this, but he is known to have disliked dressing up for social events). We do know, however, that he regularly played (though he did not dance) at house balls and parties (Deutsch, *Mem,* 121; Hanson, 152; Litschauer and Deutsch, 28, 151). (The great dividing line in Schubert's social life is early 1823, when the first symptoms appeared of the syphilis he had apparently contracted in December 1822. At first because of disfigurement, then due to true ill-health, he avoided social and public gatherings for most of 1823 and early 1824 and was active only sporadically thereafter (Bevan, 245-8, 257-8).)

Schubert was not the only performer for dancing at the balls and dance parties of his friends. Josef von Gahy was an excellent pianist who performed many of Schubert's keyboard works and sometimes substituted for Schubert. Josef von Spaun, in fact, seems to hint that Gahy's playing was esteemed better than the composer's own: "from time to time [Schubert] surprised us dancing enthusiasts with the most beautiful Deutsche Tänze and Écossaises . . . . Gahy had the knack of playing these wonderful dances with such fire that the dancers were quite electrified by them" (Deutsch, *Mem,* 133). Franz von Schober also recalls that Gahy "used to play the Schubert dances so remarkably on the piano and . . . never tired of playing, in his masterly way, for nights on end at our dances" (Deutsch, *Mem,* 207). Spaun, similarly, writes that Gahy "often sacrificed himself to the young people's dancing for whole nights at a time, bringing fire and life to the party with the wonderful Schubert dances" (Deutsch, *Mem,* 358).

These events varied in their programs but were typically constituted as some combination of dance, party, and meal(s). Examples with contemporary descriptions are cited in Litschauer and Deutsch, 23-29. Here is one from Franz von Hartmann's diary: "I went to Spaun's, where there was a big, big Schubertiade ... There was a huge gathering ... When the music was done there was grand eating and then dancing" (Deutsch, *Doc*, 571-72). If there was no dancing, participants might disperse to taverns or coffee-houses (according to Hartmann's recollections (Deutsch, *Mem,* 274), where they almost certainly heard music.

Christopher Gibbs describes the Schubertiades as

> unpublicized events devoted primarily or exclusively to his music. Usually given by the composer's more well-to-do friends and patrons (although not the high-ranking men that supported Beethoven), they offered an informal, sociable atmosphere that often included recitations, eating, drinking, and dancing. The number of participants at a Schubertiade could range from a handful to over a hundred, and their frequency varied; some years saw weekly gatherings (or more), other years saw none. (74)

All this is not to imply that Schubert's dances were strictly segregated from "concert" music: as Litschauer and Deutsch observe, "From the evidence of various diaries and memoirs [of his friends], we can deduce that [Schubert's dances] were primarily played as functional dance music, but sometimes also as performance pieces [Vortragsstücke]" (150; my translation). Hartmann recalled that, in February 1827, "there was a particularly successful dance

at Schober's, when Schubert played his beautiful 'Valses nobles'" (Deutsch, *Mem,* 276)––this set is more amenable to performance and less to dancing than any of Schubert's collections other than the posthumous *Letzte Walzer.* On the other hand, a reminiscence by Ludwig August Frankl describes an occasion where Schubert "had a great triumph. A large company was there, including the Duke of Reichstadt. [Schubert] sang and played his things. They got ready for dancing, whereupon he played and improvised waltzes; they listened, asked him to go on playing, completely forgot the dancing and so it went on till long after midnight. They departed enraptured, he likewise, the triumph had delighted him" (Deutsch, *Mem,* 265).

Postscript: In Warsaw at the same time––and to a lesser extent in Paris––Chopin served a role similar to that of Schubert at salon balls and private parties. Unlike Schubert, however, who according to accounts of several friends never danced, Chopin was a willing and expert dancer (McKee 109, 118).) To complicate matters, McKee observes that "Chopin was not only receptive to the needs of the dancers, but was also able to translate their bodily motions into an artistic musical vision. . . . Only after he left Warsaw in 1830 did Chopin begin consistently to introduce nondance elements. . . . Even so, many of Chopin's Viennese and Parisian waltzes are eminently danceable, and the distinction between functional and stylized was largely a matter of how they were used in their social context" (121).

Sunday, January 3, 2010

Dance in Vienna circa 1820, part 3

Schubert's dance compositions circulated in copies he himself made for friends (Brown, 218), and collections of his dances were published as early as 1821. He also contributed dances to "special Carnival anthologies every year from 1822 through 1828" (Hanson 155). Apart from three sets of dances for four-part strings, written in 1813-1814, Schubert left no orchestral arrangements of his dances, but the evidence that arrangements of his dances were made by others for a public casino ball in Linz in 1826 (Litschauer, 248) suggests that it is by no means impossible his waltzes and schottisches were heard in the great Viennese halls, too, as the thirst for music to accompany all-night dancing must have been extreme. (Josef Kenner, an acquaintance from Schubert's school days, writing in 1858, recalled that Schubert's waltzes were praised in Austria, though "not unanimously," but they became popular in Paris when arranged for strings (Deutsch 86).)

Still, among those generally considered to be major composers of the era, only Hummel left dances specifically identified with their use in the large halls (in his case, the Apollo-saal) (link to a page with scans of the first editions, keyboard versions). Given that the waltz collection, D 365, was the first of his compositions taken up by a commercial publisher, it seems likely that, had he lived into the 1830s, Schubert could have made a very comfortable living as a dance composer, had he chosen to do so; by then a combination of rapidly increasing venues and rising income in the middle classes made such specialized musical entrepeneurship rewarding (Otterbach, 231).

Schubert also heard the waltzes of Michael Pamer and Josef Lanner in taverns in the 1810s and 1820s––one of Schubert's favorite nighttime haunts, the Café Rebhuhn, was Lanner's base, and Schubert is said to have enjoyed the performances (Deutsch 188). On music and dancing in Viennese restaurants and taverns, see Hanson, 169-76. By contrast, it was the Sperl where, a decade later, Chopin and Wagner heard and admired the waltzes of Johann Strauss, sr.

In a moment of all-too obvious bias towards the "master composers," Paul Nettl says of Schubert that "it was he who actually introduced the Viennese waltz as a gift to the world" (261). There is little if anything in the historical evidence to support such an extravagant claim. Schubert's waltzes may have been dear to his circle of friends (Litschauer), and even known to a limited extent outside that circle, but without any doubt Schubert's contemporary Lanner is the seminal figure in the development of the Viennese waltz as it was later known, not only because of the compositions he created but also because of his influence on Johann Strauss, sr. Once Lanner split his band into two groups (in 1829), with Strauss leading one of them, Strauss's reputation grew very rapidly, and before long he was the widely acknowledged patriarch of the waltz (whose history from that point on unfolded as much in concert––and in the musical theater––as in social dance). Strauss's concerts, being more fashionable, also attracted members of the upper-middle class (Weber, 110; Gartenberg, 95).

Monday, January 4, 2010

Dance in Vienna circa 1820, part 4

The waltz's second wave of popularity in Vienna in the first decades of the nineteenth century did not need to cover a trajectory from lower-to-middle class entertainment to middle-to-upper class entertainment–instead, it added the powerful influence of a new middle-class consumer culture to move from the beer garden and dance hall to open-air and promenade concerts by 1830 and also to the musical stage, both comic and serious. As Donald Tovey puts it, "Let us not forget that this dance music is no dream of Utopia, but was a bourgeois reality in Vienna [in the early nineteenth century]" (27). (Tovey is actually referring to German dances by Mozart [K.567 and 601], but he muddles the two generations of the waltz's early popularity by mixing Mozart with Schubert and Carl Maria von Weber.)

Vienna, alone among the major capitols of Europe, in fact, maintained both dancing and listening at promenade concerts and similar events throughout the century (Weber 112-13). Miriam Hanson also observes that "The great demand for new dance music . . . promoted competition and experimentation that contributed to the high quality and unique character of the classical Viennese waltz. Around 1830, . . . the suburban dance halls and restaurants fostered . . . a music which clearly reflected the city's predominantly bourgeois taste" (168).

In the following, William Weber is referring to concerts and similar musical performances, but the same was certainly true of dancing:

> after the end of the Napoleonic wars a new era began in the history of the concert world, one in which the middle class began taking on dramatic new roles. . . . [By] the early 1830s the concert life of [London, Paris, and Vienna] exhibited similar dramatic growth, and by 1848 a commercial concert world had emerged in each city, over which the middle class exerted powerful, if not dominant, control (6-7).

In the reminiscence below, a contemporary observer, Heinrich Laube, gives a particularly vivid account of the dancing segment of a Strauss concert at the Sperl in 1833. It is important to remember that these were complex events, not merely music played to serve social dancing, and that these "garden concerts" became the model for similar events throughout Europe. Dance music was played at times for listening, at times for dancing, and audiences also heard potpourris, special-effects compositions (such as battle pieces), opera overtures, and what today would be considered "concert music": "Next to the Zauberflöte Overture stood the Annen-Polka, and after the orchestrated Adagio of the Sonata Pathétique a waltz by Lanner, Fahrbach or Ziehrer" (Schönherr, 187).

> Now preparations for the actual dance are made. To keep the unrestrained crowd in line, a rope is spanned . . . to separate the dancers from the rest. But this border is constantly fluctuating and yielding; only the rhythmically whirling heads of the girls are noticeable in that dancing stream. In bacchantic abandon the pairs waltz . . . joyful frenzy is on the loose, no god checks it . . . The beginning of each dance is characteristic. Strauss intones his trembling preludes, longing to pour forth fully . . . the Viennese girl snuggles deep in her lad's arm, and in the strangest way they sway to the beat. For a long while one hears only the long-held breast tones of the nightingale with which she begins her song and enchants the listeners, then suddenly the piercing trill bubbles forth, the dance itself begins with whirling rapidity and the couples hurl themselves into the maelstrom of gaiety. (Gartenberg 98)

By 1840, dance masters might still encourage health officers to intervene when "inexperienced youth" danced too quickly (Litschauer, 7-8), but almost all other trace of criticism was gone, and the way was paved for the eminently middle-class couple dancing of the polka, which quickly joined (and for a time nearly replaced) the waltz in the first years of that decade. Addressing himself to young composers, the very respectable Carl Czerny could write matter-of-factly that "the unparalleled favor which Waltzes have obtained throughout the world, has arisen from their cheerful, exhilarating and universally intelligible character." But the compositional pedagogue could not resist locating some plane of disapproval, which he shifts to matters of taste: "the circumstance that only few composers have yet distinguished themselves in this branch, is a proof that, even for this, talent and a just apprehension of all that the public especially prefers are required" (1:101). Czerny's deprecating "even for this" reminds us that the light music/serious music opposition was forged in its modern sense during the early nineteenth century. The waltz–and the venues in which it was played and danced–was very much a part of that process. Friedemann Otterbach examines the social and philosophical contexts of this process in detail (215-257; especially 220 ff.). See also David Gramit's comments on the dance in the context of the

early nineteenth century establishment of the "serious concert" as a privileged venue (131-3).

Tuesday, January 5, 2010

Postscript to Dance in Vienna

This is a postscript to Part 1 of the historical series completed yesterday. This was originally a very long footnote to the first sentence: “What Schubert found when he began composing waltzes about 1812 was not a simple, innocent country dance, as it is sometimes portrayed in an attempt to put as much distance between mass art and high art as possible.”

The literature has many examples of the damage done to style studies of nineteenth century and twentieth century music when mass art is ignored, but Leonard Meyer offers a particularly egregious instance that makes the point with unusual clarity. Meyer examines "the fortunes of the cadential 6/4 progression[,] tracing its rise and demise" (250). In the course of this, he points to the familiar notion of Romantic ideology as favoring the anti-conventional, and thus he says, quite plausibly, that Romantic values, which favored endings that are "gradual, continuous, and open," militate against such a clichéd and emphatic ending gesture as the cadential 6/4:

The very sonic salience that made the cadential 6/4 progression such a forceful signal made it seem routine and commonplace–a bit blatant. This is one reason why, as the years passed, the cadential 6/4 progression was less and less frequently chosen by composers (248). Meyer's statistics come from pieces included in *The Norton Scores* anthology (a pedagogical collection), and his conclusions, although broadly correct for the repertoires involved (if one ignores Brahms and Bizet), are nevertheless useless as generalizations about all the musics of the period concerned. Meyer claims that, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, "[t]he cadential 6/4 progression . . . continued to be used in popular music and in the music of somewhat conventional composers" (250). It was employed "by composers of a more adventurous kind" only for special purposes.

It is true that Johann Strauss, jr., for one, was quite fond of the cadential 6/4 (and often displayed it prominently, stretched over several bars): my own quick survey shows that the ten strains in five waltzes use this chord 4, 8, and 6 times, respectively, in opuses 314, 325, and 340. Schubert, on the other hand, rarely used it in his dances: for example, in the waltzes of D. 779, nine times in 68 strains; in D. 681, only once in 16 strains; in the ecossaises of D. 421, 511, and 529 combined, ten times in 30 strains; in D. 781, three times in 22 strains. Johann Strauss, sr., was equally disdainful of the cadential 6/4: there are twelve appearances in the forty strains of opuses 201, 213, 218, and 230, combined. Josef Lanner was even more parsimonious: six appearances in sixty strains for the five opuses 19, 20, 40, 42, and 46.

Thus the dance repertoire completely upends Meyer's claim: in fact, the Romantic "extinction" of the 6/4 had already occurred in this popular music by the early 1820s. The chord had to be *restored* in the music of the mid-century, in the case of the younger Strauss, probably because of the space provided by longer sixteen and thirty-two bar strains, but equally also because of the greater volume and dramatic effect, useful in music for the larger orchestras and venues for which Strauss normally composed.

Sunday, April 11, 2010

more from Wilmot on dancing

Here are three more excerpts from Martha Wilmot's Letters concerning dancing. The first and second come from early in their time in Vienna.

> The Spanish Ambassador's ball: The Empress did not arrive till late, that is, till half past nine. After sitting a few moments [she] rose, and followed by her Grande Maitresse and Grand Maitre, she went thro' the assembly room, talking to everybody. How those high people contrive to find something appropriate to say to so many is my astonishment, and She seems to be quite gifted in this way. When she had talked to almost everyone she proceeded to the ball room. Then begun the waltzes. There were not many dancers, except the Court, but if they were not glittering Waltzes never did I see any. . . . The Imperial party retired at eleven, and then begun the fun of the natives, who danced more freely with their equals. (46)

To her sister-in-law, January 1820:

> I dare say you imagine us very frisky people, eternally gadding abroad, but you are mistaken if you do, for on an average I think we are 4 or five Evenings out of the seven quietly at home, but when we do go, tis something to make a figure in a letter, for example, the English and French Ambassadors balls, which we have attended, both of which were uncommonly brilliant, gay, and agreeable. One country dance is always danced, and then Waltzes and quadrilles only.

And, finally her account of Carneval season 1825:

> All the balls that are given in the course of the year are given during the Carnival, which begins the 1st January and ends Ash Wednesday. This year the Archbishop would not allow it to begin so soon, and it lasted not quite 5 weeks. While it lasts the young people almost dance themselves to death, and then the last thing is a Ridout [Redoute], where the cram and mob is suffocating, the dancing and music maddening. Twelve O'Clock strikes! It announces the arrival of Ash Wednesday! The music makes a sudden stop, the sudden pause and quiet which follows is awful-it lasts a moment, when the buzz which succeeds is worse than the honest ball music and noise. . . .
> I do not enter much into the gaietys of the Carnival. You must know that nothing would be easier than for us to go to a ball or two every night, but as our dancing days are over and our childrens dancing days are not come, the stupidity from want of

> interest is very great, and the expence of dressing very great likewise, added to which [my husband] William dislikes it, and in a wicked town like this I ought to be too happy that his home is his favorite ball room. . . . But my grand delight was the Opera. . . . I have been at 7 or 8 Operas this year and they are allowed to be the very best filled up opera's in Europe, as all the performers are excellent and 2 or three quite first rate. [Our daughter] Catharine begins to enjoy an Opera and a concert, so I take her to form her taste.

Saturday, April 10, 2010

Style topics in D145n7

In this entry, I wrote about the topical contrast in the first strain and contrasting middle of D145n7:

A simple diatonic mediant move (effecting the transformation R twice) is aligned with formal design in an early ternary waltz that also happens to contrast Ländler and deutscher traits (the former in the main theme, the latter in the contrasting middle) using sharp dynamic contrast to make the point unmistakably.

"Deutscher" here was a bit too confident -- I was relying on expressive and functional distinctions that often appear in and between Schubert's dances. First, recall that "deutscher" was a relatively broad category referring -- especially very early in the nineteenth century -- to all the waltzing dances. It was, in effect, the German "back-translation" of the French appellation from the 1760s, *allemande* (in *contredanse allemande*).

Second, "deutscher" was used more narrowly for music that had the processional (that is, somewhat formal) character of the menuet; by 1810, it was often impossible to tell the two apart -- to a composer, the deutscher was often just a menuet with few of that genre's long-since-clichéd gestures. It was the contrast between the processional "waltz" (deutscher) and the romantic couple dance of the Ländler that was clearly meaningful to Schubert and that I was relying on.

But, third, the foot-stamping segments of a folk dance could also be represented along with the drone instrument (bagpipe, Dudelsack, etc.) that accompanied folk (rural) dancing well into the nineteenth century (Petermayr, 83-84).

In other words, here Schubert is offering us two very different sides of his tune: as sweet Ländler in the first strain, but probably as accompaniment to rural *stampfen* thereafter, not to a more refined urban processional dance.

In the course of this, he might even have been duplicating the contrasting segments of rural or lower-class group dancing. Petermayr quotes a description of such dancing from later in the century (NB: the segments are marked by numbers in square brackets):

The string players have tuned their instruments and begun to play dance music in three-quarter time with their characteristically piercing tones, while they stamp their feet in duple time. [1] The dancers don't hold back: pair on pair they step into the line of dance and go some steps forward, following the beat, man and woman side by side (specifically, with the woman on the outside). [2] Then they grasp hands and make several turns [or figures [the word is *Schwenkungen*]], so that the woman appears briefly on the inside then again on the outside of the line. Then both raise their arms high above their heads and the woman turns herself once under the man's arm. [3] Then both settle back [to side-by-side position] and execute several figures, as before. [4] Again the arms go up and the woman turns quickly twice, so that her skirts swirl upward and out. [5] Each couple then embraces [that is, takes a clasping hold] and turns waltzing in a circle. [6] Again the couples settle back, but now the dancers move forward stomping on the floor so vigorously that the windows shake and the dust rises. While doing this they clap hands in time, call out, and sing in chorus the powerful, not easily forgotten "Schnadahüpfl" [also known as "Vierzeiler" -- commonly known bits of verse, sometimes nonsense]. [When all this is done,] the couples change, as each woman moves forward up the line to the next man, and the whole sequence begins again. This is repeated as often as there are dancing couples, so that at the end each man has his original partner. (94-95; trans.)

48.-49. D779n13 rewritten as a Ländler and as a deutscher blog post; blog post .

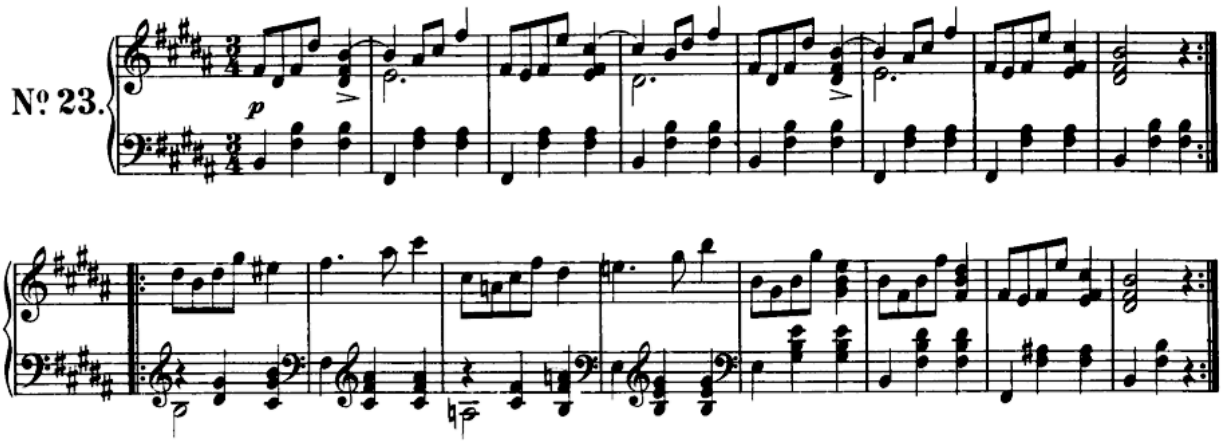
Friday, December 18, 2009

Ländler and deutscher, part I

The *Ländler* can be specifically located as a folk or common dance at least as early as 1700. Its music was strongly violinistic, very simple in its harmonic construction, and relatively slow in tempo (Litschauer, XI). Sometimes used as a wedding dance for couples, it featured figures with intertwining arms (the more sophisticated urban salon version in the "Strassburger" of the late 18th and early 19th centuries is shown in this blog's logo graphic). [added 5-19-10: Walter Deutsch notes that the "Strassburger" was a favorite dance in French cities in the first decades of the 19th century [56].] These figures were so characteristic that they gave the name to the *contredanse allemande* in the 1760s, not any specific style of music. In the dance manual of Bacquoy-Guidon (1785), for example, two pieces of music are labeled "contredanse allemande": one is in 2/4 meter, the other in 3/8. The meters and tempi are described on p. 47 of the manual.

And the *Ländler* figures have a deep history--the *Ländler* number in the film version of *Sound of Music* shows elegant and romantic uses (though the tempo is a bit fast). As little as five years ago Laura and I learned many of the figures in connection with the Texas two-step, the Cajun jig, and even the slower versions of six-beat swing.

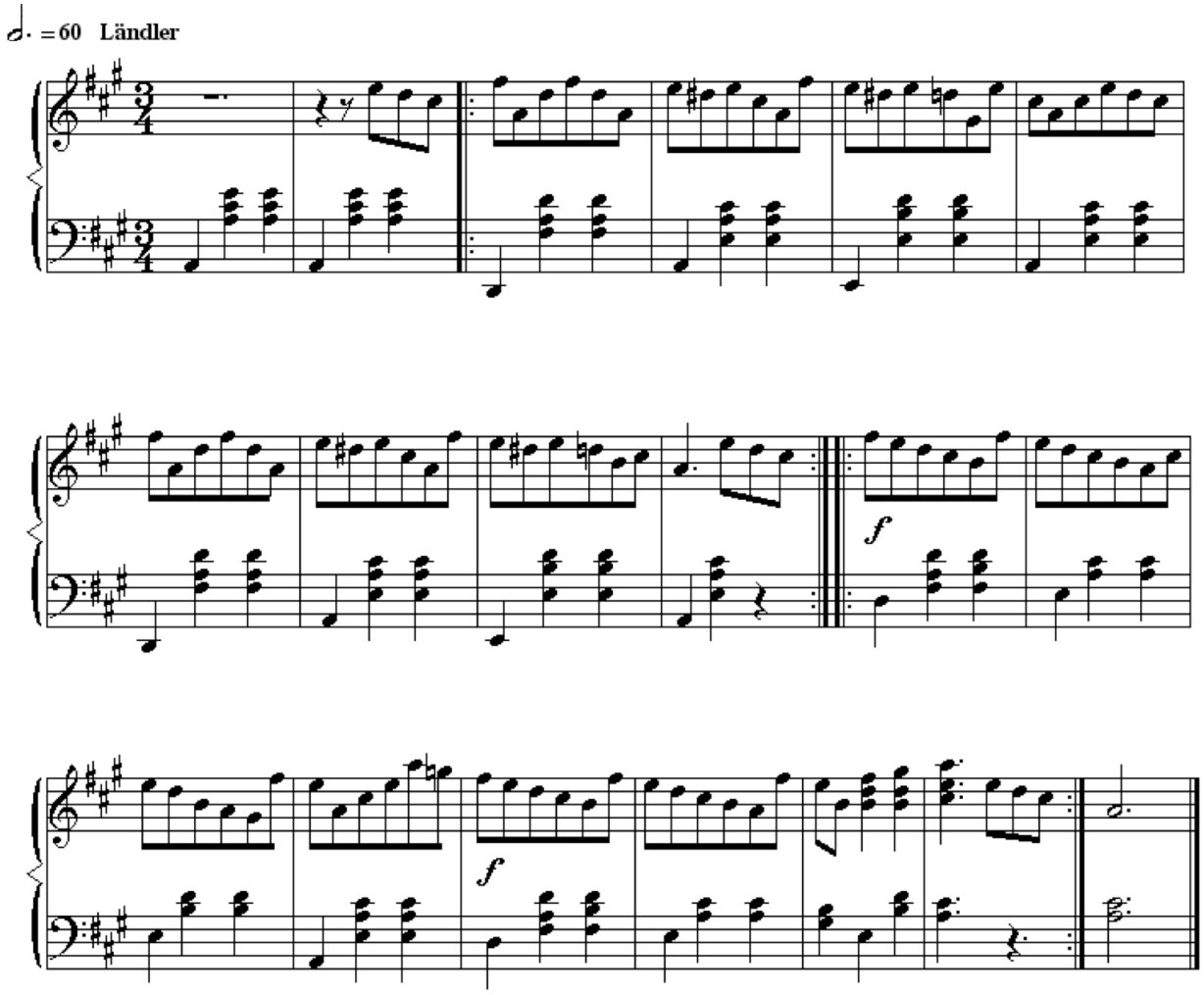
In general, one finds stereotypical early 19th century Ländler styles more often in Schubert's early dances. Here is D365n23:



In the graphic below I have rewritten D779n13 as a *Ländler*.

The manner of dancing during this time period was flexible, but according to Walburga Litschauer, the most common format was for couples to dance for a while in *Ländler*-style, then close the dance with a waltz (that is, going about the room along line of dance doing the repetitive turning figures, or *walzen,* that we associate with the later waltz) (XI). (By this time, practices varied in different cities, but in Vienna the familiar waltz developed by "breaking off" (Litschauer) from its role as ending promenade to become an independent dance.) Among variants: couples might dance for a certain period, then join a larger group for a square or round-dance figure, then break apart again into couples, often with a different partner. Some versions of the dance involved the traditional hopping figures of rustic or pastoral dances, or -- in the cruder versions -- stamping of the feet.

> "The *Ländler* was already taken seriously by Viennese society [in the early 1790s]. By 1818 one can trace several variants of this middle-class dance in the repertoire of upper-class house balls, where it was often danced in rural costumes. Because of the decorative character of the arm figures, the 'Steierische' enjoyed great popularity at these festivities." (Litschauer & Deutsch, 50; my translation).



Here are links to two pages with the scores for characteristic (old-fashioned) *Ländler* by Beethoven: WoO11; WoO15.

Saturday, December 19, 2009

Ländler and deutscher, part II

The *deutscher Tanz*, or just *Deutscher*, is harder than the *Ländler* to pin down. It was probably a generic term for German dancing styles in the later 18th century -- Mozart's sets of *deutsche Tänze*, K. 509, 600, 602, 605, and 606, for example, include music that sounds in some cases like simplified (or metrically unsubtle) menuets, in others like *Ländler*, and in still others like 3/4-meter versions of contredanses. By Schubert's time, there was very little difference between menuet and *deutscher*. It was only after Schubert's death that the familiar, stereotyped form of the waltz arose, mostly thanks to the efforts of Lanner and Strauss, sr., in the 1830s and 1840s. It was also during that period that the title *deutscher* disappeared in favor of *Walzer*.

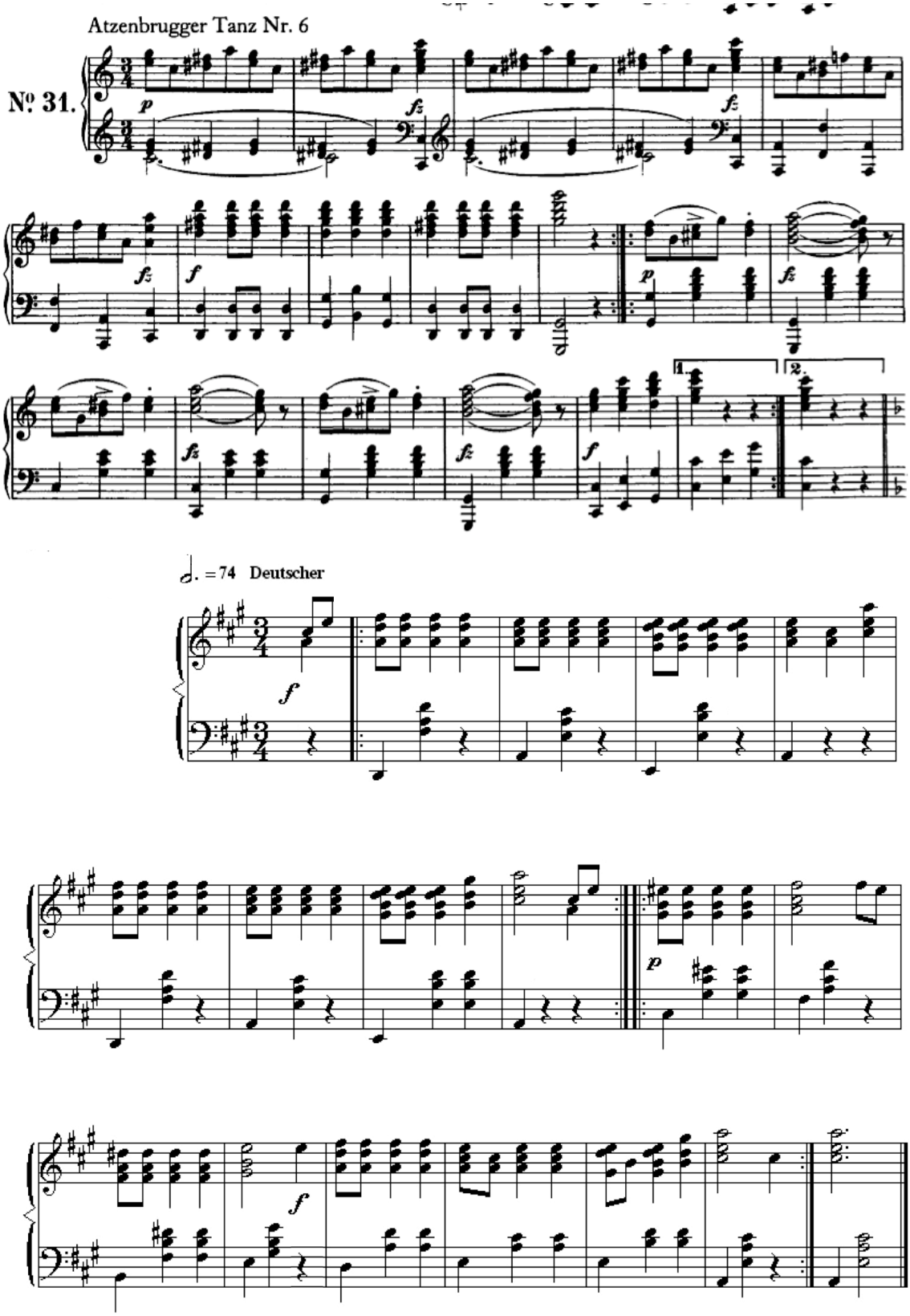
From the vantage point of the late 1820s, the "Strauss waltz" is essentially a sped-up *Ländler* -- very probably it would be most familiar to someone at that time as the "waltz" that typically closed a dance (Litschauer, XI). Before 1830, however, the *deutscher* was danced in much the same way as the *Ländler*: a promenade onto and around the room, a series of dance figures for couples, and a concluding "waltz" around the room along a line of dance (Litschauer, X). The only real difference was tempo.

If there is anything like a "typical" deutscher around 1820, D365n31 fits it [first graphic below]. Note the rhythmic variety in melodic gestures and accents, the occasional but by no means obligatory use of the oom-pah left hand figure, and the processional "tutti" passages. Also consider how easy it would be to recast this as a menuet in the style of Haydn or Mozart.

In the [second] graphic below, I have rewritten D779n13 as a *deutscher*. The tempo is marked as faster than the *Ländler* version in yesterday's post; if an entire dance was to be done in the circular turns we now associate with the waltz, the music would most likely be a *deutscher*.

Note that the actual D779n13 is neither typical *Ländler* nor typical *deutscher*. Perhaps one of the reasons for its distinctive charm--and motivation for either Schubert or the publisher to include it in D 779--is exactly that exquisite balance of types that would still have been familiar to an audience in the early 1820s.

The history sketched in these two posts is sufficient to the purpose here. It should be understood, however, that any history combining music and dance will be complicated, in this case all the more so because social dance fashions changed by the decade throughout the period in question, or roughly 1760-1840. Beyond this caveat, the one point I would like to emphasize is that histories of dance musics can never be written adequately -- or, in my view, with even minimal plausibility -- in isolation from the dance.


Atzenbrugger Tanz Nr. 6
№ 31.
Deutscher

Saturday, April 17, 2010

Litschauer and Deutsch on the Ländler

Here is a free and partial translation from the section on choreography of the Ländler (48-51):

About the dance performance of the Ländler during the Biedermeier period there remains considerable ambiguity. [Like the Deutscher,] the genre title Ländler represents a category encompassing both the so-called "almeric" (alpine) couple dances ("Steirische," "Wickler" "Schuhplattler") and the "ländlerisch" (rural) group dances. We can say with certainty only that the Ländler is a figure-dance for whose performance a moderate tempo is assumed.

Ernst Hamza has noted that the Ländler originally was a couple dance in which "the individual dance couples...had a large individual space at their disposal." The rich choreography of the almeric dances was (and still is) characterized by a number of figures with embracing movements, so that this Ländler type often appears as a lovers' dance. One can infer from dance illustrations in the Biedermeier period that similar arm figures were also typical of social dance, where in fact they were integrated into not the Ländler but [the urban dance most directly derived from it,] the "Straßburger." [the figures in this blog's logo are illustrations of this dance]

[The Ländler was apparently already being danced in Viennese society as early as 1790.] Around 1818 one can trace several variants of this dance in the repertoire of middle class house balls, where it was often danced in rural costumes. Because of the decorative character of the arm figures, the "Steierische" enjoyed great popularity at these festivities.

In the dance instruction manuals of the early 19th century the Ländler is usually called a "Länderer" and its figures are labeled "Ländern."

Sunday, April 18, 2010

On the Laendler in D734

Here is another passage from Litschauer and Deutsch (39; trans.):

> Among Schubert's dances in triple meter are about 130 Ländler, composed between 1815 and 1826 and by and large preserved in manuscript sources. In contrast to the schottisches, german dances, and waltzes, however, the Ländler do not appear among Schubert's albumleaves or dedication compositions, and thus it is not suprising that these dances are rarely mentioned by the composer's friends and acquaintances. Furthermore, as two journal entries by Franz von Hartmann indicate, Ländler were commonly confused with German dances. (In both instances, the reference is to Schubert's "16 Ländler, opus 67" D734, which were published by Diabelli in December 1826 under the title "Hommage aux belles Viennoises: Wiener-Damen-Ländler.")

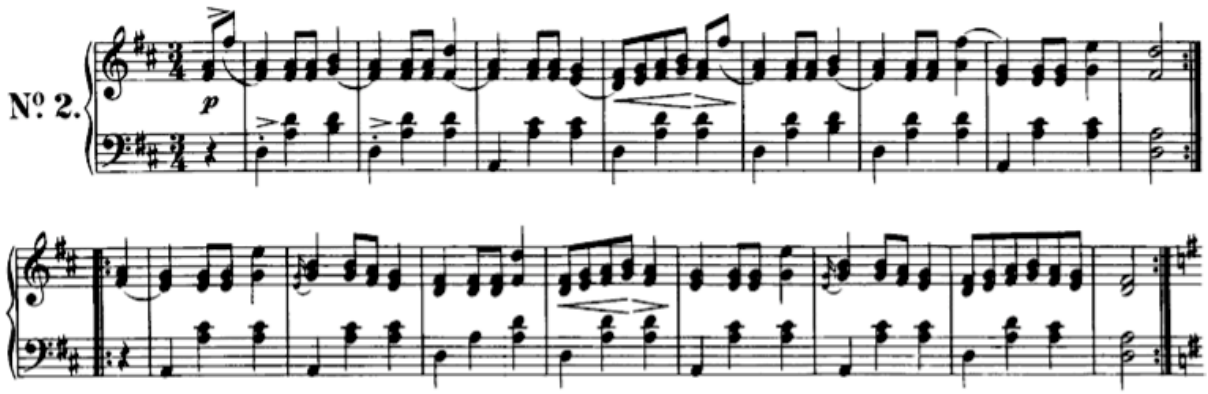
> 17 December 1826 (Sunday): By Spauns, where Gahy played brand-new Schubert German dances (with the title "homage to the belles of Vienna," which made Schubert quite angry).
>
> 6 January 1827: We went to Spauns, where we were invited, along with Gahy, to breakfast. . . . then Gahy played two superb sonatas by Schubert and the German dances that had enchanted us so at M on the 17th.

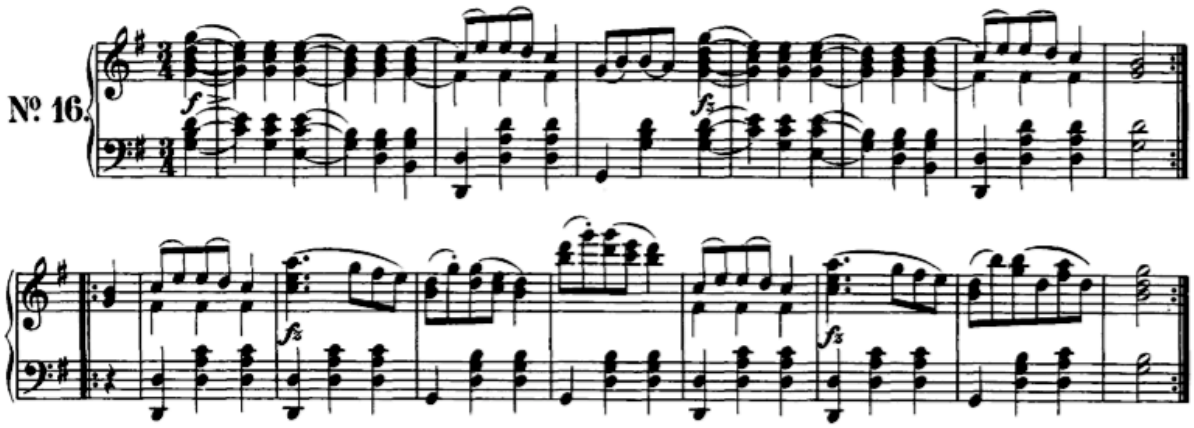
Hartmann probably should have known better, as few collections outside the first dozen or so numbers in D365 and D779 represent the Ländler style more consistently, but in his defense we should remember that Deutscher was not only the genre title for a particular group of dances and their musics, but also the family name for all "waltzing" dances.

Several points can be made about D734, many of them reminders of earlier posts:

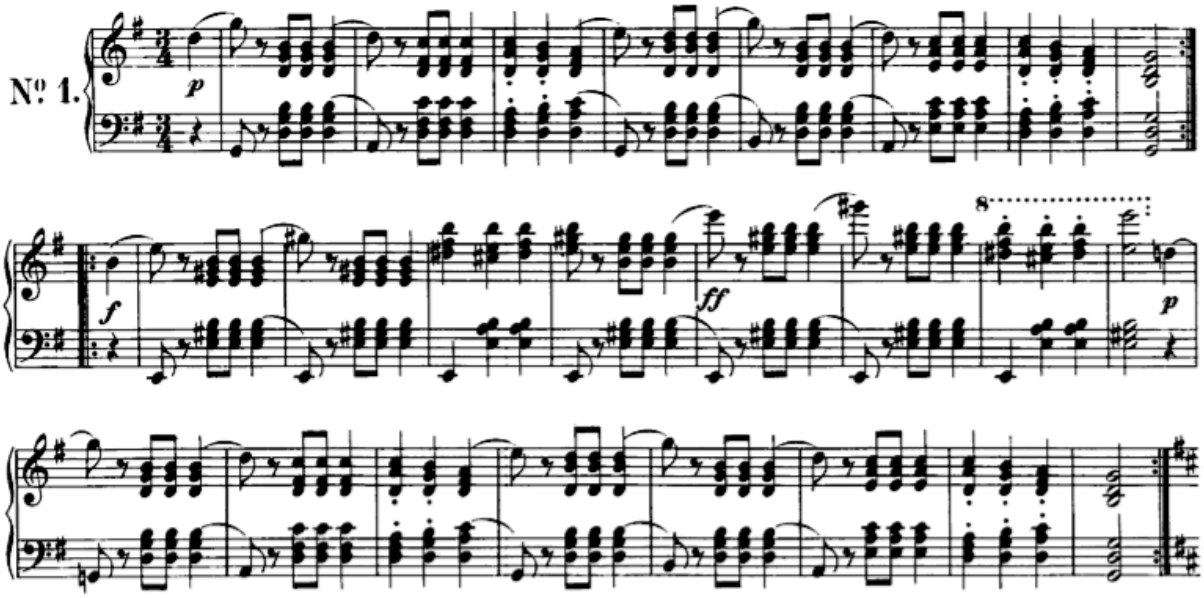
(1) the boundary between Ländler and Deutscher was always fuzzy with respect to musical style in the urban dance cultures, being reduced by the 1820s to sweeter/quieter/slower (Ländler) versus formal/louder/faster (Deutscher).

(2) in dancing, the types were often intermingled to fit alternations between couple and group dancing. In D734, for instance, n2 comes as close as any Schubert dance to realizing the type of the rural Ländler in the late 18th century: D major, I and V only, violinistic melody with many third doublings. But n16 is clearly a Deutscher that would accompany the obligatory processional that ended an extended dance/cotillion.





(3) the "sweeter/quieter/slower" criterion is muddied by imitations of the Schnadahüpfl episodes in rural dancing. This alternation is clearly at work in D734n1: the first eight bars of Ländler are interrupted by the same music abruptly transformed into a loud, drone-accompanied Schnadahüpfl, then the Ländler returns. Remember that this is also what happens -- down to the direct mediant key shifts -- in D779n13 and D145n7.



Wednesday, March 3, 2010

Performance designs for dances

------- COPIED TO CAPLIN PDF -------
It is important to understand that there is no such thing as a single, fixed form for the performance of a series of dances -- indeed, not even a fixed context or environment. This fluidity or variability is reflected in the following (repeated from an earlier post):

A reminiscence by Ludwig August Frankl describes an occasion where Schubert "had a great triumph. A large company was there, including the Duke of Reichstadt. [Schubert] sang and played his things. They got ready for dancing, whereupon he played and improvised waltzes; they listened, asked him to go on playing, completely forgot the dancing and so it went on till long after midnight. They departed enraptured, he likewise, the triumph had delighted him" (Deutsch, 265)
All that having been said, here are typical designs for dance performances, all but the first being appropriate either to dancing or listening.
1. *the "jewel"* -- a single dance performed on its own for listening.
2. *dance-trio (ABA)*. Very common, of course, in sonatas and symphonies. In J. N. Hummel, *Tänze,* op. 39, Menuets 1, 3-6. Scanned first editions are available through IMSLP. In Schubert: each of the numbers in 20 Menuets, D41; D139; D146nn1, 4-11, 20; D334; D336; D769?

3. *alternativo (ABAB)*. Of his *Deutsche Tänze,* K. 509, Mozart said: "Each German dance has its trio or rather 'alternativo' - after the 'alternativo' the dance is repeated, then comes the 'alternativo' again; it then goes via the introduction into the next dance."

4. *double trio (ABABA or ABACA)*. In Hummel, *Tänze,* op. 39, Menuet 2. In Schubert: each of the numbers in D91; D146n3; D335; D380nn1, 2.

5. *extended trio design (ABACADA...)*. In Hummel, *Tänze,* op. 39, Deutscher 1 (4 trios), 2 (5 trios), 3 (4 trios), 4 (3 trios, the last being a vocal number). In Schubert: any number of these groupings may be embedded in the larger collections (Neumeyer 1997, 2006, and citations there).

6. *extended trio design with reprises and also recurrent trios (ABACABA or ABACADABA, etc.)*. See the note to item 5 above.

7. *extended trio design with multiple dance- trio segments (ABACDC . . . or ABACADCEC . . ., etc.)*. See the note to item 5 above.

8. *fixed chain designs*, such as the quadrille (ABCDE-[coda] or ABCDEF-[coda]).

9. *extended but informal chain designs*, such as the *Ländler* sequence or Lanner/Strauss waltz set (often as introduction-ABCDE-coda or introduction-ABCDEF-coda). In Schubert: possibly the 12 Wiener Deutsche, D128 (because of its introduction and plausible key sequence); also see the note to item 5 above.

10. *"free" chains of dances*, wholly informal or organized by the dancers as a cotillon. See the note to item 5 above.

Wednesday, May 19, 2010

Dance venues in Vienna

This updates the four summary posts on dancing in Vienna during Schubert's lifetime: post #1.

Margit Legler and Reinhold Kubik offer a concise list of the major public dance venues in 19th-century Vienna (91-92).
Der Sperl: correctly, "Zum Sperlbauer," after the name of the first owner of the inn (opened 1701). A public dancehall and gardens with a performing pavilion were added in 1807, and the venue quickly became a favorite local destination. It was drastically remodelled in 1839 and retained its popularity for another 30 years; it was torn down in 1873.
Zur goldenen Birne, started in 1702, was remodelled in 1801, including the addition of a large dancehall, which became known as the "Wiener Annentempel."
Apollosaal, built in 1807 and opened in time for Carneval 1808. In addition to a great dancehall, the site had smaller halls and rooms, grottos, etc., along with an orchestral performance area in the shape of a small hill. As many as 8000 visitors could be accommodated. Perhaps in part because of its size, which had the disadvantage of an unwieldly complexity, the venue suffered an unstable, shifting history, finally burning down in 1876 after being turned into a textile factory.
Dianabad opened in 1804 and was extensively remodelled in 1829-30, its special trait being a swimming area that could be converted into a dancehall for the winter (!). The leading dance orchestras played here. The building was rebuilt in 1893, and suffered severe damage in 1945.
The other venues in Legler and Kubik's list were all opened after Schubert's death: *Dommayers Kasino* (1833-1907), *Sophienbad* (1838-2002), *Kettenbrückensaal* (1840-1904), and *Odeonsaal* (1844-1848).
In the same volume, Andrea Harrandt discusses the professional activities of Johann Strauss, sr., during the Carneval season. She reproduces two page-long lists of his engagements, for 1840 and 1846, respectively (139, 142). Between 11 January and 3 March, 1840, Strauss's band had well over 40 appearances, on weekends often more than one in a day. The venues: Sperl, 36 times; Dommayer, 11 times. In 1846, between 11 January and 24 February: Sperl 35 times; Sophienbad, 7; Odeon, 6; Redoutensäle, 4. The tables, unfortunately, don't quite agree with Harrandt's text: for 1846, Strauss is said to have played for 31 balls at the Sperl, and three days a week for the afternoon "Konversation" [see more on this below] in the Volksgarten (143) -- that would make a total of 49 engagements at the Sperl alone. In any case, the number is remarkable, and certainly corroborates statements about the intense dance-oriented social activity of the Carneval season in Vienna.

[added 5-26-10: A more extensive list can be found in the work catalogue edited by Schönherr and Reinöhl (343-53). The list covers the years 1827-1849. The book is structured as an annotated chronological list, somewhat in the manner of Franz Mailer's Strauss [jr], but the annotations are generally more contextual or anecdotal than focused on the individual work at hand. Early on, they identify the "Konversation" (alternate names: soirée, Reunion, among others) as a fashionable entertainment in Viennese venues, distinguished by the performance of quite varied types of music and sometimes including magic and similar acts. The sessions finished with some dancing (15-16). Except for the dancing, these sound remarkably similar to vaudevilles at the end of the century.]

Part 2: Dancing in the Schubert Circle

Tuesday, March 30, 2010

The Sound of Dancing

In an earlier post on the geography of dancing (that is, the physical spaces in which Schubert improvised/played dance music) I wrote the following:

The distinct timbres of the three main registers on contemporary pianofortes would be audible nearby, less so on the dance floor, where the swishing of clothes and muffled swish-slide of light cloth dancing shoes would mingle with the music.
Since writing that sentence, I have been wondering about those shoes. I wrote "light cloth dancing shoes" (that is to say, shoes of a fabric, shape, and weight similar to modern ballet slippers) because those are recognized as the standard from historical sources (dance instruction manuals and iconography). Here is a close-up from the rightmost couple in my logo graphic. This comes from 1808 and so can reasonably be regarded as typical at least into the early 1820s, and the dancers are dressed in a way that corresponds to the social class of Schubert and his friends.

A dance party (house ball) was not like a Clara Schumann recital -- strictly ordered, staid, and quiet. And since one of the few predictable elements would have been the alternation between dancing and eating/drinking, one has to ask whether the participants changed their shoes from one to the other. Given the protocols for dress, it would seem uncouth (or else youthfully rebellious) to wear dancing slippers while eating and talking. *If* Schubert's friends took the time to change their shoes, that action would would have affected the timing and process of the dancing and therefore also of Schubert's playing: it would necessarily articulate or "formalize" the dancing -- setting a particular dance segment off, as when a modern dance band takes a break. For Schubert, the inclination to group his waltzes by

some (any) sort of connecting logic would have increased at least as much as with the "endless cotillions." In fact, perhaps more so, as he would have had more opportunity to organize distinct, small sets in the dance-trio(s) mould.

Friday, April 9, 2010

The Sound of Dancing: update

The answer to the question posed in the previous post (Did Schubert's friends change shoes for dancing?) appears to be: No. Lightweight shoes, often without heels, were the fashion. (Whether they were always of cloth, or could be of leather, is unclear.) Sturdy covering boots and shoes were worn when going outdoors. Buxman: "fashion [in shoes] changed -- throughout the first half of the nineteenth century one used flat footwear, shoes with cross straps, cloth shoes or boots" (185; translated).

Here are two details from Viennese drawings, the first from 1816, and other from 1827.

We can assume a consistent style of dress in Vienna through the period of Schubert's adulthood, as Parisian fashions were dropped in 1815 (Congress of Vienna; end of the Napoleonic Wars) and then almost as quickly adopted again in 1830 (July Revolution).

Writing about Carneval 1826, Martha Wilmot (Mrs. William Bradford) describes in great detail a rather unusual costume ball that consisted of 12 very elaborate walking tableaux (she does not mention dancing but as she labels some of the tableaux "quadrilles" it is likely they danced as well as marched). In the paragraph about her own dress, she mentions "white satin shoes and broad flat pink saddle bows" (239). After the final tableau, however, general dancing started, and all characters, classes, and ages intermingled, in the most informal manner of the contredanse. At 2:00am a supper was served. The party was given by the British ambassador; Wilmot was the spouse of the embassy chaplain. (She reports that by request of the Emperor the entire series of tableaux was repeated in the palace the following evening and "the quadrilles for want of dancing Masters as Heralds to guide them, got into . . . glorious confusion" (240); also that "after the Imperial family had seen the quadrilles there was a little dancing in the Crown Prince's Apartment" (241).

Wilmot also mentions dancing in the context of a typical day for the children and their governess. (Wilmot, Blanche, and Catharine are the Bradfords' three children.) Note particularly the promenade (the polonaise) that offers the characteristic formal close to a session of dancing (equivalent to the procession of couples waltzing about the room to a deutscher Tanz).

The governess "makes both Wilmot and Blanche say lessons twice a day, in french, then she can practice them in dancing, teach work, and superintend . . . their [dancing and] other Masters. She dresses them for dessert, and comes in with them. After sitting about half an hour, I get up and announce a ball; [the governess] then waltzes with Catharine while I play some excellent waltzes that I have got. Then she waltzes with Blanche, (in fun) who will be an exquisite dancer, the little manner of her in setting about it is so admirable. The Squire has his turn [and] when this is ended [he] leads out one in a polonaise, the others follow, and so they proceed to the nursery--after which they sup, tell stories, and the two youngest go to bed. (83)

Alas, this report is from September 1820, before Schubert's D365 was published, but as the Bradfords remained in Vienna till 1829, it is entirely possible that she "got" music of his and played it at some later time -- she reports that the family always had a (rented) pianoforte in the house.

[note added 5-19-10: the longevity of the polonaise as a formal or processional dance is attested by Barbara Boisit's reproduction of the sequence of dances (*Tanzordnung*) for the first ball of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* (1830): the evening was divided into two halves with an hour's rest inbetween -- the first was polonaise, waltz, waltz, cotillon and galop, waltz; the second shuffled the dances but kept the formal dance at the head: polonaise, waltz, cotillon and galop, waltz, cotillon and galop (158, illustration). The same organization's ball for 1847 was considerably more complex, but still placed the polonaise at the beginning of the first part: polonaise, waltz, waltz, quadrille, waltz, quadrille, waltz, quadrille, mazurka, quadrille, waltz. The second part consisted of waltz and polka, quadrille, waltz, quadrille, waltz, menuet (!), quadrille, waltz and polka (Legler and Kubik, 94 illustration).]

Thursday, January 28, 2010

The geography of dance music

I am using "geography" here to denote the immediate physical environment of Schubert's playing -- the piano, Schubert on a chair, anyone not dancing standing near him, the dancers coming by relatively close, the sound of the room, the shifting groupings and activities of the participants.

Given that Schubertiades took place with audiences anywhere from a few to a hundred, we have to assume that the physical spaces for dancing varied greatly, too. In a small space -- a drawing room of one of his friends' apartments -- the piano would probably be small, too, square. Chair with a back, not a modern-style piano bench. The piano positioned either along a side wall or, if there is space, angled out into the room (as in Kupelwieser's water-color). The amount of resonance in the room would vary greatly, depending on wall cover-ings and the number of people, but would probably be fairly high since the floors would not be carpeted (or any carpets would be drawn back for the dancing).

Schubert playing, looking occasionally to the side at the dancers, especially the *Vortänzer* (the lead couple), and listening in case the *Vortänzer* call for a different figure, dance, or a

pause (common in longer dance sessions), during which Schubert might continue to play or might stop, too. Persons not dancing, male or female, sitting or standing close by, occasionally talking to one another or even making brief comments to Schubert on his improvisations or requests to hear familiar dances. The distinct timbres of the three main registers on contemporary pianofortes would be audible nearby, less so on the dance floor, where the swishing of clothes and muffled swish-slide of light cloth dancing shoes would mingle with the music. The shapes of the dancing would have varied, from couples dancing freely within the dance space, couples moving in a "round dance" format (around the room along a line of dance) to chain dances or even something like the "parlor game" formats of the quadrille. Windows closed, perhaps shuttered against the night.

In breaks, food and perhaps the light, young Austrian white wines of which Schubert was said to be particularly fond. He was a "lively" drunk, and it would probably have been difficult to get him to return to the piano late in the evening if he had had too much. These, among others, were the occasions when his duet-partner, Josef von Gahy, would take over to play for any dancing done in the late night hours.

In larger spaces, Schubert would probably have had a correspondingly louder wing-shaped pianoforte to play, and the temptation to move back and forth between music for dancing and dance-music performances would have been that much greater, as well.

Note: In Kupelwieser's watercolor, the pianoforte appears to be a small spinet -- thus, neither the square piano one might expect in that space nor the larger instrument one sees in the Schubertiade drawings and other graphics.

Sunday, February 14, 2010

Atzenbrugg transformations, part 1

The first transformation is from: a castle to: a monastery to: a museum commemorating Franz Schubert and the Schubert-Kreis: Atzenbrugg-Schlosspark.

The second transformation is from: the six *Atzenbrugger Tänze* (also called *Atzenbrugger Deutsche*) that were composed (or at least written down as a group) in July 1821 and published in two groups of three in D365 and D145 (see list below) to: the visual records of Kupelwieser's watercolor and a remarkable postcard depicting outdoor activities at the castle (see below).

n1 = D145n1 in E
n2 = D145n3 in A minor, ending A major
n3 = D365n29 in D
n4 = D145n2 in B
n5 = D365n30 in A

n6 = D365n31 in C

I just happened across the postcard collection on the website of the UK Schubert Institute (a "fan site" level operation). The link for this specific card is: n218 Atzenbrugg. I know nothing more about its provenance, date of the drawing, etc. Certainly the activities depicted are those we would expect of the summer holidays enjoyed by Schubert and his friends in 1820 and 1821 (Gibbs, 70). I have added two arrows. The lower one points to Schubert lounging on the grass, the upper one to a small building identified in another postcard as the cottage in which he either stayed or, more likely, composed in the mornings (I daresay the cottage is neither so prominent nor so isolated as this drawing suggests).

[update 2-23-10: Dieckmann reproduces the picture as his Figure 4 (a black & white version is Plate XVIII in Deutsch). It was made in 1821 (or 1822) as a collective effort of three persons in the Schubert-Kreis. Deutsch says that Schubert is smoking a pipe. According to Dieckmann's caption, the singer Vogl is on Schubert's left and is playing a guitar, one of the artists is sitting at Schubert's right, and the violinist is Ludwig Kraissl, described by Deutsch as a "landscape painter and violinist" (185) and by one of the Schubert-Kreis as "a mediocre landscape painter who fiddles heavenly waltzes" (325). Kraissl is listed as attending a Schubertiade on 11-11-1823 (302) and a New Year's Eve party the following month (319); he settled in Carinthia (south-central Austria) in 1824 (653).]

Sunday, March 14, 2010

Milestone

Today is the 150th post in this blog. The total number of analyses of D779n13, as listed on the tally page, is 90.

This may be the right moment to gather some bits of information about publication dates:

(1822). Ash Wednesday in 1822 fell on 20 February. D365 was announced by Cappi and Diabelli on 29 November 1821 and again on 11 February 1822, where it was advertised under the sales heading *Neueste Tanzmusik zum Carneval 1822* (*Schubert: Dokumente,* item 143).

(1823) Ash Wednesday in 1823 fell on 12 February. D145 was announced by Diabelli on 31 January 1823 and again on 5 February (*Schubert: Dokumente,* items 191-192). The three dances in D971 were published by Sauer and Leidesdorf in the collection *Neue Tanzmusik: Carneval 182*3, advertised on 10 January 1823 (*S:D,* item 188).

(1824) Ash Wednesday in 1824 was unusually late; it fell on 3 March. D779 was announced by Diabelli on 21 November 1823 (*S:D,* item 357). Some dances eventually included in D146 were first published by Sauer and Leidesdorf in the anthology *Halt's enk z'samm* in 1824. The volume was advertised on 12 January, 29 January, and 21 February (*S:D,* items 236, 244, 250).The ads note that the collection is available in four versions: piano solo, piano 4-hands, piano and violin, and two violins and bass -- in other words, in all the arrangements necessary for domestic and small venue performance for listening and dancing.

(1825) Ash Wednesday in 1825 fell on 16 February. Another collection of the same name was advertised on 27 January 1825 (*S:D,* item 308). D783 was announced by Cappi on 8 January 1825, as *Deutsche Tänze und Ecossaisen* under the sales category *Tanz-Musikalien für den Carneval 1825* (*S:D,* item 301). These pieces were apparently arranged by J. B. Scheidemayr in Linz as cotillions, in which form they received a favorable review on 11 March (*S:D,* item 319). The score is lost, but Deutsch (410) takes it for granted that they are ensemble arrangements. The same review complains that Scheidemayr's own *Deutsche*, although lively and solidly written, are "rather too pompous," and some will find his "light and uplifting *Ländler*" more to their taste [my translation].

(1826) Ash Wednesday in 1826 fell on 8 February. In December 1825, Sauer and Leidesdorf advertised three collections: *Krähwinkler Tänze für das Pianoforte* (18 December), *Seyd uns zum zweyten Mahl willkommen!* and *Ernst und Tändeley: Eine Sammlung verschiedener Gesellschaftstänze für den Carneval* (29 December; again on 20 January 1826) (*S:D,* items 363, 364, 370). The first of these was issued in two volumes, waltzes in the first and galops and ecossaises in the second. *Seyd uns* was a collection of 50 waltzes, one each by 50 composers, plus a coda and an introduction based on the title song (from Mozart's *Magic Flute*) (a set of 40 waltzes had been published a year earlier: *S:D,* item 298). *Ernst und Tändeley* was

equally ambitious: it contains 6 each of menuets, quadrilles, ecossaises, and galops, as well as 8 cotillons (Schubert's only dance of this name was included here). The publisher's description notes that the collection is good for dancing parties "where one simply wishes the music to be played by amateurs at a piano"; thus the virtue of a "collection in which all those dances appear that serve to delight those at a social party" [my translation]. Remarkably, within two weeks, *Seyd* and *Ernst* were the subjects of a favorable review in the *Wiener allgemeine Theaterzeitung* (*S:D,* item 371).

(1827) Ash Wednesday in 1827 fell on 28 February. On 23 December 1826, Sauer and Leidesdorf advertised the *Neue Krähwinkler Tänze für das Pianoforte* as well as the *Moderne Liebes-Walzer*, both sets for piano solo (*S:D,* item 430). D734 was announced by Diabelli on 15 December 1826 and again on 14 February 1827 (*S:D,* items 425, 453). D969 was announced by Tobias Haslinger on 22 January 1827 (*S:D,* item 444).

D969 was advertised by Haslinger again on 11 April 1827 and a month later a review appeared in a Frankfurt newspaper (*S:D,* items 472, 493). The review appears in Deutsch, p. 638. The final comment is "The reviewer feels that a dance should never consist of two parts only, as is the case here; for its repetition, often for hours on end, must result in unendurable weariness." To this the biographer retorts that "Schubert's dances, written for domestic balls, are to be played in series. [D969] comprises a dozen waltzes." The reviewer's comment is obscure, and the biographer probably misreads it -- but what is interesting is that it's taken for granted by both that D969, that most concert-friendly of Schubert's sets, was meant for dancing.

(1828) Ash Wednesday in 1828 fell on 20 February. D924 was announced by Haslinger on 5 January 1828 (*Schubert: Dokumente,* item 555) and received a review in the *Wiener allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, in which it was noted that "with respect to composition, the works of Schubert, Lanner, and Strauss stand out" [my translation] (*S:D,* item 590; also see Deutsch, 734).

37. Compression of D779n13 to a stereotypical 16-bar waltz. blog post.

Monday, October 26, 2009

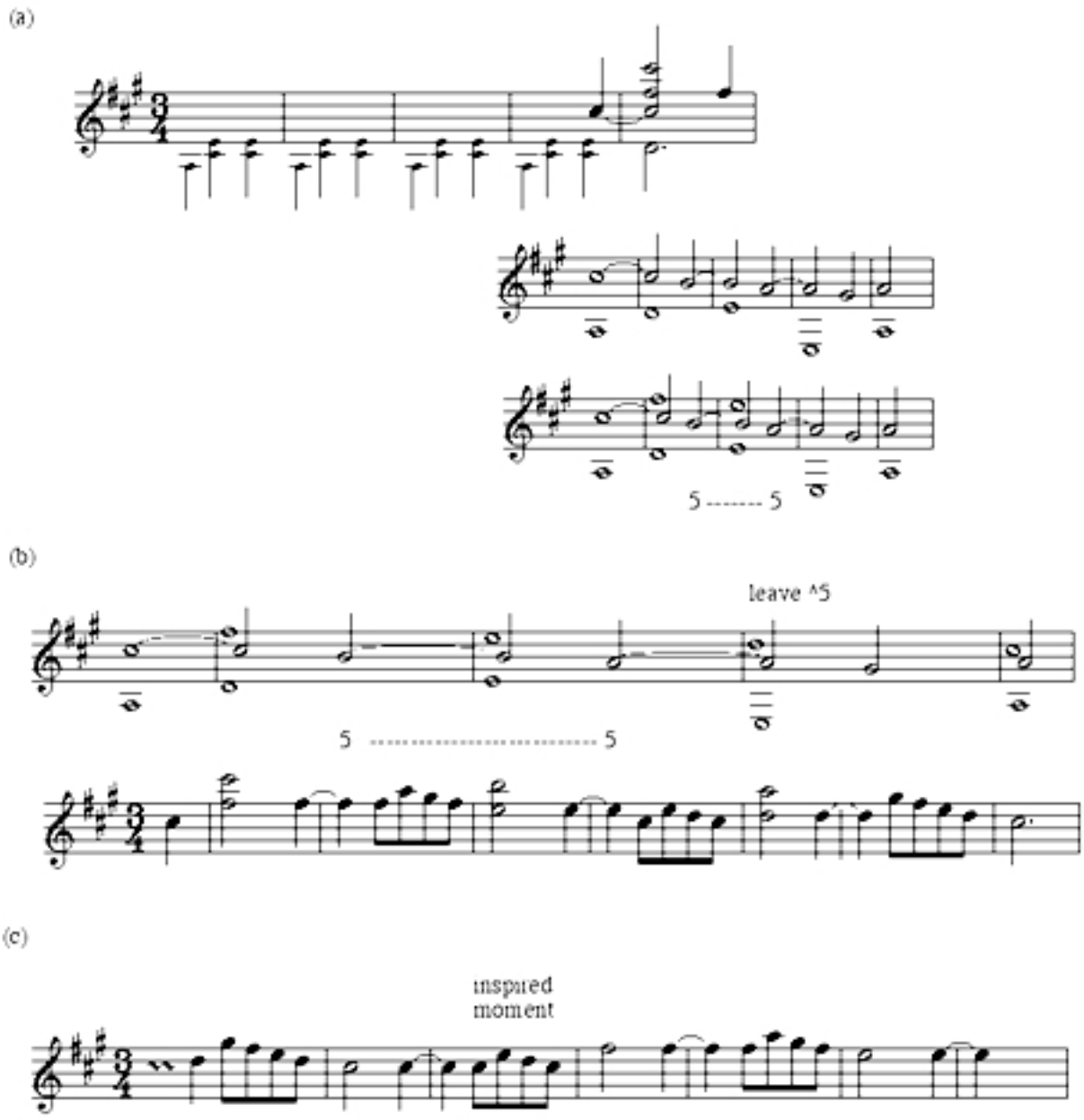
D779n13 originates in improvisation

The Opus 9 (D. 365) collection was published in 1821; as most of the waltzes of D. 779 were probably composed in 1822-23, it is entirely plausible that Schubert might have played a version of D365n6 at some point not long after the publication of Opus 9 and decided to use its distinctive opening formula to improvise a new waltz. The likelihood is increased by the fact that D365n6 was apparently among Schubert's favorites: as Litschauer reports, it is among only six Schubert waltzes that appear three times in different manuscripts and one of only two found in manuscript copies made by one of his friends (Litschauer 1995, 4). The fact that some of these are variants is all the more intriguing. The first of the three manu-

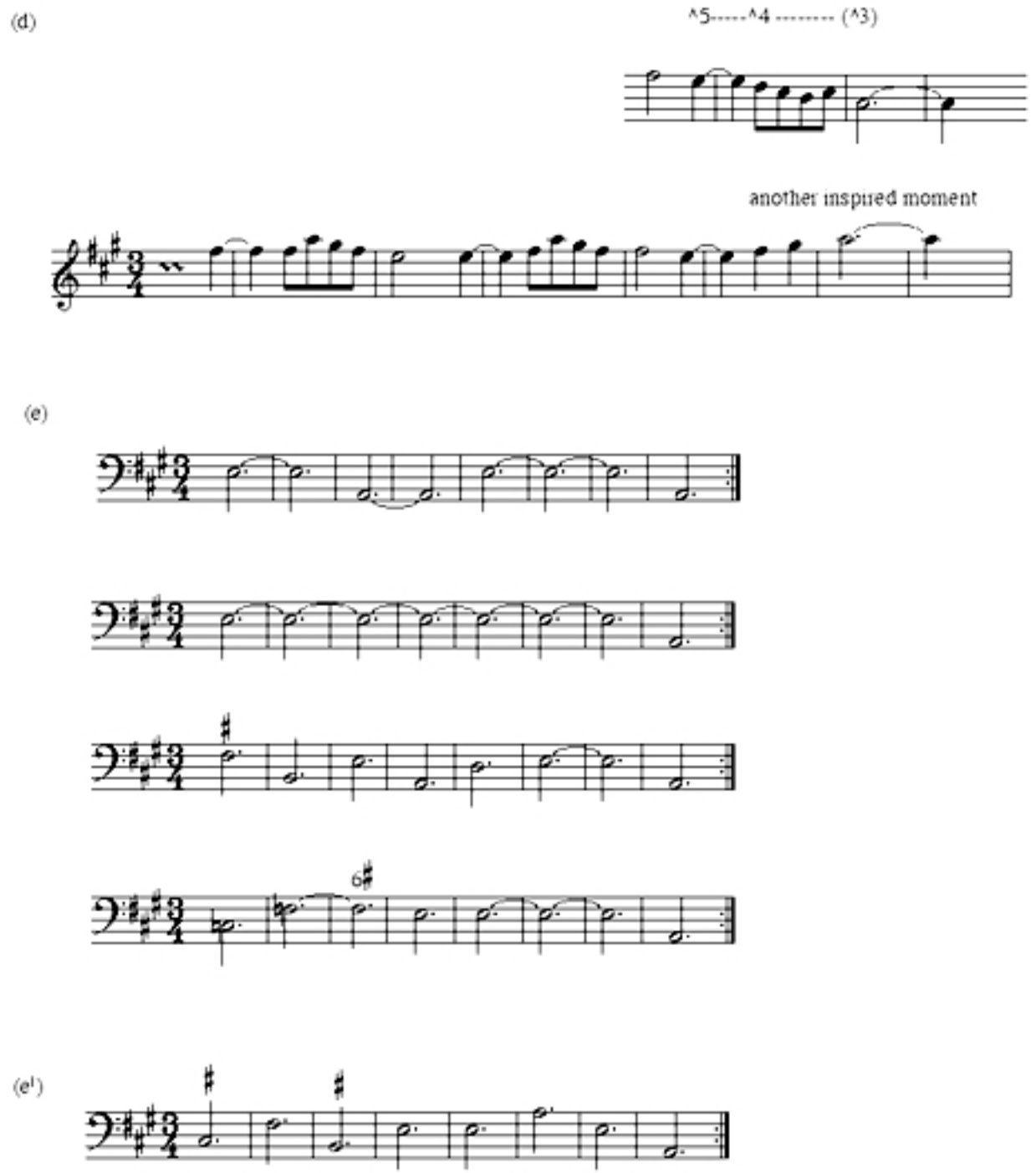
script versions (in 9 Deutsche (1819)) is identical to the published version, but the second (in 2 Deutsche (1821)) is striking in that it gives a fully realized Bb minor 6/3 chord in the left hand of bars 1-2, whereas the third (in 4 Deutsche (undated)) combines the first strain of D365n6 with the second strain of No. 7 from the same set (see Litschauer 1989).

Thus, we can imagine the new waltz starting as depicted at (a) in the graphic below: as necessary, vamping to establish the waltz meter and tempo for the dancers (or to gather one's thoughts), then open with a slight rhythmic variant of the figure in D365n6. The voice leading formula (second line in (a)) is varied too from the moment that F# becomes the upper voice (by the end of the first full bar of melody), but that is also where the trouble begins (third line in (a)), also realized as an initial attempt at a complete phrase in (b), which has a rather flat ending that allows the suspensions to drag the upper-voice melody down through ^4 and ^3).

Level (c) shows this ending again with the lead-in to the repetition of the phrase. Here is the first inspired moment in what has so far been a rather dismal effort: the hemiola rhythm of the initial gesture has taken control by now and the "turn" in four eighth notes gracefully (and convincingly) gathers energy that is directed toward the F#. Finishing out this varied repetition of the first strain, Schubert brings the upper voice down from its perch on ^6 and ^5 with a conventional ländler cadence that strikes ^1 but leaves the register of ^3 open. This cadence will also close the second strain of an 8 + 8 recomposition in Example 4.34.) Like the descent to ^3 in the first statement, this cadence seems weak.



At this point, the decision has to be made whether to set the new waltz in a two or three-part form, but for our purpose here, Schubert's choice makes little difference. I will assume that he composes a contrasting second strain (in the manner of D365n5). The dancing continues, and I imagine that Schubert plays a trio (perhaps one of the Ab major waltzes from D. 365 transposed to A major), but the awkwardness of the newly invented waltz bothers him, and he returns to it. This time around, the first phrase and most of the second are as we know them in the published version, but the cover-tone-*qua*-melody, now much more insistent than in the first attempt, brings about the second inspired moment, the cadence that lifts the upper register to ^8 (see the lower line in (d)).



Having reached the register of ^8 (A5), Schubert decides to stay there, perhaps expecting to use G#5 to initiate a cycle of fifths sequence as in (e'). For reasons unknown (which might include a simple lapse of attention during a long evening of playing), he decides to ground the contrasting middle of a small ternary form in a tonicization of the C# major supporting that G#5. There are a few examples of this design, where the contrasting middle closes in the tonicized key, and the reprise returns to the main key without modulation, but in this

case the design will not work because the theme starts on a non-tonic position one half-step above C#.The third and last inspired moment, then, is to take advantage of yet another motion upward to carry the melody into the pianoforte's thin-toned and ethereal upper octave where the reprise begins in the final version.

Schubert chose to keep the A Major Waltz and eventually found it a place in the D. 779 collection, but I fancy it was not because of its odd combination of counterpoint and dance topoi or even its dramatic tonal contrast (something Schubert is known to have liked), but instead for the sake of its charming two-tiered melody. I imagine one of his musically skilled friends, perhaps Josef von Spaun, coming over after hearing several repetitions of the Waltz and whispering, "Schön, zärtlich," while the dance continued.

Tuesday, October 27, 2009

Postscript: More to Improvisation

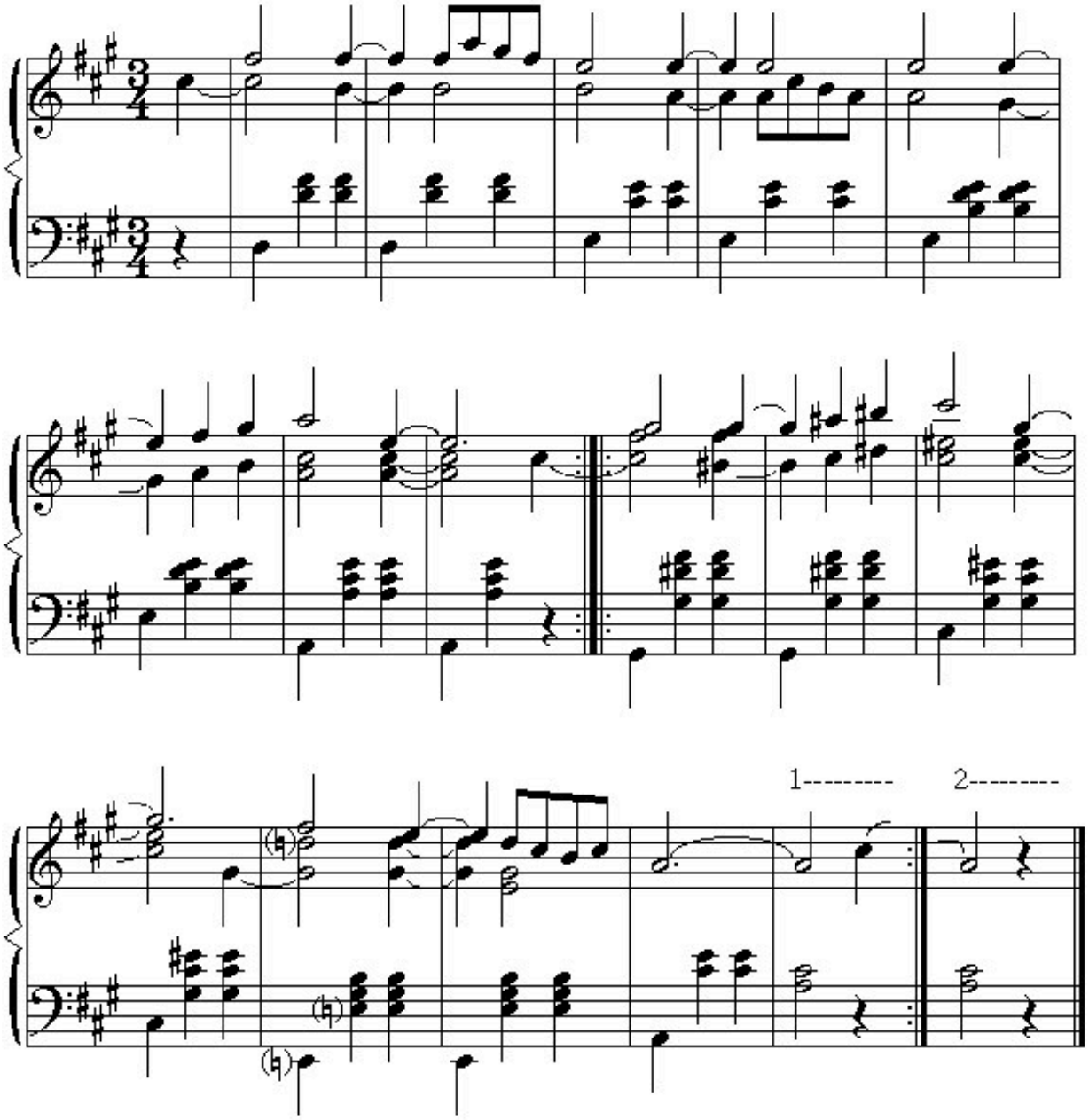
As a postscript to yesterday's improvisation history, here is an alternate solution that Schubert might easily have come to: a simple sixteen-bar form that resolves the hypermetric peculiarities of its model: see graphic below (NB: this is a thumbnail; click on it for the original). The roughness of its harmonic figures in the second strain is not evidence against it, as there are many precedents in the waltz repertoire for such sudden harmonic turns between the four-bar components of an eight-bar strain.

The key to the changes lies at the beginning: the two-beat (four-eighth-note) pickup has been altered to a clichéd single quarter-beat (as in D365n6), and the harmony begins "in progress," as it were, with the 7-6 suspension over ii6. The fact that this opening is plausible (and closely resembles an existing piece) tends to invalidate Carl Schachter's claim that "to omit the first two bars [of the A Major Waltz] would be to suppress the opening tonic altogether; [this] would make the whole piece pointless and nonsensical" (72).

The prosaic clarity of the recomposed first strain serves as well as any preceding analysis to highlight the strangeness of Schubert's original, perhaps the last bit of evidence we require in order to affirm that the A Major Waltz is a poor piece of social-dance music and is misplaced in D. 779--perhaps it would have been more successful had it been expanded a bit to act as the trio to a minuet or scherzo.

My crude rewriting barely masks the most obvious metric problems, however. The A Major Waltz, with its repeated second strain, consists of 29 two-bar groups, or the two-bar introduction plus 14 four-bar phrases, or 7 eight-bar strains: a waltz in an 8+8 design has four eight-bar groups, and a waltz in an 8+16 design has six groups.

The fact of an introduction itself is unproblematic; they are not common in Schubert's own dances, but brief introductory figures or flourishes had become familiar to dancers nearly a decade earlier through their use in the "extraordinarily popular" *Linzertänze* by Michael Pamer, principal predecessor of Lanner (Reeser, 47)--both Strauss, sr., and Lanner had played in Pamer's orchestra. Three other waltzes in the familiar sets by Schubert include two-bar introductions: D146n10; D365n34; and D734n15. (In a performance setting for dancing, such introductory "vamping" was undoubtedly commonplace, as I suggested in yesterday's post.)



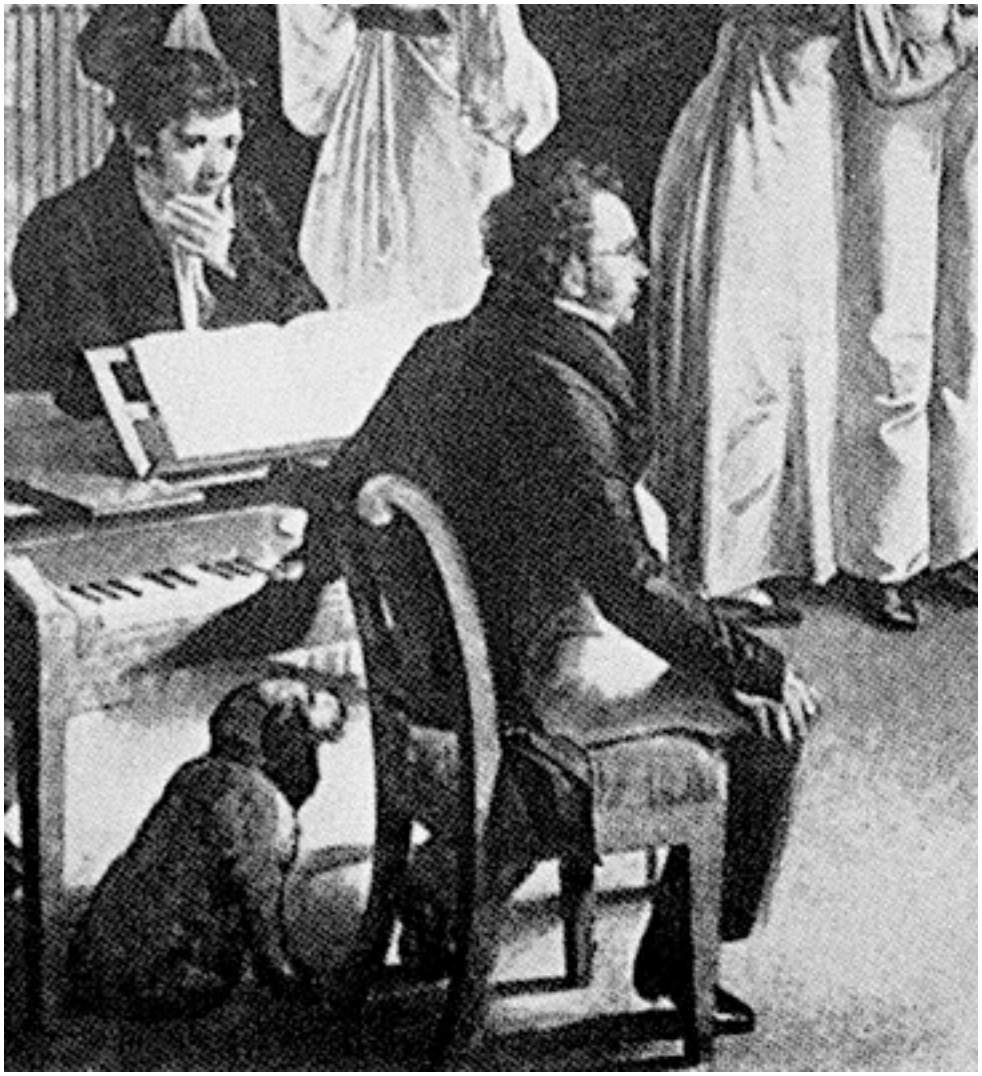
And uneven hypermetric groups do happen, also: three of the *Valses nobles,* D. 969, have them. Numbers 9 and 12 have an extra four-bar group in the second strain: the former adds

up to seven eight-bar groups with the repeat of the second strain, the latter to nine such groups. Number 3, however, wins the prize as the oddest design in the major waltz sets: a four-bar introduction is followed by a repeated strain of 8+8; the second strain consists of four eight-bar groups plus one six-bar group (as 4+2). Thus including the repeat of the second strain, the total is 4 + (8 x 13) + 4, or 14 eight-bar groups altogether. According to Litschauer and Deutsch (111), D. 969 was very probably meant as a concert cycle, not a functional dance collection, and one has to wonder whether the A Major Waltz would not be better placed as a trio in that set, rather than in D. 779, whose members are otherwise all functional dances not far removed from Schubert's first published collection, D. 365.

Monday, December 14, 2009

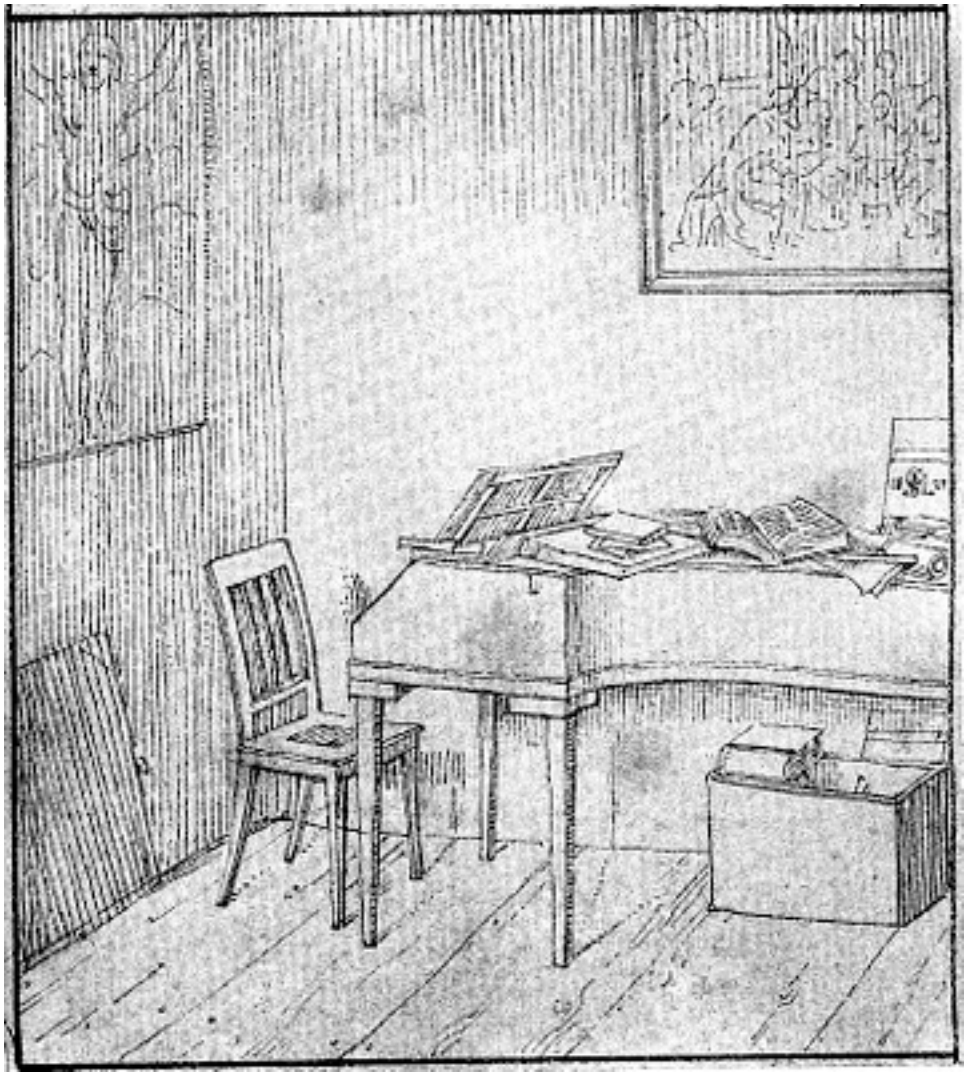
Gesellschaftspiel; pianos

Here is a detail from a fanciful painting [watercolor] that depicts the Schubert-Kreis in a combination tableau entertainment and party game similar to Charades. Schubert himself sits in a corner of the room, at the piano. I don't know who the fellow is staring intently in Schubert's direction [one source says "Hartmann" -- that would be either Franz or Fritz von Hartmann] [update 2-20-10: according to Dieckmann, it's one Welser von Hartmann, relation to the brothers unknown (120)], but the visual parallel between Schubert and the dog [the artist Kupelwieser's dog Drago (118)] suggests the amount of (perhaps not always rewarding) work involved in playing for "endless cotillons" (dances that can last an hour at a time). (Diary notations and reminiscences from 1829 through the 1870s contradict one another: in some of them Schubert declares he loves to play for dancing; in others he seems borne down by the tedium of playing for hours and is happy to cede place to his friend Josef von Gahy, who was said to perform Schubert's own waltzes with "fiery spirit.") [Here is a link to a small but good-quality image: CorbisImages.] [edits 12-28-09]



The counter to this interpretation is the truly remarkable fact that Schubert did not have regular access to a piano as he composed. Robert Winter, in the *New Grove* biographical sketch of Schubert, writes that in late 1824,"on his return to Vienna [from Zseliz] Schubert moved briefly – probably for financial reasons – for one last time into the Schubert family home in the Rossau. To be sure, it was the only place he ever lived in that contained a piano; Schubert never bought, leased or borrowed a piano of his own." Since he composed on a regular basis throughout the morning (one of the few disciplined parts of his life, apparently), this means that great swathes of Schubert's music were written "in his head," that is, without assistance from an instrument, at least not from a keyboard.

[update 2-20-10: I am still trying to trace this history of Schubert's instrumentarium. Given that he was a proficient violinist, it's not unreasonable to assume that he would have owned that instrument, perhaps for most or all of his adult life, but so far I have found no reference in the literature. And, as to the piano, here is a bit of counter-evidence in a drawing by Moritz von Schwind, made in 1821 and called "Schuberts Zimmer." end update]



This also means that playing for dancing might have been far less onerous than I suggested above, because Schubert might have happily used the time to make "sound experiments," to try out melodies -- or, more likely, progressions or key relations -- that he had already written or wanted to write but might not be able to auralize sufficiently. Maurice Brown's comment about the dances as "notebooks" for larger compositions, then, is on the mark but too text-oriented -- the dances as "sound experiments" would be a better description. [added text 12-19-09: Brown speculates that Schubert used casual dance improvisations "as 'journals' or 'notebooks' in which the composer was able to try out...new ideas and techniques that might later be developed in more substantial pieces" (Brown cited in Brodbeck 32). Brian Newbould follows out this idea by making comparisons between dances and some of Schubert's sonata movements.]

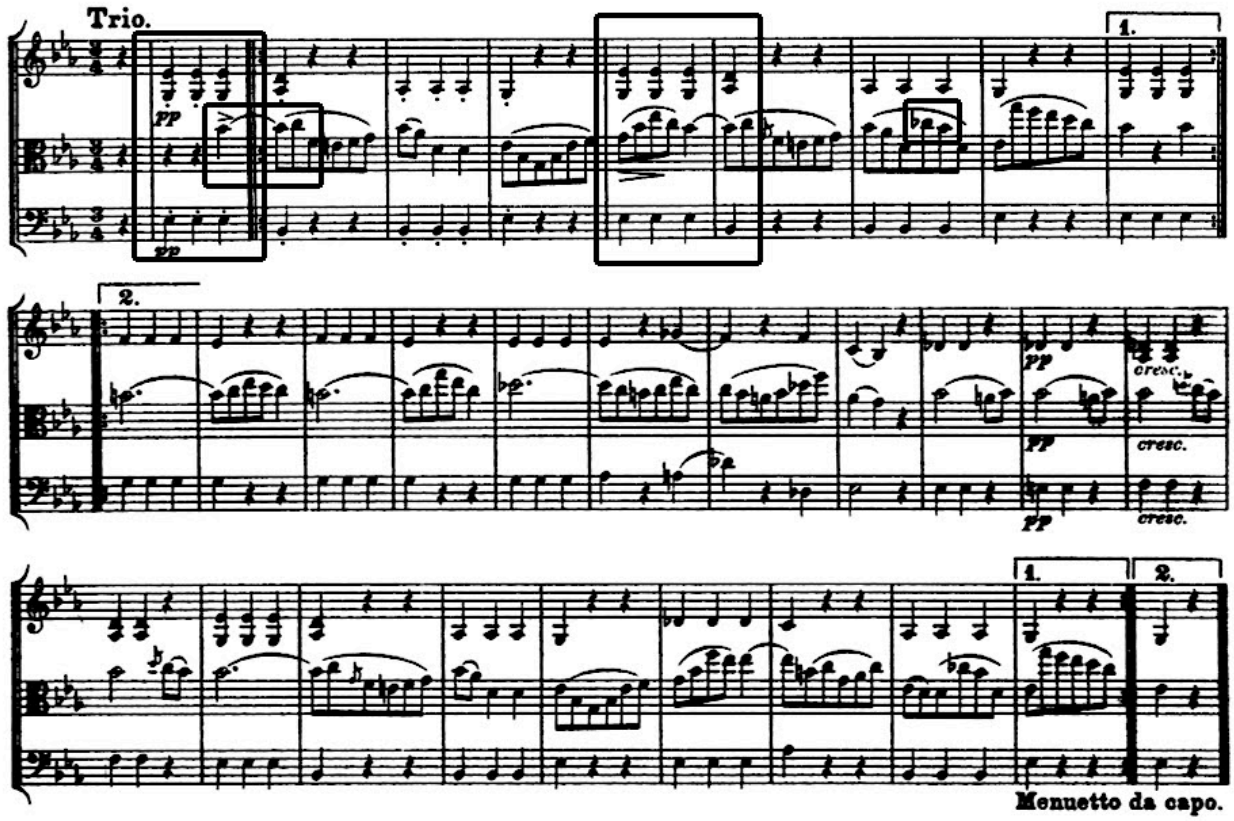
Part 3: Instrumentation and Voicing

Thursday, February 18, 2010

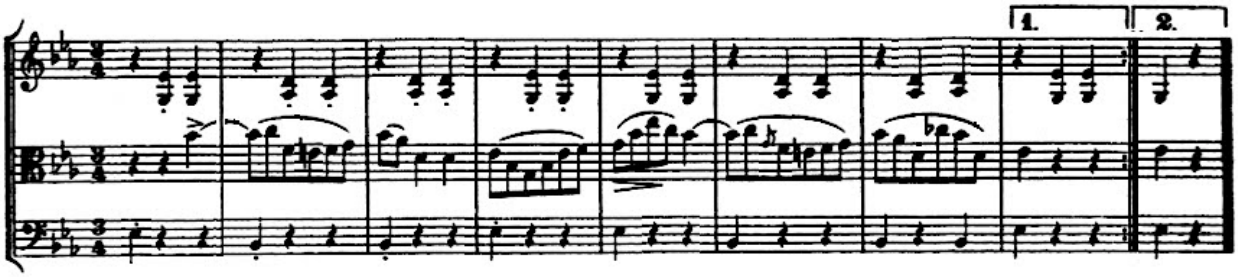
String Trio, D581, III, Trio to the Menuet

Schubert's Bb Major String Trio, D581, composed in fall 1817, has four movements, all of which meet the topical and design expectations of the time, as one might expect of a 20-year old composer still finding his way. The Menuet has a number of distinctive gestures that confirm its status as a late-style menuet. Its trio would be the ideal place to introduce the texture of the dance trio (two violins and bass) that would have been familiar from dance music played in taverns and restaurants at the time: see the second paragraph of this post for more on that.

Schubert, however, seems to be doing his best to refine the tavern-waltz topic, if we can call it that, although in some respects the result must have seemed *komisch* to his listeners. The solo role given to the viola is unusual, to say the least, and the sound of the instrument distorts the ensemble sound of the tavern-trio. Not played carefully, the first strain can sound metrically awkward (mainly because of the displaced beginning of the melody -- Schubert fixes it in the reprise (see the third system)). (Here's a link to an audio file with an excellent performance: D581, III & IV. The trio runs from 1:45-3:00.)



Still, with its prominent ^5-^6 play (boxed at the beginning), the first strain is recognizable as a *Ländler,* and in fact even with its displaced first note it can easily be rewritten to make a perfectly good dance piece (provided the violist can handle the tune): see below



The contrasting middle (first eight bars of the second section), on the other hand, is a stereotypical menuet pattern. Altogether a work that shows the same topical uncertainties (or perhaps topical blending) that lie at the back of D779n13.

Thursday, June 3, 2010

More to the trio texture

In an early blog post, I wrote this:

While thinking about improvisation, about Schubert sitting at the piano playing while his friends danced, I realized that the piano permitted the sound of the waltz that would have been most familiar to people in Vienna about 1800 -- two violins and bass -- to be transferred from tavern or restaurant to the home.

-- and added this more recently (5-19-10): Litschauer and Deutsch give an example of this texture (44); so does Rainer Gstrein (82) .

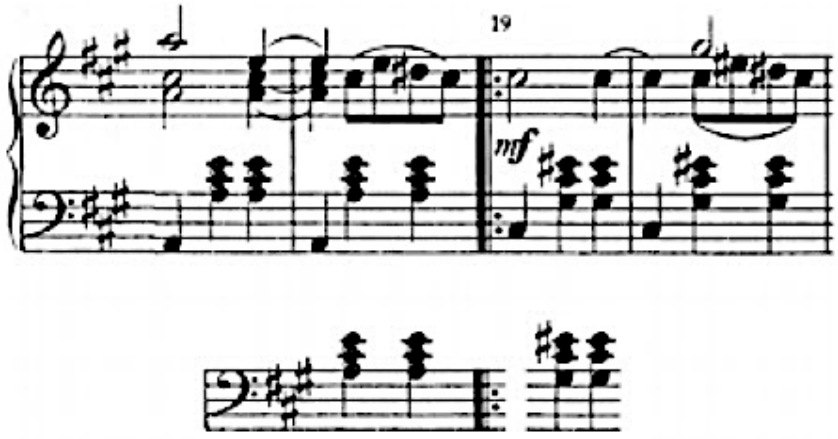
And now I add this: Alexander Weinmann's *Verzeichniss* for Johann Strauss, sr. & jr., shows that the elder's early compositions were published in one or more of the following formats: piano solo, piano four-hands, violin and piano, 2 violins and bass, guitar, flute solo, csakan [Hungarian flute] solo, and orchestra. Beginning with Op. 56 (1832), "2 violins and bass" was replaced by 3 violins and bass, but as 2 violins, violin 3 *ad libitum*, and bass. Only with a handful of Strauss's last works was the "standard" string quartet specified instead: Opp. 225 (1848), 232, 237, and 241 (1849).

68. Schubert's "Riemannian Hand." blog post. Also: additions to the post.

Sunday, December 13, 2009

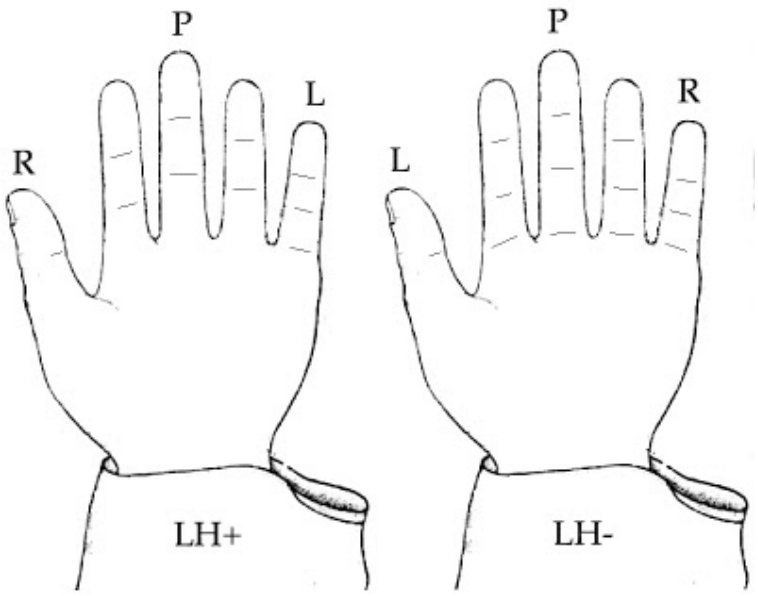
Schubert's "Riemannian Hand"

The modulation to C# major is an LP transformation (Hook 139): A major moves to c# minor moves to C# major. Here is that change from the first to second strain, from A major to C# major, as a direct move in the left hand (thanks to Steve Rings for pointing this out):



While thinking about improvisation, about Schubert sitting at the piano playing while his friends danced, I realized that the piano permitted the sound of the waltz that would have

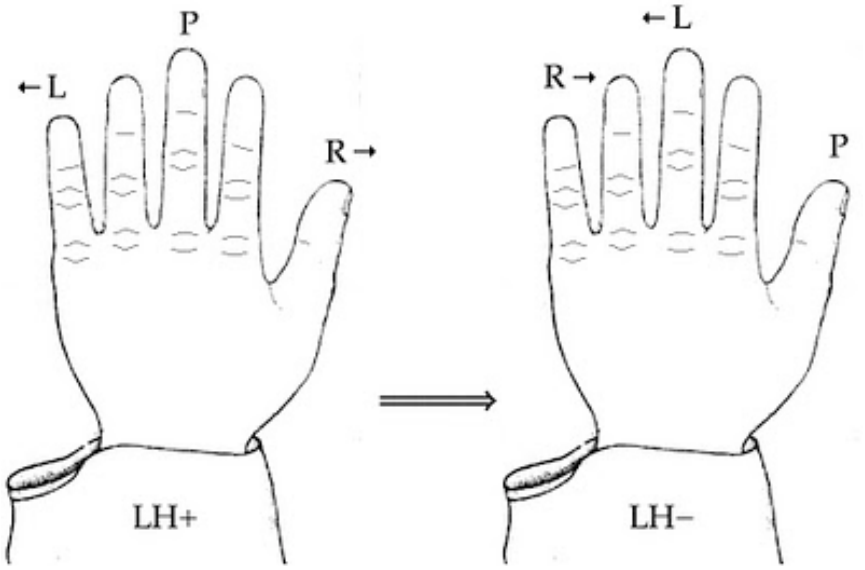
been most familiar to people in Vienna about 1800 -- two violins and bass -- to be transferred from tavern or restaurant to the home. [added 5-19-10: Litschauer and Deutsch give an example of this texture (44); so does Rainer Gstrein (82).] The three-layer texture of melody (first violin), bass, and accompanimental chords (second violin) became right hand, left-hand accents, and the offbeat "oompahs", respectively. (Link to D790n3 played apparently on a period instrument: note the timbral differences in the three registers.) In the heat of improvisation, the latter could serve Schubert well as voice leading stabilizers -- and, as in this case, enablers of modulations. Indeed, we might speak of his "Riemannian hand" and visualize it, as below, where a simple shift of thumb, middle finger, or pinky would effect a particular transformation.



Tuesday, December 29, 2009

The "Riemannian Hand" and Schubert's voicings

This is an update to the post on the "Riemannian hand" and the post on closed-position voicings. I have reconstructed the graphic from that post in two respects below: (1) we now see the hand from the top, as a pianist would see it, not in the "Guidonian position" of the singer putting his palm out in order to remember the sol-fa; and (2) I have charted the two stages of the transformation--the first hand for L that takes A major (A+) to C# minor (C#-) and the second hand for the P that changes minor to major (C#+).



The point of this graphic is to show that the "Hand" isn't stationary. Although L shifts the pinky from A+ to C#-, the subsequent thumb move isn't the thumb's "proper" R (on the first hand), but P (on the second hand). In other words, the abstract LPR hand-group has rotated while the physical hand has not. The separation of these two is something Schubert certainly would have noticed while playing, and that realization would very plausibly have facilitated the notion of modulation rather than "just" chord change (the latter would have led to C# as V/F#-, or V/vi, the move in many of Schubert's dances). The difference is that of harmonic thinking (in the familiar nineteenth-century sense) rather than figured-bass or continuo thinking (eighteenth-century).

Here is further explanation of the rotations. I am grateful to Steve Rings for working this out. The text is his.

> It seems that the specific assignment of LPR to the fingers is based on both mode and triadic position/inversion. The table below illustrates:
>
> 5/3 6/3 6/4
> M LPR PRL RLP
> m RPL PLR LRP
>
> The LPR triples here are to be read from left to right in a registral fashion as "low-mid-high," which allows one to apply them to either right or left hand. One toggles back and forth between major and minor by using neo-Riemannian letters that occupy the same registral "slot" in the triples. Thus, for example, if we begin with a major triad in 6/3 position and apply L to it, we will be moving our "highest" finger, as the given triple is PRL. This will then take us to a minor triad in 5/3 position, as it is the only minor entry in the table with L in the rightmost slot. Note the dualist patterning: the neo-R triples for the major triads are all rotational permutations of LPR, while those for the minor triads are rotational permutations of RPL. LPR and RPL are of course retrogrades of each other (a result of Riemann's dualist conceptions of major and minor).

Postscript (1): I can't show the piece for copyright reasons, but there is one instance of a mirror to the A+-C#+ transformation in D779n13: the beginning of the second strain of D980d, a waltz published in January 1828. The main key is C major, where the first strain ends. The second strain drops to A minor and repeats that chord for three bars, followed by an F minor 6/3 in the fourth bar, and G7 in the fifth. The left-hand voicing is an imperfect wedge: E-F-G in the left-hand thumb, A-Ab-G in the pinky. A- to F- is also an LP transformation.

Postscript (2): Guy Capuzzo notes a transformation series that fits the guitarist's hand in relation to the frets (183). The "Guitarist's Hand" and the "Riemannian Hand" are related to, but distinct from, the keyboard topology of Minturn and Jones (the latter according to email correspondence from Neil Minturn, 26 December 2009).

Postscript (3) [added 1-05-10]: a detail from Joseph Kupelwieser's watercolor: see this post for more information:

Monday, March 15, 2010

Schubert's personal soundscape

By "personal soundscape" I mean the ambient sound and resonance of his room(s). In this post, however, I am actually focusing on musical instruments again, as I am still vexed over Robert Winter's statement about pianos, repeated below from this post.

. . . the truly remarkable fact that Schubert did not have regular access to a piano as he composed. Robert Winter, in the New Grove biographical sketch of Schubert, writes that in late 1824,"Schubert moved briefly . . . for one last time into the Schubert family home. . . . It was

the only place he ever lived in that contained a piano; Schubert never bought, leased or borrowed a piano of his own."
Schubert writes his siblings in October 1818: "Do take my fortepiano; I shall be delighted" (Deutsch 109). The instrument is presumably the Graf said to have been given Schubert by his father in 1814 (44). Schwind's drawing of Schubert's room with a piano was made in 1821 (163; 204; also my earlier post). In notes on Schubert's estate expenses, Deutsch says that "Schubert no longer owned a pianoforte, but had used that in Schober's lodgings" (849). Johann Mayrhofer's recollections of sharing a room with Schubert in 1819 include the remark that, ten years later (that is in 1829), the room still held "a played-out pianoforte" (860); in the notes a further quote to this: "Schubert had a miserable pianoforte standing in a narrow room" (864).

Dieckmann's comments on Wilhelm Rieder's formal portrait of Schubert, an oil painting done decades after the composer's death, suggest that Winter took too literally another late-life recollection: Schubert's lively but problematic friend Joseph von Spaun claimed that the composer never owned and didn't use a piano to compose (Dieckmann, 102). Dieckmann thinks that the piano drawn by Schwind in 1821 is the same instrument given Franz several years earlier by his father; it would have gone along when Schubert moved back into the family home in fall 1822 and was probably left there the following year as he went back and forth between the house and the city. From early 1825, he may not have had an instrument but played those in friends' houses nearby (Dieckmann 106-7).

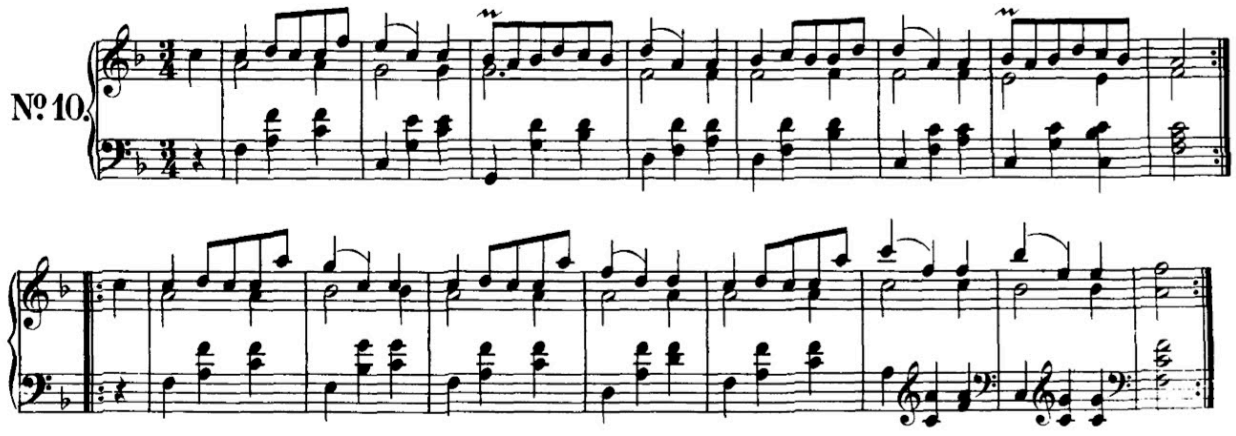
The end result: Winter is apparently wrong; Schubert did own a piano and had it with him in his rooms at least part of the time up to 1825; he may very well have composed without an instrument; no one mentions a violin.

Thursday, May 27, 2010

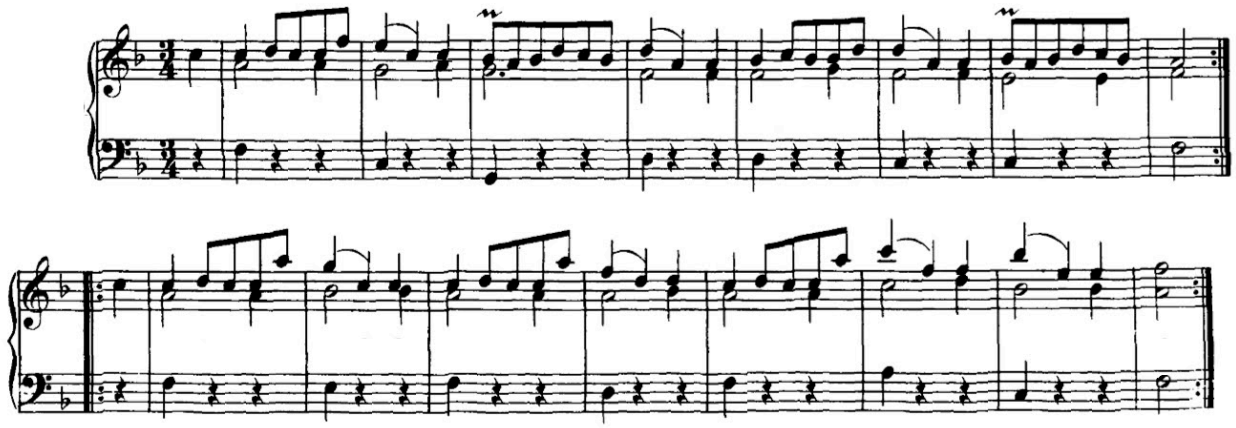
Schubert's soprano-alto pairs

Dances with consistent soprano/alto pairings comprise a distinct subcategory in Schubert's dances. D779n13, of course, represents it well. Here are some others.

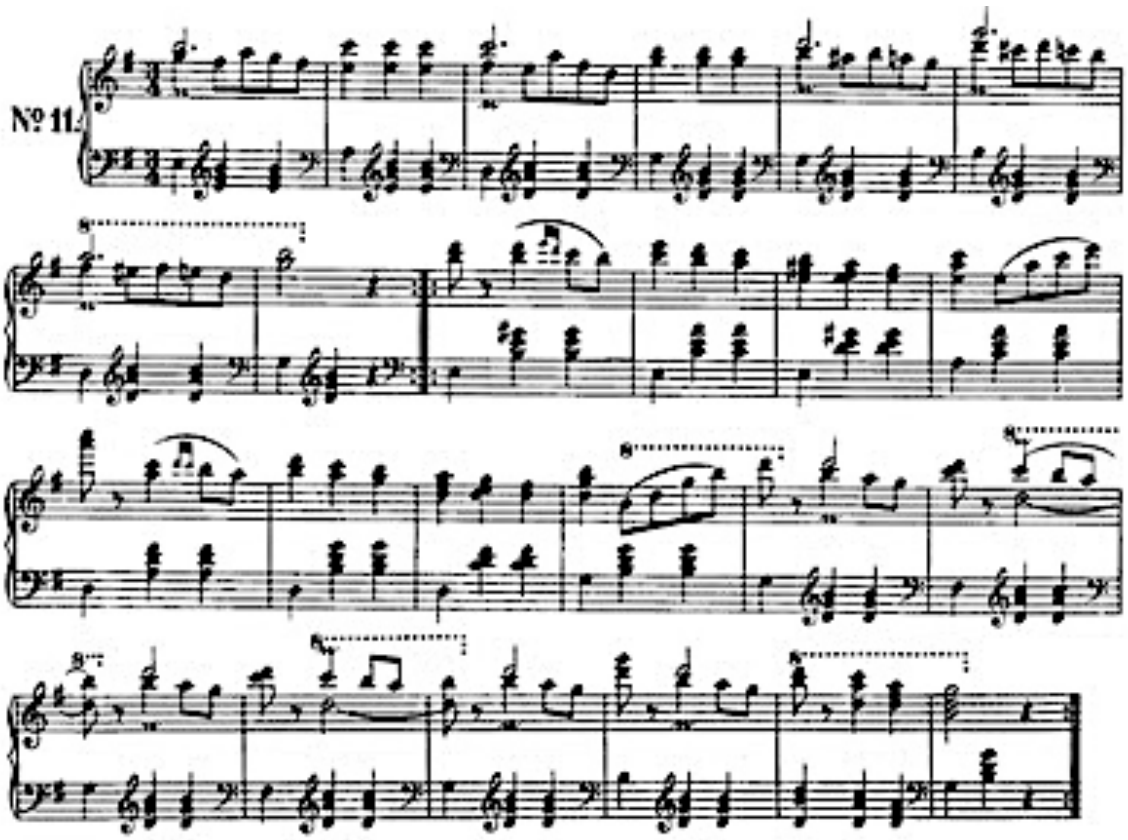
D969n10 is a simple case where the source of the soprano/alto pair in the 2v/bass trio texture is especially obvious (see my rewritten version below the score).



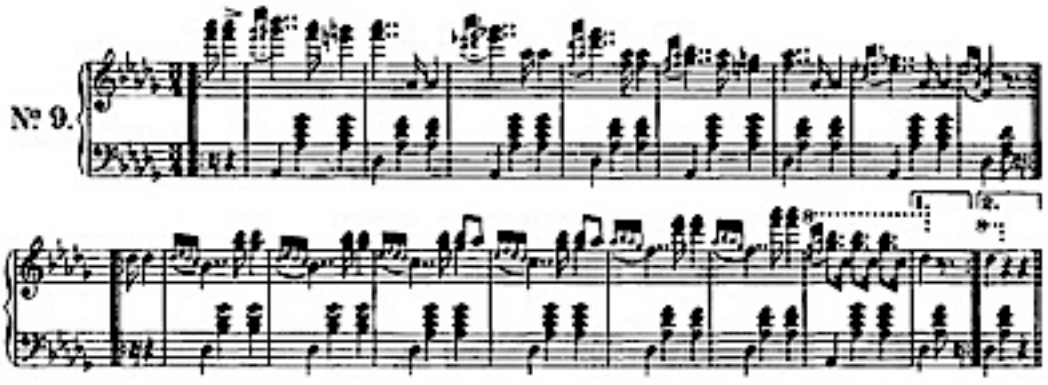
Rewritten in trio texture:



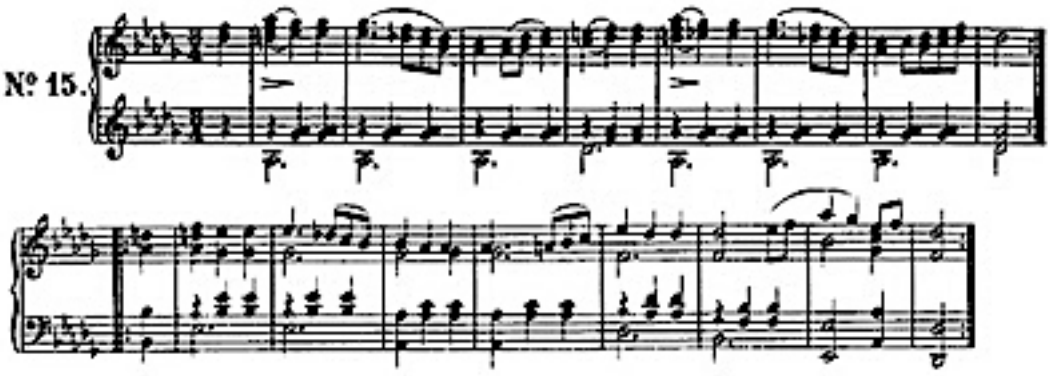
D924n11 is more elaborate (I wonder if it's an imitation of improvised variation by violinists) but at the same time holds more closely to the thirds/sixths pairings typical of the violin pair.



Two examples from the early dances:
Among the Laendler of D145, no. 9 is another simple case. Obviously, the key of Db major is another expressive alteration of a typical violin key (D), like the Ab (from A) that dominates D365.



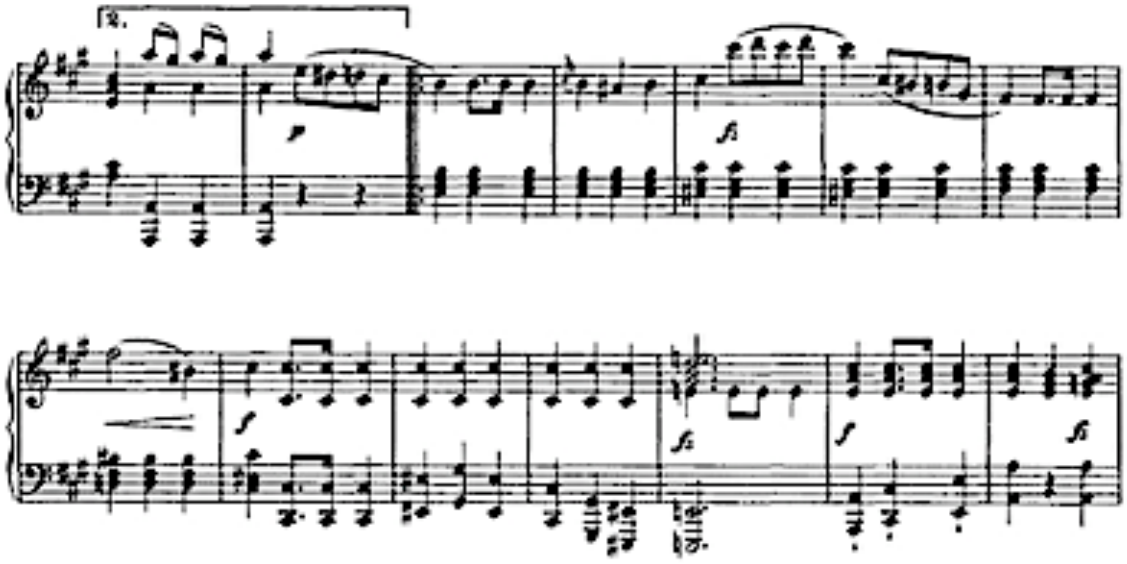
The same for D365n15:



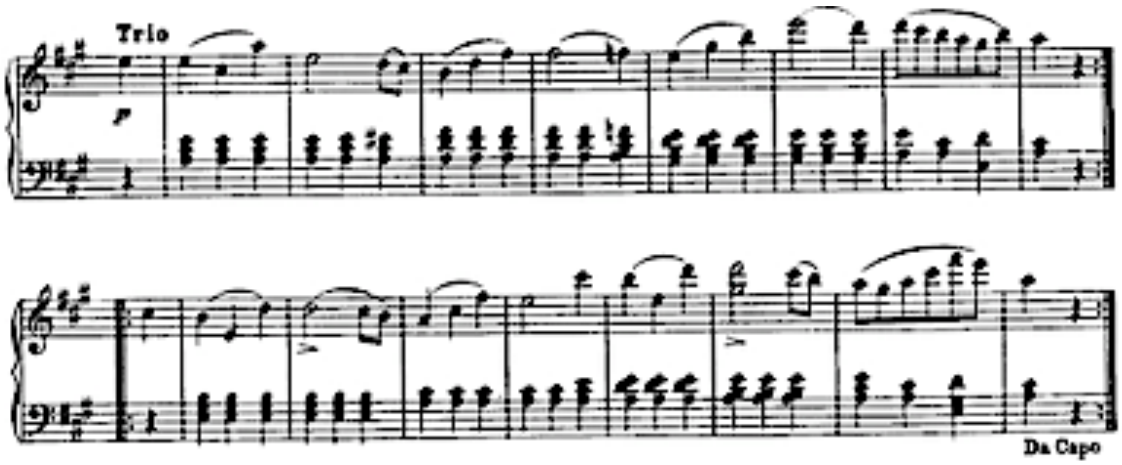
Closed-position textures

Although the "trio" texture associated with the oom-pah left hand figures is by far the most common in Schubert's dances, occasionally (and beginning quite early in his career), he uses a closed voicing in the left hand. In these cases, the stabilizing role comes very much to the fore. Here are a few examples, to be discussed in more detail at another time. The first two appear in a manuscript from 1815, D146n15 in a manuscript from 1823.

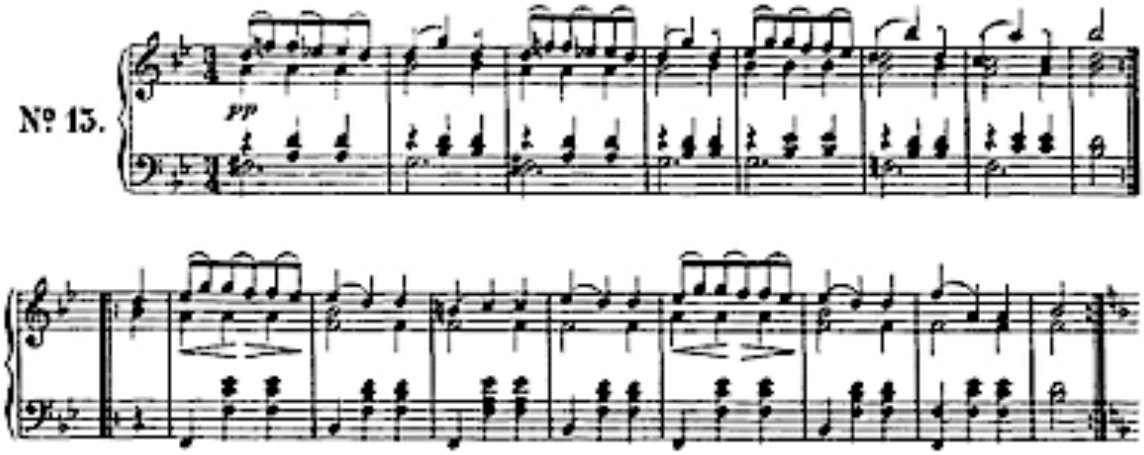
D146n3, trio, contrasting middle (the reprise begins in the final two bars of the example):



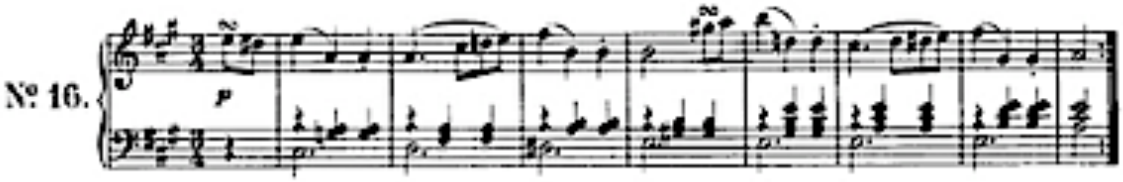
D146n4, trio. A similar example, D820n2, could not be reproduced here for copyright reasons.



D146n15. This and the next example combine closed position and oom-pah texture:



D365n16:



Part 4: Schubert's dances: sources, chronology

Waltz publications during Schubert's lifetime

The publication of Schubert's *Valses sentimentales* was announced in the *Wiener Zeitung* on 21 November 1825. Opp. 2-4 of Josef Lanner were announced at the same time. For reference, Johann Strauss, sr., began publishing his waltzes in earnest by no later than 1828 (several galops were published in that year, also), and he had reached Op. 41 (the *Fra Diavolo Cotillons*) by the end of 1830.

Of the roughly 290 extant waltzes, Ländler, and deutsche Tänze, 165 were published during Schubert's lifetime. These include a few scattered individual pieces and seven larger sets: D145, 365, 734, 779, 783, 924, and 969. It is impossible to know how many dances found their way -- in original, revised, or recomposed versions -- into sets published years later, but in general it seems reasonable to regard D145 and 365 as representing Schubert's earlier years (before 1821); D734 and 779 the most active years of socializing and playing for dancing; and D783, 924, and 969 the later years, the period beginning with the first treatments for syphilis early in 1823.

We might note also that it was 1826 when Schubert's *Trauerwalzer*, D365n2, first appeared under Beethoven's name with the title "Favoritwalzer" and shortly again thereafter as "Sehnsuchtswalzer" (Kinsky 727). After that, the little piece's fate was sealed, and it was republished any number of times throughout the nineteenth century. Already by 1831, it had acquired English words (under the title "The Maid of Elsmere"). By 1870, American publishers had attributed as many as seventy waltzes to Beethoven; a very small number were actually his, including WoO11, no. 7, a Ländler that was Americanized as the "Cactus Waltz" (Kinkeldey 245-46).

Monday, December 28, 2009

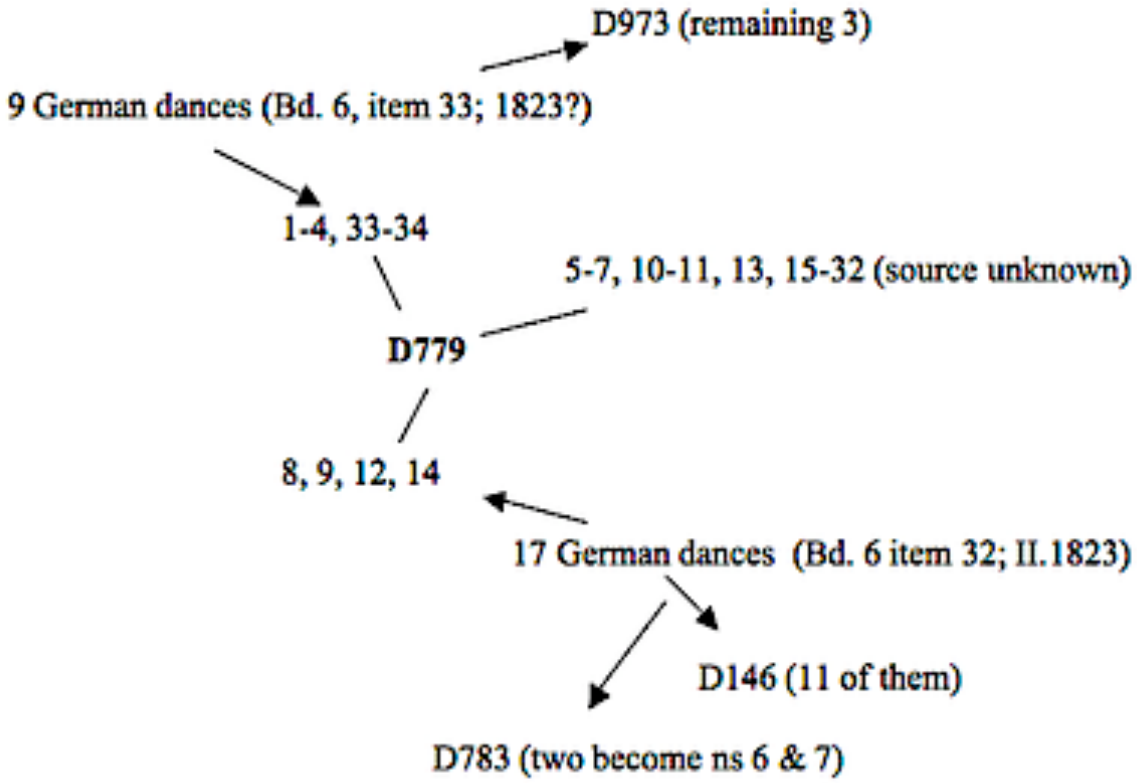
Dance table

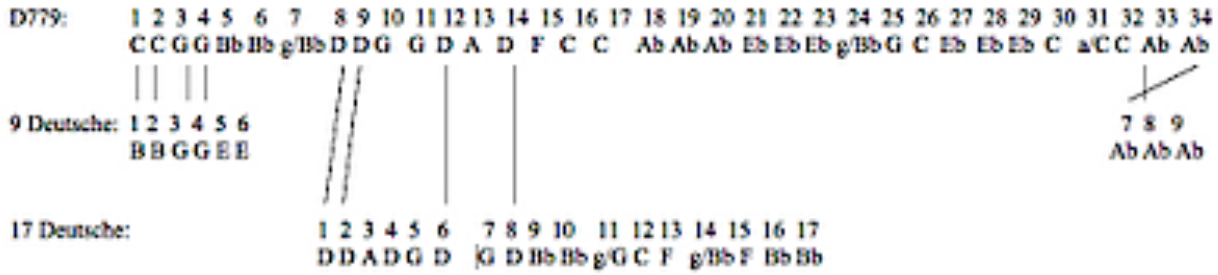
I have compiled a table that can be accessed here: link. The table collates three publications: the old Universal edition that was republished by Kalmus and is available on IMSLP, the Henle Urtext edition, and the relevant volumes in the *Neue Schubert Ausgabe*.

From the latter's admirable division of the dances into those that exist in Schubert's hand (Bd. 6) and all those published in his lifetime (and those published posthumously but which can be traced back to Schubert) (Bd. 7), one can find support for my rough division of the dances into three groups (before 1821, 1821-23, and 1823-28). In the main, the earlier dances were collected for publication from a number of ms. sources, where the later publications may have been newly composed pieces planned as sets. The first of these "planned

sets" seems to be D 734, but D 779 is an anomaly as the ten existing in Schubert's hand were chosen from two different ms. collections, the majority of whose dances went into other publications or remained unpublished till after Schubert's death.

The two graphics below (1) give a view of the relationship between D146, D779, D783, and D973; (2) chart the positions and keys of the ten dances in D779 in their sources (the 9 German dances and 17 German dances). Both graphics are thumbnails; click on them for the original, larger versions.





Tuesday, November 10, 2009

D779 sources

This post has a bit of background information on the *Valses sentimentales, D. 779.* They were published in 1825, but most were written (improvised?) in 1823 or earlier. Ten of the thirty four dances come from two manuscript collections, as detailed below. I discuss the sources in some detail in my Lerdahl review-article, 216-17.

For reference, Schubert was writing dances already in his mid-teens. Those collected in D365 were probably written (improvised, repeated, reshaped, written down) in the five-year period before publication in 1821. The dances of D779 probably originated (mostly) between that time and 1825, as did the German dances of D783 (which appeared in the same year) and very likely the *Wiener-Damen Ländle*r of D734, published a year later. The other large sets of waltzes published in Schubert's lifetime were D969, the *Valses nobles,* and D924 (*Grazer Walze*r), in 1827 and 1828, respectively.

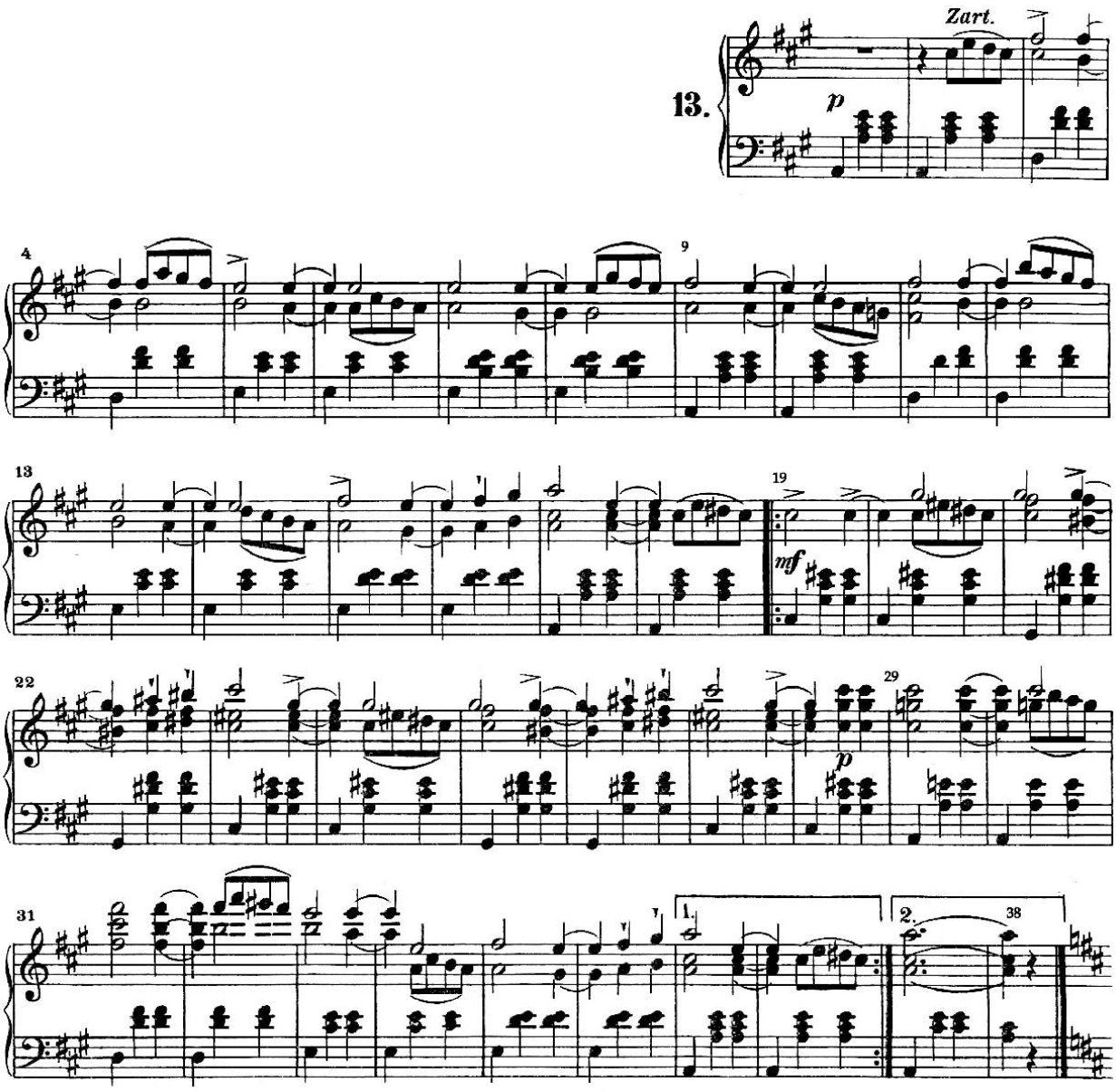
 # (key)--(key in *source* (date of source))

1 (C)--(B in 9 *Ländler* no. 1 (early 1823))
2 (C)--(B in 9 *Ländler* no. 2 (early 1823))
3 (G)--(G in 9 *Ländler* no. 3 (early 1823))
4 (G)--(G in 9 *Ländler* no. 4 (early 1823))
5 (Bb)
6 (Bb)
7 (g/Bb)
8 (D)--(D in 17 *deutsche Tänze* no. 1 (1823))
9 (D)--(D in 17 *deutsche Tänze* no. 2 (1823))
10 (G)
11 (G)
12 (D)--(D in 17 *deutsche Tänze* no. 6 (1823))
13 (A)
14 (D)--(D in 17 *deutsche Tänze* no. 8 (1823))
15 (F)
16 (C)
17 (C)
18 (Ab)
19 (Ab)
20 (Ab)
21 (Eb)
22 (Eb)
23 (Eb)
24 (g/Bb)
25 (G)
26 (C)
27 (Eb)
28 (Eb)
29 (Eb)
30 (C)
31 (a/C)
32 (C)
33 (Ab)--(Ab in 9 *Ländler* no. 7 (early 1823))
34 (Ab)--(Ab in 9 *Ländler* no. 8 (early 1823))

Saturday, October 10, 2009

D779n13 score

Here is a score for D779n13: see below. Here is a link to an online copy of the file: score. And finally here are two links to the complete collection: Valses sentimentales 1; Valses sentimentales 2.



Wednesday, December 23, 2009

Schubert holograph

Here is a link to a page with a facsimile of the waltz that follows the *Trauerwalzer* (and sounds like a variation of it) plus one other dance from D365, both in Schubert's hand (this is a *Reinschrift* or fair copy, not a sketch). This is the second page of a two-page manuscript -- there are two schottisches and Schubert's signature on p. 1. Alternatively, you can go to the front page of Schubert-Autographe and navigate your way to the dance autographs.

67. D779n13 as a portrait of two dancers. blog post. Also see hemiola and the valse à trois temps.

Monday, November 2, 2009

D779n13 and dancing

In Schubert's major published collections of dances, the only piece to bear an affect label--apart from the occasional *dolce* in early sets--is D. 779 no. 13 (*zart*), but because there is no extant holograph, we cannot be sure the label is actually his.

I have noted several times already that this waltz has a distinctive design. All the numbers of D. 779 are in small two-reprise forms of either sixteen or twenty four bars; the A Major Waltz is thirty eight bars (18 + 20). The first reprise would be eight bars if it had a repeat sign, but the repetition of the first reprise is written out to simplify the overlap of the ending and return of the opening phrase; the introduction adds two additional bars. The second reprise would be sixteen bars, but Schubert's abrupt harmonic shifts oblige him to smooth things over with analogues to the introduction, adding two bars to each eight-bar phrase.

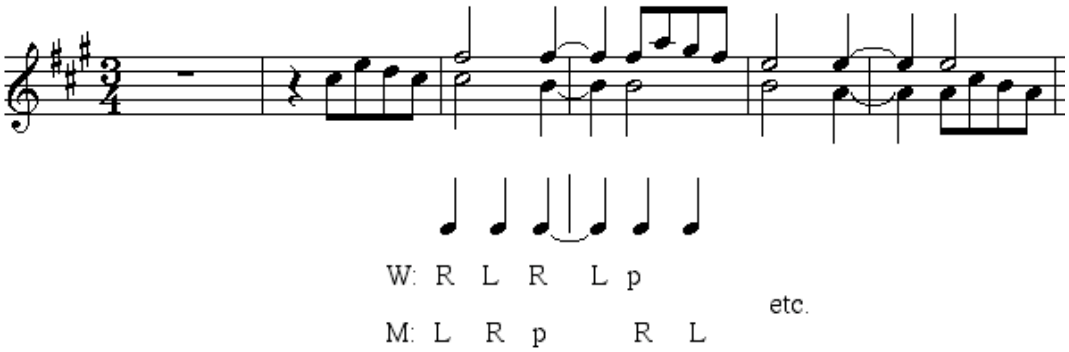
Thus, there is tension between this waltz as music for dancing and as a small-scale piece for listening. Like the peculiar scherzo-like pieces in the posthumous *Letzte Walzer* (D. 146)--most of which were composed not as waltzes but rather as minuets or scherzi with trios--the A Major Waltz threatens to burst the boundaries of its genre on the scale of the individual waltz, just as Weber's *Invitation to the Dance* and the concert waltzes of Chopin and others broke the boundaries of the functional dance environment and moved the waltz to the salon recital and, eventually, the concert hall.

Eric McKee argues that it is problematic to use this shift as an excuse to cut off these dances from their social origins and treat them merely as autonomous artworks (155) -- that is to say, he disagrees with Margaret Notley (see the score post). Although Chopin began to introduce non-dance elements into his waltzes after 1830 (when he left Warsaw), still "many of [his] Viennese and Parisian waltzes are eminently danceable, and the distinction between functional and stylized was largely a matter of how they were used in their social context" (121).

The A Major Waltz does remain invested in the social culture of dancing (despite its hypermetric peculiarities); to go even farther, more than any other waltz of the early 1820s, it is easily heard as a miniature portrait of a couple dancing. (This again follows McKee, who argues that Chopin's waltzes are "musical visions of the dancers on the ballroom dance floor" (122) and that the composer tends to focus his musical gaze, as it were, on the woman (141).)

Schubert did not have Chopin's ability, gained from his own experience, "to translate [dancers'] bodily motions into an artistic musical vision" (McKee, 121), but from everything we know about Schubert's extensive activities as an improviser for social dancing, we can assume a similar skill from him even if he did not dance himself.

The bass figures provide the necessary metric contexts, and the two "empty" bars (1-2) depict the dancers setting themselves and internalizing meter and tempo. The two upper voices are continuously paired, soprano and alto, leader and follower, mirroring each other's figures in the two-bar pattern of the waltz step (in the graphic below, "W" is "woman," "M" is "man," "L" and "R" are left and right foot, respectively, and "p" is the pivot made without a new step). What we hear once these voice leading parts acquire voices, as it were--once they become agents or personae--is what we might see in the *valse à trois temps,* a common waltz figure known before the turn of the century and common through the 1830s (Aldrich 1991, 19-20; Aldrich 1997, 134; McKee, 123-4.): not simply alternation of figures, but, in the eighth-note gestures, the waltz's trademark circling or whirling.



And what we sense is not so much desire as it is the piquant charm of sublimated desire (flirting, in a word): two persons in a social setting accept one another as partners and dance. One would normally dance with a number of partners through an evening in, say, a house ball, but it is clear from statements in contemporary sources that a couple's sexuality was always a potential diversion of the dance from its social purpose. (For additional context and description, see my discussion of D779n13 and dancing in Neumeyer 2006, 217-220.)

The A Major Waltz, under those terms, might even be taken as a portrait of a couple in love and of the power relations that obtained in their intimacy during the era at hand. The effect

would be very like the one David Gramit describes as arising near the end of Schubert's song "Seligkeit" (D. 433), whose *Ländler* rhythms and strict four-bar phrase design at first seem "allegorical-a symbol of worldly pleasure standing in for heavenly ones." In the final strophe, however, the poem's narrator reveals his willingness to abandon heaven for the favors of his earthly lover; thus, "what we initially hear *like* a dance turns out to *be* dance itself; the hoped-for pleasure is not spiritual but embodied" (222; his emphasis). (A similar use was cited by Hoorickx in "Hänflis Liebeswerbung," D. 552, but in this case a deutscher (D. 972 no. 3) is quoted intact as the introduction. Hoorickx also notes that in the same year (1817) Schubert quoted all of the Cotillon, D. 976, as the second theme in the finale of the Violin Sonata, D. 574.)

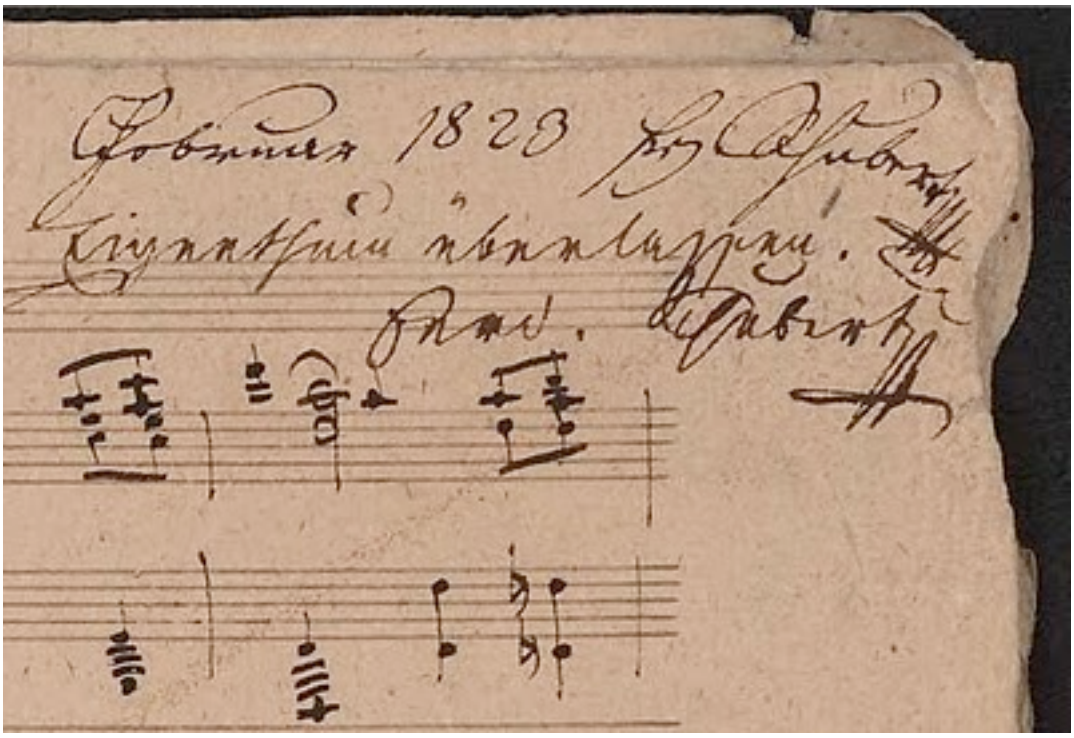
Sunday, February 21, 2010

Schubert's hand (holographs, that is)

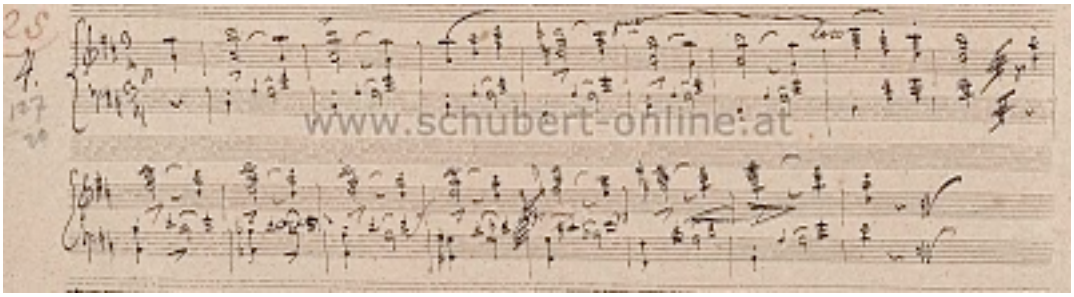
On the Schubert-Autographe site mentioned in yesterday's post, you can find your way to dances for piano solo by the sequence: Notenmanuskripte / Alle Werke / Klaviermusik zu zwei Händen - Tänze. The two richest items are the [17] *Deutsche* mined for numbers in D 146, D 779, and D 783; and the [9 *Tänze*], with original versions of the opening numbers in D 779, along with the posthumously published D 973.

It's always fascinating to look at composer autographs, but here I am not interested in the stance of authenticity -- except to note that I was surprised to see how many expression marks, including accents, Schubert wrote into these pieces: I've always assumed they were mainly the work of later editors. The expression marks remind me of comments from Schubert-Kreis reminiscences about Josef von Gahy's "fiery" playing of the dances. Perhaps that style of playing was really in Schubert's mind, too (if not always in his fingers, given the tacit comparison in the description of Gahy's performances).

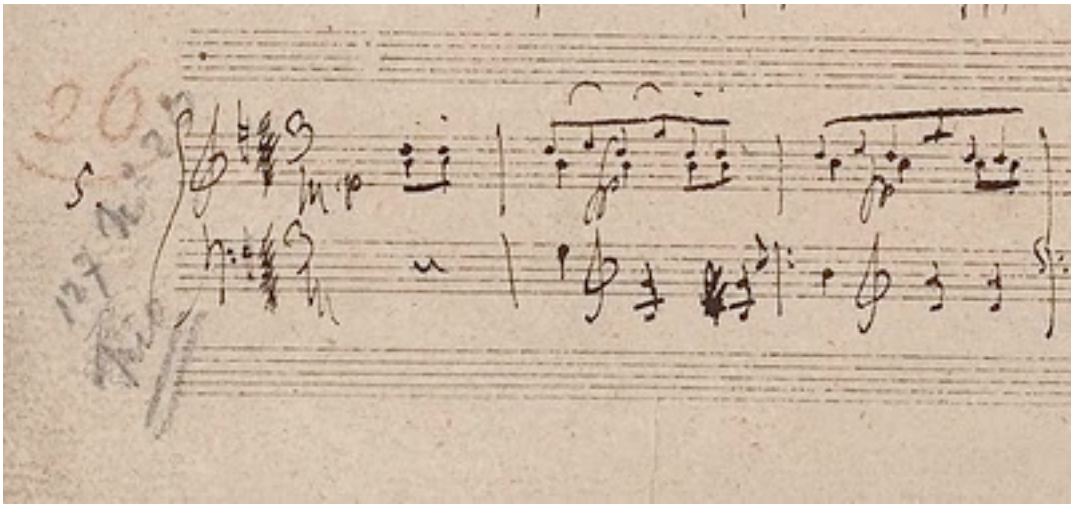
Not authenticity but rather the opposite, actually -- these autographs strike me as another part of the geography of Schubert's music making. First, he was ill: by early 1823 he was undergoing treatments for syphilis. Second, we note that in 1823 Ash Wednesday fell on 12 February. Imagine Schubert, before that date, rising in the morning to compose as usual. He decides (or follows up on friends' requests) to organize and write fair copies of several dances he played before he withdrew from social engagements, perhaps so that Gahy (or someone else) could play them during the final days of Carneval. Having finished the work, Schubert signs the first page, underestimating the space needed and his family name slants off on the corner. I'll be charitable and assume that the corrupted page edges came later. [this paragraph revised on 3-7-10]



Number 4 in the *17 Deutsche* eventually became the last (n20) of the posthumous "Letzte Walzer" D146. What strikes me about this is the marked leftward slant of the handwriting at the left side of the page and how it gradually corrects itself by the right-hand side. This is as close as one can come to "embodying Schubert," to imagining oneself seeing with his eyes as he sits at the work-table, feeling the weight of the body's shift to the left as he fills the wide paper, and relaxing as he does while crossing the page to its right edge.



Here, as a postscript of sorts, is the beginning of n5 in the *17 Deutsche*. As the black pencil marks show, this eventually became the trio to n4 above. Although that is plausible, nowhere is there is an indication that Schubert assumed the same.



Part 5: Schubert and Schumann

65. Robert Schumann's story/review of D365 and D783 and the substitution of D779n13 for D783n7: blog post.

Sunday, November 8, 2009

Schumann's Schubert story

Robert Schumann's review of Opus 9 and 33 (D. 365 and D. 783), published in 1835, gives us another way to think about associations between D779n13 and dances in other collections. Schumann, by his own admission a Schubert "fanatic," imagines a meeting of the *Davidsbund*, a domestic musical evening that resembles an informal, small-scale Schubertiade.

Florestan is in rare form throughout. He first invokes an image of dancing, with the heavily ironic joke that "dance music makes one sad and languid while church music, on the other hand, makes one gay and active--at least myself." Then Zilia [Clara] pricks her finger on a rose and offers, mysteriously, that "Like these waltzes it has nothing to do with pain, but only with drops of blood, drawn forth by roses" (124). Burgeoning excitement caused by Zilia's playing produces a silly moment at the level of a parlor game, as they try to decide between Schubert and Chopin: "Florestan went into a corner remote from the piano, saying, 'Now if running toward the keyboard I manage to hit correctly the first chord of the last movement of the D Minor Symphony [Beethoven's Ninth], it shall be Schubert.' Of course he succeeded."

After this, "Zilia played the waltzes by heart." These waltzes were, first, Schubert's Opus 9, then the *deutsche Tänze* of Opus 33 (D. 783). Florestan insists that the latter is a tableau of characters and that a painter present that evening ought to sketch them quickly and project the results as magic lantern slides. Florestan leaves suddenly, and our author offers the apology that "Florestan, as I may explain, is in the habit of breaking off at the moment of highest enjoyment, perhaps to preserve its entire freshness and fulness in his memory" (126).

Here the story has an intrinsic interest for its narrative progress, its characters, their social interactions, and its description of a domestic evening among creative artists in the early 1830s. The music is certainly important as a plot element (motivation for the event and characters' behavior) and as a motif, but Schumann allows his review of the music to be nearly lost in the story. Of D. 365, he does say that they are

> lovely little genii, floating above the earth at about the height of a flower--though I do not much like *Le Désir* [No. 2], in which hundreds of girls have drowned their sentiment, nor the last three aesthetic errors [nos. 34-36] which on the whole I cannot

> forgive their creator. There is much beauty in the way in which the rest circle round the *Désir*, entangling it more or less in their delicate threads, also in the dreamy thoughtlessness which pervades them all, so that we, too, when playing the last, believe that we are still in the first. (124)

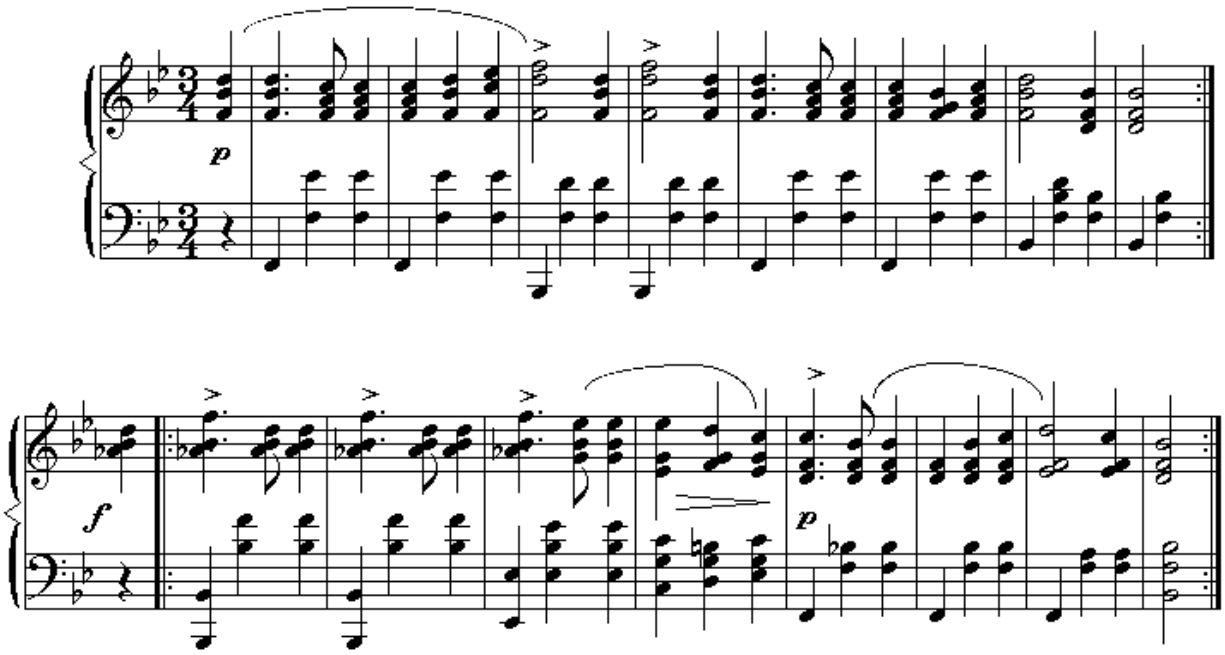
(About *Le Désir*—Schumann is being disingenuous, as he himself valued it highly enough to write an (unfinished) set of variations on it.)

D. 783 is described in terms that clearly evoke Schumann's own character-piece cycles, as Florestan declares that No. 1 announces a masked ball and then calls out characters from the ball as each dance goes by: "No.2. A comic figure, scratching its ear, and whispering "Pst! pst!" Disappears. No.3. Harlequin with his hand on his hips; exit with a somersault. No.4. Two stiff, polite masks, dancing and conversing little with each other" (125). Etc.

These descriptions might provoke us to consider how the A Major Waltz might replace one of the dances in D. 783. Florestan describes only the first ten dances, not all sixteen, but from those he does describe, No. 7 would seem to fit well: "Two reapers waltzing together in a happy trance. He says softly, 'Are you she?' They recognize each other." (Schumann's original for "Are you she?" is "Bist du es?" which is easily mapped onto the dotted rhythms that open phrases or–more likely perhaps–onto the half-quarter pairs at the ends (as "Bist du's?") (*Gesammelte Schriften* 1:200).)

The Bb-major Deutscher in this position bears a number of similarities to the A Major Waltz: its first strain is the only one in D. 783 that does not end with a hypermetrically weak tonic, its overt chromaticisms are restricted to the opening of the second strain, and it relies on expressive suspension figures.

The first strain is the "happy trance" of the two dancers, the chromaticism a question, and the descent to the final cadence the mutual recognition. Each of these traits is easily transferred to the A Major Waltz: the soprano/alto pairs of the first strain and the more exuberant C#-major section; the question in the mysterious chromatic measures measures 29-30; and the moment of recognition in the sixth-octave registral climax.



As a final comment, I should add that David Gramit is only half-right when he claims that "Schumann's one extended discussion of Schubert's dances . . . effectively neutralizes the physical and potentially popular not by dismissing it, à la Hanslick, but by transferring it to the realm of the imaginary" (232). The physical--that is, the functional quality of dance--is certainly gone, as Zilia is seated at the piano throughout the evening; through her, the dances become domestic salon music: as Gramit puts it, they are "no longer functional music but rather evocative character pieces." The physical is transferred to Florestan, who is a vital, even hyperactive, presence throughout the story, but it by no means follows that "Schumann creates high art out of dance" (232).

The domestic musical evening, the salon, itself is a principal emblem of middle-class entertainment in the 1820s and 1830s, and often included dancing and parlor games. There is, furthermore, nothing "high-art" about the magic lantern (indeed, quite the reverse, if one recalls that magic lanterns and similar machines were later associated with photography, not painting). Gramit anachronistically imposes socially exclusionary high/popular art distinctions onto an era when such distinctions were far from fully formed, and thus he falsely turns Schumann the creative critic into Schumann the snob, the progressive Romantic into the reactionary Romantic that Schumann did indeed become after the democratic revolutions in 1848-49.

Monday, December 21, 2009

Schubert's F-major experiments

Quoted from Schumann's review of D 365:

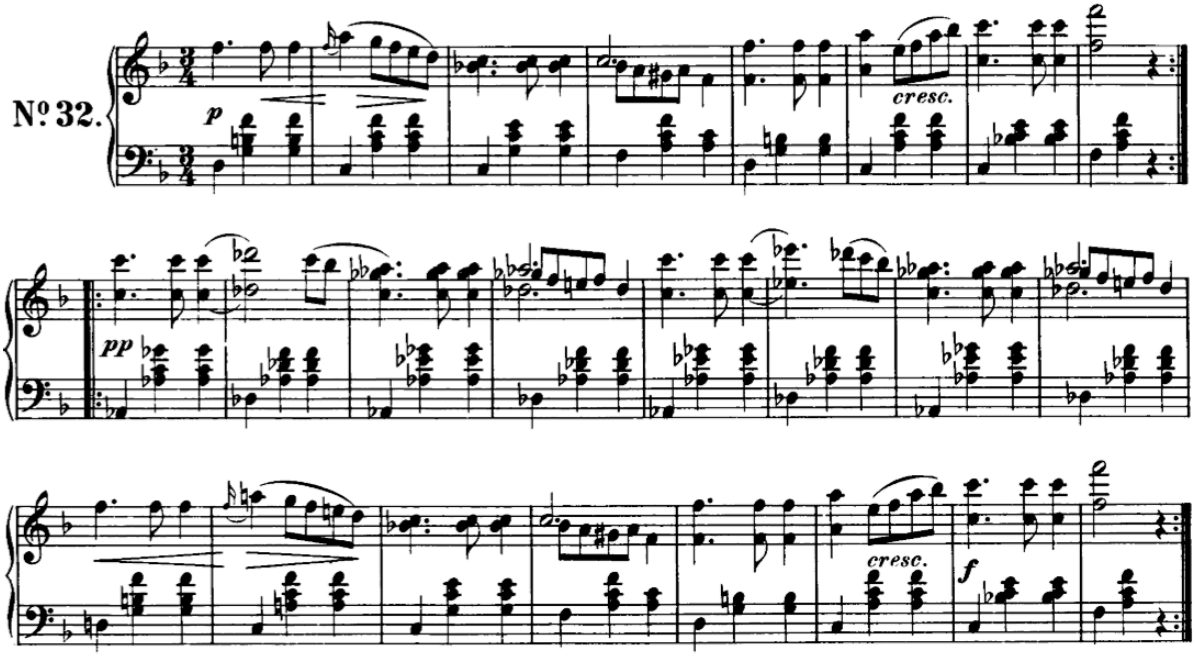
> . . . lovely little genii, floating above the earth at about the height of a flower--though I do not much like . . . the last three aesthetic errors [nos. 34-36] which on the whole I cannot forgive their creator.

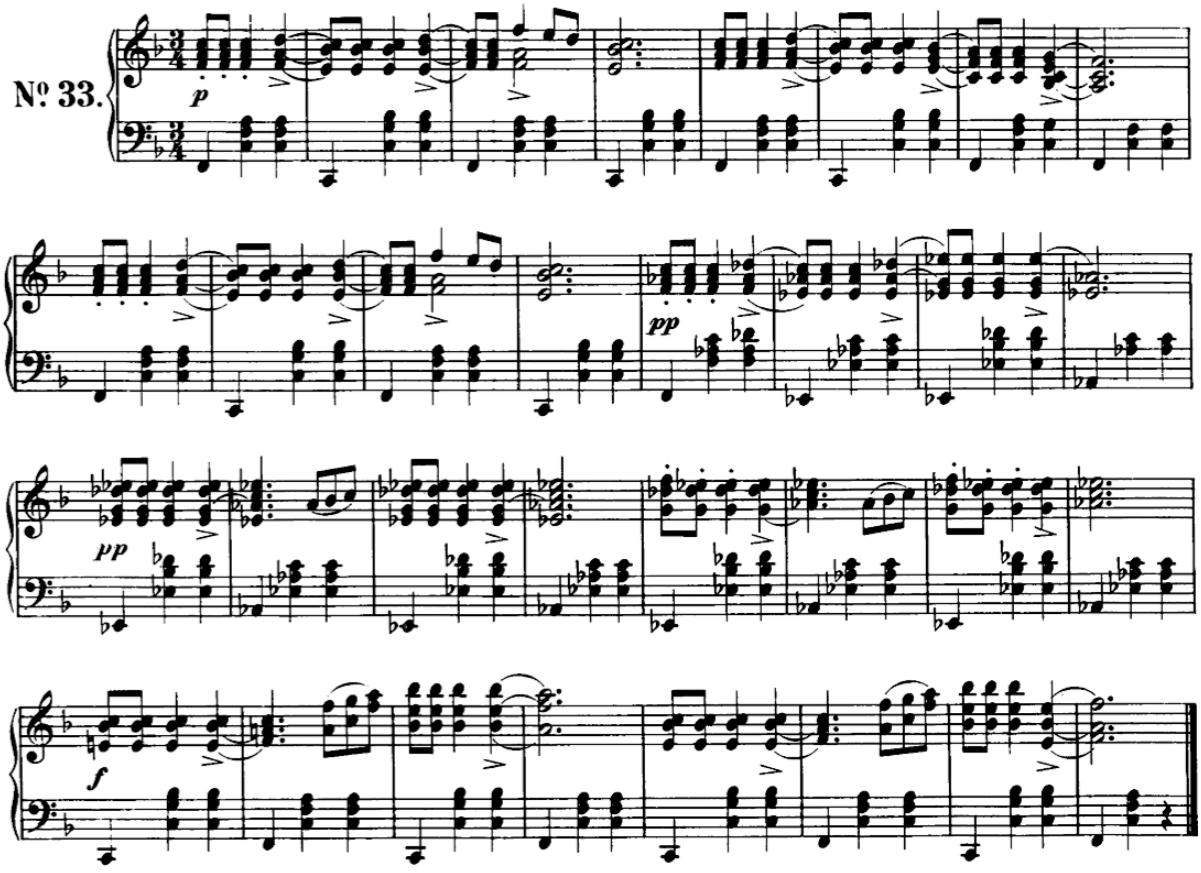
What did Schumann mean? What was it about these waltzes that was so troublesome? I would suggest that it was exactly the same spontaneous (and thereafter practiced) creativity that expressed itself in the abrupt shift to III in D779n13 but that in other cases found itself confined within the tiny frame of (what "should" have been) a 16-bar binary dance. (Or a simple ternary design with a transposed A-strain as its contrasting middle -- see examples in yesterday's post).

After a long series of waltzes in sharp keys (everything from G major to B major) in ns16-30, a single C-major waltz intervenes before the final five waltzes in F major. No wonder many commentators regard this last group as "tacked on" -- which may very well be true and may have been an element in Schumann's displeasure with ns34-36. The effect is all the greater because the five waltzes do hang together as a set and could easily be played independently of D365 in dance-trio groups, most likely as 32-33-32-34-35-34-36-34. This design would support a dance or a performance of nearly 5 minutes. (The grouping of 32 with 33 is supported by the appearance of this pair in two manuscripts in Schubert's hand from 1821. The grouping of ns34-36, similarly, is found in another manuscript from the same year. See Litschauer.)

The "theme" of this last group is announced immediately in n32: the exploitation of chromaticism. The non-tonic opening does refer back to n31 but retrospectively, after the phrase-aligned cadential progression plays itself out, the G7 is understood as chromatic. Nevertheless, the focus of the chromatic play is, as we would expect, in the contrasting middle of the binary form (beginning of the second strain) or of the small ternary form (the "B" section). As in D779n13, Schubert turns the affects around by making the transposed variant of the theme in the contrasting middle more stable harmonically than the original.

Schubert plays out the idea of diatonic/chromatic contrast in another way in n33 [second graphic below]. What would have been a 16-bar waltz with repeats is still 32 bars but each "repeat" is written out: bars 9-16 = 1-8 but the cadence is to bIII, not I; bars 25-32 are a variant of 17-24 where the Ab major of the earlier bars shifts directly to the F major of the later ones. The design overall is closely related, in its blocking out of chromatically related key areas, to the ternary forms I discussed in yesterday's post. This is also a waltz that could easily have arisen in improvisation and repetition, and seems little removed from that state as it stands.


Nº 32.
p
cresc.
pp
cresc.
f


Nº 33.
p
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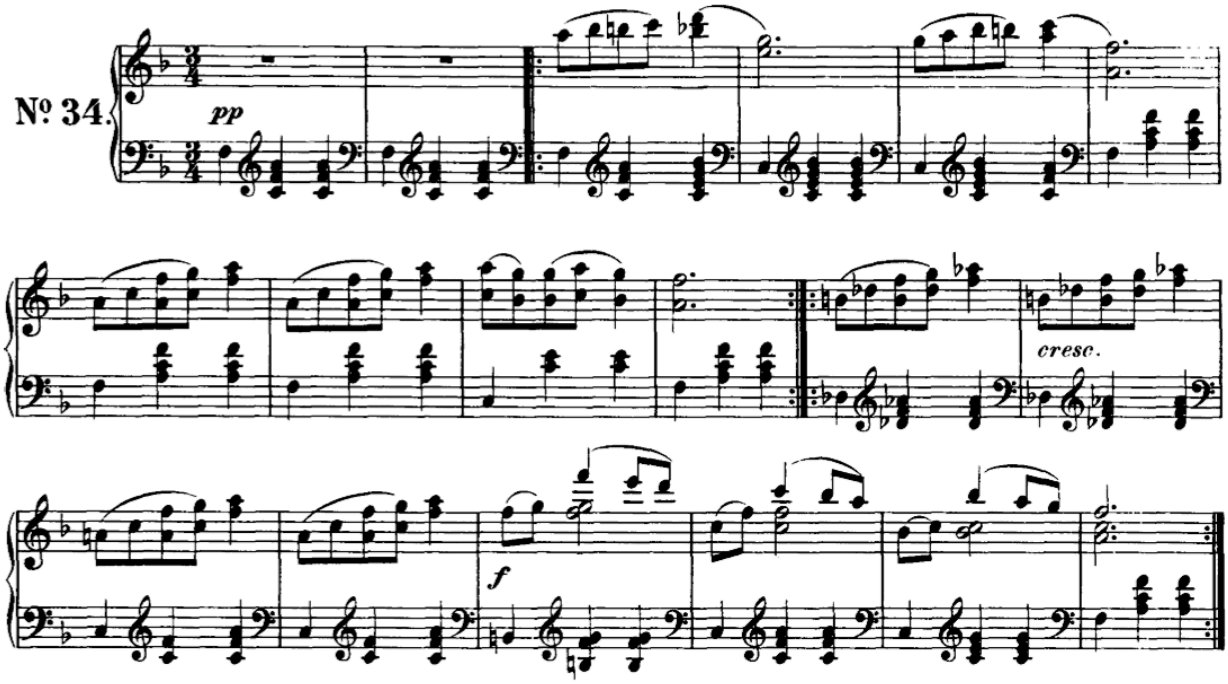
Now, on to the three "errors." In n34, it is easy to imagine a motivic motivation in improvisation for the striking augmented sixth chord that opens the second strain: the chromatic passing tone B-natural5 and its run up to D6 is compressed into a diminished third B-natural4 to Db5 in the second strain. As the eight-bar cadential function unfolds, the bass charts the inverse: Db3-C3-B-natural2.

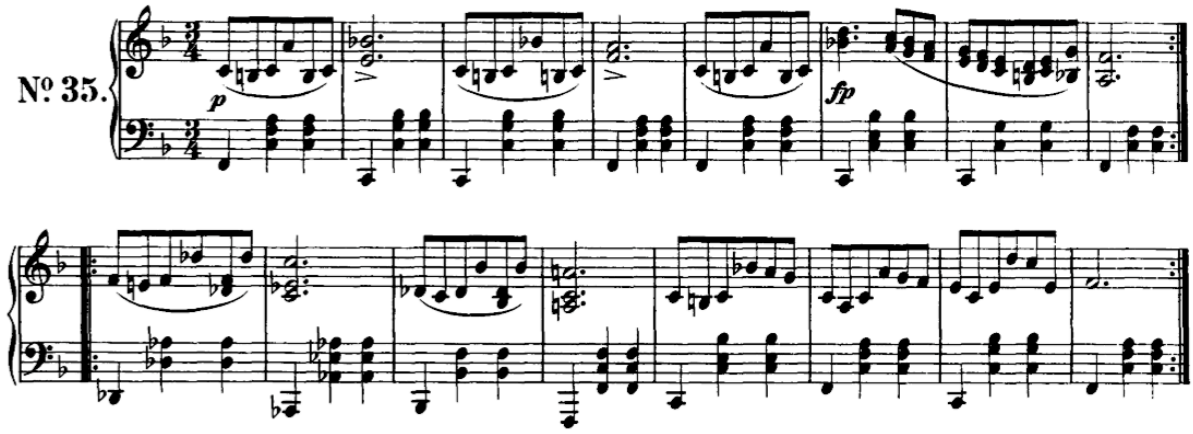
The extended cadential function with chromaticism and prominent cadential 6/4s sounds a bit old-fashioned and dramatic, as if it belonged to a menuet or a purely instrumental piece -- not much like "little genii" floating just above ground. Given that the first strain abuts four bars of Ländler to four bars of horn calls, perhaps Schumann disliked the topical chaos.



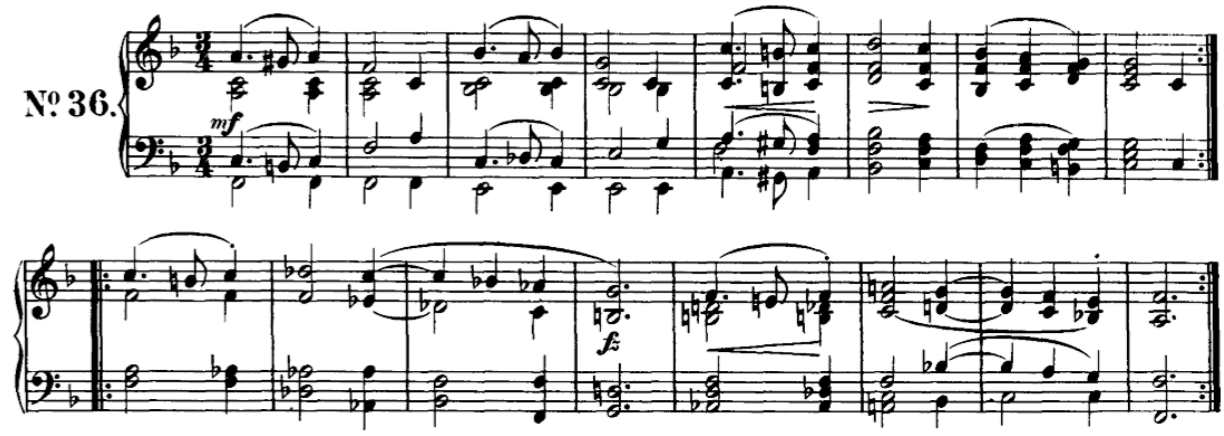
It is more difficult to guess what Schumann objected to in n35--the design is certainly as straightforward as it could be, and the direct chromatic shift to begin the second strain and the "falling fourths" progression that opens it are hardly uncommon in Schubert's dances. Here again, I will guess that the issue was topical dissonance: the lilting violinistic figures of the *Ländler* style are placed in a rather low register. Where D365n2 (the *Trauerwalzer*) lifts its figures out of this register to end with clear *Ländler* figures in the next octave, and so neatly contrasts the chromatic (lower) with the diatonic (higher), here the register is maintained throughout.

In the manuscript that includes the F major waltzes, all are in F# major. These have the earliest date (March 1821; D365 was published in November that year) and are undoubtedly the "originals" -- that is, the keys Schubert would most often have played these dances in. The F# major versions without question lie better under the hands -- some places in the published versions are so awkward as to be nearly unplayable. It's unlikely Schubert him-

self would have made these kinds of clumsy literal transpositions -- and so perhaps what Schumann was objecting to, unbeknownst to him, was publisher's errors and not Schubert's.



The last waltz uses a texture that is very rare in Schubert's dances: melody with block-chord accompaniment that virtually erases the dance and moves the music toward song instead. These block chord textures, often with the half+quarter rhythms found here, are used occasionally for strains or whole dances that emphasize tonic pedal points (and especially in the minor key).



Note added 12-24-09, cited from Notley, 140: "Schubert entered these five dances as F sharp major "Deutsche Tänze" in his autograph, but they came out as F major waltzes in [D365]. The dances, which bear the date March 8, 1821, play with the possibilities of modal mixture. . . . In each the chromatic inflections underpin his interpretation of the genre's even phrases and divided form."

Tuesday, December 22, 2009

more on Schumann and the F-major experiments

I originally ended yesterday's post with the following:

> One has to wonder if Schumann ever played for dancing, because, despite the party-game context of his review, he had a skewed notion of what Schubert's dances, even in their published forms, represented. It was a small step from mistaking these F-major *deutscher* for a closed text to the monumentalizing priorities of the Bach *Gesamtausgabe*. And it really seems unnecessary because the record of Schumann's early music, finished and unfinished, certainly confirms that he had improvisational skills.

In the meantime, I found this in Andreas Boyde's reconstruction of the unfinished set of variations on D365n2:

> In 1827 Schumann began "revelling" in the music of Franz Schubert. He heard his songs for the first time, was introduced by Agnes Carus to the four-hand works for piano and fell in love both with "Schubert's Waltzes and her". His diary on 2nd March 1829 mentions a "fruitful improvisation on the Waltz of Longing"; eight months later he requested the music for the complete Schubert Waltzes from Friedrich Wieck and according to Friedrich Täglichsbeck played them "beautifully and whenever he had the chance".

The question of playing for dancing, however, remains open.

Friday, December 25, 2009

Plantinga on Schumann's Schubert

Leon Plantinga writes that "Schumann reacts to Schubert with rare sensitivity and unquestionable sincerity" (220). Among the points by which be elaborates this assessment is a comparison of Beethoven and Schubert as composers for the piano. Here is the Schumann quote:

> Particularly as a composer for piano, [Schubert] has something more to offer than others, . . . more even than Beethoven . . . . This superiority consists in his ability to write more idiomatically for the piano, i.e. everything sounds as if drawn from the very depths of the instrument, while with Beethoven we must borrow for tone color, first from the oboe, then the horn, etc.

And Plantinga's comment: "Schubert's music is perfectly suited to the light and sensitive Viennese piano which he (and Schumann) used, while Beethoven's explosive sforzati and orchestral effects, not always successful even on a modern piano, strain the capacities of an early nineteenth-century [instrument]" (221). (Link to a performance of D790n3 apparently played on a period instrument.)

Here is Schumann's general assessment of Schubert, after speaking of "the enchanting fluctuation of feeling, and the wholly new world into which we are transported" (226):

> But even then there ever remains a pleasurable feeling like that following an enchanted fairy tale; one senses that the composer was master of his story, and its connections, in time, will also be clear to you.

Plantinga's comment:

> This is somehow a melancholy picture: Schumann the revolutionary, the spokesman for the new era, finds ultimate satisfaction only in the music of a composer long since dead. Schubert's . . . music reminded Schumann of his own youth, when he devoured all Schubert's available compositions, of his own early ambitions and optimism. In Schumann's writing about Schubert there are always overtones of misty-eyed nostalgia; he felt a stronger kinship with him than with any other composer.

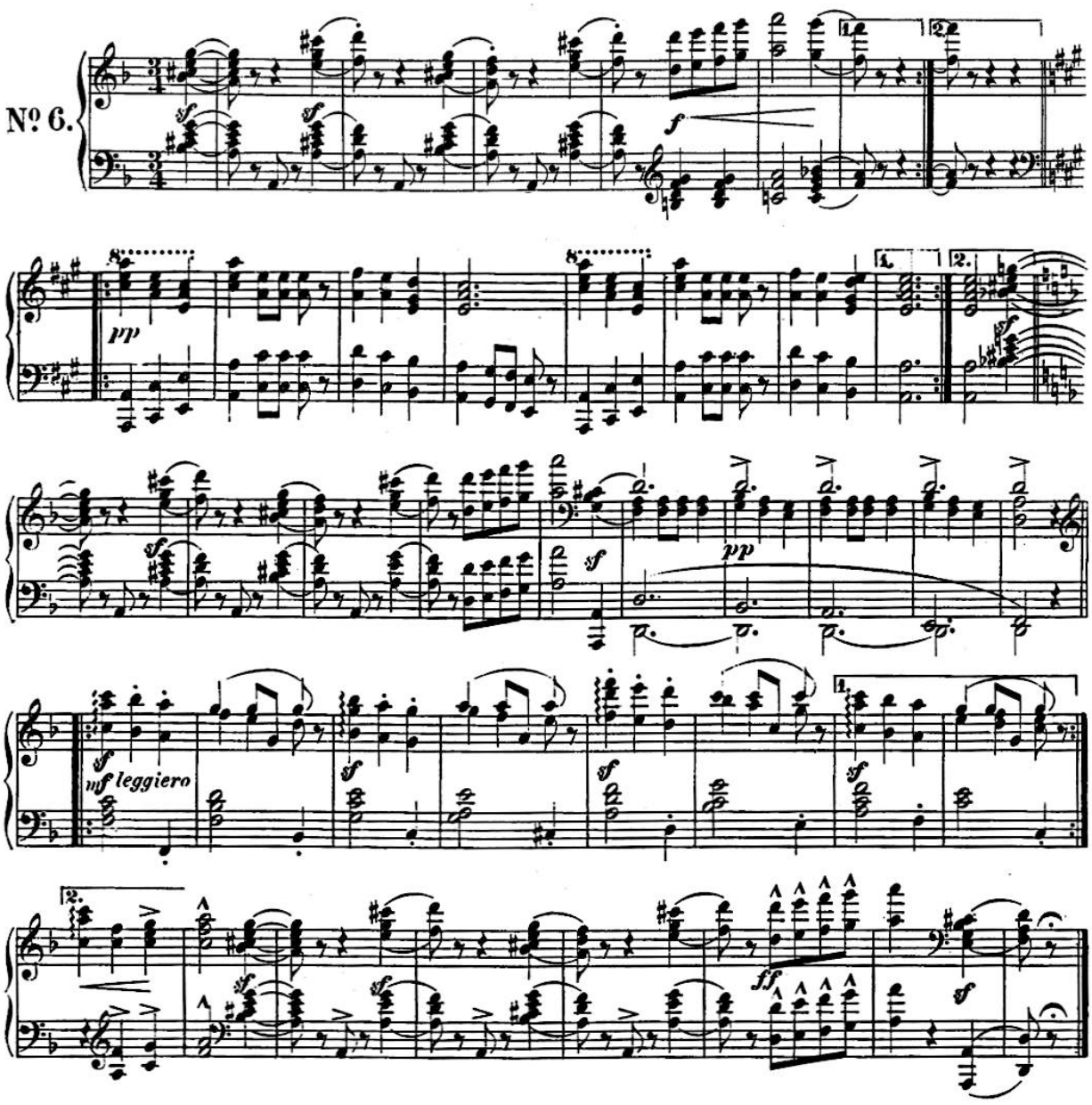
I should also note that Schumann included a Schubert dance (D783n14) among the fourteen pieces in the *Klavierbüchlein* he prepared for his daughter Marie in 1848.

Monday, March 1, 2010

More to Papillons and the single-strain dance

Yesterday I referred to "floating strains" in Schumann's *Papillons*, by which I meant individual dance strains (usually 8 bars) that "take the place" of a complete dance in reprise sections of dance sets. *Papillons* does indeed contain such a floating strain, but it acts more like an interrupting reminiscence than a reprise within a dance set: it's the second strain of n6, which reappears in the middle of n10.

As it happens, however, n6 itself is built as a miniaturized dance set in ABACA design (or dance with two trios), where *all five sections* are single strains.



Monday, May 3, 2010

Archaeology of Improvisation

In November, I will be giving a paper-presentation during a conference session on improvisation. The place is Indianapolis; the occasion is the joint national meeting of the American Musicological Society and the Society for Music Theory.

The title is "Schubert's 'Riemannian Hand': An Archaeology of Improvisation." Here's the abstract:

Schubert was said to string his waltzes into "endless cotillons" for dancing. A close relative of the contredanse, the cotillon required frequent repetition of strains, particularly the principal one. Using the three-layer texture of the waltz (as played on a piano) and "endless cotillons" as the design, I will demonstrate (1) how strict small forms, repetition, and variation can reveal pairings and groupings among Schubert's surviving waltzes, suggesting relationships that may have arisen through varied repetition in performance; and (2) how the chordal offbeats can effect transformations with parsimonious voice leading by simply moving thumb, middle finger, or little finger, thus anchoring the more distant modulations that Schubert attempted in improvisation. By doing multiple comparisons among dances, I try to reconstruct some sense of how Schubert, during improvised performance, may have been—in Kofi Agawu's terms—"thinking in music about music."

[note added 5-19-10: Legler and Kubik reproduce instructions from a dance manual by Edward David Helmke (1830), one of which is "A waltz may last no more than 15 minutes and a cotillon no more than 45 minutes" (95).]

Part 6: Other

Some Schubert links

Here are some links to websites with information (or more links) related to Schubert.

1. Cynthia Cyrus's cleanly done, concise, and very helpful Schubert links. Cyrus is an associate dean and associate professor at Vanderbilt. She is a medievalist and apparently also a Schubert fan.

2. Schubert-Autographe. A remarkable "online databank" of Schubert autograph manuscripts in Viennese holdings. An ongoing project of the *Wiener Wissenschafts-, Forschungs- und Technologiefonds (WWTF)* in collaboration with the *Institut für Angewandte Musikwissenschaft und Psychologie in Köln (IAMP)* and the *Musikwissenschaftliches Institut der Universität Wien*. If you click on the button "Über Schubert," you'll reach a short biography and, at the bottom of the page, a set of links to the New Schubert Edition, Schubert societies in several countries, works-lists, and festivals. As is so often true of links-lists, some but not all are current.

3. The same, alas, is true of links provided on the Schubert-Edition site: links. Scroll down to "Schubert Im Internet" for sites specific to the composer. But that's the Net....

4. Continuing the theme, here's a link to the Schubert Society of the USA, a NYC-centered group whose activities and web-site are apparently undergoing change at present.

5.-6. The Wikipedia article on Schubert is quite decent, though it whitewashes a number of aspects of Schubert's life and personality (that is, it reads like something Schubert's agent would have written). The article has links not included on the sites named above. My personal favorite is the collection of digitized cylinder recordings from the University of California at Santa Barbara. Several performances of the Serenade are on offer, but also characteristic waltz "suites" recorded in 1913 by the České Trio z Prahy and in 1909 by the Indestructible Military Band (!). I haven't been able to verify yet that the pieces are actually by Schubert but will work on it. Unfortunately, the item listed as a "valse sentimentale" has not been digitized.

7. Tomoko Yamamoto's wonderful photo-biography is a treat: Schubert-Project. Like any good travelogue photo-set, it makes me want to repeat her journey.

8. Finally, a link to a performance of D779n31 (not 13) on alto viol, no less, and guitar: Ernst Stolze. There are, of course, many performances of Schubert waltzes on YouTube -- I'm afraid I just don't have the patience to wade through the morass of student performances, bad audio, and/or bad video to find the handful of adequate video files that are undoubtedly there somewhere.

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